

**JOURNAL OF THE
CORPORATE MERCENARY**

**2020
YEARBOOK**

SOLO OF FORTUNE 2

**SOLO EXCLUSIVE —
AMERICAN ANGELS! A
EURO-SOLO RATES AMERICA'S
10 BEST!**

**NEO-SOVIET UNION & THE
FORMER EAST BLOC —
A WORLD SITUATION
REPORT**

**THE OPEN ROAD — SOF
EXAMINES WALKING
STEEL**

**SOF FEATURE — THE
FUTURE OF FORCE,
2020-2050**

**R. TALSORIAN
GAMES, INC.**



MR. EDITOR

By Derek "The Q" Quintanar

Well, we're back...

For those of you just joining the *Cyberpunk* adventure, this is a supplement/sourcebook for the Solo character role. We're giving you background and history (World Situation Report, Future of Force, Destroy All Flesh, I Was There), playing tips (Medically Alert, IPSC Range Review, C.J. O'Reilly), and equipment (Bubba&J.T.'s Reviews, New at the Paris Show, The Open Road). This is done in "magazine" format, as if you were reading this in 2020. The Yearbook would be faxed or downloaded to you through a subscription service, or you could buy a printout or download at a dataterm. It's a way of giving your Solo character more depth that just another "guy-with-a-gun."

So what have you done for me lately?

Those who've taken this route before (via the best-selling *Cyberpunk* supplement of all time, the original *SOF*) will find that we haven't let you down. The book has increased in size by 50%, stuffed full of cyberware, equipment, vehicles, and—oh, yeah—weapons, too. There are close to 40 of them in both articles and advertisements. Enough toys for a loong time...

But "toys for the boys" is not the only game in town. New places to play are being detailed, such as the East Bloc/USSR and the SouthAm. The best Solos in America are presented for use as supporting cast or deadly enemies. Plus, tips on running low-cyberware games, or "practice" runs for training purposes.

Hey, one of these articles is the same as before!?

In order to handle this larger format, RTG has staged this issue of *SOF* as a year-end Annual, showcasing the best articles of the period 2014-2020. We've actually reprinted Jersey Whitherspoon's column from the original *SOF* as part of our look at Eastern Europe, and to reinforce that "Best Of" feeling.

Now you've got the biggest guns, toughest vehicles, sharpest intel, and baddest attitude in the Dark Future—what are you gonna do with it? Get out there and show those posers that you're packin' the most powerful weapon of all—Information!

Derek Quintanar, S.E.

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SOLO OF FORTUNE

**YEARBOOK
2020**

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THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CORPORATE MERCENARY

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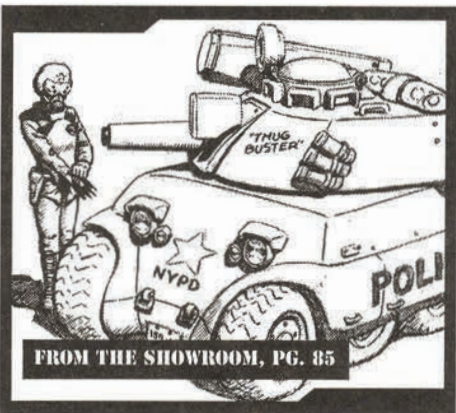
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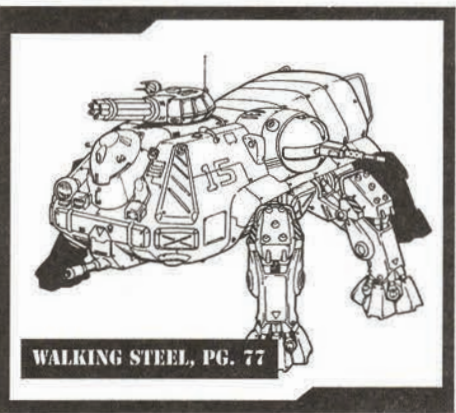
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INSTANT RESPONSE TIME

LETTER OF THE MONTH: Wondering About Wondernines

Sirs:

I'm writing to complain about the poor coverage your magazine has given to the classic (and in my opinion, superb) 9mm pistol. You know what I mean—the good old high-capacity, high-reliability, high-accuracy, low-cost guns that most civilians rely on for self-defense. It seems your magazine would have we readers believe that such “wondernines” aren't made anymore. I've checked, and the only 9mms your magazine has reviewed in the past 14 months are the Federated Arms X-9 (which holds 12+1 9mm rounds) and the Militech Avenger (10+1 rounds).

What is this? Both weapons were described in your June 2019 issue as being “of high quality and very popular,” but neither holds as many shots as pre-millennium wondernines packing brass-cased ammo. Don't tell me that nines are good only as hideout pistols!

In your October 2020 issue, your writers slid to the other end of the spectrum in the article on “Exotic Nines,” which covered the Texas Arms M351 Gyrojet Pistol (8+1 rounds of 9mm Gyrojet), the Hammer M-11 Sabot-Bolt pistol (10+1 rounds of 9mm Bolts) and the Beretta M97P (which holds 18+1 rounds but has a built-in lasersight). Again, why the strange treatment of the venerable nine? Are we, your readers, to believe that 9mms are exotic weapons? Come on!

As if this were not aggravation enough, the May 2013 issue listed many 9mm pistols under the section “Unspeakable Trash”! The Fashion-Gun 9 (13+1 rounds), Kang Tao Type-97 (12+1) and Sci-Fi Starrior-4 (12+1) are certainly garbage, but they sure aren't representative of the whole crop! Frack!

Fact of the matter is, the only honest-to-Gibson wondernine your magazine has covered is the South American Goncz-Taurus Pistol, which holds 15+1 rounds, but it uses old, brass-cased ammo and is not all that reliable, so while this gun qualifies, it isn't even up to 2020's minimum technological standards! What—are there NO true wondernines anymore!?

Exasperated,
Angus Kessler
Georgia, Late at night

Angus, Angus, Angus. We don't have anything against nines—our readers do! Most of our subscribers are hardcore Solos; they need big guns to take on armored opponents or small guns they can hide under their jackets. Typical wondernines are too “straight-laced” for a modern samurai's needs.

For those of you who don't have your “Firearms History” chip slotted at the moment, the story started with the High-Power—designed by John Browning and manufactured by FN in Belgium. The Browning Hi-Power (also

known as the BHP and the HP-35) was the first “wondernine”—a 9mm Parabellum autoloading pistol with a double-column magazine. It was a revolution, and soon the pistol market was flooded with new wondernines; the Hi-Power holds 13+1 rounds, but it was soon to be outdone by the Beretta M92F (15+1), the Glock 17 (17+1) and the Steyr GB-80 (18+1). Eventually, the principles of the wondernine became old hat, but the popularity of this type of weapon has never faded from public interest.

Angus seems worried that wondernines will fade from sight, largely due to this publication. We hope not, and fortunately, there are still are plenty of wondernines to be found; these days, they're almost universally built from carbon-fiber composites and fire caseless ammunition. They've got three advantages over 20th-century models: they're lighter, they pack more shots in the magazine and they're more reliable. Because all the technologies required to make these weapons are in common use throughout the world, and because there are much more potent (and thus more popular) high-fire-power pistols on the market, wondernines are also decidedly cheap. The following are some of the most widely-sold modern wondernines: Constitution “Bronco,” Daewoo DP17, H&K P-18, IMI's Gideon, Militech's A226, S&W M2009 and the Walter 915.

Fear not, Angus. The 9mm lives on!



21st Century Wondernines

P ● - ● +1 ● - ● J ● - ● E ● - ● 2D6+1 (9mm Caseless) ● - ● See Below ● - ● 2 ● - ● VR ● - ● 50m ● - ● ???eb
 All wondernines are pretty much the same: relatively accurate, firing caseless 9mm ammo; semi-automatic, and easy to get ahold of. In game terms, all wondernines have the same stats except for name, shots and price: roll 1D6 and add this to 14 to determine the shots per magazine, and add (the same number you rolled on your 1D6) x10 to 240eb to determine the price in Eurodollars. Then just make up a name, or just choose from the guns mentioned above. As an option, you could assume that all 2020 wondernines pack 20+1 rounds and cost 300eb.

Sirs:

I wish to protest your bias against sub-calibers, appearing in several of your previous issues. Such rabble-rousing should be beneath your publication. I am a user of the P2M13 in .177 Caseless from Heckler & Koch. The magazine capacity is high for its size, it can be bought with a suppressor, and the explosive cartridge has the proper stopping/wounding power for civilized Europe. Because it is not the "hand artillery" so commonly found in the Americas, is no reason to denigrate its performance.

Yours, in irritation,
 Joel Simone
 Dept. 5
 France, EC

Sir, we're going to let our reviewer, J.T. answer your letter—

A-hem—OK, you wine-sipping gonk, here's the scoop:

One, we're not all vat-grown Angels that can hit a man in the trigger finger from a dead run; the .177 caseless does just enough damage to make someone notice you—and be mad as

hell when he does. Two, hyper-velocity small-bores generate a lot of heat, not good, even for modern caseless rounds. There's always the chance of a cook-off, and that'll mess up your whole op. Three, I'm opposed to the caliber, not the gun. See my review of the Suranam MP in this issue. H&K makes solid pieces; if only they'd do the P2M series in 7mm. And finally, if you want a non-violent alternative, get a .454 Davis Phoenix and load it with gel-slugs. Now there's a manstopper that won't spill a drop!

Sirs:

Your interview of Emile Lazarus in the July 2020 issue was one of the best bios of this outstanding war leader ever done. I was inspired to take a trip to Virginia and visit the Lazarus Group's HQ there. I'm now in training to join a Lazarus unit. Thanks SOF, for starting me on a new action-oriented career.

Yours gratefully,
 J. Sable, jr
 Springfield, MO

J., we agree with you 100%; if you're going to join the military—join the right military! Lazarus is a man that any of our staff would follow to hell and back in a minute.

Sirs:

What's the scoop on war-surplus T-14 combat shotgun systems? There's talk running around that the US gov'ts releasing old copies to the police and security markets. If so, will they need refurbishing?

Yours,
 Kenshiro Shima
 Hawaii

Ken, the US took such a beating in the SouthAm that a lot of ordnance was lost; there's no telling what might

show up in the Mexican and South American markets. Anything you get there will probably be missing major accessory groups and need some serious rebuilding. As for the remaining government T-14s, yes, they are selling them to licensed security firms. Those will be in reasonably good shape for hard-use items over 10 years old. Just have a reliable weapons tech give it the once-over before you bet your life on it...

Hey Screwheads:

I just returned from watching *Alien Predators Ate My Aerodyne* down at the Night City 88 Theaters, and was appalled to see that the hero was being played by the editor of *Solo of Fortune* magazine! Not only can this guy not act, but he has the most annoying voice I've heard in years, and he looks like he fell through the ugly tree and hit every branch on the way down! Magazine editors pretending that they're actors! What are you thinking? Come on, get real!

Yours,
 C. Keller
 Night City, CA

Well, Ummm, Well...

We haven't been getting enough letters lately. If you've got any comments on Solos, or related paramilitary matters, write us at Instant Response Time c/o Solo Publications, 1212 Lipmann Drive, Baltimore MD, USA 21215. Net Node 3570.65.2110 rustbelt



I WAS THERE

16TH ANNUAL SOF INVITATIONAL IPSC SHOOTOUT

by **Jan Brett**

I wait, tense, in the darkness. My hand flexes around the Pachmayr grip of my flechette gun as my targeting sweeps the room. Clear tone rings, and I slam out of the room into the hallway. Target! Boosters racing, my Nikon has acquisition before I'm even conscious that the Hammerli has left its Safariland Omega Option holster. Squeeze, and a pair of flechettes slam home. I'm off down the hall, sweeping each doorway as I run. Fire! I dive into a roll as tracers fly over me. I come up shooting, putting flechettes in both eyes.

I'm up and running, PaceSetter fuels my strides. Target! two quick squeezes and it's down. Ahead I can see the doorway...and two targets stepping into it just as my Sandevistan starts to drop out. On the edge of the boost, my hands starting to shake, I squeeze off two shots, and watch in dismay as I miss one!

He's got me and he knows it. "Drop the gun, Jan." I do it, kick it over to him, and raise my hands in a "ya got me" shrug. He doesn't notice. Good. the index finger straightens...slowly ...locked. He still hasn't noticed. "Well, the great shooter Brett, stopped at last." he gloats, smirk all over his face. Amateur. I grin, which should worry

**I WAIT
IN THE
DARKNESS.
MY HAND
FLEXES
AROUND
THE GRIP
OF MY
FLECHETTE
GUN...**



him, but doesn't. "Maybe not." I throw off casually as the synth muscles in my finger tense.

The dart catches him in the cheek as I dive into a tumble. My feet slam into his chest as the neurotoxin takes effect, locking every muscle in his body. I grab my gun and run through the door. Final tone sounds, and I'm done.

"Hey Jan, you missed. I thought you never missed?" "Funny man, Morgan." I gasp as I towel off the sweat. A bottle of VitaDrink is sitting on the chair and I grab it, guzzling it down.

And that was just the first event.

I was at the 16th annual SOF invitational IPSC shoot, held this year at the training grounds on the Oahu Military reservation in Hawaii; one of the toughest courses in the world. Five days of fun, sun, and guns in the sand. I packed the SPF-80 suntan lotion.

For those who have been living under a rock in Mongolia, IPSC stands for International Practical Shooting Competition. Basically, it's a place to show off your shooting and combat skills, win prizes, and drool over the toys.

The plethora of categories of competition that have sprung up since the sport was invented is impossible to explain in a short article; suffice it to say that if you shoot, you can compete. Playing up here in the Freestyle or



Unlimited Classes takes cash and training, though.

And you can get either here. The prizes topped out at 10,000 Euro, and classes by some of the best shooters were held all five days. Hey, I even got to teach a course on Augmented Shooting; loads of fun.

IPSC started as pistols only, but over the years has expanded to include sub-guns, rifles and shotguns of all types, and even heavy weapons. And the shooter's bazaar certainly reflected it. Although the emphasis was on custom and stock pistols of all flavors, I also examined a new Smartshell launcher by Armatech, two backpack laser designs, and a new binary-propellant rifle by Tsunami. I skipped over the railgun designs (Militech, Tsunami, and H&K), and the various Borg guns—just not my style.

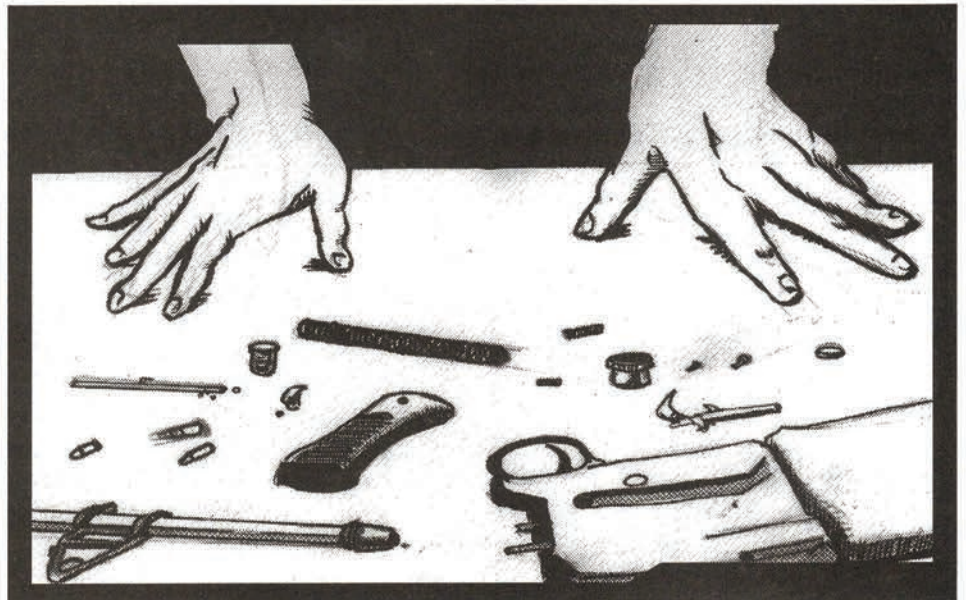
Accessories were in abundance as well: scopes, leather (gloves and holsters), compensators, interface gear, COTs, silencers, extended magazines, custom refitting by the Smiths (Josh Linebaugh didn't appear though; too bad, I wanted to thank him for the work he did on my carry piece), and grips in wood, polymer, resin, even steel (for the Borks). I drooled over some Capo Bolo grips for my HFP, and some Ebony ones for my dress gun. If you wanted it, you could get it here.

Five days later, I had some great memories, some new tricks up my sleeve, some cash in my pocket (precious little, after all the buying I did), new toys, and three new medallions to hang on my wall.

Oh, and the worst sunburn I've had in a long time!

Jan Brett is a professional shooter on the IPSC circuit, having won the Lunar Freestyle of 2014, among other trophies. A native of Tycho, Jan now lives in San Francisco, where she occasionally freelances as a bodyguard or courier.

FULLY CHIPPED



THIS MONTH: ADVANCED WEAPON CUSTOMIZATION

In 2020, no two weapons are exactly alike. The addition of both accurizing and customizing options give any weapon a unique feel and style that can be tailored to use, look, or application. Prices given for these modifications are in multiples of the weapon base price. 1x is equal to list price, 2x is twice that, etc. Price modifications are added together, not multiplied. These prices are moderated by normal economic factors (quality, black market availability, etc.). The modifiers given here are for customizing an existing weapon. If the player has the weapon

built to specification (by a weapon-smith with CADaM and autofactory, for instance) the price modifiers are halved. Still, it's not cheap to build a custom weapon, but this is what autofactories were designed for!

Example:

Colt A/O 10mm Autoloading Pistol Smartlink™ (1x price, +2WA)
 Custom Grips (0.3x price, +1WA vs Fast Draw/Snapshot)
 Barrel Extension (0.2x price, +25% range)
 Solenoid Trigger (1x price, +1WA at extreme ranges only)
 Printless Finish (2x price)

So, what we end up with is an Olympic-class target pistol with an Olympic price, twenty-seven hundred euro!! Over five times the price of a normal A/O! (Don't forget, you had to buy the weapon, too.) God help you if you need this weapon on





several hours notice instead of several days, the price would rise even more. This is a weapon for a world-class solo. The datastring looks like this:

PISTOL ● +5(+6) ● L ● R ● 2D6+3 (10mm) ● 10 ● 2 ● VR ● 65m ● 2750eb

This one costs 15Keb; pocket change for the average rock star.

Example:

Malorian 3516

Custom Grips (0.3x price, +1WA vs Fast Draw)

Barrel Extension (0.3x price, +25% range)

Solenoid Trigger (1x price, +1WA at extreme ranges only)

Pearlescent Grey Finish (1x price)

PISTOL ● -1(+0) ● L ● R ● 6D6 (14mm) ● 6 ● 1 ● VR ● 65m ● 15,840eb



Grips

Custom-molded grips can help handgun accuracy on the fast draw. There are two drawbacks: grips cannot be customized for cyberhands, BattleGloves or Powered Armor, and custom grips are made for one specif-

ic person (anyone else uses the weapon at normal WA).

Custom-grips are molded from a porous, pliant rubber material that will wear faster than standard grips. For game purposes the grips must be replaced annually, or the weapon loses the accuracy bonus. Custom grips cost 0.3x weapon price, require a **Difficult Weaponsmith** skill roll and take forty minutes to install with the proper equipment. Weapon Accuracy is increased by +1 during Fastdraw and Snapshots Only (CP2020, pg.97). There is no weight modification. Heavy weapons *cannot* have custom grips of any kind.

On rifles and shotguns, this option involves an adjustable stock as well (cheek-pieces and butt-pads). For long-garms the modification costs 0.6x weapon price; requires a **Difficult Weaponsmith** roll, and two hour's time. Twenty shots on a target range are also required to adjust for a specific shooter. The modification allows 1 extra action of Aiming, for a total Aiming bonus of +4. Anyone other than the intended user has a -1 penalty to WA, unless they take 30sec to adjust the stock, giving them a normal WA.

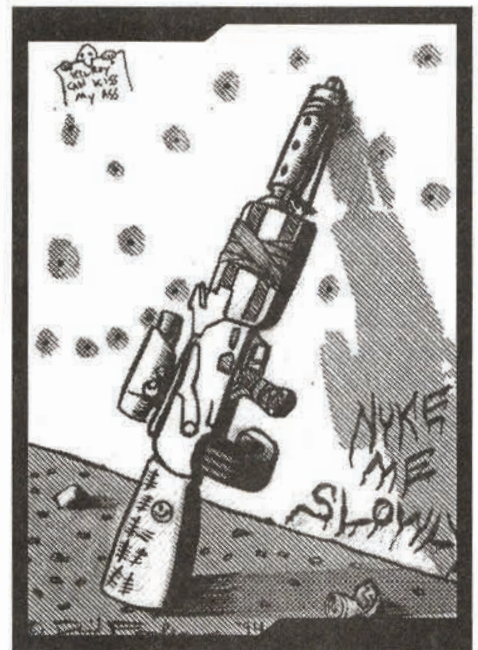
Folding Stocks

Folding stocks (also collapsible or detachable stocks) are a common modification on non-bullpup style weapons. So common is this mod that fully half the non-bullpup assault rifles supplied to troops (especially paratroops and vehicle crews) are supplied with this option. Folding stocks that replace solid stocks raise Concealability by one level (example, L to J) when folded. There's a -1 WA penalty when the stock is extended, and a -2 WA when it is folded. If a folding stock is added to a weapon that does not normally have a stock (i.e., pistols and some SMGs), then the WA is normal when folded and +1 at Long and Extreme ranges when extended. Folding stocks cost 0.3x weapon price, and require an **Average Weaponsmith** skill roll and one hour to install.

Solenoid & Electric Triggers

Solenoid and Electric triggers are firing assemblies that fully replace the standard trigger. The most common use of this modification is for remote-fired vehicle weapons. An electric trigger can be used only on caseless ammo (it uses a charge to actually ignite the round, as opposed to the impact of a firing pin on a primer). A weapon with a solenoid trigger must either be smartlinked, or have a firing stud of some kind. The benefits of these modifications are two-fold: first, if a weapon has a solenoid or electric trigger, is smart-linked, and has a security option, then no one but the owner can operate the weapon. Sure, a good tech could change the code, but it takes time and tools that the average fleeing felon lacks. Second, in long-range sniping situations, trigger-pull can deviate a bullet just enough to miss. With a solenoid trigger, this is eliminated.

Electric triggers perform basically the same functions as solenoid triggers, but for caseless weapons. Electric triggers were developed as part of binary weapons technology





(like the M31a1). They are being used in caseless weapons as well to eliminate primers (thus decreasing the ammunition weight). The savings is negligible to the individual soldier, but when moving bulk lots of thousands of rounds they save weight and cost

Solenoid triggers cost 1x weapon price and increase weapon weight by 1/10th. Solenoid and Electric triggers give a +1 WA at Extreme Range only. Building a solenoid trigger is an **Average Weaponsmith** or **Difficult Electronics** roll, and takes one hour with proper tools and equipment. It takes another three hours to modify 100 rounds of ammo with an **Average Weaponsmith** roll. You can buy caseless ammo manufactured for electric fire; it costs 0.9x normal price, and will not work in regular caseless weapons.

Barrels—Chopping

Chopped or “sawn-off” barrels are a common modification that makes a weapon more concealable, but reduces accuracy and range. Only rifles and shotguns are normally chopped, as most SMGs and handguns use shorter barrel lengths to start with.

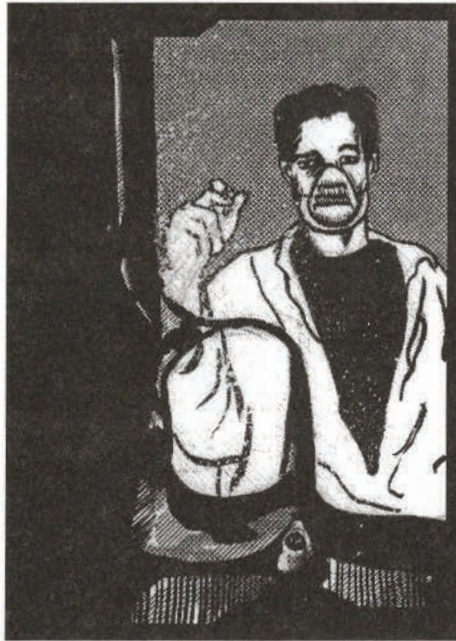
Chopping costs about 0.3x weapon price. Concealability increases one level (L to J, N to L, etc.) All range brackets are cut in half, e.g., Long range for a rifle would be 200m. Shotgun pattern sizes are 50% wider (at all ranges) after chopping. Handguns and SMGs have a -1 WA penalty if they’re chopped. Heavy weapons like the Barret Light-20 can be chopped, but Concealability stays N. Barrel-chopping concealment bonuses do not compound with folding stock bonuses. Referee’s discretion and common sense always apply.

Warning: these penalties are for semi-professional modification, at least. Anybody can get a hacksaw and shorten your gun. This usually results in damage to the gun—and the shooter. WA penalty is -2; if the attack roll is a 1 or a 2, the barrel is jammed and

the weapon is useless. If the attack roll is a fumble, the action explodes, doing the weapon’s normal damage in a 0.5m radius.

Barrels—Extension

Some rifles/pistols are fairly accurate at range, but improved projectile stabilization could easily make them more so. Increasing barrel length can improve range.



Increasing barrel length costs about 0.3x weapon price. Concealability is reduced one level (L to N, J to L, etc.) Range is increased by 25% (round up to nearest 5m) i.e., a pistol’s Long range would now be 65m. This modification can only be done once per weapon.

Magazines

Extended magazines are as old as slugthrowers themselves. Since the first repeating firearm was invented someone has been trying to put off reloading for as long as possible. In *Cyberpunk 2020*, any magazine-fed small arm (and Heavy Weapons) can have an extended magazine of up to five times the original magazine capacity.

If a magazine carries more than 2x the original capacity, the following penalties apply: Concealment is reduced one level (L to N, J to L, etc.); this is compoundable with other Concealment mods. Initiative bonuses for Snapshots (*CP2020*, pg.97) are at -1 for handguns/SMGs and -2 for rifles/shotguns. Reliability is reduced by one level as well. Magazines cost 1eb per shot for cased ammo, and 0.5eb per shot for caseless ammo. Extended magazines for heavy weapons cost 2 or 3 euro per round (Ref’s discretion).

Full Auto/Selective Fire

Any weapon (other than a revolver) can be made full-automatic or selective fire. It is an expensive option, but can ruin your opponent’s day.

Burst fire modification adds a selector switch that allows single-shot, or three-round burst fire. The mod costs 1.5x weapon price, takes three to six hours and a **Very Difficult Weaponsmith** skill roll. WA has a -1 penalty and Reliability drops by one level (this can be further modified).

There are two types of full-auto modifications. The first is pure autofire. The weapon cannot be fired single-shot, and always expends at least 1/2 the magazine capacity when the trigger is pulled (to a maximum ROF of 30). This modification costs 1x weapon cost; reliability drops by two levels (if reliability is below UR, the weapon automatically jams on a fumble and you must roll to see if it breaks), and WA is automatically -1. This modification is a **Difficult Weaponsmith** roll and takes two hours.

The second type is selective fire. This mod adds a selector switch that will allow single-shots, three-round bursts, or full autofire. The WA has a -2 penalty for full autofire, but is normal for single shots and burst fire. Weapon reliability drops by one level, and cost is 2x the weapon price. This modification requires a **Very Difficult Weaponsmith** roll and four to six hours.



Extended Autofire, Heat Resistance & Cooling Systems

With the advent of extended magazine designs, there comes the danger of trigger-happy gunslingers literally shooting their weapon to death. Most small arms are designed for short bursts; extended periods of autofire are almost guaranteed to overheat (and ruin) a weapon. LMGs, SAWs and similar weapons are designed for constant autofire; SMGs, machine pistols and assault rifles are not.

For each consecutive combat round of full-auto firing from a non-LMG or SAW-type weapon, the Reliability level drops by one. Again, if Reliability is below UR, the weapon automatically jams on a fumble and you must roll to see if it breaks.

Modern polymer and ceramics technology have created replacement barrels that can take the heat and abuse of extended autofire. The modification counteracts one level of heat-related reliability loss. Heat-resistant barrels cost 0.5x the weapon price. They require an **Average Weaponsmith** skill roll, and take 40 minutes to install. It requires a **Difficult Weaponsmith** roll to manufacture one. Manufacturing takes one hour with the proper tools, material and equipment.

Finishes

You can only accessorize in blue for so long. Eventually, either fashion or career will force you to carry a weapon in a nonstandard finish. You cannot carry a blued revolver with white shoes. You cannot carry an optical-orange assault rifle while wearing cammo-pattern Metalgear™.

All weapons come in either parkerized (matte black), blued, or nickel finish at no extra charge. Some of the

polymer one-shots even come in a wider range of colors. Those options are covered by the manufacturer.

If you want real custom finishes like chrome, neons, etc.; these cost extra.

Natural colors (basic red, green, black) cost 0.1x weapon price.

Chrome, pearlescent, camouflage and gloss colors cost 1x weapon price.

"Bowling-ball" finishes (two or more colors in pearlescent swirls) cost 0.3x weapon price.

THERE ARE A FRIGHTENING AMOUNT OF WEAPONS OUT THERE THAT ARE JUST DANGEROUS TO THE USER. HAVING A WEAPON JAM ON YOU USUALLY ONLY HAPPENS ONCE.

NeonGlow® iridescent finishes actually emit light and cost 1.5x weapon cost. Sure, it looks cool, but don't carry this unless you want to advertise. If you've got techhair and synthskin—go for it!

Printless™ finish, a teflon parkerizing that resists fingerprints (Near Impossible TECH-based skill check to "lift" prints) costs at least 2x weapon-

cost; plus cammo, or other finish, if needed. Warning: possession of a weapon treated with such a finish is a class-three crime in some states (see *Protect&Serve*).

Quality

There are a frightening amount of weapons out there that are just dangerous to the user. Streetmasters are as common as headaches, but they jam constantly no matter how cool the neon green finish sets off your eyes. Having a weapon freeze up on you usually only happens once, so reliability is big issue on the street. The reason so many solos carry Arasaka is quality. The reason Solos don't usually carry Hong Kong Arasaka rip-offs is quality.

You can buy that stylish new flavor-of-the-week weapon manufactured (read copied) using better materials, machining and care. For each 0.5x the weapon price, increase Reliability by one level. If you want some one to think you are stupid, look stupid. Carry a Streetmaster or CyberMag. Style doesn't mean stupid. Style means sneaky.

Compensation

Recoil can be a problem in any firefight situation. Compensation is the addition of ports cut into a barrel attachment. These ports direct the exploding gasses usually upward, to compensate for the muzzle jump associated with firing a weapon. Compensators reduce muzzle jump, allowing for faster follow-up shots. This modification allows a +1 ROF for weapons firing in semi-auto mode (ROF 1 or 2). Though this is especially true of large-bore pistols and SMG's, even a smaller weapon's muzzle-climb decreases.

Compensation can be added as a modified barrel on any firearm. Compensation costs 0.4x the weapon's price. The modification requires a **Difficult Weapontech** roll, and two hours with the proper tools.





NEW FOR FALL

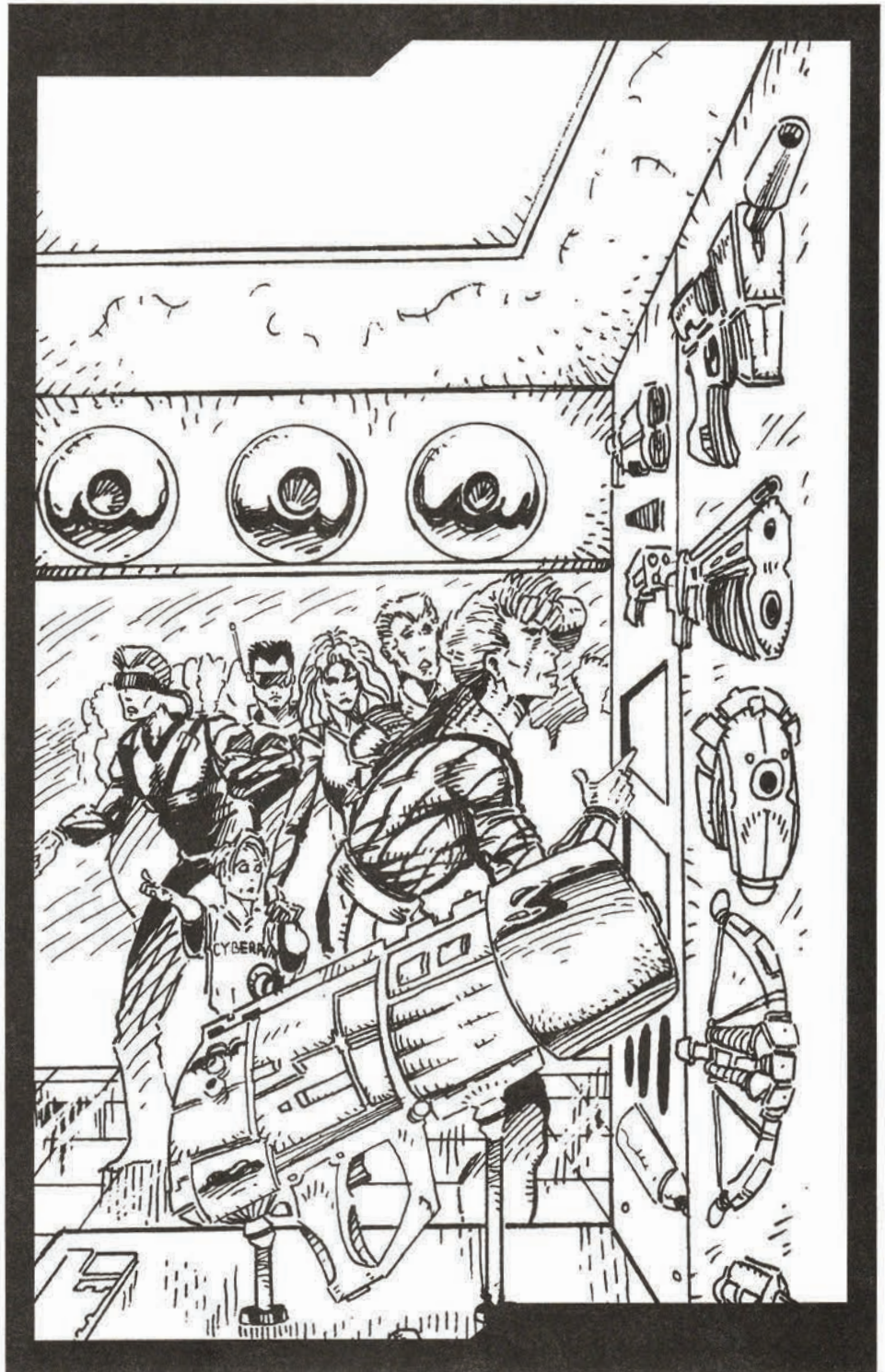
by **Dementia Sixteen**,
Style Consultant for *Solo of Fortune*.

This year's fall show at the très chic Gallerié LeGun of Paris was a major success. Several of the world's premier designers showed impressive work for the new season. As far as this reviewer is concerned, the best designs were for ACPA and Full-Conversions. Arasaka, led by veteran designer Tsuneo Storm; and Malorian Arms, this year showing works by Janice Heart, were the big winners with immediate orders from Night City MaxTac and LawDiv's Emergency Response Unit. Other attendees included LAPD, The Lazarus Group, DMS, and many, many more.

Arasaka "Rage" 15mm SMG (Assault Weapon)

Jacqueline is modeling the "Rage" 15mm Submachinegun. Arasaka has developed this concept as a primary anti-cyborg/light vehicle weapon system for full-conversions and ACPA, *trés bon!* The weapon comes standard with a telescoping stock that stows conveniently (for use by Full-Conversions). A selection of different finishes including stainless, basic black, and haute chrome are available. There are a variety of magazine sizes to fit any style from sidearm to primary weapon.

Calling this weapon a submachinegun is not quite *le mot juste*; it describes the weapon's mission more accurately than its actual size. The round is based (loosely) on the 15mm round used in the BRG-15 auto-cannon. The designers have discarded the necked-down casing for a simpler straight casing with about two-thirds the muzzle energy of the original design, though at greatly decreased range. This still allows for massive damage to armored personnel





(including full-conversions and ACPA), armored vehicles, and structures. Currently, the only rounds available are high explosive, and a standard ball-type "practice round." This is a far stretch from the pistol-caliber SMG's of original nomenclature.

If initial orders are any indication, this weapon will be a big hit this year. Now all the buyers need is to find something macho enough to shoot at.

SMG/RIF • -1/-2 • L • P • 4d10+3 [15mmKurz] • 20* • 1 or 10 • VR • 100m • 4500eb

If fired single-shot then WA is -1. When fired three-round burst WA is -2. The weapon does not have burst fire capability. Due to recoil, at least an Omega-class linear frame, or full-conversion 'Borg with a STR of 15+ is necessary for firing. Listed damage is for the steel-jacketed "practice round" (AP). Damage for the HE round is 3D10 explosive with a one-meter dia. Ammunition costs 8eb per shot for "practice rounds" or 20eb per shot for HE. (BOD min=15, see Recoil Rules on pg. 68) *Ten-round magazines cost 20eb each (empty). Twenty-round magazines are 40eb each (empty). The larger fifty-round magazines cost 100eb each, and lower the reliability by one category (to ST).

ACPA Stats: 1 Space and 20SDP • Twenty-round Magazines are 1 Space and 15SDP • Both are poor availability • Weapon weight is 8kg, magazine weight is 1kg (10), 2kg (20), and 5kg (50).

Arasaka Tsunami Grenade Launcher

Arasaka has had great success last season with two weapon systems: the "Oni" 10-gauge assault shotgun (for ACPA) and the 25mm "Tsunami" grenade launcher (for ACPA and vehicle use). Both weapons have filled a need that was not serviced by other products to date. The Oni is

an ammo hog and too heavy to be deployed in less than Powered Armor. The Tsunami, however, is a very flexible option at several levels. The 40 & 25mm support grenade launchers offered by other manufacturers are useful, but limited, in the urban battlefield. These are low-pressure systems that lack the range and speed of delivery necessary for urban assault needs. The Tsunami's unique high-pressure design, providing both longer effective range and greater delivery speed are *trés magnifique* in today's conflict environment.

Silvia is modeling the "Pocket Tsunami" revolver-style grenade launcher. The term "pocket" grenade launcher is also misleading. This is a small and very mission-specific weapon; more similar to a pocket-battleship than to a pocket-knife. This weapon gives full-conversion cyborgs a devastating primary support weapon, infantry a very portable, effective support weapon (more versatile than a mortar), and ACPA an awesome "sidearm."

Heavy • 0 • L • P • Varies (25mm mini-gren) • 6 • 1 • ST • 200m • 1250eb

This is a massive six-shot revolver-type GL. There are two configurations. The Cyborg-Support configuration looks like an Arwen Riot GL, but more stylized and streamlined. This configuration has a forend grip and no stock. The ACPA "sidearm from hell" configuration appears as a BIG six-gun. In the six-gun configuration the weapon accuracy is decreased to -2. ('Borg support gun BOD min=11, ACPA pistol BOD min=23) Grenades Types and Damage: Fragmentation : 3d6+1, 5m radius, 15eb
HE : 5d6, 3m radius, 15eb
HEP : 5d6, (1/2 SP, armor reduced 2 Ms, 1/2 dam. stun), 25eb
Incendiary : 4/3/2d6 over three turns, 2m radius, 15eb

These are high-pressure mini-grenades and cannot be used in the Militech Min-GL.

ACPA Stats: weapon is 1 space, magazines are 1/2 space (the magazines are loaded cylinders that are replaced by hand taking two turns) • Weapon is SDP 15, magazines are SDP10 • Both are poor availability • Weapon weight 8kg, magazine weight 1kg

Malorian 3600 Super-SMG

Tim shows off the Malorian 3600 Super-SMG. Erin Malour—and most of the law-enforcement community, to be sure—is probably sorry the "Silverhand" 3516 was ever designed. The weapon has been ripped-off more than the German MG42—how *gauche*. But Janice Heart has come back with a vengeance. Instead of letting the imitators grab the glory, she has upped the ante and designed a weapon truly brutal, truly huge, and truly a new pox on police and metal-heads everywhere. The 3600 Super SMG. Basically, Malorian has re-scaled the cartridge in a weapon too large to be called a submachine gun, and too short to be considered an assault rifle. You need a cyberarm and chest-plating to fire the thing (or take 1D6+3 ignoring soft armor—including skinweave), and it is not very accurate in the base configuration, but it will pop Metalgear™ at point-blank range every time.

'Til next season—*ciao!*

SMG • 0/-1 • L • P • 6d6 [14mm] • 20 • 1 or 3 • VR • 50m • 3000eb

Ammunition is 5eb per round. Magazines are 40eb each. WA is 0 for single-shot, and -1 for three-round burst. The weapon is not capable of automatic fire. (BOD min = 11)





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Bringing you the exotic in Personal Protection

Midnight Arms has become the exclusive dealer in the Free State of California for such respected firms as Stein & Wasserman and UrbanTech. MA also sells such established greats as Techtronica and Pursuit Security Inc. at bargain prices!

Stein & Wasserman Bi-Power Handcannon 850eb

P • +0 • J/L • P • 4D6 (.44 Mag) • 6 • 2 • ST • 50m
 P • +1 • J/L • - • 2D6+2 (.45 ACP) • 10 • 2 • ST • 50m

After a long wait, Stein & Wasserman's "Bi-Power" is now commercially available! Following a previously unheard-of design philosophy, this hybrid handgun mates a double-action .44 Magnum revolver to a .45 ACP autoloader. The sturdy grip holds 13 rounds of .45-caliber ammo in a double-column magazine, feeding into the upper portion of the gun. The automatic's long slide ends in a compensator, but (because it's built into the frame beneath the barrel of the automatic and ahead of

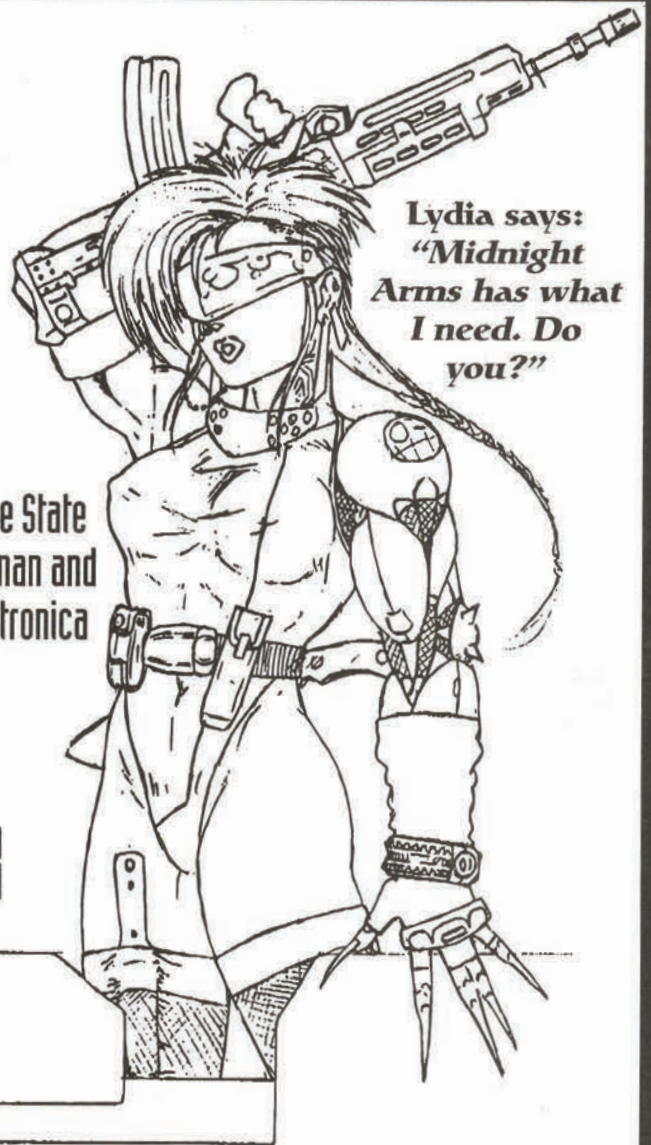
the trigger assembly) the revolver's barrel is somewhat snubby. "R" (revolver) mode or "A" (automatic) mode can be selected at the flip of a thumb-switch. Although many complain that the choice of brass-cased ammo for both barrels makes the weapon less reliable, the Bi-Power rarely malfunctions. The Bi-Power's worst problem is its size—packing a .45 auto with an 8.5" barrel and a .44 Magnum wheelgun into one package makes this handcannon "L" concealability for anyone with a BOD of less than 8.

UrbanTech Lance Mini-Missile 100eb

HVY • +2 • P • C • 4D6 (HEAT) • 1 • UR • 300m

Need an effective defense against tough attackers, but don't want to tote around a cannon? If so, the Lance is for you.

The UrbanTech Lance is a personal Mini-Missile weapon. It consists of a single missile with breakaway protective case. The weapon is armed by breaking the case, pointing it at the target, clicking the activation button, and pushing it away from the firer. Use INT as the base To Hit stat instead of REF (this determines that you've pointed it correctly). The Lance's engine will kick in a safe distance from the launcher and seek the target (minimum range: 10m). The missile inflicts 4D6 damage to the target; 2D6 in a 0.5m radius. (Note: this is a HEAT warhead; SP is halved, damage is not.) If the Lance misses, it has a 50% chance to correct and make a second To Hit roll with a 0 WA.



Lydia says:
 "Midnight Arms has what I need. Do you?"

MIDNIGHT ARMS, Night City Net, Midnite @ PacCom 225.347. Modem for our catalog.



THE FUTURE OF FORCE:

**A LOOK INTO THE
PRESENT AND FUTURE
OF LARGE AND SMALL
SCALE CONFLICTS**



ARTIST'S RENDITION OF COMBAT IN 2050



By Lieutenant-Colonel Fiona O'Shaugnessey

As mercenaries and Edgerunners, our business is warfare, whether on the small scale (extractions and tactical engagements) or the large scale (strategic objectives). Knowing where the "state of the art" lies in modern warfare, as well as having some idea of where the art has been (and is going), makes us infinitely more likely to survive. Because both Corporations and Governments are involved in the use of military force, and there are other groups that may well field units resembling "classical" military units, this article will in general refer to "organizations", except when dealing with a specific peculiarity of one or the other.

FORCE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN INSTRUMENT OF POLICY.

No look at warfare would be complete without a look at the past; by realizing the mistakes of the past, we can make sure not to repeat them.

Force has always been an instrument of policy. Organizations have always had the option of using war to achieve their goals, since the first clan of Neanderthals decided that if they bashed their neighbors over the head they could have the much nicer cave next door instead of the one they were living in.

For much of man's existence, war has been a tool wielded in the main by the elite: the Knight, the Samurai, the Legionnaire; soldiers who spent

most of their time training for war. Warfare in the Middle Ages was composed of skirmishes conducted during the summer months (between the planting season in the spring, and harvest in the fall), between units of, to us, incredibly small sizes. For example, in 1346, Edward III fielded a force against the French of some 14,000 soldiers, and the 4,000 French soldiers who lay dead after the battle of Crecy represented a loss of soldiers unmatched to that day; indeed, many battles were fought with less than a thousand soldiers per side.

But Crécy was, in its own way, a signal of changing times; the English yeoman with his longbow and knife carried the day at Crécy, and tacticians soon realized that while there was always a place for the specialist, the citizen soldier was vital to the changing face of war. As the weapon of choice changed from the bow and the sword (weapons requiring large amounts of training to become competent) to the firearm (the basics of which can be taught in a matter of hours), massed tactics became the norm, utilizing large numbers of hastily trained conscripts. Many standing armies became virtual skeletons: cadres of experienced NCOs and officers which could be fleshed out by draftees in a matter of weeks. Only the "colonial regiments" were maintained at full strength; since they were, in many cases, little more than armies occupying hostile lands, such was necessary.

This was a general policy that would change little until after World War II. The Cold War paranoia of the "Red Threat", and the unwillingness of many European countries to provide for their own defense, precipitated an unparalleled build-up of military might the likes of which the world had never seen. In 1989, the combined numbers of the American military exceeded 2 million; nearly a full 1% of the American population was involved directly in warfare; when factoring in support and production, almost every American was involved in the Cold



War effort. Similar numbers prevailed in the USSR.

Since then, we have seen a drastic drop in the numbers of military personnel. Now, the largest single military organization, the Chinese People's Liberation Army, is, at 10.5 million, more than five times the size of the nearest competitor, the combined forces of the Neo-Soviets and their corporate armies. Of course, the Chinese (and, to a large extent, the Neo-Sovs) are still utilizing Industrial Era styles of warfare (more on this later).

This scale-back, along with the changing role of the military and of armed conflict, has led to a proliferation of so-called "Special Operations" units: America's SEALs and Green Berets; the UK's Special Air Service and Special Boat Squadron; the Neo-Sov Spetsnaz, and the Black Ops units of the various corps (like Petrochem's Water Leopards), to name a handful. Where once such forces made up only a tiny fraction of an organization's overall military strength, they may now make up even a tenth of those forces.

Overall numbers can be deceiving in terms of actual fighting strength. Modern forces, thanks to computerized inventory, requisition, and personnel forms, automated communication systems, and self-diagnosing equipment, can make do with much less in the way of rear echelon units: technical, administrative, and support personnel who are not involved with the front line except in a peripheral manner. While such jobs still exist, many have been streamlined or consolidated (thus, a unit's Signal team will also handle its paperwork). Older units, not yet utilizing such time/manpower saving features, will usually have a ratio of 10:1, where there are ten support soldiers for every one who fights, while modern units may be as high as 4:1 (this is more true of mercenary units, who can often make use of the support personnel and facilities of the units they fight with).

Modern military personnel are also more highly trained than those in

almost any time previous. Not only is training (using virtual simulators and chip-learning methods) more available, but there are few military personnel who have not seen battle in some form or another. The near-constant brush-fire wars of the last thirty years, combined with unparalleled levels of civil unrest have seen to this.

So we have seen a return to the professional soldier: a combatant who

WE HAVE SEEN THE RETURN TO THE PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER...

spends much of his time either fighting or preparing for combat. The percentage of the world's population actually involved in active military duty has never been lower. And so the circle closes.

Military Operations

Military missions can be broken down into three basic levels of operation (Strategic, Tactical, and Political), four levels of "secrecy" (Overt, Deniable, Covert, and Clandestine), and a number of different basic types.

Strategic missions are based around long term goals of a basically military nature: missions that will permanently (or near permanently) change the battle or war. These might include the reconnaissance of a major hostile force to discover its strength, the engagement of said force (to

destroy it, removing it from the enemy's assets), or the theft of major intelligence (like the enemy's encryption codes, or battle plans).

Tactical missions are those designed to gain a short term military advantage, or one on a small scale. They are often performed in conjunction with, or in support of, a larger mission. They might include the use of a Special Forces unit to disable an enemy radar installation before an air strike, or a feint with an inferior force to distract the enemy from a more important activity.

Political missions are those performed for political gain, either internally or externally. They are usually high-profile, overt jobs (what good is a hostage rescue if no one knows you did it), or extremely low-profile, clandestine ones (what good is gaining the information if everyone knows you have it), with little grey area in between. Any mission can be a political one, so long as the objectives are basically political rather than military (this can become vague, as the military is often used as a political tool).

Overt missions are those where the organization involved doesn't care if anyone knows that they are involved or responsible. Indeed, in today's world, this usually means that they "definitely want" others to know they did it, or else they have no option due to the mission profile. Overt missions are typically ones where the objectives are well understood, and, if not easy, at least attainable.

Deniable missions are those which, when asked, the organization in question can plausibly say "We didn't do it, we have no knowledge of who is responsible for the operation...where did you say it took place, again?" Many fingers may point in the direction of the organization in question, but there "isn't enough evidence to indict", as a lawyer would put it. To put it shortly, everyone knows (or at least suspects) the organization in question did it, but no one can prove it. Many Edgerunner actions occur at this level of secrecy (especially extractions or thefts, where



it is often hard to disguise the fact that you ended up with the goods).

Covert operations are those where the organization has little interest in being discovered as being behind the op, thank you very much, but doesn't care who knows that it happened. Covert Ops are very demanding because of the need for secrecy. No fingers can be left to point at the organization, but at the same time, the lack of evidence can itself be damning; of course, aiming the job at someone else will have two groups upset with you if word leaks out. Very tricky work.

In the perfect **Clandestine** operation, no one should ever know that an operation took place at all; no suspicions should be awakened that anything out of the ordinary has occurred. Clandestine operations are even more difficult than Covert ones, obviously, as there are very definite limits as to the level of force that can be employed. Clandestine operations usually involve the theft of some piece of information that, were it known to be compromised, could be swiftly changed, or the placing of false information or equipment (like monitoring devices).

Mission Types

There are a large number of types of missions undertaken by military units, from subtle replacement of an enemy's SigInt (signal intelligence) files, to a bald-faced grab for land. Many of the types listed here will seem more the work of smaller units, but the fact is that larger units perform much the same operations, just on a larger scale (squads take city blocks; a division takes a city).

One of the more common small unit operations today is **Hostage Rescue**; this entails the use of military forces to retrieve individuals (usually noncombatants) from a set location currently occupied by hostiles. This is one of the least dangerous operations, relatively speaking, as the initiative is

solely with the attacker; the defender cannot evacuate or easily relocate. The problems, of course, lie in hostage casualties, and the chance that the hostiles have access to outside support.

Hostage rescue could be considered a subtype of the **Extraction** mission, but is usually considered a separate type. In the eyes of the military, there are two types of extraction. The first is identical to the type exercised by Corporations: the removal (willing or not) of an individual from his current place of employment or residence to be relocated elsewhere. The second is the removal of intelligence or military assets from an area after an operation (successful or not, although extraction after a successful operation is usually less problematic). Contrary to popular belief, forces (especially highly trained Special Forces personnel) are usually not deliberately abandoned behind enemy lines after an operation to sink or swim; such incidents (like in Vietnam and Central America) are almost always the result of a desperate need for the unit originally assigned for exfiltration elsewhere, or a mixup in communications. This can be less true with Mercenary teams.

Anytime an organization wants to make a point by using its military assets, this is called a "**projection of force**." This may be a simple matter of moving a number of ships into an area that is of interest to them (such as the "carrier diplomacy" wielded by the United States in the last half of the 20th century), or a complex series of military demonstrations (usually called "tactical maneuvers", or "training exercises") held in some area adjacent to a location they are interested in. Usually, force-projection missions are not intended to result in hostilities, but hostilities can break out (for example, the downing of Libyan interceptors by American F-14s during the Libyan blockade), and can escalate into a full blown war (for example, the American invasion of Somalia).

What an organization calls "**materials acquisition/reclamation**" is

known, in layman's terms, as theft. Whether the theft is to recover something that once belonged to the organization, or to take something from someone else, Military forces are sometimes called upon to use force majeure to take possession of some object; this may be a prototype, blueprints, intelligence, stocks and bonds (which can be very important during a Corporate takeover), or some irreplaceable treasure. It will almost always, however, be something that cannot be recovered by other means. Like extractions (which are second cousins to "acquisitions"), there may be a "sour grapes" clause; if the organization performing the operation can't get it, no one can have it (so blow it up).

Military forces are occasionally called upon to perform an **assassination**. This is murder, plain and simple: the use of military force to remove an individual or group of individuals from the playing field of life. Assassination can sometimes be secondary to a larger assignment (like the bombing of tents known to house Muammar Khaddafi during the Libyan bombing raids in 1987), or can be an operation in and of itself. Such operations are only undertaken by Military forces when Intelligence assets are unable to reach a target, or when done in pursuit of a larger military objective (for instance, the killing of a military leader during a war).

Sabotage/demolition, often known as "removal of tactical/strategic assets", is the destruction of an opponent's property. This may be done as a message (don't mess with us; we know what is important to you, and can break it when we want to), or for a greater reason (like destroying border radar posts before a bombing run is sent in). This can also be done preemptively (for example, the bombing of Iraqi nuclear facilities by the Israelis in the early 80's and again in the late 90's), to remove an asset from an enemy's (or perceived enemy's) control before they can use it against the organization.



Reconnaissance is the scouting-out of an enemy's strengths and weaknesses. Although satellite intelligence can be very informative, it can also be spoofed. Personal reconnaissance is a therefore a vital adjunct, as it can back up satellite, SigInt, or HumInt (Human Intelligence: spies) data with hard observation. Of course, it is also the most difficult type of operation; Recon teams are far from friendly lines, often underequipped for combat due to the amount of surveillance and support gear they must carry (like food), and are typically far smaller than the forces they may run into.

The primary purpose of the military in warfare is **taking land**. This is done by going into an area, killing or capturing the opposition, and then

occupying it. Taking land can be an incredibly bloody operation, especially against a resolved enemy (like one fighting on his home soil), or in urban situations (where the narrow streets and construction render air and artillery support much less likely).

Once the land has been acquired, a unit's role will often change to **static defense**. This is holding the land you have occupied, or guarding an installation or facility, and is the primary job of the infantry (air forces can *destroy* land, tanks can *take* land, but only the infantry can *hold* land). Static defense is both boring and nerve-wracking; nerve-wracking because you need to be on constant alert, and boring because nothing happens until you let your guard down.

Police actions are one of the tasks Military forces are not well suited for, but are increasingly called upon to perform. Soldiers are not police; their reactions are to shoot at a potential threat, not yell at it. This is necessary; on the battlefield, there is little time to assess a target; if it's not one of yours, and it's armed, it's a hostile. In a police action, however, this can end up with (does end up with) innocent civilians getting shot, and criminals getting shot when maybe they didn't need to be.

The Changing Face of War

"Wars are fought using the next war's weapons and the last war's tactics." This quote has become a maxim to live by in this modern age, when war is changing so rapidly that it is difficult to keep track.

The introduction of the Net has revolutionized warfare in a great number of ways. First, the Net has brought instant access to communication and information to the battlefield (a process which started in the Gulf War of 1990, when air strikes and artillery barrages were, in several cases, called in by cellular phone because the radio systems were jammed). Unit commanders can immediately call up information stored in databases a world away, or access real time images from orbital satellites (more on the importance of orbital assets later). Combat remotes can be controlled by operators a continent away. It has also brought new arenas to warfare; large parts of the 1st Corporate War were fought in the Net, and it is widely believed that the majority of Corp wars will be fought entirely in the Net, with real-world operations taking place to support the Net war, rather than the other way around. (Coverage of the first all-Net Corporate War is in our **February 2018** issue—Editor.) Information has become increasingly vital to modern field commanders; real-time simulations keep them apprised of the enemy's most likely next move, and of what the enemy will think *theirs* will be.



So-called "Brilliant" weapons, like the EEC's Wyrn cruise missile, can home unerringly on enemy targets, while smart guns and micro-missiles (precursors to a whole generation of "smart bullets") drastically increase the chances of a hit with sidearms.

"Information Era Warfare" goes beyond simulations and clever weapons, however; it requires rethinking *how* to fight a war. Units are deployed to take advantage of strengths and weaknesses, targets attacked to remove specific assets from the enemy. Instead of attacking an armor battalion directly, its C3I (Command, Communications, Control, and Intelligence) assets are attacked instead, hopefully crippling its ability to fight effectively. Assassination becomes a major tool of the Information Era commander; if he can demoralize an enemy's regiment by removing a commander, or ensure that an incompetent is placed in command by killing his superior, the Info-Era commander has drastically enhanced his odds. The S-2, or Intelligence and Security officer, becomes the single most important member of the command team, after the CO. Information, not the weapons driven by it, has become the most powerful tool on the battlefield.

Part of the reason for the switchover to this new style of warfare is the speed with which it can resolve a crisis. Since time in warfare truly is money (and great heaps of it), and since few organizations can afford a long-term conflict, the faster a conflict is over, the better. While units are not yet held to a budget for an operation, one can see that it is indeed possible, especially for Corporate forces: "Sorry, blokes, no air support today, no money in the bleedin' budget for it!"

While the formation of the Net and the development of Information Era fighting are perhaps more important changes, developments in military technology are the more visible ones. And visible they have been.

The aerodyne is rapidly finishing what its precursor, the helicopter,

started: the conversion of military forces from mostly ground vehicle-based, to being based primarily on air cavalry. The average American COG, for example, has as its ground elements equal parts of motorized, air mobile, and mechanized units, while some units are almost strictly airmobile. This enhanced use of airmobile assets allows for rapid response to changing battlefield conditions.

"The battle goes to the man holding the high ground" has been a



maxim that, while not strictly true, has become increasingly so. And the highest ground (as proved by the EEC's "rocking" of Colorado Springs), is, of course, Up-well. Already vital to provide communications and data links, surveillance, and such mundane things as weather reports, orbital assets are playing a larger role in the modern battlefield. Satellite-based target designation has been experimented with; but more frightening, is that, for the first time, BattleSat-based weaponry is capable of hitting ground targets. Fortunately, these kinetic-kill weapons are expensive, still not

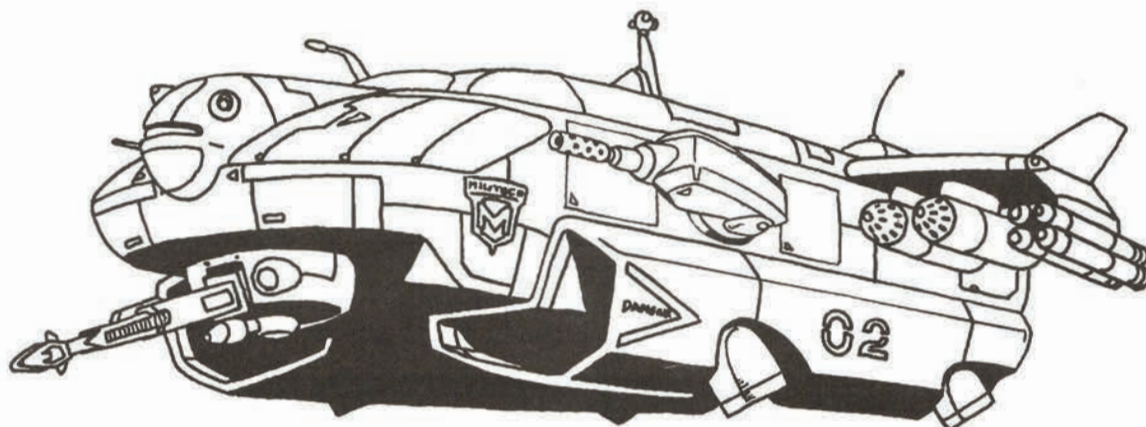
incredibly accurate without ground designation (usually within about 5 meters), and not to be used lightly, for political reasons—but the threat is there. We can probably count on orbital strikes being called down against tactical (as opposed to strategic) targets within the next ten years.

Autonomous Drones and Remote Piloted Vehicles (ADs and RPs respectively), are starting to become increasingly common on the battlefield. Both are (relatively) cheap force multipliers; a single pilot can control a number of semi-autonomous remotes, and drones require only rudimentary command. Of course, both have their weaknesses. Remotes tend to see more use as reconnaissance or surveillance units, rather than combat units; the expert systems that control them are still not that bright, and outwitting them is not very difficult. RPs are used for both surveillance and attack, but are highly reliant on continuous communication links. As drones become more intelligent, we will see more use of them as combat units (see *AVD: Militech's robot flyer*, pg 20 for more).

Originally used strictly for Special Operations Units, and still expensive, powered armor is beginning to become more common as the price drops and the technology becomes more proven. Powered armor is still in a nebulous world in terms of deployment; some units utilize them like small tanks, and others like heavy shock infantry. All agree that they truly excel in Urban environments, where their size and firepower make them perfect for supporting an infantry assault. With development of smaller, lighter suits of powered armor, we will see it take an increasingly major role on the battlefield. (see *Viper: High Tech Armor goes Mainstream*, pg 22)

For many years, there was little difference in how Infantry attacked things: they used a rifle. Calibers and specifics differed, but by the end of the 20th century, you either carried a Battle rifle (chambered in 7.62mm), or an Assault rifle (chambered in a round

continued on page 23



AVD: Aerodyne Vehicle; Drone

Militech's robot flyer

By MICHAEL CAMERON

It screams over the treeline, railguns and rocket pods spitting death as it hurtles over the tank column. Two tanks manage to fire off multi-role missiles, but chaff confounds one, while the other is destroyed by a burst of autofire from an AGAMs pod. The satin black flier screams around in an impossibly tight turn, wheeling on a pillar of flame, and lets loose with a burst of anti-tank missiles, killing the remaining tanks. Then, after a cocky victory roll, the low-slung AV screams off with acceleration that would kill the pilot ... if there were one aboard. It leaves behind the smoking remains of a tank battalion, killed by a pilot sitting in a van a hundred miles away.

Meet the AVD, Militech's newest entry into the world of high-tech killing machines. Built on an AV-6 frame, the AVD (Aerodyne Vehicle; Drone) is designed as a test-bed for new countermeasures systems (both passive, like the AVD's composite body, and active, like the AGAMs, ECM, and flare/chaff sys-

tems), aerial weaponry, and most impressively, the new ROCC/AM (Remote Operation Command-Control/Auto-nomous Machine) control system that allows the unit to be flown by a pilot (safely ensconced some distance away), or fly and fight autonomously, utilizing a powerful expert system.

Although using the same basic systems as the AV-6 (including the Pegasus-IV turbojet), and massing as much as its cousin, the frame of the AVD is much lower and sleeker as a result of its laminated armor and the lack of a passenger/crew compartment. Its speed is only slightly better than that of the AV-6, but acceleration and maneuverability are both much higher, as the computer doesn't have to worry about greyouts or slamming an infantry squad around.

No expense has been spared in the construction of the AVD; as a result, it's both better armored and armed, including an internal missile bay, side-mounted chainguns, and a forward Rheinmetall railgun in a chin turret. Militech says they like the penetration and accuracy of the railgun, but are dissatisfied with the maintenance and reliability. "If the AVD actually goes into production, we'll likely replace the railgun with a pair of 20mm autocannons; the cannons are less likely to

flake out", says Charles Concannon, director of the AVD project.

The real stars of the AVD project are its avionics, communications, and computer systems. Designed for a flexible blend of remote control and drone operation as the situation requires, the AVD is equipped for control by laser-link, tight-beam (radio or microwave), or general broadcast in any of a dozen frequencies (including cell-phone), from a ground, air, or satellite-based command center.

The ROCC/AM system is designed to smoothly take over operation in the case of a break in communications, acting more like a co-pilot than an observer when operating in "slave" mode. While the ROCC/AM is not as intelligent as they would like, Charles notes "This little bugger" (patting the "heart" of the system, a black cylinder, featureless except for the i/o ports) "is a generation smarter than any drone currently on the market. The only way we could get it smarter is by actually installing an AI ... and we're working on that."

So what's the catch? Well, the first, of course, is cost; the four AVD prototypes each cost over 8 million Euro (how much over, Militech won't say); nearly as much as a F-36 FireShark interceptor. Militech says that production costs would drop if it was built as a



mass-production unit, but "not as significantly as we'd like." Thus, these are likely to be the most expensive (planet-based) remotes in existence for some time.

There is also the ROCC/AM unit, which, while extraordinary in what it can do, is still restricted by processing power. While spectacular as a remote, when operating as a drone the AVD is still burdened with a lack of tactical sense that can make it easy prey to an alert fighter pilot.

In the end, the AVD certainly succeeds in what it was designed to do: test the outer limits of remote/drone capabilities in a combat environment. Technologies developed in the AVD project are already being incorporated in Militech's newest generations of drones, remotes, and manned vehicles.

Whether we'll ever see it on anything other than a simulated battlefield remains to be seen, however.



The Adventure Hooks are pretty major: A) Players are hired to steal (one of the prototypes, the plans, one of the computer cores). B) Players hired to extract Charles Concannon. C) AVD is chewing up countryside; (it's gone rogue!, Netrunner is controlling it, Aliens have taken it over, Rache Bartmoss is joy-riding, Militech can account for all four; who's is this?). D) Nomads trying to kill one that's wiping them out. E) Pacifistic group, scared at potential for "AI war", hires players to destroy all 4, and plans—without bloodshed. F) AI hires players to install chip in one of them...just a small little chip, it'll never be noticed.

Militech AVD; Performance Statistics

WEIGHT:	loaded;	5300 kg, w/1000kg external munitions load
	unloaded;	2950 kg
SPEED:	Flank;	560 kmph
	Top;	805 kmph
	Acc/Dec:	12/12 kmph/second
RANGE:	Max:	1300 km
	loiter:	950 km
ARMOR:		Composite laminate; 125mm steel plate equiv.
ARMAMENT:		Internal missile bay (960 kg weight, 6 missiles standard load)
		2 15mm chain guns (articulated mounts R, L) w 2 250 md box mags each
		1 EMG-85 railgun in chin turret w 1000 rounds
		External mounts on hard points for 1200kg of munitions pods
		Laser designator in chin turret
DEFENSIVE:		AGAMS anti-missile system (5,000 rounds)
		Flare/chaff dispensers (2, 20 rounds each)
		Electronic-Countermeasures (classified performance values)
SENSORS:		Full Audio-Visual, including low-light, thermal, and passive IR
		Look-down, terrain avoidance radar w ID and detection
		Laser and microwave detection
COMMUNICATIONS:		Laser comm
		Tight beam radio and microwave links
		500km scrambled radio
		Satellite link
CONTROL:		ROCC/AM control system
		KTR-327 Targeting computer w rangefinders and multi-target options

MILITECH AVD; Game Stats

TOP SPEED:	500 mph
ACC/DEC:	75/75 mph
CREW:	0
RANGE:	800 miles
PASSENGERS:	0
CARGO:	none
MANEUVER:	+3
SDP:	100 (Body 5)
SP:	50 (Armor 3)
TYPE:	AV
MASS:	4 tons (without pods)
COST:	9M eb without weaponry (weapon cost varies by missile load)

Special equipment: Composite armor, flare, chaff, AGAMs, cellphone, laser communicator, military radio, scrambler, satellite uplink, robot gun controller, remote targeting, multi-targeting, AI control (16 base) cyberlinkage (for remote operation), ECM, ECCM, Audio/visual sensors (incl. low-light, image enhance, active IR, thermal, and telescopic), laser and microwave detectors, navigational system, Military radar with look-down, terrain avoidance, and ID functions, military radar detector .

Weapons: 1 stabilized EMG-85 railguns in chin turret with 1000 rounds and +3 targeting computer, 2 15mm HMGs (as 14.5 mm) in articulated mounts (1 per side) w +3 targeting computers, and two spare magazines each, 6 spaces of missiles in internal bay (normally 4 Hellfires and 2 AAMs), 8 spaces of weapons on pod wings (normally either 2 pods of 19 2.75 in rockets and 4 Hellfires or 10 LATGMs and 2 AAMs). Internal bay can be reconfigured to carry any type of missile, including AAMRAMs, HATGMs and LATGMs. Rockets cannot be carried in internal bay.



Viper: High-Tech armor goes mainstream

by Danielle Ravensclaw; SGT, SFPD Max-Tac

The facility is in a secluded part of the Rockies; the road leading up to it so badly maintained that few will venture this far. The security is subtle, but impressive. This is one of Raven Microcybematics' high-tech research and testing units, and the site where the Viper High-Threat combat suits were developed.

Viper represents a new thinking in combat armor. Before this, there were two basic types of personal armor: Body armor (non-powered, unarmed, intended for general consumption), and PA suits (heavily armed and augmented, intended for limited release and use).

With MetalGear™, and assault armor, personal armor has reached a plateau; heavier armor is so heavy and bulky as to be unusable. On the other hand, the average PA suit is far too expensive for anything resembling general issue; only the most elite units can field them in any number.

Viper changes that. The Raven Microcyb Viper suit is a suit of enhanced personal armor intended for fast response, special operations, and MAX-TAC units. Balancing protection and cost, the Viper suit is also light enough for all but the flimsiest structures. And I was going to be one of the first outside of Raven Microcyb to not only see it, but actually test it.

After a quick briefing on the suits capabilities and a fitting session, it was back to the guest quarters for a night of sleep while they adjusted the suit to fit me.

I should note that there are actually two Viper designs. The basic design (called the Pit Viper) is an "infantry" design, designed to be easily adapted to and used even by non-Troopers. Equipped with basic HUD and comms gear, the idea is to allow infantry to wear more armor than could otherwise be, and move and fire heavy weaponry like the Cyborg rifle without difficulty.

The Hooded Viper, on the other hand, is intended as a Command/Special Ops suit, and is equipped with the latest in VRI, reflex, and communications/control equipment. It is also equipped for the addition of limited armament; two modular units can be attached, one on each wrist, as external mounts. There are no provisions for further mounting of external systems, but it didn't look like it would be hard, either.

The next day, I was fitted into the suit, and allowed to play with it. Even the Pit Viper suit is impressive; because the design is so spartan and light, it's more like wearing a suit of body armor than driving a PA. On the other hand, watching AP rounds from a M-2012 H-bar splash off the chest was truly impressive; especially since I was in it at the time! Raven claims the Viper will deflect anything lighter than 12.7mm BMG. I believe them.

The interface on the Pit Viper is strictly standard; on the other hand, the Hooded Viper, while designed to be as user-friendly as pos-

sible, is like playing a video game; the VR Display is continuously in action. I can see where learning to use the Hooded Viper would take some time.

The most impressive part of the Viper system is its cost: the basic Viper comes in at a low 26,000 euro, while the Hooded Viper checks in at 48,000eb. Amazingly low, these can be considered incredibly expensive body armor, rather than amazingly cheap PA suits; which, of course, is exactly how Raven Microcyb wants folks to think of them.

Although neither suit is yet on the market, a limited number are going into action with the US military and several police departments for final evaluation. Raven says that they are currently taking orders from "authorized agencies", for delivery within the next nine months.

Me, I'm hoping the SFPD orders some of these. While they are no replacement for a real PA suit, they go a long way towards evening the odds for the Max-Tac boys who don't get to Trooper for real.

Pit Viper

Strength	Tough	Dam	SP	DFB	SIB
16	-5	D6+2	30	+2	0
REF	lift	carry	weight	cost	
0	500	240	350	26,000eb	

Features: Military radio w/ scrambler, Bodyweight™ automed, full HUD Wideband, advanced control. Onboard sensors include Lowlight, IR, Anti-Dazzle, and Image Enhance; Full audio plus Amplified hearing and level damper. internal life support for 1 hour plus filtration; battery endurance is 24 hours.

Hooded Viper

Strength	Tough	Dam	SP	DFB	SIB
16	-5	D6+2	30	+3	+3
REF	lift	carry	weight	cost	
+2	500	240	350	48,000eb	

Features: as above, plus Sat uplink, and Laser communicator, Remote targeting link, two EMP Sponges, VR Interface, High Boost, and C3 unit. Onboard sensors, as above, plus Teleoptics and Thermal Imaging. There is a housing for a single 1/2 space externally-mounted weapon or device on each wrist; this is usually a 1-handed combat blade and a 14mm pistol (this costs an additional 3500eb).

Easiest to retrofit onto the Viper suit are devices like tool suites, fire extinguishers, and utility packs. Weapons are the hardest, because the armor is not equipped with the various brackets, mounts, and surface connectors. all externally-mounted equipment (other than the two allowed for in the Hooded Viper) cost half again as much to mount, and weight 1.25 times as much. Weapons cost twice as much, and weigh half again as much.

Game Note: Although these suits use the older Linear Frame stats, they use the new CCPL muscles (*Chromebook 3*, pg. 107), the leading edge of design tech. Raven's profit margin on these is relatively low; they're relying on sales to police agencies and other groups that can't afford enough PAs to be worth while, but can afford to outfit a couple of squads with Viper suits. There is also the repairs/spare parts market to look at; since folks are likely to use big weapons on these, they are going to need fixing a lot. See also *Maximum Metal*.



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somewhere around 5.5-6mm). Evolutions and revolutions in personal weapon technology have started to change this. Weapons like the ramjet rifle, liquid-propellant rifles, electrothermally-enhanced weapons, and linear accelerators (rail/coil guns) drastically increase the amount of damage the average soldier can dish out, while smart gun arrays, genius weapons, and easy laser-designation make hits more likely.

At the same time, personal protections are also becoming more advanced. Improved ceramic and laminate armours allow individuals to wear as much protection as some light vehicles, while exotic systems like the BACL Reactive Body Armour, IR shielding, and stealth systems all increase the chances that a soldier is going to live to come home.

Medical technology has also made leaps forward, greatly increasing the chances that a wounded soldier will survive. Most wounded soldiers delivered to an aid station within the "golden hour" are likely to recover; in worst case scenarios, the patient is slapped into a cryotank, shipped to a hospital and operated on there. This, combined with refinements in nanotech healing processes, is starting to make any hit you survive initially, a survivable one. The increased healing speeds afforded by Nanotech also decrease the amount of time a soldier is spending in recovery to days instead of weeks. What affect this may be having on the psyche of the soldiers involved is as yet unknown, but is something to be watched closely.

Cybernetics, in addition to restoring to full efficiency a soldier whom a half-century ago would have been cashiered, are seeing more use as "standard options"; most Corporate soldiers have at least an interface and plugs, and many have cyberoptics. Some smaller militaries (like the British) are equipping their soldiers with various biotech augmentations as a matter of course; as the prices drop, this is becoming more common.

Cybernetically-augmented soldiers are becoming the norm; augmentation is even part of some military contracts. Extensively enhanced "CyberSoldiers", once the province of Special Operations, are starting to appear in line units, and more Full-Conversion Cyborgs are being introduced as the technology is proven.

**TOMORROW'S
INFANTRY-
MAN'S MAIN
WEAPON WILL
BE A SELF-
TARGETING
3MM RAILGUN...**

The Edge of Tomorrow

So now that we've seen where we've been and where we are, where are we going? Let's take a theoretical look at a soldier from the year 2050, extrapolating from where we are.

John Davies is an infantryman, with over a year of training before assignment to a combat unit. His armor is a suit of myomer-assisted laminate armor that can stop most anti-personnel weapons in use; of course, anti-vehicle weapons or a direct hit from a railgun will kill him. The armor is light enough to be used with difficulty if the power is knocked out, and flexible enough to perform gymnastics in.

John's primary weapon is a self-targeting 3mm railgun. His back-up is a dual purpose pistol with a 4.3mm hyper-velocity ET barrel, and a 15mm launcher that fires "genius bullets" that

home in on body heat or radar images. On his back is a 4-cell multi-role missile launcher over the right shoulder, power supply and spare ammo for his weapons, and, over the left shoulder, a self-targeting pulse laser that serves both as weapon and anti-missile system.

His helmet is filled with sensors: low-lite, milliwave radar, image magnification, edge-sensing Ladar, thermal, computer-enhanced threat recognition and identification, MRI. You name it, it's probably available. His HUD automatically filters this flood of information to what he needs; the rest is synthesized into a continually updated battlefield database, allowing the suit's tactical AI to not only give John accurate advice, but also to relay needed information to his squad mates or central command. Commo systems, ECM, ECCM, "ghost suit", and stealth systems are all controlled by the AI, as are the suit's three combat and recon drones, although the latter are capable of independent operations.

John's cyberware is relatively subtle: He has an interface computer, advanced skin/bone/muscle weave, and is host to a Nanofac capable of synthesizing Healer or Defense nanites as needed. Under the armor he wears a carbon/boron-mesh body suit that will resist penetration by fragments and bullets; a small survival kit carried has rations, a water filter, monoknife, and spare gun (since, even with his nanoaugmentation, either of his suit's weapons would shatter his arm if he fired them).

Dropped by capsule from orbit, or brought in by hyper-velocity transport, Private John Davies is ready for combat on the battlefield of tomorrow. That tomorrow will be sooner than we expect.

Lieutenant-Colonel Fiona O'Shaughnessey was a member of the British Army until the rise of the MLA, when she fled with a sizable bounty on her head for her condemnation of them. Since then she has worked as a mercenary, and as a tactical and technical advisor for SOF.





THE FUTURE OF FORCE!

So WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?

For the independent entrepreneur (read Edgerunner or Mercenary), times have never been better for getting involved in the Wages of War. As war has increasingly become a game played by more than just governments, the job opportunities have skyrocketed.

The most obvious jobs, of course, are for Solos and Jockeys. Mercenary units are forming all over the world, and many smaller governments will pay good money for "foreign tactical advisors." Even the major organizations will pay for mercenary teams on a not-infrequent basis, usually for Covert or Clandestine missions. Prowlers make an excellent addition to any Merc team, both as B&E men and as scout-snipers.

But the jobs don't end there. Netrunners and Techies can be hired to provide support for Clandestine Ops (which frequently have special equipment needs, and always require Net coverage to erase footprints of the electronic kind). Any Merc unit will need MedTechie support; where they're often fighting, Trauma Team doesn't go. Corp Liaisons, Rockerboys to drum up popular support for a revolution, Fixers for local contacts; etc. are all needed.

Nor are all jobs directly related to active combat. In the modern style of warfare, Edgerunner missions can frequently be an adjunct of a military operation, and these will (increasingly) be farmed out to a private Clandestine Ops unit (read, team of Edgerunners), rather than be undertaken by a team of Special Forces (who may well be of more use elsewhere).

The reason for this is subtlety. Military units, even Special Forces, are used to fairly liberal Rules of Engagement, and will tend to ignore

restrictions when the ball drops. Edgerunners, on the other hand, understand that their pay is directly tied to performance; they will do the job the way the buyer wants.

Even in support roles, the amount of money flowing out of the Armed Forces is increasing. With computerized requisitions and inventory comes restrictions on what you can get. Sometimes, this means not getting what you need, or getting something you don't want. A smart Fixer with military contacts can make a killing by trading or buying what a local COG commander has surplus of, and providing him the tools he needs (but can't get). And all without resorting to theft of government property (which is a major source of heavy weapons on the Street, as RPGs, grenade launchers, and MGs "disappear" from military armories).

Fixers and Corps can also act as "brokers", offering the special services of mercenary teams they hold on retainer to the highest bidder (taking a cut, of course). Some Corps have gotten quite wealthy doing this.

Civilian Netrunners often act as "advisors", or trainers for Military 'Runners, and Civilian Techies can be involved with the training for, and repair of, classified projects.

There is a down side, of course. Like never before, the Armed Forces can put a major crimp in the style of Edgerunners. Trained and ready to fight in urban environments, and in smaller sizes than before, a trained Marine rifle squad can take on a small boostergang with the right information. Governments are much more likely to rely on military forces for defensive duties than before (because they are both cheaper and more reliable than hiring Corporate contractors), which



means that performing an extraction or theft on a Government facility can be tricky indeed. Corporate forces are easier, but by no means easy, and there is always the risk the Corp has hired mercenaries (like, say, Lazarus), to defend their property.

It cannot be stressed enough that military forces are not something to be laughed at; they are well armed, trained, and, more importantly, supported. The average soldier is not as good a combatant as the average Solo, but you won't encounter the average soldier alone. He's part of a squad, and even if you kill him, you have to deal with his nine chums. And it's likely that three of them are going to see you kill the blighter. So be warned.



CYBERWARE & NEWTECH FOR THE PROFESSIONAL™

CYBERWARRIOR®

CYBERMATRIX "D/TEK" CYBERNETIC TARGETING NETWORK 1300EB

Pick 'em up, pick 'em out...pick 'em off.

You're caught in an op gone bad; it's practically raining boosterboys and you're fresh out of backup. But you're not worried—as quickly as the enemy enters the crosshairs in your 'optic, your cyberarm jumps into action! It's almost too easy—all you have to do is look and D/Tek instantly acquires, tracks and shoots. Give your smartgunning hand a mind of its own. Get D/Tek.

Attention: D/Tek is an after-market package which requires the presence of the following cybernetics to function: Neural Processor with Smartgun Link, Interface Plugs, Cyberoptic with Targeting Scope option, Cyberarm with Hand. (5350eb; HC=6D6+4). D/Tek uses a gyro-compensation system installed in the cyberarm (taking 1 space) and a logic coprocessor wired into the user's neuralware; D/Tek may be purchased as a complete package (includes all requisite cyberware) from Cybermatrix for 6,000eb (CR Surgery, HC=5D6+3 total).

Game Notes: Basic Network: HC=1D6+3, Surgery: M. D/Tek allows the user to ignore negative modifiers from **Moving Targets REF>X**, **Firing While Running**, and **Firing Shoulder Arm From Hip**. It can be disconcerting the first few times it's used, but you'll get used to it. And don't worry—there's a safety override that keeps your arm from tracking beyond its natural range of movement!

TECHTRONICA "SCANGRIPS" 200EB

Get a better grip on your weapon!

Move over Bianchi and Hogue! Techtronica's Scangrips use pressure-sensitive molecular memory to truly individualize your weapon. Once the grips are programmed and installed, grasp the weapon: the pressure-activated, memory-plastic grips mold themselves to your hand for perfect ergonomics. They scan your fingerprints to disengage the lock on the firing mechanism, and activate any electronic sighting systems mounted on the weapon. The only thing they don't do is shoot the bad guys for you!

THINK-BOOM RADIO DETONATING SIGNALERS 100EB PER SIGNAL

Think-Booms are a handy device for the solo with his hands full. The device sends out a signal like other remote controllers. The specialty of this model is that it plugs into any interface socket and can be triggered with a mental command! The device looks like a large coin, approximately an inch in diameter, with a plug jutting from one side. Since it lays flat while plugged in, it can be worn under clothing for maximum concealment. Up to three signals may be programmed (allowing three different activations). The Think-Boom can be used with any device rigged to receive such a signal; it does not have to be a detonation device. Range is only 100m unless the user has an unobstructed view, which allows up to 200m range. Signal frequencies come pre-set by the manufacturer. Characters with Radio Splice for their cyberaudio may have a variant installed internally that will send a signal as far as their splice will reach. Up to two signals for 500eb.



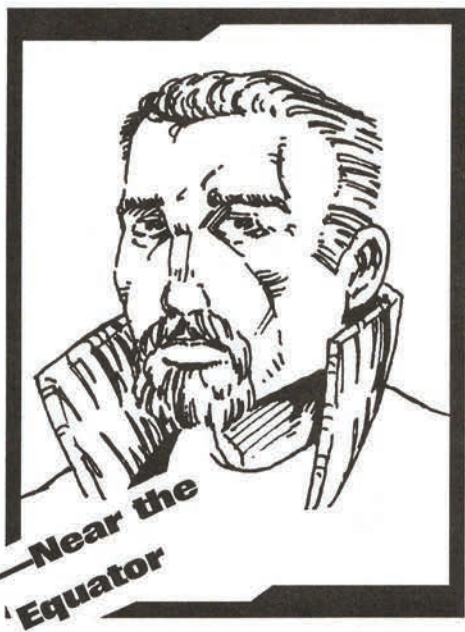
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Check your local database for the location nearest you! Delivery 7 days a week!



A SOLO OF FORTUNE SPECIAL REPORT FROM SOUTH AMERICA

LESSONS LEARNED AND BRIDGES BURNED: ON THE ROAD WITH C.J. O'REILLY



Don't ask.
 Okay, I'll tell ya.
 Yeah, I knew the job was bad news when I took it. The invitation was dripping sweat as I pulled it out of the envelope. Come down and do some work for the government of (name of country deleted for legal reasons — Editor), it said. Be our guest. Stay at the lavish Hotel (name of hotel deleted for legal reasons —Editor) in our capital city as our guest. Enclosed was a round trip ticket on the national airline. My second warning should have been that the ticket said: "Warning, departure time subject to change based on availability of aircraft." If you've never flown internationally, I'll clue you in on something—it doesn't say that on Orbital Air tickets. But I was short of cash, and short of work, so what could I do? I swindled SOF into paying me a few bucks for a post-trip write-up, packed my passport and hardware into a courier bag, and caught a cab for the airport.

The first really ominous rumblings came when I got to the airport and saw the airplane, which, as my notoriously rotten luck would have it, was available. Two hours later (it took them

AFTER A HAIR-RAISING DESCENT THROUGH A THUNDERSTORM, WE MET THE GROUND SOMEWHERE IN THE VICINITY OF THE CAPITAL.

that long to get both engines started) we're grinding along at the spectacular altitude of eight-thousand feet in a World War II era DC-3 that shook so hard I learned how to do the mambo in the time it took me to walk down the aisle to the flush-into-the-air bathroom. I pity anyone who was standing below us, because I don't even take to good air travel well. About an hour into the flight the stewardess, who looks like my mother (who's dead), comes by and offers me a drink. She didn't take it well when I asked her if we were

I shoulda listened to Clyde O'Reilly Sr., my dear, departed pappy, when he told me, "Never go anywhere you can't buy a good, cold beer for less than what you'd pay a local hooker." Sheesh, truer words were never said. But there I was in a tropical hell-hole where the air was so damp my teeth were rusting.
 How'd it happen, ya ask?



going to land at the capital, or parachute in (snort). The drink turned out to be a glass of *Fibuto*, which is a toxic creation distilled from the Gualpa fruit, the only edible vegetable indigenous to my destination, and one of the country's two exports (the other one is garnet paper). I had one sip and spent the next ten minutes alternately hallucinating and throwing-up while I picked cockroach legs out from between my teeth with the pin on the back of the plastic Junior Pilot flight badge I found in the seat-back pocket in front of me.

Eventually, after a hair-raising descent through a whopping thunderstorm, we met the ground in a semi-controlled fashion somewhere in the vicinity of the capital. Imagine my surprise when the rustic farm I thought we had landed at turned out to be the airport. It was here that I had my first real contact with the warm hospitality that my destination was so famous for. As I stood in the middle of the customs line surrounded by a herd of goats that was being cleared by the woman in front of me, two officials in smelly, olive-greens singled me out and took me over to a table where they made me empty out my luggage, including my courier bag. Needless to say, things were looking interesting about the time they got to the Malorian section of my carry-on luggage. I was just about resigned to spending the rest of my life in an equatorial jail when a spit-shined lackey showed up and waved and gesticulated wildly at my guards. For a moment I thought he was arguing that I be shot on the spot. It turned out that he was driver. I thought I was safe.

Wrong.

If anything, the drive into the town was worse than the flight. It wouldn't have been so bad if the driver hadn't accepted a case of *Fibuto* in return for allowing the goat lady and her bleating squadron to share the car with us on the way back. He drank two bottles before we left.

Twenty dirt-encrusted minutes later I was escorted into the offices of



the local police Commandante, who greeted me warmly with...*a glass of warm Fibuto!* Imagine my ecstasy... The Commandante was a truly loathsome character, with cracked aviator shades, and a sweaty shirt that rode up over a large, moist, spreading gut dimpled by a navel so deep and wet that I could have dropped a lobster trap into it and probably come up with a pretty good catch. He laughed and gesticulated, and explained that the problem was a revolt of the workers at the local garnet mines. This was the sad camp where they mine the garnets for the garnet paper that accounts for 90% of a gross domestic product smaller than my monthly SOF retainer (which ain't much). Of course the tragic economy isn't helped by the fact that the government, by order of El Presidente, was printing off new *Dugals*, the local currency, so fast that ink futures were

on the rise the world over. El Commandante cheerfully informed me that, in return for putting down the worker uprising, my pay would be twelve billion *Dugals*. I did some quick math and realized that impressive number equaled about \$16 euro, and with inflation, would probably equal eighty cents by that night. Uh-uh I said. Pay me in Euro or put me back on the plane. Then I remembered the plane ride, recanted, and said pay in euro or put me on a boat. Much haggling later, the fee was agreed upon and I set out for the hotel. That was my next mistake.

The Hotel was without a doubt the worst semi-enclosed structure I have ever had the displeasure to set foot within in the forty-three long years of my existence. The concierge handed me my key, but it turned out not to be necessary as the wood around the



Playing in South America

Running games in South America is all about atmosphere. Think, hot, sweaty, and poor. The vast slums of Rio. The steamy climates of Venezuela. The danger-charged worlds of the Colombian and Peruvian drug lords. In 2020, most South American countries are brutal police states with a very few, very rich people and a great many poor people. Solos will be working in a shadowy world of illegal coups, government overthrows, rebellions and insurrections, terrorist organizations such as Sendero Luminoso, and smuggling. All deals are suspect, and the local currency is never any good. Many of the luxuries and supplies that European, American, and Japanese solos take for granted will be rare, and very expensive.

door to my room was so rotted that it gave way when I leaned my bags against it. The room itself was a cubicle about twelve feet on a side with a bed, a sink, a table, and a three-watt incandescent bulb that hung from a frayed cable over the bed like an electrified Sword of Damocles. Of course, there was no danger of a fire if it fell, since the bed was so thoroughly soaked with moisture that I momentarily thought they had drawn a refreshing bath for me. When I drew back the sheet, a cockroach the size of a cocker spaniel scurried across the mattress, then suddenly took flight. Luckily for me, it settled on the cord for the light bulb and was immediately electrocuted. The charred, smoking hulk floated down to the bed, where it hissed out in the water and filled the entire room with the smell of burned, quenched cockroach. I decided to sleep on the floor. Then I looked at the floor and decided to sleep in the bathroom. So I went into the bathroom.

It was in the bathroom that I learned one of the great truths of this country. The residents are much more clever than they seem, and have come up with an ingenious solution to solve several of their problems at once. First, the combination of *Fibuto* and bad water has given everyone in the country diarrhea. Not having a strong enough economy to import toilet paper, and not wanting to use leaves, since local plants tend to be infested with deadly species of spider whose name (I understand) translates as "ass-biter surprise," a certain amount of the garnet paper produced is redirected into the local toilet-paper industry. Unfortunately, as near as I could tell, it was redirected after the garnets are inserted. But, in order to consolidate the national industry, and deal with the ruinous rate of inflation, new *Dugal* notes are printed directly onto the toilet paper. And furthermore, in order to deal with inflation, the notes are printed in sequentially increasing denominations! My roll started with a 1000 *Dugal* note and ended with an impressively ornate 500 Million *Dugal* note. I

**TO DEAL WITH THE
RUINOUS RATE OF
INFLATION, NEW
DUGAL NOTES ARE
PRINTED DIRECTLY
ONTO TOILET
PAPER**

have since learned that the toilet-paper bank notes are carefully calibrated to the changes in food and *Fibuto* quality so that as you use toilet paper, the denominations on the bills go up in *direct accordance with the rate of inflation!* Sheer genius, really. Of course, I had learned on the way back from the airport that it doesn't make any difference, since *Fibuto* is the operating currency.

Since I could read the writing on the wall, I decided to refund the Commandante his money and get the hell out of there. I picked up the phone and my light bulb exploded. So I packed up my bags, crept out into the street, and chartered a ride down to the river, where I bartered my way onto a local tramp steamer headed for Caracas, Venezuela with a load of garnet paper and export-bottled *Fibuto* marked for Lesotho, the only *Fibuto* export market in the world. Forty-eight hours later, I was back in semi-civilization, with forty mosquito bites to serve as reminders of my brief stay in (country deleted again—Editor). If you're ever down that way, stop by at the Hotel (name deleted again—editor). Order up a *Fibuto*...hold the ice. Tell 'em I sent you. Then duck.

—C.J. O'Reilly.

P.S.: My editor tells me that legal fees for this trip are being deducted from my paycheck for this article. I'm sending him a case of Fibuto. Cheers. CJO.





Midnight Arms

Bringing you the exotic in personal protection

Midnight Arms has become the exclusive dealer in the Free State of California for such respected firms as Mystic Technologies and Pursuit Security Inc. MA also has the edged weapon artistry of Kendachi at below factory-dealer cost!

Mystic Technologies Nunchaku/Blade

200eb

Concealment, accuracy, and damage as per Nunchaku & Sword in *CP2020*.

Mystic Tech continues to amaze with its innovative melee weapon systems. This weapon is 2' long staff with an extendible blade at one end. The blade is 1' long and inflicts 1D6+1 points of damage (2D6+1 if used 2-handed). When a release button is pressed the staff splits and forms a pair of nunchaku. Note: you cannot use the nunchaku function if the blade is extended!

Kendachi Monosword Cane

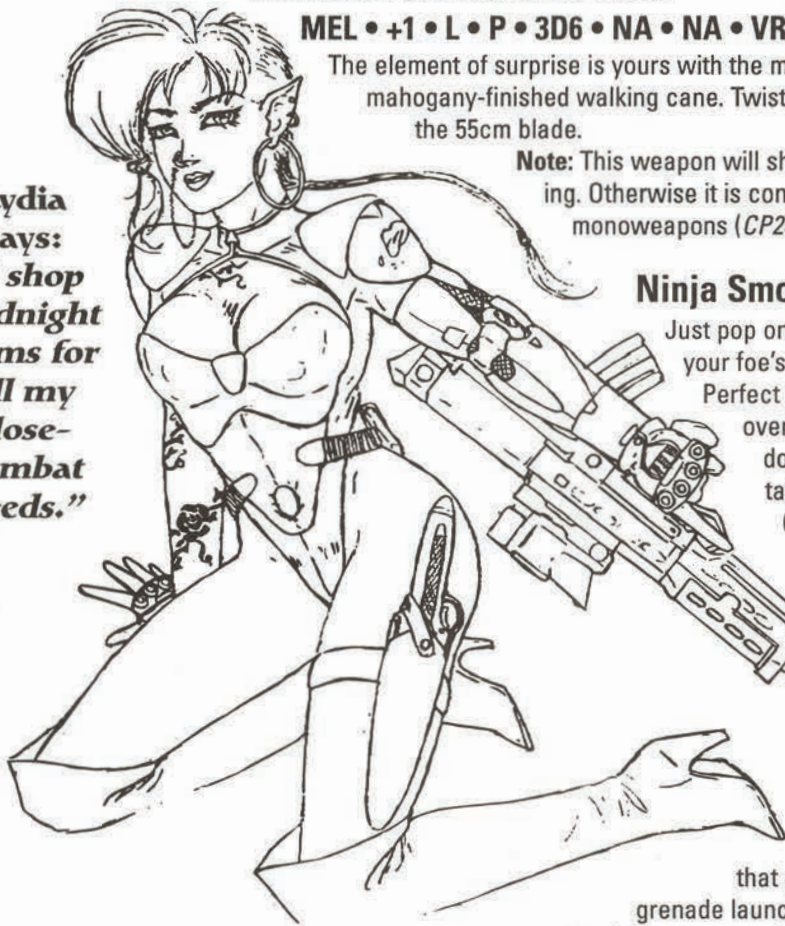
255eb

MEL • +1 • L • P • 3D6 • NA • NA • VR • 1m

The element of surprise is yours with the monoblade hidden within this rich, synthetic mahogany-finished walking cane. Twist the handle to the left, and a lock will release the 55cm blade.

Note: This weapon will shatter with a 4- on a D10 if fumbled or parrying. Otherwise it is consistent with all other rules governing monoweapons (*CP2020*, pg.112).

Lydia says:
"I shop Midnight Arms for all my close-combat needs."



Ninja Smoke Pellet

25eb/5 pellets

Just pop one of these on the ground and vanish from your foe's sight. Flash powder that explodes on impact. Perfect for fleeing boosters or getting an advantage over more powerful adversaries. Just pray he/she doesn't have IR in his optics. A package contains five pellets.

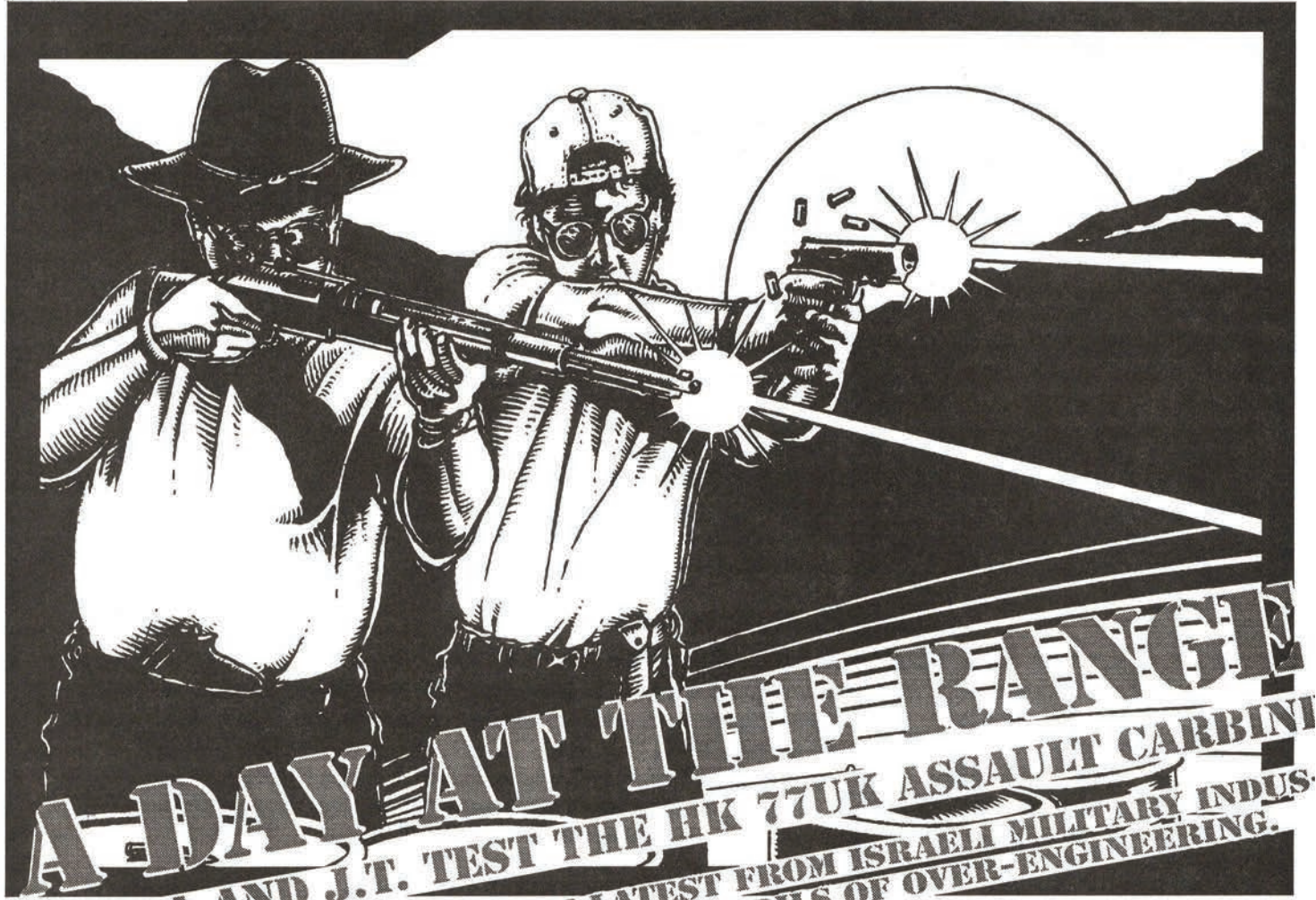
Game Note: Target is temporarily distracted and loses his/her next action. A *Stealth* roll is permitted to the pellet user to escape the area.

Stundart Shotgun Shell

20eb (per pack of four)

Improved product design from Pursuit Security Inc. A Stundart round that can be fired from any shotgun or 25mm mini-grenade launcher up to 100m. Its larger capacitor results in a -2 to Stun saves, and soft armor up to 10SP can be penetrated.

MIDNIGHT ARMS, Night City Net, Midnite @ PacCom 225.347. Modem for our catalog.



**By the staff,
with Delbert "Bubba"
Reyes and J.T.
Cooper.**

It was a very pleasant, mid-Autumn morning around the SOF offices when some wag pointed out that the closet where we store our complimentary review-copies of weapons was getting full, and people were having a hard time making it to the secret beer locker. Bowing to the inevitable, I had an intern load everything into the back of the company truck while I rounded up resident SOF firearms experts, Bubba and J.T. Ten minutes later, we were on our way up to Anderson Quarry. On the way

we stopped, as always, for a greasy breakfast at Moseley's diner. One guess who ended up with the check. It was a beautiful day for shooting: partly cloudy, and the glare was negligible. Only the lightest breeze rippled through the quarry, and the dust stayed on the ground.

Bread And Butter

The first weapon out of the box, by unanimous decision, was the new Heckler and Koch 77UK assault rifle, a deal at 750eb. This is the latest creation from H-K's prestigious British subsidiary; probably the last British company doing good export business. The HK 77UK is a light,

bullpup carbine designed for mobile infantry and airborne units. It comes standard with a collapsible stock, and is cleverly balanced and stabilized for accurate firing under shaky conditions. About 60% of the HK 77UK is fashioned from advanced composites, but it retains some metal parts for ease of manufacturing and repair. The HK 77UK is also a modular system, with a wide range of easily interchangeable parts, including scopes and optical sights, barrel attachments including a very well-designed sound/recoil suppressor, and various barrel and stock configurations.

Everyone expected the HK 77UK to be a dream to fire, and we weren't disappointed. J.T. fired two magazines from bench rest at the 400 meter line, and was consistently able to keep his groups within four inches using the basic optical sight. With the iron sights



he was only slightly less accurate, firing seven inch groups. Since the HK 77UK is a light weapon, Bubba decided to take it through the combat-pistol range. This is a little something that the boys set up last month. There are five stations with multiple targets set up in various patterns at between five and fifty meters. The point is to sprint between the stations and get as many targets in as short a time as possible. The course is for testing pistols and submachine-guns, but the HK 77UK's light weight, small size, suppressed recoil, and clever stabilizing system make it a surprisingly good performer in these kinds of mobile, snap-shooting conditions. Its porting system virtually eliminates muzzle climb, even when firing full-auto from the hip.

The HK 77UK is a very well thought-out weapon, but it is not perfect. First, the magazine capacity is surprisingly low for a caseless system. There seems to be a lot of wasted space in the magazines. A little work could easily double the magazine capacity from thirty to

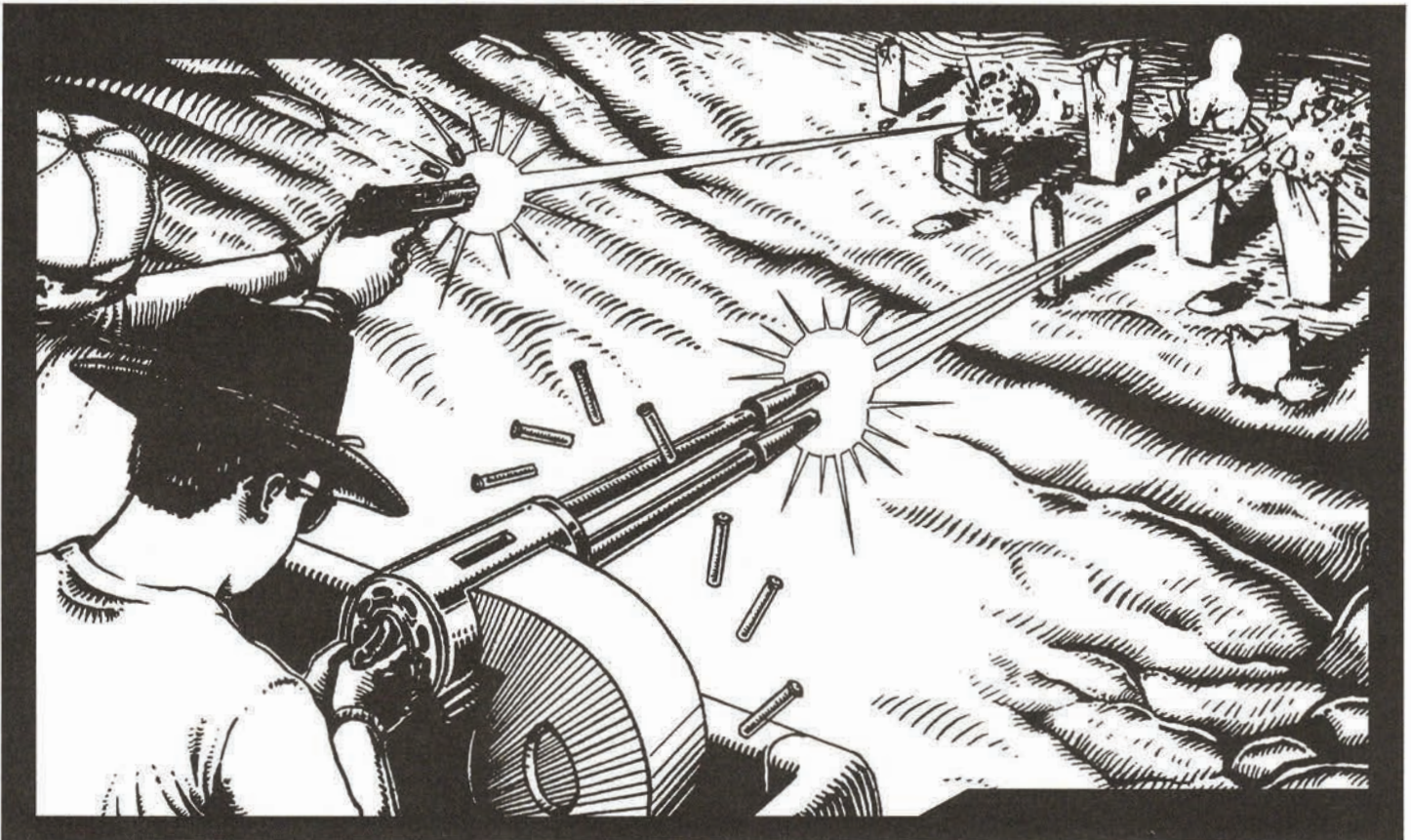
sixty. Bubba and J.T. both expect third-party companies to begin producing high-capacity magazines for the HK 77UK. The other problem is that H-K is using a non-standard caliber. The common caseless rounds are 4.5mm and 6.5mm. The 9mm caseless packs a good wallop, but could be hard to get hold of in remote locations. At 750eb, though, it's a heck of a weapon. If you can stockpile the pricey ammo, and you want to carry the best into a mobile combat or recon situation, you couldn't do much better than the HK 77UK.

The HK 77UK wasn't the only cherry of the group. The other weapon everyone was itching to try was Arasaka's latest offering for the pricey sniping market. The WSSA "Sniper System" is designed for urban, corporate deployment. It fires a very light, 3.5mm hypervelocity flechette that actually rides a 6.5mm sabot down the barrel. The weapon weighs in at a comfortable 3.8kg with a forty-round magazine, and comes standard with a nifty Zeiss 12-power enhanced sight and

smart-chipping. The light weight makes the weapon a infiltrator's dream.

With J.T. on the spotting scope, Bubba lined up on the 400 meter range and took shots prone, at bench rest, and standing. Accuracy in good conditions is outstanding. At bench, Bubba drew two-inch groups with consistency. Anyone who has spent time in the bush knows that a sniper can't always be choosy about firing location, but the light recoil and light weight make the WSSA a good choice for situations where you can't rest the weapon, or shoot prone.

Curious about the stopping power of such a light projectile, J.T. arranged several watermelons in the quarry, and we set about making melon balls. Against a soft target, the 3.5mm hypervelocity flechette is surprisingly effective, easily carrying enough energy to shatter a melon completely. While it doesn't have the raw splattering power of 8mm long, or some other popular sniping rounds, it can definitely provide a nasty surprise for your enemies.





There are some problems with such a light load, however. Penetration against hardened targets is very poor. Even at hypervelocity, the projectile is simply too light to penetrate anything but cloth-based armors. Furthermore, the WSSA is ill-suited for situations where you are shooting through foliage, glass, or walls. The light projectiles simply deflect too much to make precise shooting through obstructions possible. At long ranges, the 3.5mm flechette is also susceptible to wind deflections, and snipers will want to avoid severe cross-winds at anything other than moderate ranges, even with the programmable sight. That is a serious flaw in the basic design, especially considering how impressed the guys were with the overall engineering and feel of the WSSA. Both Bubba and J.T. suggested redesigning the platform to support 6.5mm caseless or 8mm long. Nonetheless, as a medium range assassination weapon for soft targets, Bubba and J.T. give the WSSA very high marks, even at 2400eb.

The Perils Of Precision

The high-tech weapons firm of Mustang Arms has a couple of new offerings, and we happened to have them along for the outing. Bubba was excited about the new Mark 2 11mm pistol, because, as he says, "it's gettin' harder to find a good, old-fashioned slug-thrower." Unfortunately, he was soon disappointed by the 425eb pistol. Mustang is a new firm in Night City, and they use the latest in computer-aided design/manufacturing, that enables them to develop weapons with amazingly tight tolerances and design specs. Unfortunately, advanced materials still haven't caught up with the design techniques, and Mustang has hamstrung itself with some fatal flaws. The Mark 2 is beautifully built, with a 12-round standard magazine, 6.5 inch barrel, and standard porting. Bubba and J.T. both complimented the excellent feel of the weapon.

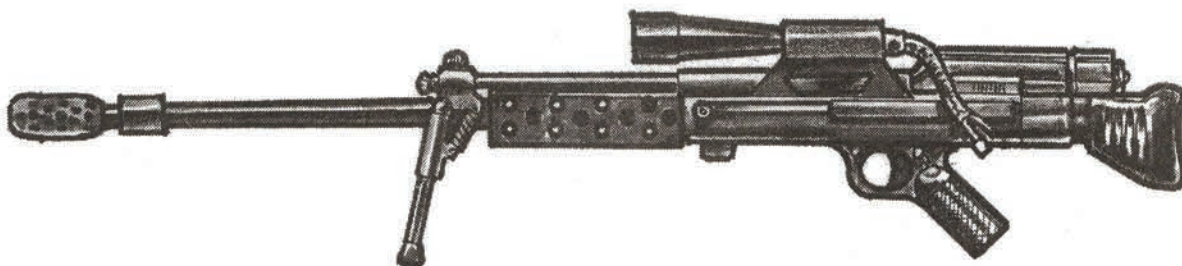
Unfortunately, the tolerances of the moving parts are so fine, that there is no margin for error. What this means is that the weapon fires beautifully until it: a) gets any dirt at all in the action, b) overheats, c) is dropped on a hard surface. Then it tends to lock-up completely, and must be completely stripped, cleaned, and re-assembled before it will fire again. So, while it might be a great weapon for target-shooting in an air-conditioned range, Bubba and J.T. both nixed it for combat situations. J.T. was particularly surprised to see that the Mark 2 is finding some favor with police. He suggested that there are going to be some surprised cops next time they have a firefight in a dusty or wet situation.

Mustang partially redeemed itself with the Close-Control 20, a finely built shotgun for urban, house-to-house, and riot situations. It fires versatile loads, including non-lethal rounds and slugs. The only negative comment was from Bubba, who thinks that any combat shotgun under 10 gauge is a waste of time.

Arasaka WSSA Sniper System

RIF • +5 (with smartrig) • N • P • 4D6 (3.5mm FF) • 40 • 2 • VR • 600m • 2400eb

Designed for urban-deployed corporate enforcement teams, the heavy-barreled, semi-auto Arasaka WSSA has a 40-round helical mag of sabot 3.5mm Frag-Flechets (see Kendachi Frag Flechettes, *Chrome 2*, pg.46), and is equipped with a silencer, flash suppressor and a Zeiss 12x scope with computer-enhanced laser sighting. This system already includes smartchipping, and a whole lot more (+2 to *Awareness*, night vision, and rangefinding). With a loaded weight of 3.8kg, this is becoming a very popular sniper weapon.





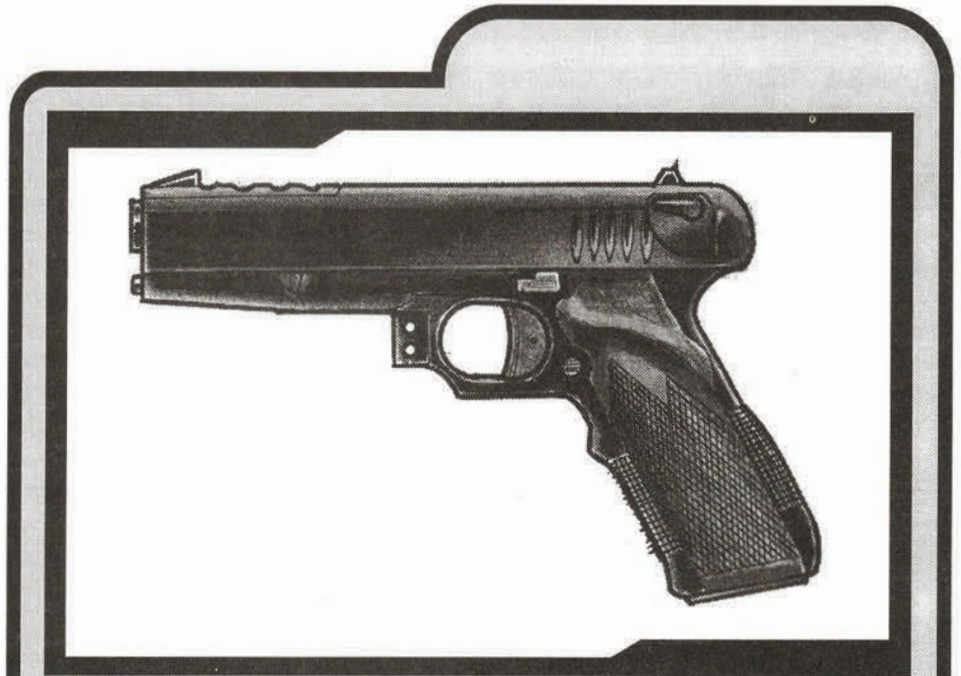
The Latest From IMI

One group that has never suffered from over-engineering is Israeli Military Industries, makers of such legendary weapons as the UZI and the Galil. IMI is back with two new systems: the Gamad light pistol and the Gamdaii dual-purpose submachinegun. IMI has a tradition of indestructible weapons that will work under any circumstances. As J.T. points out, they were developed to be serviceable in desert combat situations with a minimum of maintenance. You could fill the receiver of an Uzi with toothpaste and still be confident that you were going to have trouble-free operation. The point isn't that you don't have to clean or maintain your weapon; it's that your weapons will continue to work reliably until you have time to clean them.

The Gamad and the Gamdaii were both developed with that philosophy in mind. The 575eb Gamad is a light pistol designed to give Mossad agents a concealable punch. Gamad means "dwarf" in Hebrew. The punch is anything but midget-like, though. The 10mm caseless rounds pack a hefty impact, and the Gamad will keep seven in the box and one up the pipe. That's a good complement for such a small package, especially if it's hidden away as a back-up. If seven rounds isn't enough, a 15 round extended magazine is available, but it is a little clumsy, and destroys the weapon's main advantage—it's concealability.

J.T. decided to see if IMI was up to its usual standards. He emptied a soda over the Gamad and buried it in the sand for ten minutes. Then he exhumed it and took it through the combat pistol range. Not one jam in four magazines, and the 10mm bullet made short work of some old bowling pins. J.T.'s only complaint was that the small size and light weight make one-handed control difficult.

The 950eb Gamdaii is the Gamad's big brother: a 10mm submachinegun over/undered with a compact 25mm



Mustang Arms "Mark II"

P • +1 • J/L • C • 3D6 (11mm) • 12/20 • 3 • VR • 50m • 425eb

The Mark II is a powerful autoloader machined to very close tolerances. Using the latest computer-aided design techniques, the Mark II is ergonomically and technically advanced. It sports a 6.5-inch barrel with a ported compensator, but its most unusual feature is the magazine: although a standard 12-round clip is available, each Mark II comes with a 20-round "banana" mag. This handgun is popular with many police units for its "staying power"—that is to say, magazine capacity. Patrol officers commonly carry five twelve-round magazines of 11mm AP, plus one up the spout; the banana clip is normally used by SWAT, entry teams, and military special-ops units.

Mustang Arms Close-Control 20

SHG • -1 • N • P • 3D6 (20-Gauge) • 15 • 2 • STD • 50m • 350eb

This utilitarian shotgun comes from the Night City-based firm Mustang Arms. Composed of lightweight composite materials, the C-C 20 is designed as a reliable antipersonnel weapon which won't devastate an enclosed area. The Close Control 20 is a semiauto 20-Gauge bullpup, loading buckshot, slugs, anti-riot baton rounds, or flechette shells. Its clear-plastic box magazine holds 15 rounds, and the entire weapon is only 26 inches in length.

/10 gauge shotgun combo. The Gamdaii takes two magazines at once, allowing two kinds of ammo to be selected from at any moment. In classic Israeli fashion, the dual 35 round magazines go through the pistol-grip for balance, and to leave room in front of the trigger-guard for the short-barreled grenade launcher/shotgun. Unfor-

tunately, that makes the pistol grip just a little too thick for comfort, unless you have really big hands. The Gamdaii is totally ambidextrous, and generally pleasant to fire. There are some problems with the grenade launcher, however. The extremely short barrel length forces you to use special, expensive, low-velocity grenades. Accuracy suf-



fers, as a result, and J.T. was only able to come within about ten feet of a target at fifty-meters. With such a small explosive charge, that can lead to problems. If you use the 10-gauge sleeve adapter for shotgun use, the short barrel creates a pattern so wide as to be useless beyond about 3.5 meters. Furthermore, Bubba tells me that there have been some reports of people using the Gamdaii in close-quarters combat, and then switching to the grenade launcher, hitting an obstacle within a few feet, and killing themselves or their buddies. Important safety note: IMI's special grenades do not have a safety distance! Once primed by firing, they will detonate as soon as they hit an object.

Stand back. Nonetheless, the Gamdaii is up to IMI's usual, excellent engineering standards. A little tweaking and Bubba says he would own one. J.T. thinks the whole platform is a little goofy.

And so ended another pleasant day up at the range. There is some good stuff coming out, but Bubba offered a cautionary word. "It seems like more and more manufacturers are putting expensive bells and whistles on their guns. Electronics. Chips. Grenade launchers. Remember, the things that count are reliability, accuracy, and your own marksmanship skills. Is the damn thing going

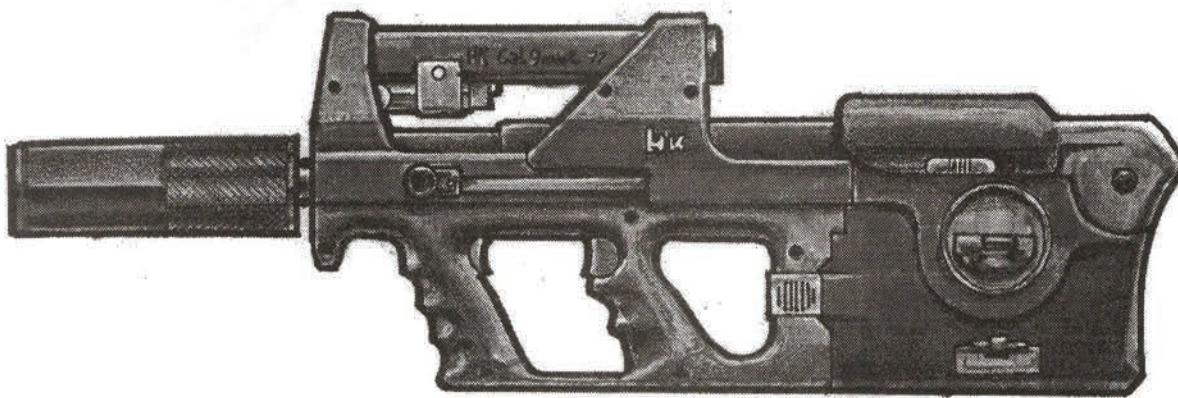
to keep working in a firefight in the middle of a swamp?" Yep. Keep it simple. In combat, there's just no substitute.

Stupid Guns

Every time we come out here, there is a box of worthless crap that we tote along to test out, just for fun. Here are this month's loonier items:

continued on page 36

Bubba's Pick Of The Month:



RUGGELS

Heckler & Koch 77UK assault carbine

RIF ● +1 ● L ● P ● 2D6+4 (9mmCL) ● 30 3/30 ● VR ● 250m ● 750eb
(permanent suppressor: 200eb; smartrig: 600eb; 45-rnd U-drum: 60eb)

In use by private military units world-wide. H&K's British subsidiary has installed the latest in folding stocks and auto-stabilizers, making it more accurate than most competitors. There's a wide range of attachments available, including a 25mm GL, a full-spectrum electronic sight (for use with SmartGoggles™), and an integral suppressor system.

The 25mm GL is Militech's mini-GL (*Chrome 1*):

MGL ● -1 ● L ● C ● Mini-gren ● 4 ● 2 ● ST

Suppressor reduces WA to 0, cannot be heard without cyberaudio (extended hearing range).

Folding stock reduces Conceal from L to J, but firing while folded is a -2 penalty.



J.T.'s Picks Of The Month:

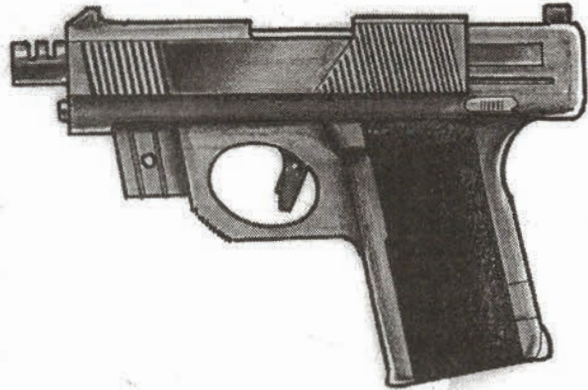


IMI "Gamdai"

SMG ● +2 ● N ● E ● 2D6+3 (10mm Caseless) ● 35x2 ● 25 ● VR ● 950eb
 GL ● - ● - ● +0 ● (25mm Grenade or 10ga.) ● 1 ● 1 ● ST

The perfect mate for the Gamad! A dual-feed 10mm caseless SMG mated to a single-shot 25mm grenade launcher. Intended to supplant current assault weapons for Mossad units, this weapon system is of high quality and fine machining. The gun feeds from twin magazines, allowing different types of ammo to be loaded. Ammo selection is via thumb-operated lever. Like most IMI weapons, the Gamdai is easily modified for left or right-handed use. The GL barrel is shorter than most launchers; special rimmed, low-velocity rounds must be used. With the capability to load a wide range of ammunition (for both SMG and GL), the Gamdai is number one with firepower freaks everywhere.

The 25mm launcher can load all of the standard types of ammo, but uses its own rimmed shells (these cost 50% more than normal shells). They have a range of 100m. It is impossible to load normal 25mm mini-grenades into the launcher. 10ga. shells can still be loaded, using a special sleeve.



IMI Gamad It. Pistol

P ● +0 (+1 w/lasersight) ● P ● E ● 2D6+3 (10mm Caseless) ● 7 ● 2 ● VR ● 575eb

This stubby 10mm pistol gets its name ("Dwarf") from its small size. First designed for Mossad, the Gamad was only released onto the foreign market in the last 3 years. The weapon comes with a lasersight only, but a smartgun variant is available. This is the weapon that Mossad agents have come to be known by. These pistols are also popular as back-up weapons. An extended 15 rnd mag is also available. (35eb, raises concealment to J).





continued from page 34

Mystic Technologies' Arrow Gun

I am suspicious of any company named "Mystic Technologies." I want to kill my opponent, not dazzle him. The MT arrow gun is an arrow-firing device with all of the problems of a bow and arrow, or crossbow, and none of the advantages. It takes one arrow at a time, and fires it with compressed air, making a loud pop. True, it can fire under water, but I find a powerhead to be much more effective, even though it requires hand-to-hand combat. The arrows are terrible on hardened targets. I suppose that the arrow gun could be used to fire at a target on the shore from under the water, but I don't know how practical that is, with refraction. For amphibious ops, you're probably better off with an old Steyer AUG, firing cased rounds. The AUG can fire through a barrel full of water, and with the receiv-

er partially submerged. Arrows are for Robin Hood. Use a silenced gun, fer cryin' out loud!

RIF ● +1 ● J(L) ● C ● 3D6 ● 1 ● 1

● ST ● 70m ● 1000eb

Includes a waterproof case (SP10) with slots for eight 35cm aluminum arrows with carbo-glas broadhead blades (see Archery rules for damage). It also comes with a preconfigured mount that can accommodate most scopes and laser sights. With the collapsible stock extended, concealment is lowered to L. Arrows are 5eb. is each.

Pursuit Security Inc's Beanbag Gun

Are you kidding me? This is one of those items that police departments buy as PR moves, and

then leave on the shelf when the s*** hits the fan. Most of these will end up unfired, in the hands of collectors or battered wives who want to discourage abusive husbands without killing them. What good is a beanbag gun going to be when the full-borg comes through the wall? You could point it at your head and shoot yourself into unconsciousness in the hopes that he leaves you for dead. The good news: the ammo is blister-packed and can be found on the wire spin-racks

P ● -2 ● J ● E ● Stun ● 1 ● 1 ● ST ● 100eb

This compact weapon, shaped like a bicycle pump, delivers a small, soft beanbag up to 10ft away at 300fps. Compressed air cartridges (good for up to 5 shots) are extra. Any area hit that is not armored will be numbed unless a Very Difficult BOD check is made (*Endurance* skill applies).

THE STORM FROM HELL! THE GA-1112 AUTOGUN

We don't review many vehicle-mounted weapons, and when we got our review unit of the Dover GA-1112 electric cannon, it was billed as a "man-portable system."

Yeah. Right.

The GA is really a very cheap (1,110eb) vehicle-mounted weapon. Forget man-portable. Anchor this baby to a coaxial mount or a pintle-mount on your jeep's rollbar and you will be the boss of the beach. The GA is a two barreled system that uses a motor-driven, rotary bolt to maintain a 2500 round per minute cyclic rate. It fires the brutal 12mm CaselessLong specialty round, and draws on a 400 round drum-magazine. The works weighs in at 15kg unloaded, so the only people who will hump it along are full-borgs. We mounted ours to the pickup-truck's

tailgate and opened up at the back of the quarry. Rocks, bushes, squirrels, watermelons, birds, and terrain all dissolved under the withering fire.

Of course, the GA has a couple of crippling problems. First, to save battery power, the electric motor only winds as long as the weapon is being fired. When you stop, so does the motor. Then, when you want to shoot again it takes about one second after you squeeze the trigger for the motor to wind up to speed again, and for firing to begin. One second is long enough to die. The other problem is that the 400 round drum will support sustained fire for a grand total of ten seconds. Reloading ain't quick. Take my word for it.

My suggestions for Dover: turn it into a dedicated, vehicle-mounted system. Increase the magazine to 1200 or 1600 rounds and mount it on the vehicle. Feed the ammo through a flexi-guide. Then, hardwire the motor to the

car battery so that, as long as the vehicle engine is running, the gun's bolt is cycling. That cancels the start-up time. The GA-1112 could become one of the most powerful light-vehicle mounts in years. I'd definitely use it to discourage tailgaters.

—Bubba

Dover GA-1112 Autogun

HVY ● +1 ● N ● R ● 4D6+4

(12mmCL) ● 400 ● 80 ● ST ●

400m ● 1,110eb

The GA-1112 is a "man-portable" MG chambered for 12mm caseless ammunition. A double-barreled weapon, the GA-1112 feeds from a underside-mounted drum. Weighing about 15kg (empty), it comes with a sling; an integral smartgun rig compensates for the hip-firing position. This weapon must be squeeze-cocked to start the motor (one combat round), and then it can be fired. The ultimate man-portable area-suppression weapon for cyborgs!



at discount stores, right near the comic books. You want non-lethal? Get a real gun and aim low.

Suranam Machine Pistol

Possibly the most comical weapon that I have ever encountered. This Korean-made disaster would be good for stripping paint—if it weren't for its habit of blowing up. The Suranam Machine Pistol fires exploding .177 caseless rounds. Yes, that's right. An exploding varmint load. Hey, if those ground-squirrels are really tough... The problem is this: the hypervelocity rounds generate a lot of chamber and barrel heat, and although the propellant won't cook-off, the explosive bullets will. When the explosive bullet cooks off in the chamber, it will then ignite the caseless propellant. Since the system is caseless, and doesn't have an automatically-opening ejection port, the backblast from the bullet forces the burning propellant into the magazine, where it will cook-off the remaining 25 to 50 rounds all at once. Surprise! You want to win a war? Airdrop a case of these into your enemy's camp. They'll take 'em into battle, and within 24 hours 90% of them won't have a right hand any more. Now that's strategy.

—J.T.

SMG ● +0 ● J/L ● C ● 1D6+4
(.177) ● 25/50 ● 50 ● UR ● 50m ● 375eb

This Korean-made "minisub," or minisubmachinegun fires the .177-calibre explosive caseless cartridge. It is made of carbon-plastics, has a folding wire stock, and due to the small ammo size, the magazine can hold a very large number of rounds. Thanks to a small explosive charge which causes high bullet expansion, the ammunition is efficient, but the weapon's high rate of fire often causes severe overheating problems. The Suranam is a common choice for cyberarm weapon installation.

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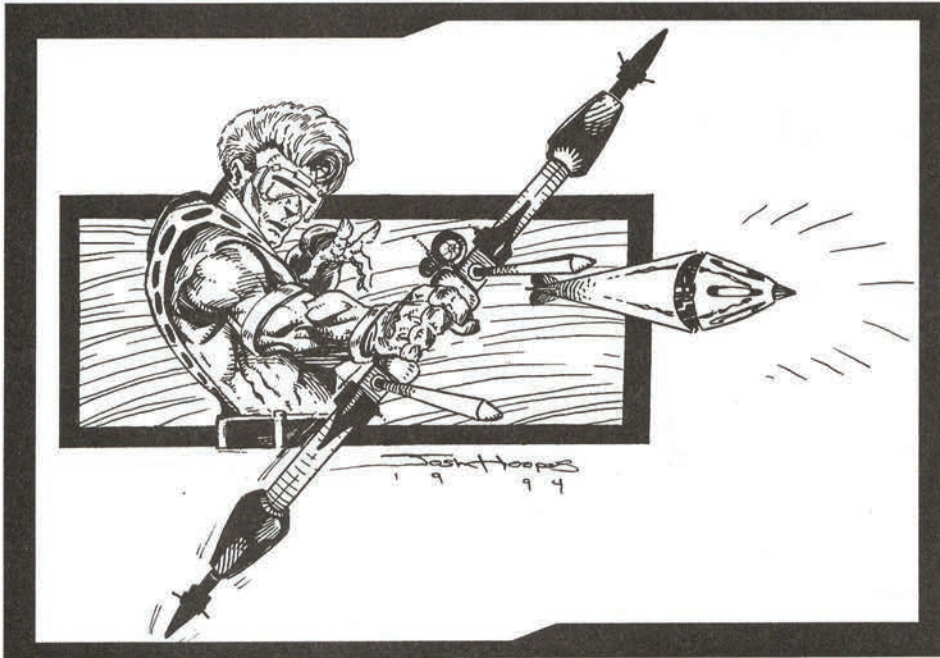
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IN FOCUS

ARCHERY IN 2020



It's common knowledge that there's no true way to silence a projectile other than to reduce it to subsonic velocity. That's why there are no truly silent firearms that pack enough punch to be effective in the kevlar-clad world of the 21st century. Many professionals are turning to an old and respected hobby, that of archery, as an answer to the problem.

Assassins and silent-kill solos aren't the only people taking up this ancient practice. Few realize that *Bushido*, the way of the warrior, requires that a *bushi* master the arts of spear and bow, as well as that of the sword.

For centuries the bow has been relegated to obsolescence by the gun, when in actuality, bows were more accurate, and longer ranged than primitive firearms. It simply didn't take as long to train a soldier to use a firearm as it did to master archery.

Thanks to a combination of 20th century advancements in bow design and 21st century materials construction techniques, the bow is back, and better than ever!

Modern bows come in two types: self bows, where the bow string is pulled back and held until firing, and crossbows, where the string is held mechanically until firing. Self bows have two sub-categories, recurve bows being simple constructs with the arms of the bow bent against the draw angle, and compound bows, which use a pulley-tension system to lessen the actual energy needed to pull and hold the string.

Self-Bows

These are bows that are drawn, held, and fired with a straight pull, rather than being cross-bows. There are quite a few bows from different companies available; the bows below are simply representative of the different types.

Eagletech Sport Bow "Wildcat" 35eb

0 ● N ● E ● 3D6 ● 12 ● 1 ● VR ● 100m
A simple 20-kilo pull recurve bow, cheap and popular.

Eagletech "Tomcat" C-Bow 150eb

0 ● N ● C ● 4D6 ● 12 ● 1 ● VR ● 150m
A more expensive, gyro-stabilized compound bow with a 40-kilo pull (stepped down to 20 kilos).

Eagletech "Tigercat" C-Bow 500eb

+1 ● N ● P ● 6D6 ● 12 ● 1 ● VR ● 150m
A professional's compound bow, pulling 60 kilos (stepped down to 30). Comes complete with computerized sight and gyro-stabilization.

Eagletech "Bearcat" Self Bow 500eb

+1 ● N ● P ● 6D6 ● 12 ● 1 ● VR ● 150m
A recurve made out of maximum-strength composites, with all the power of a normal 60-kilo bow. It can be taken apart into two halves. Please note that the pull of this bow remains at 60 kilos at all times, not stepped down by pulleys! Characters holding this bow will have to start making *Strength Feat* skill rolls after one combat round of holding it...

Arasaka Arms Half-Bow 100eb

-1 ● L ● P ● 3D6 ● 12 ● 1 ● VR ● 100m
A recurve short bow that can be taken apart into two halves. Made out of scanner-resistant composites.



Crossbows

Crossbows are either cocked by the user (that is, the user uses his own strength to pull back the string) or cocked mechanically, utilizing a winch or other device to drag the string back into position.

Eagletech "Arbelest" X-Bow 500eb

0 • N • P • 5D6 • 12 • 1/2 • VR • 150m
A 60-kilo pull bow, cocked by using a built-in winch. Characters with a cyberarm and internal bracing (muscle and bone lace, body-plating breastplate, FMJ) can reload manually, raising the ROF to 1. This bow is quite large, with the bulk of 1.5x an assault rifle.

Eagletech "Handbow" X-Bow 75eb

-1 • J • E • 1D6+2 • 12 • 1 • VR • 25m
This is a hand-held crossbow with a 7-kilo pull. It can be installed in a cyberarm with autoloader for 300eb (the installation uses all the option spaces in the arm).

Eagletech "Scorpion" X-Bow 1500eb

0 • N • P • 7D6 • 6 • 1/2 • VR • 200m
A 120-kilo pull bow, cocked by a power winch. This winch can be removed, if desired, but then the bow can only be cocked by full 'borg conversions and people with two cyberarms (or a cyberarm and a cyberleg) and spinal bracing (MBL, breastplate, FMJ). Manual cocking with two cyberarms or by a full 'borg raises the ROF to 1. This bow is huge, easily the size of a Barret-Arasaka 20mm! Anyone hit with a quarrel from this bow has to succeed at an *Acrobatics* roll of 20+ to remain standing after the impact, otherwise he is knocked over.

Eagletech "Stryker" X-Bow 220eb

-1 • N • C • 3D6+3 • 12 • 1 • VR • 50m
A 20-kilo pull sport crossbow, cocked and fired by the user.

Arrows

Target: The basic arrow/quarrel (bows use arrows, crossbows use quarrels). Halves all armor SP, does normal damage. 12 arrows/24eb, 12 quarrels/30eb.

Broadhead: An head consisting of two or more razor-sharp blades. Acts as a knife for armor penetration, penetrating damage is doubled. 12 arrows/40eb, 12 quarrels/50eb.

Stun: This arrowhead is a blunt ellipsoid. All damage is stun. 12 arrows/20eb, 12 quarrels/25eb.

Spinner: A vicious arrow with a hardened target point that springs into a broadhead inside the victim. Furthermore, the arrow rotates in flight, drilling a 20mm+ hole through the victim's flesh! Acts as a knife for armor penetration, penetrating damage is tripled. 12 arrows/80eb, 12 quarrels/100eb.

Warhead: A standard 25mm pistol grenade (*Chrome 2*, pg.48) can be fitted onto an arrow and shot from any bow with a 20-kilo or greater pull. This reduces WA by -2 and halves the effective range of the bow. The "Arbelest" and "Scorpion" crossbows are exceptions to this; they suffer the -2 WA penalty, but retain their normal ranges (these monsters already throw massive bolts; the grenade's not heavy enough to make a difference).

Special Bow Rules

Self bows require the *Archery* skill to fire effectively, since they are used and aimed very differently than crossbows. Crossbows use either the *Archery* skill, or the *Rifle* skill at half value (the "Handbow" can be fired with *Pistol* skill at half value instead of *Archery* skill).

Range: Arrows and quarrels lose energy over time more swiftly than bullets. An arrow or quarrel shot at Extreme range only does 1/2 damage.

The number of shots listed for each bow aren't held in some sort of magazine. No, they're in a quiver or other arrow holder, so in order to reload your bow or crossbow, you have to reach down/back/out to it and grab the arrow/quarrel before transferring it to your string. Please note that this can become difficult in tight spaces.

Accessories

String silencer: 50eb This is a set of weights that muffles the sound of a self-bow string being loosed. The self-bow equivalent of a firearm silencer, a silenced string muffles the twang to the sound level of a medium-loud sniff. Not applicable to crossbows.

Crossbow autoloader: 25% of the bow's cost. This is a box containing 1/2 the crossbow's normal shots (usually six quarrels). Like a clip, it feeds a new quarrel to the weapon once it's cocked. On self-cocked crossbows (those that don't use a winch), the autoloader includes a lever-based cocking mechanism, better than the normal one. This item doubles the ROF of the bow, but reduces the Acc by -1.

Bow sights: These range from simple optic bow sights to computerized, enhanced-vision sights. The basic sight costs 50eb and adds +1 to the bow's WA. Sight additions include: Cyber-targeting, +250 eb (requires WLNK and cybereye w/targeting option; can be hooked to smartgoggles, boosts WA by an additional +1, for a total of +2); also IR, +200 eb; and Lowlite, +150 eb

Gyro-stabilizer: 100eb A gyro-stabilizer halves the movement penalty for firing a self-bow while moving, keeping the bow steady even in motion.





JERSEY WITHERSPOON'S "DEAD ON TARGET"



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 VIP's out of an experimental military research lab near Fairbanks), popping caps, slinging shrat, and generally sticking it to the opposition, I was 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.

"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. I talked to the folks down in Recreation and Covert Operations and managed to haggle a visa would get me into the Soviet capital. next, I contacted SOF, told them what I was about, and was sent a gift-wrapped set o 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 were all patched up, and my arm was re-

re-wired 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 there be any 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 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 on 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 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 heroes. 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?"

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?"

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, so I 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, 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 this forearm. Behind

him, a woman jacked into a .51cal anti-vehicle 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, holding down the trigger. The guy with the blades delivered an expert wheel kick that caved in the side of the borg's head. They were suicidal moves, and I waited for the borg to clamp its paws down on the both of them, but that never came. The pair rolled out of the way as something inside the cyberpsycho 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 arrests. But it was too late. They 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 injured officer to his feet and introduced myself as a reporter working for the *London Times*. Fortunately, he spoke passable English and 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 every thing. 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?





RED SQUARES—

Love & Bullets From Moscow, Part II

by Francis “Jersey” Witherspoon

Welcome to the Big Uneasy. The complete collapse of everything connected with the Soviet Union hasn't done much for Moscow's value as a restful vacation spot. It's hard to really relax when all of your spare time is spent standing in line for moldy turnips and vodka so lethally awful that you can get a hangover just from holding the bottle up to the light and looking at what's floating around in it.

Of course, with my American press credentials and secret supply of Eurodollars (technically illegal in Sov, but hotly traded on the black market), I can shop at the tourist stores that are off-limits to the locals. I went into the one around the corner from my hotel and bought a pound of dynamite sausage, a loaf of bread that would cost the average Sov three months salary, and a bottle of the good stuff. But on the way back to my cozy, little rat-infested home-away-from-home, I walked past a lonely-looking babushka standing in the cold Moscow rain, at the remotest end of the public bread line, with three hungry-looking children gathered around her. I felt so bad, I gave her the works. Except for the vodka, of course.

Naturally, my philanthropy did not go unnoticed. A pair of beefy Moscow PD with armored greatcoats and PP-Ya “not-so-smart” submachine guns approached me, and firmly warned me that it is illegal for tourists to present gifts to locals. The cops started collecting food, and I started getting annoyed. Still, I was a visitor in a foreign land and caught up in the spirit of diplomacy. Also, I could tell from the

number of strategically-placed bulges under their coats that violence would be ugly. So I did what any smart tourist would do—I bribed them. One crisp, ten-euro note each later, and the cops not only gave the food back to the soaked family, but they bought me a cup of wretched coffee at a nearby sidewalk cafe and filled me in on the local scene. (Brief aside: why they have sidewalk cafes in the city with the worst weather I have ever known is a mystery.)

According to the cops, the most organized, powerful force in the new Soviet Union is organized crime. Feeble attempts to democratize and move away from socialism and towards a market economy a few years back did wonders for the black-market and smuggling gangs. Now the Russkis have got a problem with that most free of the free enterprises. The Sov Mafia is so entrenched that the cops don't even try to do anything unless a gang war breaks out. My new friends told me where the hangout for the local Mafia branch was, and suggested that I pay them a visit. I was so overjoyed at this find that I gave my bottle of vodka to the cops. In return I got a great bearskin cap, and what I think is the Moscow version of a “get-out-of-jail-free-card.” I love the Moscow PD.

That evening I paid a visit to the Club Miami, on Dzerzhinsky Prospekt, disturbingly near the headquarters of the old KGB. Club Miami is the base of operations for the Golytsino Mafia, named for the industrial suburb where they originated. The door is a nondescript basement entrance. When I knocked, a panel in the

EDITOR'S NOTE— YOU HARD-HITTERS LIKED JERSEY'S COVERAGE OF MOSCOW SO MUCH, WE SHIPPED HIM BACK TWO YEARS LATER, IN THE SPRING OF 2015, TO UPDATE HIS ARTICLE. HERE IT IS.

door slid aside, and a pair of beady, metal, Sov cybereyes glared out at me. My unseen friend angrily muttered something that my Russian lingo chip translated as “Please, sir, depart immediately.” I'm guessing that the chip took some liberties with the harsher language. I decided to use a non-verbal reply. I held up my SOF holo-ID press credential. Thirty seconds (and several deadbolts later) I was being ushered into the club and someone was pressing a zesty, intoxicating beverage into my hand. I love that pass. It's good *everywhere*.

The Club Miami is a large, sound-proofed basement, and it is a disco in the best tradition of the word. A tropical-Cuban motif disguised the security cameras and gun ports. The bouncers wore loud, loose Hawaiian shirts that covered their pistols. A large crowd of attractive young people in tight clothes gyrated on the dance floor to a Latin groove. They even had a spinning holo ball. It was worlds better than the drab tourist club I had visited earlier in my trip. There were top-of-the-line braindance booths, and a selection of mixed drinks the likes of which I haven't encountered since that hostage-rescue operation on the Royal Vista cruise ship on the Italian Riviera (see **June 2014** issue—Editor). I was curious how it was that the entire rest of the Soviet Union could live in complete poverty, squalor, and hardship, while the Mafia thrives without so much as a peep from the cops.

The answer to my questions came in the form of Anatoly Kusnetsovo, local leader of the Golytsino Organizatsiya.



Kusnetsovo was a large, well-fed man with a jolly demeanor, and the cold eyes of someone who could cheerfully shoot you through the head. Kusnetsovo immediately began to treat me like his best friend, clapping me on the back, and ordering a large plate of sausages, bread, and caviar to be brought to our table by an attractive debauchka so minimally clothed that I forgot immediately about the freezing rain falling outside. "Here we live well. Even better than party leaders! That's why people want to join us! To be like us!" A spray of caviar shot from his lips and speckled my shirt as he talked and laughed. He gestured at the young people on the dance floor. "Some of these children work for us. Many do not. But they will become party officials, police officials, and they will remember what we did for them."

The Golytsinos have the cops so wrapped up that Kusnetsovo was remarkably forthcoming in discussing the workings of his group. Their rackets read like a shopping list. Food and technology smuggling. Weapons supply. (It turns out that even the police buy their more sophisticated weapons from the Golytsinos; the official red tape is just too devastating.) Illegal importation of western cyberware. Black market money trading. Automobiles and aerodynes for party officials(!). Computers and illegal information trading. I learned later that the Golytsino is one of the big four in Moscow, with most smaller Mobs specializing in one or two forms of graft. I also learned some of the secrets to the big gangs' success. In a land of shortages, they fill a critical need. In order to stay in business they have a few simple rules. First: make friends with the police. They're having as hard a time as everyone else. Two: stay away from crimes that will piss the police off, such as arson, protection rackets, and, depending on the area, drugs. Three: make the people your friends. Average citizens drive a great deal of the black market (which, contrary to its name, is often held in broad daylight on the outskirts of town like a giant bazaar). Don't alienate your customers by squeezing them with protection rackets, shooting them, or beat-

ing them up. Many gangs don't subscribe to these rules, and have more trouble with the cops, the party, and the citizens. Of course, because of the smuggling, the Organitskaya often have cyberware, weapons, and equipment far better than the police and army.

It's not all sunshine and roses for the Golytsinos, though. Although they have the cops on the take and the public on their side, competition with the other Organitskaya groups for business and territory is fierce and violent. Bloody con-



flagrations are common, as are gangland hits and raids. There is a pact to keep innocent deaths and collateral damage to a minimum, though, because police and Party attention hurts all of the gangs. In fact, Kusnetsovo let me in on the fact that the Golytsinos had learned the location of a warehouse belonging to the rival Karlanikhas. He asked if I would like to go on a raid. In the interests of Journalism, I agreed. After all, I was on vacation. Why not have some fun?

Kusnetsovo's main lieutenant, a thick-necked thug named Voregod, was in charge of the raid. He and I bundled ourselves into a trio of nondescript Zhiguli sedans along with ten other men and women and headed down to Domodedovo, near the airport. After paying off some local cops to take a long coffee break, Voregod sent out his scout,

Natalya, to deal with the lookouts. This was the same attractive, bikini-clad woman who had earlier served me sausage and drinks. Now she was dressed in a black jumpsuit and was wearing a pair of Japanese light-amp goggles and a wicked knife. She crept out of one of the Zhigulis and vanished into the shadows. Ten minutes later she re-appeared with a bloody knife and said that she had "dealt with" four guards. I swore on the spot never to cheat on a Russian woman.

A minute later, we were at the door to the warehouse. Voregod simply knocked. When the door opened a crack, he gave it a mighty kick with his cyberleg and burst inside, surprising about seven men and women and casting a handful of flash and smoke bombs around him. "Surprise from Golytsino!" He roared, and began firing. Within sixty seconds the Golytsinos had all but wiped out the surprised Karlanikhas. One guy was left alive, sprawled in a pool of blood and shattered cyberware on the floor. As the rest of our accomplices were carrying out crates of Japanese cyberdecks, Voregod knelt by the wounded man and said in Russian, "Don't take it so hard! We had a Solo of Fortune reporter here! You will be famous!" The wounded man lifted his head and stared at me through his agony for a moment. Then he asked me for my autograph. So I signed my autograph for him. And then Voregod shot him through the head. It's a funny old world.

An hour later, we were back at Club Miami, Natalya was on my lap, and Kusnetsovo was explaining to me that the Kharlanika's would no doubt retaliate as soon as they could. That's life in the Soviet Mafia. If you're ever in Moscow, drop by Club Miami and tell the doorman that I sent you. They'll make you feel at home, and, if you're lucky, you'll get a little action. As for me, my holiday was over, and the next day my new friends were seeing me off at the airport. I'll miss Moscow. Sure it's cold, gray, and paranoid. But it ain't ever dull.

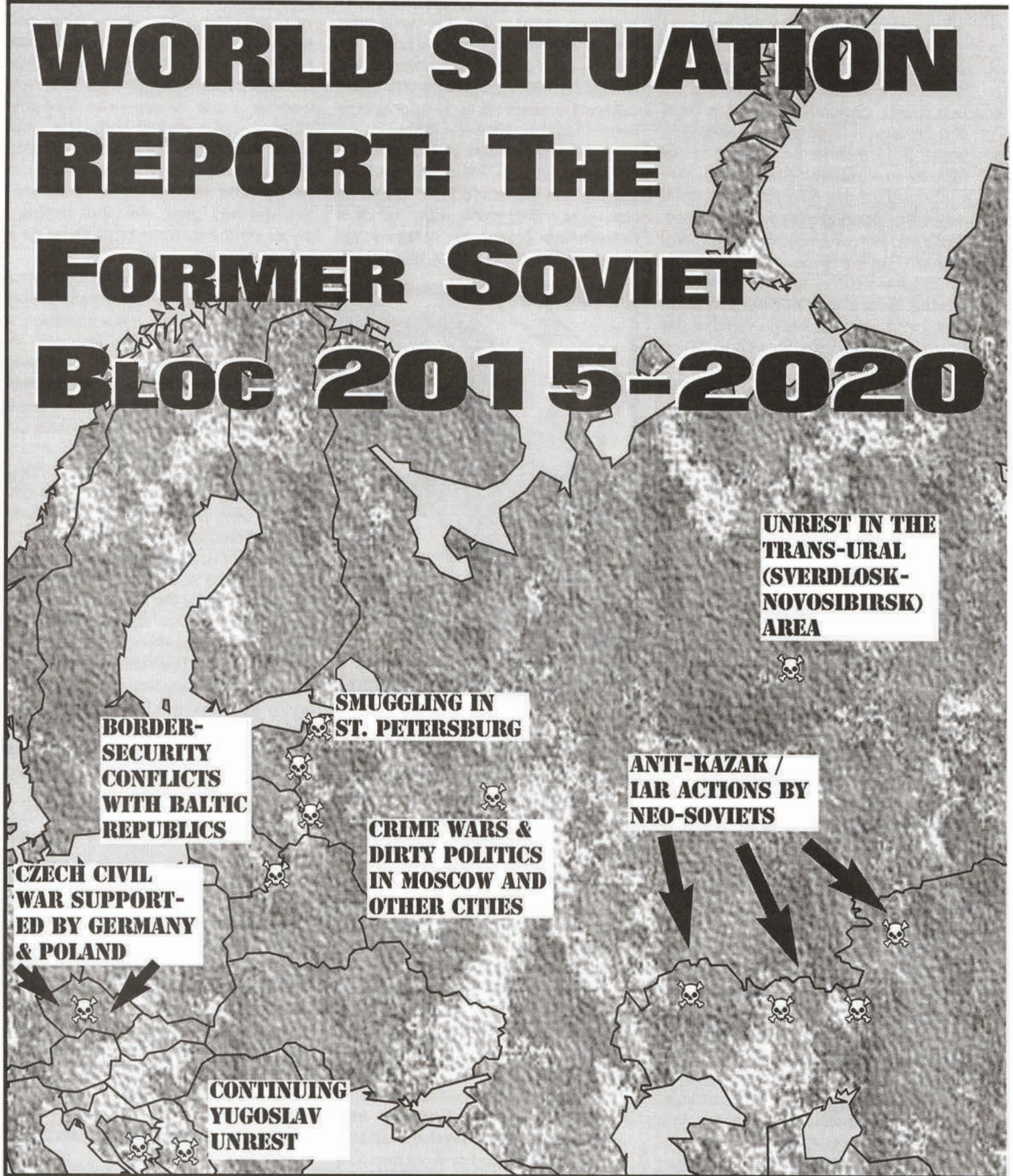
Next month:

Istanbul on less than fifty rounds a day!





WORLD SITUATION REPORT: THE FORMER SOVIET BLOC 2015-2020





The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was once one of the world's two great powers, controlling all of eastern Europe and a healthy chunk of Asia, and influencing countries around the world through diplomacy, industry, and covert methods. This changed during the 1990s, as secessionist member republics combined with a failing economy, inter-culture wars, and political woes to bring about the downfall of the old USSR.

The new Union of Soviet Sovereign Republics was born from this crisis period. The name change was very subtle (some theorize that the single word change was in order to avoid the cost of replacing the USSR on all the stationary and paperwork), but its effects far-reaching: each member nation of the new USSR was a sovereign republic, with its own laws, jurisdictions, military, etc., in essence freeing every country from the yoke of a Russian central government. At the same time, the USSR's domination of the countries of eastern Europe was quietly dropped; it had all but ceased anyway, since the Sovs couldn't afford to continue the economic upkeep. [For more information on the mechanics and history of the transition from the old USSR (usually just referred to as the USSR) to the new USSR (in world-speak slang, Neo-SSR/Neo-Sov, differentiating it from the old country), check out the History section of the SovOil dossier in *Corp Report*, Vol. 3.]

The situation in the USSR and its former satellite countries is one of a continued struggle for economic recovery. The old USSR used its resources (and those of its satellites) very heavily, without regard for the future of the area. When it finally collapsed, the new sovereign republics and former Bloc nations found themselves faced with depleted resources, high levels of pollution, antiquated industries, and a lack of hard currency. In short, they had the hard job of playing catch-up with the rest of the world, starting with a 50-



75 year handicap and adding the problems of massive industrial pollution to boot. To this day, the USSR and its former satellites are still trying to pick up the pieces and compete on a world market that passed them in the 1980s.

Political turmoil continues to complicate the process. Many of the sovereign republics can't get along with each other; several fight frequent border wars over everything from resources to religion. The monolithic structure of the Soviet Party repressed other political parties for so long that once the other parties were allowed out of the back rooms, they went rather berserk. After 25 years, the political wars have calmed down a little bit—but the term "Russian politics" is still synonymous with behind-the-scenes blackmail, coercion, and mysterious disappearances...

And who would have thought that the old USSR would ever be credited with maintaining peace anywhere? Yet, as soon as Russian troops were withdrawn from satellite countries and outlying republics, zealots hauled centuries-old hatreds out of the closet and started shooting each other. Ukraine threatened war against Russia. The Baltics followed suit (it can be argued that the Baltics threatened war first, and Ukraine followed suit—the exact timing is lost in classified diplomatic records). Fortunately, these were diplomatic maneuvers. The religious war in Kazakhstan, with the Arabic Moslems and the Russian Christians, was more serious. Indeed, the war threatened all of the USSR, until the members of the new Islamic Asiatic Republic (formerly Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, and parts of Kazakhstan) started warring on each other over ancient tribal wrongs.

Poland and Germany had a brief moment of angst when they arrayed armies at each other's borders. To this day, they maintain an uneasy peace. Bulgaria's historic feud with Turkey has resulted in sporadic border clashes. And who can ignore the

prize snake-pit of them all, the mess in what used to be known as Yugoslavia? The Bosnians and Serbs wasted no time in starting their genocidal war. The war has slowed to a relative trickle, but it still plods on.

The new USSR and the countries of eastern Europe are wracked with

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internal strife on all levels. Open warfare is common, political struggles are an almost everyday occurrence; racial, political, and religious differences often boil over into conflict, and atop it all is the move to rebuild into the 21st century. Combined with Western influence and interests in the region, the possibilities for mercenary employment are staggering.

Survival Tricks

First things first: unless you are a native of the country where you're going, *you're not in Kansas anymore*. You are not on your home turf, and you'd better know the local situation before you go sashaying into one of the eastern European countries, or you'll wind up on the wrong end of a gun very swiftly. It's not just the language that will be different. The customs, the food, the body language, the politics—everything is going to be different. What's worse, is that it won't be totally alien, like walking into the Forbidden City. No, things will be just familiar enough to get you caught up in a stimulus-response situation where your natural response to the stimulus will be all wrong, and bang! you're dead (or worse).

In simple terms, don't look at a tour in the old SovBloc as a milk run through historic Europe. Even if you're Euro-hip to the eyeballs, and can mingle with the goldenkids and the football supporters, you'll have to learn a whole different culture to fit in with the east Euros. Short of finding a very competent and long-suffering native guide with a silver tongue, the next best thing is to outfit yourself with a CultOps chipset (editorial note: the CultOps chipset is similar to the Special Operative and Tourism chips in *Chromebook 1*. It is a set of two chips; one has the language at +3 and the other has *Specific Culture* at +2 and *Local Geography* at +1. This is enough to prevent basic faux pas. Cost is 1500 eb). For the real pros, nothing less than a complete chip-set (language, customs, law, geography, and military tech, all at +3) will do—it's heavy on the chip-slot, but a good, thorough knowledge of the country and the people can save your mission, and your butt.

The next thing to look at is your kit. What are you taking with you into east Euro? Besides your cybernetics, of course—speaking of which, look to

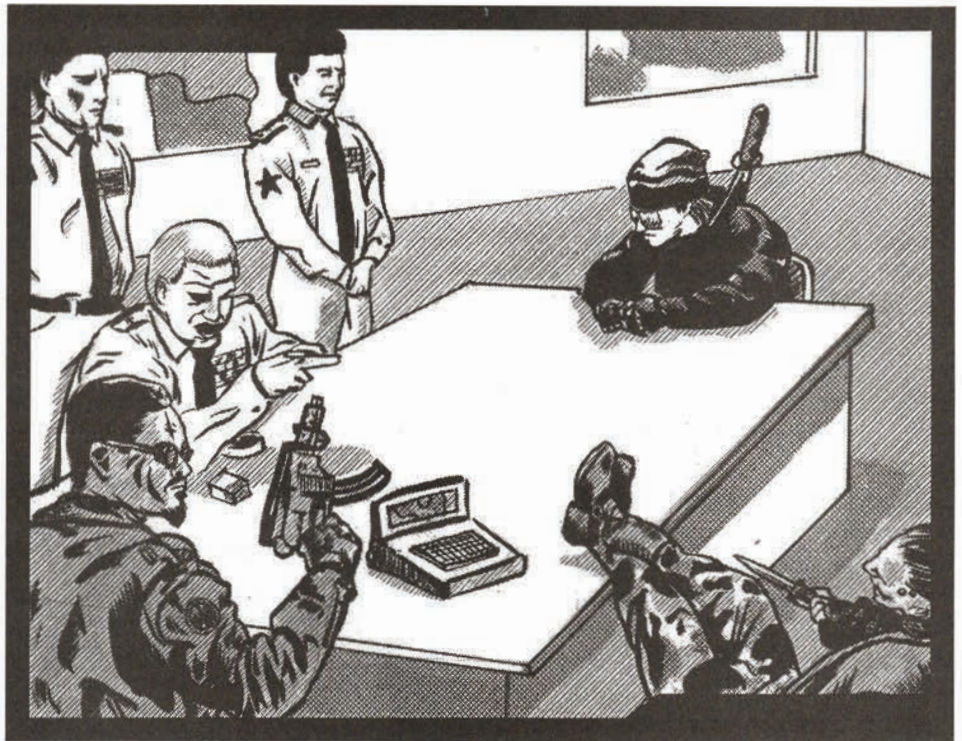


your body first. Get a complete check-up, inoculations, nanotech boost, and cybernetics overhaul done before you head out, even if you're only going to be there a week or so. Eastern Europe is not the center of modern medicine and cybernetics research. If your metal breaks down out in the middle of Kazakhstan, the nearest cybernetics clinic is in Volgograd—and its most recent stock is ten years old, mate. They don't have the spares, the facilities, or the know-how to fix that malfunctioning servo (much less a faulty neural circuit). And they don't have tailored nanos to keep your biowares going, either.

Back to the kit. What are you taking in the way of equipment? Thinking of hauling in a Malorian Flechette pistol and an M31A1? Or maybe just a Militech 25mm GL. Better haul lots of ammo and spares, then, because you won't find any available at any price where you're going. You'd be better off switching to a Stolvoboy, or even an old AK-74, because there are *lots* of these around, with mountains of spare parts and ammo. Anything in 9mm Parabellum is okay, too, because of the proximity to western Europe and their love affair with the old round.

The same thing goes for the rest of your equipment. Whenever possible, try to kit yourself out in what's locally available, because most mercenaries don't have huge supply networks to keep them in their favorite materials. The best advice is to check out an area SovOil location, and see if the local employees won't liberate some equipment in exchange for some euro. SovOil stuff is high quality (by east Europe standards), and common enough that it won't generate interest (or supply problems).

So you've got your chips, your check-ups, and your gear. You figure you're ready to go. Uh uh. Rule #1: Knowledge is power. Before you head off to your job, check out the local situation nine ways from Sunday. If you can, finagle an intelligence report from a reliable source or two—it's amazing what you can find when you combine



a CIA dossier with the lowdown from a native organized-crime stoolie. Read the newsmags. Raid network datafiles. Try to find out everything you can about where you're going and what you're doing. The more information you have, the less chance there is of getting caught in a double-cross (a common and popular tactic in eastern Europe. It's no coincidence that the vampire legend comes from here, with its central basis of the idea that anyone can betray you, even your loved ones).

So keep your eyes open. Make sure of the political and military situations if you can, because changing conditions can alter allegiances in moments. In addition, be as certain as possible of the allegiances of your employer, *and your enemies*. Employer and adversary covertly working together to accomplish a political goal is a more common occurrence in eastern Europe than you might think.

Russia

The largest sovereign republic of the USSR, the largest economic power, and the tail that wags the USSR dog, Russia is pretty much still the center of

the USSR, a fact which angers the other sovereign republics (such as Ukraine), and makes neighbors like the Baltics and Poland nervous. Russia still has one of the world's largest standing armies, nuclear capability, and is one of the world's aerospace leaders—the Soviet Rocket Corps provides most of the ESA's heavy lifting engines.

Despite this apparent strength, industrial might, and solidarity, there is still plenty of employment for mercenaries inside Mother Russia. The opportunities range from security to garrison, from striker missions to espionage:

Striker Mission: The oil fields of the Caucasus region (located between Ukraine and Kazakhstan) have been a strategic target since WW II. The Wehrmacht almost captured them, and were stopped at Stalingrad. Stalingrad was re-renamed Volgograd, and is still the focal point of this oil-rich region. SovOil practically owns this region, but has problems with Arabic Kazakhstanis, who also claim this region because they want the oil, too!

The Employer: SovOil, the biggest company in the hemisphere. It pays



well, and SovOil's checks never bounce—but you earn them. Watch your back, though. SovOil hires foreign mercs to do its dirty work for the following reasons: 1. To achieve an objective more cost-efficiently than SovOil's troops; 2. to do a dirty job and blame it on foreigners, rather than SovOil (hopefully, they'll get you out fast); 3. suicide missions, where the idea is to shoot up the enemy and die in the process, thereby blunting the enemy and only costing SovOil the euro to bring you in and turn you loose.

Support: Variable, depending on the mission. If you're going to be there for a while and you're not doing commando ops, SovOil can keep you in comparatively good supply—particularly if you use SovOil-standard equipment.

The Enemy: The main thrust to capture, or at least cripple, the Caucasus oil fields, comes from a collection of Arabic Kazakhstani tribes whose motives are greed, tribal pride, and a hatred of the Russians (who are perceived as foreign oppressors). The Kazakhstanis are fairly well-equipped, using arms and equipment seized from local armories. Usually this material is used against the Christian Kazakhstanis, but these tribes can muster fairly large forces to sally out of Kazakhstan and attack SovOil's oil fields.

The Mission: Using western technology and tactics, mercenaries cross the Kazakhstani border and attack the aggressors before they strike into the oil fields. These are usually search-and-destroy missions, with the emphasis placed on "hit-and-git." The method of attack varies with the size of the mercenary force—a large armored force would use direct assault, while a small force might choose guerrilla tactics.

Garrison Mission: The border with the Baltics (Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania) is always a touchy place. Russian troops nearby are not well-loved—pesky partisans tend to sneak out and dry-gulch them, always a morale problem.

The Employer: The Russian government. Pay is low, and sometimes unreliable, depending on the government's internal politics. Foreign mercs are low on the priority list.

Support: Abysmal. The Russian Army will grudgingly allot a mercenary force necessary supplies, when it gets around to it.

The Enemy: Partisans from the Baltics (particularly on the Estonian border), and the Russian Army(!). Hopefully, the nationality of merc units on border patrol will dissuade parti-

sees as a slap in the face.

The Mission: Border patrol, pure and simple. Diligent units might try to catch a smuggler or two, but most of the unit goal is to "show the flag," assuring the Baltics that the troops on the border are not sneaky Russians planning to invade...

Security Mission: Well, actually, *bodyguard* duty. Moscow is still a pretty dangerous place to live if you're a politician. If you're New-SSR, then the Hardliners are after your skin. If you're a Hardliner, then the New Order hates your guts, for the "Nights of Fire" if for nothing else. If you're Islamic, everybody else watches you for signs of *jihād*; if you're a Ukrainian, everybody suspects you of espionage against Russia... You get the picture.

The Employer: A Moscow politician of one alignment or another. Get your pay up front, and in gold, or eurodollars. File it in an iron-clad account somewhere, like Switzerland. And write your will.

Support: Pretty good, in Moscow. After all, if you need something, you can nip down to the shops and get it. And if the shops don't carry it, there's a thriving and well-supplied black market that does...

The Enemy: Grief. This category can include every soul in Moscow, including your supposed allies-of-the-moment. This job is recommended for the truly paranoid, since their delusion gives them a leg up on the reality of the situation.

The Mission: Depends on what the pol wants. Some missions are hellish, straight bodyguard jobs, with foreigners hired because they (hopefully) don't have any interest in local politics, and once bought, stay bought...usually, the employer tries for some sort of blackmail or other extra "insurance" to insure his bodyguards' loyalty. Other missions involve espionage against the pol's enemies, ranging from info-gathering to sabotage and assassination. Every dirty trick the KGB ever thought of during the Cold War is now used internally, against the members of the USSR.

WHAT ARE YOU PACKING IN THE WAY OF EQUIPMENT? THINKING OF HAULING IN A MALORIAN FLECHETTE PITSOL AND AN M31A1? BETTER HAUL LOTS OF AMMO AND SPARES — YOU WON'T FIND ANY WHERE YOU'RE GOING.

sans from attacking (most of the time). The Russian Army might decide to "stir things up" by faking partisan activity and trying to provoke a mercenary response, both to legitimize action against the Baltics and to harass the foreigners, whom the Russian Army



This sort of mission absolutely requires good knowledge of Moscow, USSR politics, local customs, and the local power structure.

“Police” Work: Following the breakdown of Soviet control in the 1990s, a new force made its presence openly known in the USSR. Organized crime became a real factor in politics and economics, and there wasn’t much that the authorities could do about it, because of OrgCrime’s links with the local powers-that-be.

The Employer: Some Russian law enforcement or martial authority, usually on the sly. Payment will be good, usually 1/4 down, 3/4 on completion of the job.

Support: None. The employer wants to avoid all links with the mercenaries.

The Enemy: The Organitskaya. It could be a local mafioso, some sort of smuggling or black market cartel, or even an assassins’ union.

The Mission: Strictly deniable, either a sting or a strike. Stings are covert missions where the mission is to penetrate the OrgCrime organization and gather information on it, then fade out quietly without letting the organization know that it’s been compromised. Strikes are more overt, where the idea is to have some foreign group (unaffiliated with the blameless and unwitting authorities, naturally) come in and smash the organization, then disappear (obviously in the pay of foreign competitors, comrade!). These missions are touchy, difficult, and usually pay well.

The Baltics

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania; the three first Soviet Socialist Republics to gain independence (as of Dec. 21, 1991). And independent they always were, hating Russian domination—the Estonians fought alongside the German *Wehrmacht* in WW II, and continued a guerrilla war against the Soviets until 1955!

By and large, these three small countries are fairly peaceful, as long as the Russians keep their troops away from the borders. Latvia’s industry and Lithuania’s agriculture are too valuable to the USSR to fight over. Estonia’s oil-shale fields, containing over 60% of the oil-shale reserves of the former USSR, are a contested resource.

The Employer: Petrochem, SovOil, or Estonian security. The first two pay



magnificently, although it’s a good thing to have a “if we don’t return” file with a trusty media or two. Just as insurance... If you’re hired by the Estonians, the pay is low, but they will not shaft you.

Support: None. Estonian duty is purely covert.

The Enemy: Petrochem, SovOil, and Estonian security.

The Mission: Espionage and counter-espionage. Both Petrochem and SovOil have forces working in Estonia to try to subvert Estonian sympathies (and oil) to their causes. Foreign mercenaries are usually hired to commit some sort of terrorist act that can be blamed on one of these

corporations, or to prevent a terrorist act by the employer’s rival, or, rarely, as security by the Estonians themselves.

This is really hazardous duty. The Estonians are so trigger-happy and suspicious of non-Estonians that they make Arasaka look restrained. The spying and counter-spying is fierce and no-holds-barred, yet actual damage to the oil-shale operation is verboten; after all, that’s the prize!

The Upper East Bloc

Poland, the Czech and Slovak Republics, and Romania/Moldavia comprise the Upper East Bloc countries. All three countries are still fairly poor; they started that way when they were gifted with independence back in the 1990s, and the ensuing chaos and world recession didn’t give them much of a chance to improve their situation. Of the three, Poland is the wealthiest and most modern, with the Czech Republic a close second, thanks to German investment (a fact which grates on the Slovaks).

These countries are peaceful, without much employment for mercenaries (beyond the usual corporate hijinks). The Czech and Slovak Republics are the exception to the rule. On June 18, 2021, General Skroup launched a power bid to seize the Czech Republic when he invaded Prague with EC support. The Czech government fought back, and was defeated after a spirited engagement, falling back to southern Poland as government-in-exile (it didn’t take much to persuade the Poles that the abortive invasion of 2018 was a ploy by Skroup and his EC friends to keep Poland and the Czech Republic off-guard). Now, a standing war is being waged against what the east Euros see as little more than a thinly-veiled German annexation ploy.

The Sides: General Skroup’s Provisional Government in Prague, the



Czech Republican Army in Poland, the Slovak Army in Slovakia, and partisans of various alignment in all three locations.

This is serious business. Skroup's lightning strike failed to do more than precipitate a war. Skroup is trying to hold on to Prague and the other major Czech cities, while the CRA is doing its best to strike at Skroup's forces without damaging their own cities and people. The Slovak Army lurks on the border, ready to attack Skroup at the least provocation, and racist partisans—Slovak, Czech, and German—attack their declared enemies and generally cause lots of collateral damage.

Of course, there's support for the combatants. Skroup has not-so-tacit support from the EC, and the CRA has open support from the republics of the USSR. The problem is that this war is perceived as another German attempt to annex the area now called the Czech Republic. In WW II, most of the

Czechs didn't mind, since they hated the Soviets. Now that they have independence, they do mind. And so does the rest of eastern Europe; the Czech Republic has become a rallying point for the former Soviet Bloc, a chance to prove that the EC (and Germany) can't dominate the eastern countries. Naturally, there's plenty of mercenary work here. For a change, it's fairly straightforward; since the sides are so polarized, the chances of a double-cross are slim (unless you sign on with the partisans). The EC/Skroup forces pay very well for expertise, but you earn the money, since working for Skroup either means commando missions against the CRA or anti-partisan

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missions. The CRA can't pay as well, but its missions are a lot safer, since they have contacts everywhere in the operation theatre. Typical CRA contracts include commando missions against Skroup's forces, particularly his supply lines through Germany...If offered an anti-supply mission, hold out for higher pay, because it means operating inside Germany—in essence, an undeclared war against Germany!

The Southern Bloc

Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. Lands of the gypsies; of Transylvania fame. More hungry and economically depressed than their northern neighbors. All three are governed by dictators, but Hungary and Romania's dictators are governed by EC "advisors." There's no merc work here, unless you want to be an EC stooge taking part in a war of provocation against Bulgaria (a position usually referred to as "the short end of the stick").

The Yugoslavian Splinters

The moment that Communist control faded in Yugoslavia, the country fell apart. The separatist countries of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia soon became household names as the inhabitants of each sought to redress wrongs dating from the German occupation of WW II (actually, the differences are much older than that, but WW II provided the most recent set of grievances).

The Serbs and Croats practiced genocide on each other for nearly a decade, and nearly succeeded. In the end, the crash of the late '90s convinced them that they had to stop shooting one another or starve together. An uneasy peace settled over the land. Gradually, the former Yugoslavians started cooperating (out of necessity), and eventually stabilized into a sort of coalition. The crowning achievement of the coalition was the "annexation" of Albania in 2019.

(This "annexation" needs explanation. What happened was that the Albanians and the Greeks claimed that Macedonia—the easternmost part of former Yugoslavia—was more Greek/Albanian than Serbo-Croat, and



“annexed” the little country by moving in some troops and closing the borders in 2018. In response, the Serbs and Croats invaded northern Albania with forces only slightly stronger than Albania’s token military. At present, the Serbo-Croat forces occupy Albania’s northernmost city, and enough of northern Albania to make it hard on the Albanians to remove them. And that’s the extent of the “annexation.” Still, Serbs and Croats fighting on the same



side without killing each other was a real triumph.)

There’s mercenary work in this sector. There’s a sort of three-front war going on: Serbia vs. Macedonia; Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia vs. Albania; and, of course, there’s still the Serb vs. Croat conflict. It may not make the news as often, but the fighting still goes on.

The Employer: Any of a dozen organizations. Payment is less than certain; get the money in advance—or at least in a Swiss bank account, to be paid on success. And watch who hires you; the former Yugoslavians are likely to change allegiances without a moment’s notice.

Support: Better travel light, and self-contained. Support here is lousy.

The Enemy: In this country, this definition can change without a moment’s notice, too. When your employer defines your enemy, move on the objective quickly, before your enemies are declared your friends! As far as opposition, all of the sides involved are poor—equipment is surplus 20th-century stuff, with green or undisciplined troops. There are a surprising number of tanks still around, though, so don’t think it’s a milk run.

The Mission: Variable. Most missions are quick strikes against a defined target objective; settling for any other kind of mission leaves a mercenary unit open to local political maneuverings.

Current Soviet Equipment & Vehicles—

CLGMs (Cannon-Launched Guided Missiles):

The Soviet Union was the first country to routinely equip normal combat vehicles with ATGMs, placing external Sagger launchers on the world’s first IFV, the BMP-1. It was soon discovered that the external launching platform exposed the missile, the launching apparatus, and the loader to enemy fire; however, early missiles were too bulky to fire from internal launchers. As missile technology improved and missiles became smaller, the Soviets invented slim, streamlined missiles that could be launched through the smoothbore gun tubes of their MBTs. Soviet ATGM research continues to refine and reduce missile sizes, so that now their 11cm CLGMs are the equal of other nations’ HATGMs, and their 8cm CLGM is equal to normal LATGMs.

Outfitting a cannon to fire CLGMs adds 5000eb. to the cost of the gun; minimum sizes for missiles 9cm for LATGMs, 12cm for HATGMs.

The Common Neo-Sov Soldier/ Policeman:

INT	4	REF	6	TECH	4
COOL	6	ATTR	5	LUCK	5
BOD	6	EMP	5		

Skills:

Soldier: Combat Sense +3, Athletics +2, Awareness +3, Brawling +3, Driving +2, First Aid +1, Rifle or SMG +3, Stealth +1.

Policeman: Combat Sense or Authority +3, Athletics +2, Awareness +3, Brawling +3, Driving +2, First Aid +1, Handgun +4, Intimidation +2, Melee +2, Rifle or SMG +3, Stealth +2, Streetwise +1.

Equipment:

Soldier: AKR-16 assault rifle with 10 magazines, 4 hand grenades, knife/bayonet, SP20 helmet, SP10 kevlar vest, field kit, tent, backpack, one week’s field rations. One soldier in two has an under-barrel 30mm grenade launcher (treat as 40mm grenade launcher), and carries only 6 magazines of AKR-16 ammunition and no hand grenades, but carries 10x 30mm grenades for the launcher.

Policeman: Stolovoy STS submachinegun with 5 magazines, Stolovoy ST-2 pistol with 4 magazines, 2 hand grenades, knife, handcuffs, truncheon with built-in electric stunner, SP14 armor jacket.



A VASTLY IMPROVED MODEL, THE T-100 HAS ENOUGH ROOM INSIDE FOR TALL CREW MEMBERS, DECENT RANGE AND SPEED, A LACK OF THE CHRONIC MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS THAT PLAGUED SOVIET TANKS IN THE PAST, AND ENOUGH COMBAT CAPABILITY TO SURVIVE THE BATTLEFIELD OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

T-100 Tank

The T-100 is the latest in the Soviet tank series. A vastly improved model, the T-100 has enough room inside for crew members taller than 1.55 meters, decent range and speed, a lack of the chronic maintenance problems that plagued Soviet tanks in the past, and enough combat capability to survive the battlefield of the 21st century. Its low price and ready availability ensures that it's seen on battlefields from Asia to Africa.

The gunner and commander ride in the turret. The driver and loader ride in the hull.

TOP SPEED:	80 Kph	SDP:	335 (Body 17)
ACC/DEC:	16/80 Kph	SP:	160 (Armor 8)
CREW:	4	TYPE:	MBT
RANGE:	612 Km*	MASS:	56 tons
PASSENGERS:	0	COST:	9.8M eb
CARGO:	1 space	*80 kilometers of this range is due to an external fuel tank mounted on the rear deck. This tank can be jettisoned, and usually is before entering battle.	
MANEUVER:	+2		

Special Equipment: Composite and reactive armor, amphibious, fire extinguisher, 12 man-hours life support, 2 IR smoke launchers, anti-personnel grenade charges, military radio, visual rangefinder, auto-pilot, navigation system, active IR sensors, light amplification, military radar detector, armored searchlight, thermograph.

Weapons: Stabilized 12cm, CLGM-equipped gun with +1 targeting computer, stabilized 23mm coaxial autocannon, mounted in turret. 14.5mm machinegun on pintle mount atop turret. 2 7.62mm machine-guns in articulated mounts forward on the hull, fired by driver or gunner. 9 HATGM missiles with semi-active thermal guidance, 3 23mm, 4 14.5mm magazines in the turret; 50 rounds 12cm and 4 magazines of 7.62mm ammunition in the hull.

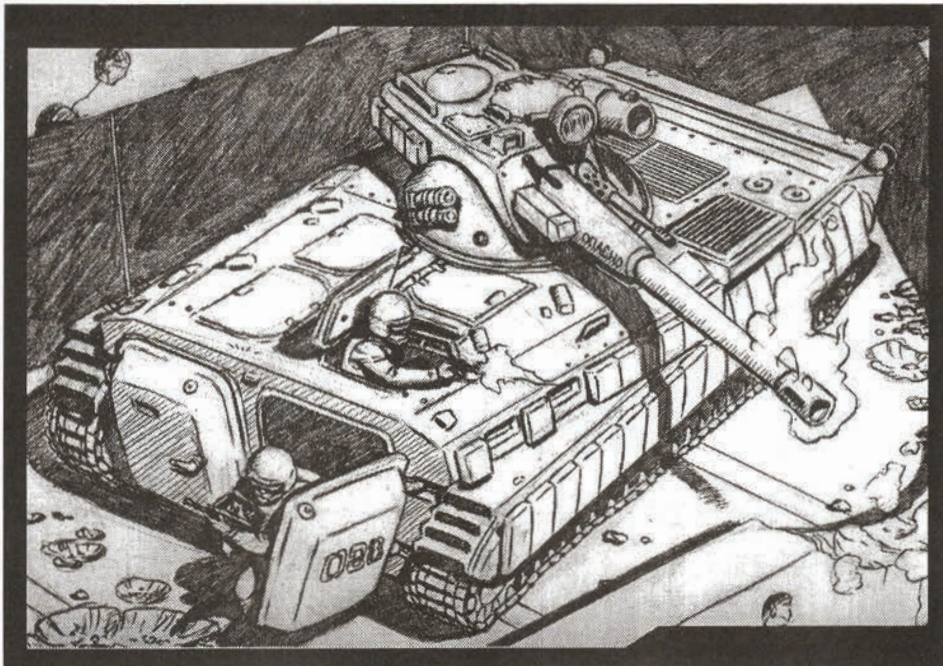
Mi-52

Of course, SovOil's aerodyne was the perfect platform from which to develop an attack AV. It's bulky, and not very maneuverable, and boxy, and ugly, and doesn't look a thing like the rest of the world's sleek attack AVs. But it is cheap, and shares a lot of parts in common with the Mi-50, and the Soviets sell a lot of them to countries which cannot afford the sleeker Western models.

TOP SPEED:	365 Kph	MANEUVER:	+0
ACC/DEC:	80/80 Kph	SDP:	110 (Body 3)
CREW:	3	SP:	55 (Armor 3)
RANGE:	1288 Km*	TYPE:	AV
PASSENGERS:	3	MASS:	4,400 kg
CARGO:	3 Spaces (500 Kg)	COST:	850,000 eb

Special Equipment: Ejection seats for crew, fire extinguisher, 12 man-hours life support, chaff and flare dispensers, military radio, visual rangefinder, auto-pilot and navigation system, active IR, laser detector, light amplification, magnetometer, radar with terrain-following, thermograph.

Weapons: 23mm autocannon and 30mm AutoGL (count as 40mm) in high-angle chin turret. 2 12.7mm Gatlings in hull, fixed forward. 2 19-shot 2.75" rocket pods, pointed forward. One 14.5mm machinegun in articulated mount on each side. 4 autocannon magazines, 4 AGL magazines, 4 Gatling magazines, all in hull.



BMP-3 IFV

The Soviet BMP was the world's first Infantry Fighting Vehicle. It was fully enclosed, armored, fast enough to keep pace with the tanks, armed with a 76mm cannon and the new ATGM launcher, capable of carrying a squad of infantry into battle, and fighting alongside them. The BMP-3 is the latest in the series of Soviet IFVs. Like the T-100, it's got a taller ceiling (designed for troops over 1.55 meters tall), better reliability, and a lower price tag than any comparable Western model.

The entire crew rides in the hull.

TOP SPEED:	50 Kph	SP:	37 (Armor 2)
ACC/DEC:	20/50 Kph	TYPE:	AFV
CREW:	3	MASS:	18.7 tons
RANGE:	595 Km*	COST:	950,000 eb
PASSENGERS:	7	*113 kilometers of this range is due to an external fuel tank mounted on the rear deck. This tank can be jettisoned, and usually is before entering battle.	
CARGO:	None		
MANEUVER:	+2		
SDP:	187 (Body 9)		

Special Equipment: Reactive armor, amphibious, 2 IR smoke launchers, anti-personnel grenade charges, military radio, visual rangefinder, auto-pilot, navigation system, Image Enhancement, passive IR sensors, light amplification, military radar detector, armored searchlight, thermograph.

Weapons: 10cm CLGM-equipped cannon (treat as a 90mm), coaxial 30mm cannon and 7.62mm machinegun, all mounted in turret. 2 30mm and 2 7.62mm magazines in turret, 5 LATGMs with semi-active thermal guidance and 20 rounds of 10cm ammo in hull.

THE SOVIET BMP WAS THE WORLD'S FIRST INFANTRY FIGHTING VEHICLE. THE BMP-3 IS THE LATEST IN THE SERIES OF SOVIET IFVS. LIKE THE T-100, IT'S GOT A TALLER CEILING, BETTER RELIABILITY, AND A LOWER PRICE TAG THAN ANY COMPARABLE WESTERN MODEL.



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ATTACK
HELICOPTER.**



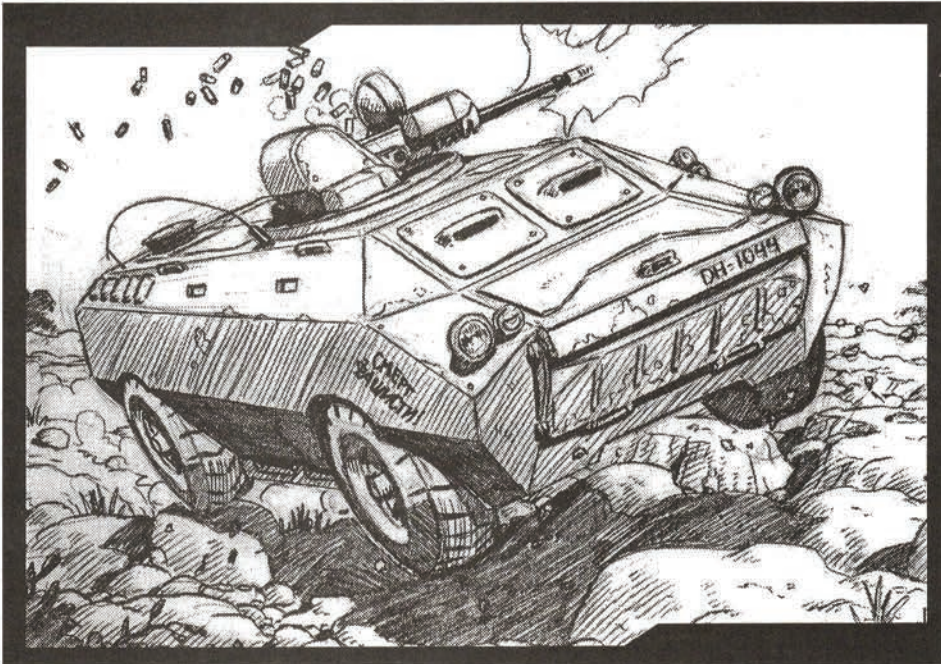
Mi-32 Hitter

Another example of relatively inexpensive Soviet military technology, the Hitter is a proficient, if under-equipped, attack helicopter. It's lighter, smaller, and cheaper than its predecessors.

TOP SPEED:	290 Kph	MANEUVER:	-2
ACC/DEC:	25/25 Kph	SDP:	80 (Body 4)
CREW:	2	SP:	40 (Armor 2)
RANGE:	644 Km*	TYPE:	Med. Helicopter
PASSENGERS:	0	MASS:	8 Tons
CARGO:	None	COST:	650,000 eb

Special Equipment: Ejection seats for crew, fire extinguisher, chaff and flare dispensers, military radio, visual and radar rangefinders, auto-pilot and navigation system, active IR, light amplification, magnetometer, radar with terrain following, thermograph.

Weapons: 23mm autocannon, targeting laser, and 30mm AutoGL (count as 40mm) in high-angle chin turret. Weapon wings hold up to 16 spaces of pod weapons. 2 23mm magazines and 4 30mm magazines.



BRDM-10 Scout Car

The BRDM-10 is the USSR's current armored car, used for a multitude of roles (rather like the Hummer in the USA). It's rugged, fairly easy to maintain, and there are lots of them.

The crew sits in the hull.

TOP SPEED:	100 Kph	MANEUVER:	-2
ACC/DEC:	25/65 Kph	SDP:	90 (Body 3)
CREW:	2	SP:	31 (Armor 2)
RANGE:	300 Km	TYPE:	Pickup
PASSENGERS:	2	MASS:	3.6 tons
CARGO:	14 Spaces (1.2 Tons)	COST:	125,000 eb

Special Equipment: Off-road capability, amphibious, 2 IR smoke launchers, military radio, auto-pilot and navigation systems, passive IR, light amplification, armored searchlight.

Weapons: Pintle-mounted 14.5mm machinegun, with extra ammo as cargo.

Note: The BRDM-10 serves as a base chassis for a number of other BRDM models. They are essentially BRDM-10s with armament modifications, and use the same basic stats. Any statistic changes will be noted in the modification.

BRDM-11

This is the up-gunned "cannon" version of the BRDM scout car.

STATISTICS CHANGES:		CARGO:	12 Spaces (1 Ton)
CREW:	3	COST:	140,000 eb
PASSENGERS:	None		

Special Equipment: Visual rangefinder.

THE BRDM-10 IS THE USSR'S CURRENT ARMORED CAR, USED FOR A MULTITUDE OF ROLES (RATHER LIKE THE HUMMER IN THE USA). IT'S RUGGED, FAIRLY EASY TO MAINTAIN, AND THERE ARE LOTS OF THEM.



**COMMON
BRDM TYPES:
BRDM-10
SCOUT
BRDM-11
CANNON
BRDM-12
ANTI-TANK
BRDM-13
ANTI-AIRCRAFT**

Weapons: Stabilized 30mm cannon with stabilized coaxial 7.62mm machinegun in turret. 2 magazines 30mm and 3 magazines 7.62mm in turret.

BRDM-12

This is the anti-tank version of the BRDM.

STATISTICS CHANGES:		CARGO:	8 Spaces
CREW:	4		(1 Ton)
PASSENGERS:	None	COST:	170,000 eb

Special Equipment: Thermograph.

Weapons: Reloadable LATGM and HATGM, 7.62mm machinegun, in turret. 9 HATGMs, 20 LATGMs (all have semi-active thermal guidance), 4 magazines 7.62mm ammunition in hull.

BRDM-13

This is the anti-aircraft version of the BRDM. In the past, Soviet AAA (anti-aircraft artillery) platforms were tracked vehicles. These more expensive machines have been replaced by the BRDM-13, which is used as the standard AAA platform of the USSR.

STATISTICS CHANGES:		CARGO:	10 Spaces
CREW:	4		(500 kg)
PASSENGERS:	None	COST:	390,000 eb

Special Equipment: ECCM, military radar, multi-target.

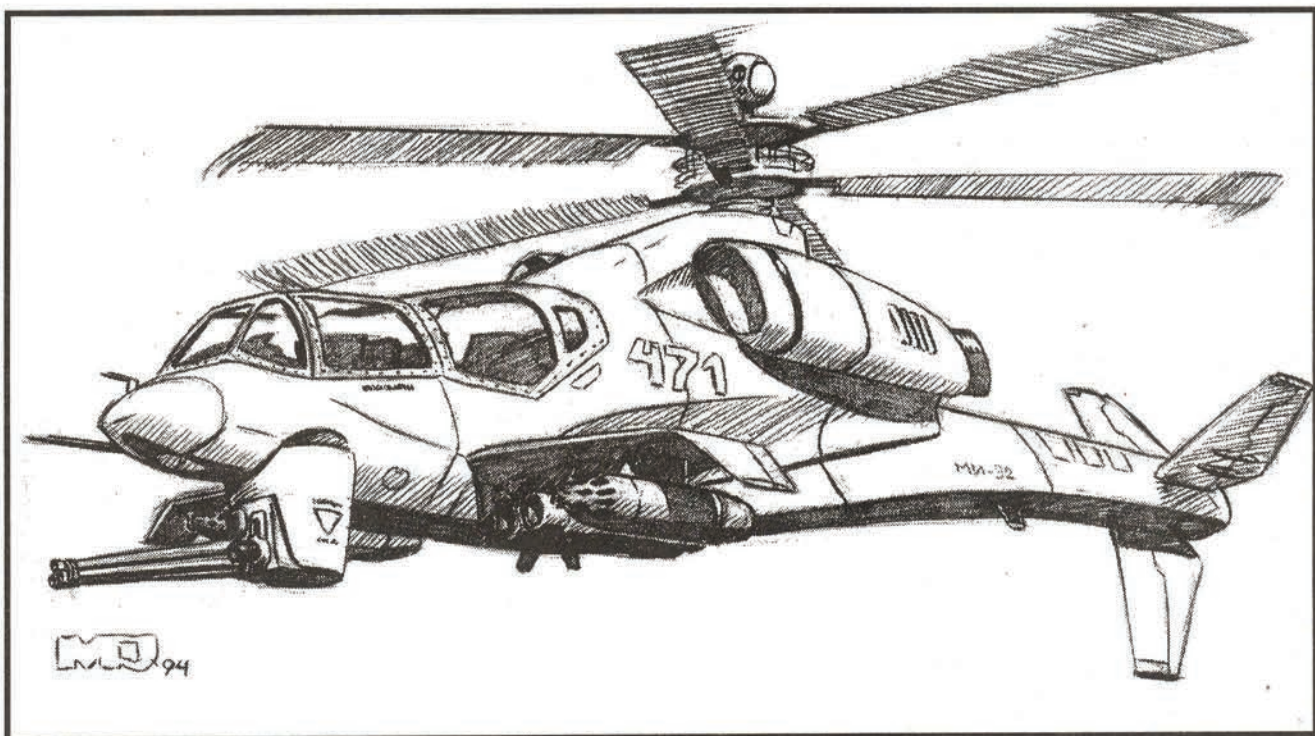
Weapons: Stabilized 23mm cannon with +2 targeting computer, 6 VSAMs, 1x 23mm magazine, in high-angle turret.



For all your heavy equipment and industrial needs on a budget, turn to KomKol. With a proud history of providing to Soviet peoples with Agricultural Technology, KomKol now steps proudly forward to meet the mechanized needs of the modern world, bringing a much-needed tradition of durability and utilitarian simplicity that has lasted 40 years!

Born in the shadow of the Urals, tested in harsh conditions ranging from Lithuania to Siberia, you can say with confidence, "KomKol means Kuality, Komrade!"

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Now, in the tradition of the world-famous Mi-24 "Hind" and Mi-28 "Havoc" (erronious NATO designations used for ease of identification), MIL is proud to present to the world the latest mustang out of our stables, the Mi-32 "Hitter" (again, NATO designation used

for ease of identification). In every respect, the "Hitter" is an improvement over the record-breaking "Havoc".

It has a comparable top speed, yet its range has been increased 130%. Its improved avionics systems can track up to 12 targets independantly, while an improved TFR system increases survivability.

The "Hitter" carries enough weapons to wipe out an armored brigade, while superior armor technology provides better protection than that car-

ried by the unsinkable "Hind".

Any General will tell you that air superiority is the key to holding any battlefield. Now, for the first time, a front-line U.S.S.R. attack helicopter is available on the world market for an affordable price, exclusively from MIL Design Bureau.

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AMERICAN ANGELS: ONE OF EUROPE'S BEST RATES THE TOP U.S. PROS.

This year's finest include some of the old familiar faces, but time (and attrition) have given us some great new faces as well. Only *Solo Of Fortune's* prestigious reputation allowed us to collect actual photographs of some of our fine finalists. We hope you enjoy our third annual rogues' gallery.

Honorable Mention (Posthumous)

Mister X, Sniper and CyberSoldier

Few c-psychos or solos had the style of Mister X. Damn few had both style and a sense of diminished responsibility like Mister X. He started out like so many others. He was

a looker, with much potential, so he went government. After three years as a mechanized light fighter, he had two armored legs and an attitude. Upon his return to the United States, Mister X went to work for the "Company", as a team leader in the early-retirement division. Success followed in hit after hit, increasing his reputation in professional circles. He was seen at all the hip clubs, dated all the "wrong" people, did bondage calendars with the girls/boys at *Sex & Guns Illustrated*... What went wrong? Who knows... Usually, when someone as professional as Mister X gets a new mod, someone does at least a cursory check of previous augments and modifications. Well, he knew the risks. That second set of implant weapons was too much. So he tanked up on jet fuel and went out shooting. Not a man to do anything halfway, he

targeted cops. It took thirty-five full-time officers and a four-state manhunt to bring down Mister X. Seventeen police officers were killed, and thirty others were wounded in the four-day ordeal. That level of skill (and that much raw talent) deserves at least an honorable mention here. After all, they don't make them like that anymore.

10⁰ Joshua K., Bodyguard & Assassin

This newcomer is a mystery: out of the Night City underground and into the spotlight. This young man has appeared three times this year—and with a new face each time! First, the assassination of Peter X, famed corporate raider and founder of Sphere. This was the picture of grace. Not only did





NOTES: Joshua usually leans toward a fairly handsome (ATT 7+) and muscular (BOD 8+) biosculpt. However, he could look like anyone with enough surgery, even a woman! Definitely a hard man to keep track of.

9 • **Tvikki, Political Activist & Bodyguard**

Joshua hit the man twice in the face (preventing any attempts at resuscitation), he then leapt out a twelfth-story window to a waiting aerodyne, and sped into the rising sun.

Soon after, Joshua surfaced in Palm Desert as a replacement bodyguard for Slade McCallahan. This popular brain-dancer had gone through three already this year, and tried for a fourth, but Joshua K. was a bit too fast for the would-be assailants. After shattering one's leg with a well-placed kick, he then snapped the other's neck with his bare hands. These joy-boys should have thought twice before attempting to make a name for themselves with Joshua K.

Number three was another big hit. As Joshua danced the night away at Tampa's fashionable Blitz, he sidled up to the famous promoter, Vampyre Elton, and pulled him to the ground. All eyes were on him. It seems that the famous promoter's security was slacking off a bit and Joshua was hired to "check things out." Everyone was surprised to see Joshua and Elton together, and needless to say, the security has been replaced. Joshua has obviously been a busy boy. We should see a lot more of him in the future.

INT: 9 REF: 10 TECH: 6
 COOL: 8 ATT: varies LUCK: 9
 MA: 8 BOD: varies EMP: 5
 REP: 8 SA: 6



the old IRA to Red Brigade and the 3000. She joined **Kidrok's Carnival Of Carnage** tour in Prague and never looked back. She has been personally credited with the Raven Microcyb bombing in Balsam (death toll 45), and the Biotechnica hijacking (12 confirmed middle management deaths). She is a staunch anti-biotech terrorist with more than a little style. We hope to see more of her action.

INT: 7 REF: 11/12 TECH: 7
 COOL: 7 ATT: 7 LUCK: 7
 MA: 7 BOD: 9 EMP: 9/7
 REP: 8 SA: 7

NOTES: Adrenal Booster, +1 REF (transform virus, see *Deep Space*).

8 • **Susan Forrest, NorCal State Executioner**

Do not get convicted of a capital crime in the Free State of Northern California. Susan Forrest is one of the toughest Solos there is, and she loves her work. I personally would have rated her a bit higher, but she only does one thing. She hunts and kills fugitives with a zeal that can only be described as religious. Having actually been chased by her on one occasion, I feel her effectiveness is matched only by her good looks. With over twenty confirmed executions last





year, that is no small amount of good looks. We at Solo are pleased to announce that she is possibly the new commander of the U.S. Marshal's Service Special Crimes Unit. Salud! We hope you do well.

P.S. See you next time.

INT: 7 REF: 9 TECH: 6
COOL:9 ATT: 7 LUCK: 7
MA: 6 BOD: 8 EMP: 9/4
REP: 8 SA: 7

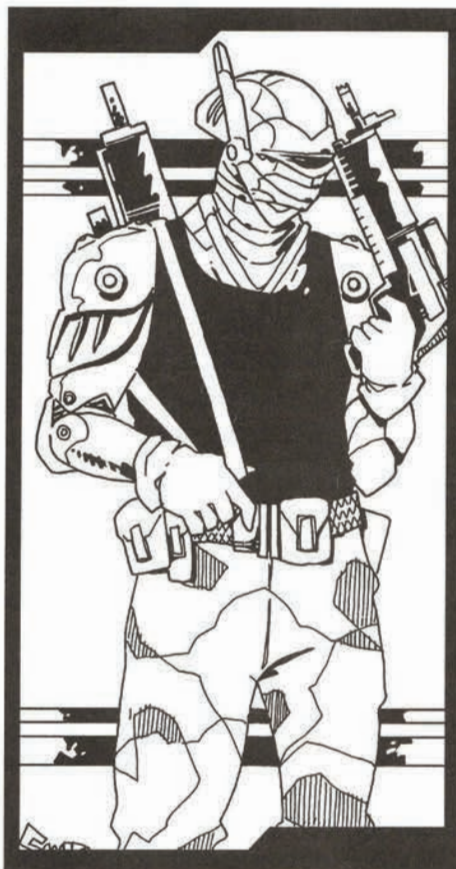
NOTES: This woman is one of the most heavily armed people in America. Her job description requires it! She usually carries an assault rifle with grenade launcher, a sidearm (or two) and an SMG. Please kids— don't try this at home.

7● Shaitan— Freelance Anti- Corporate

There are a lot of people out there gunning for the corps. It seems that you can't swing a dead cat without hitting some corporate hate-group or another. Most are fairly general. They want to destroy MediaCorps, or AgriCorps. They want to save the environment, or the whales or something. Few hate a specific company (at least none of the large and vocal groups), and even fewer have personal reasons. Even so, it seems that Shaitan has a thing for Arasaka.

He will take any job he can get away with, but it must be against Arasaka, and it must have serious collateral damage possibilities. In the last few years Shaitan has gone from a good Solo with a reasonable reputation, to a great Solo with a phenomenal success record.

Shaitan has made the destruction of all things Arasaka paramount in his mind. He will not use Arasaka products, nor will he work with those who do. He accomplishes whatever mission he is hired for, then spends the rest of his time trashing Saburo's



"stuff." He has even been known to occasionally create or modify jobs just so he can destroy Arasaka property. Why? No one is sure. It has been advanced that Shaitan's mother (or other close female relative) was once violated by a member of the Arasaka family (probably Saburo). He has honed his mind and rebuilt his body for this task only. His type of single-handed crusade would be laughable, had he not managed to somehow elude capture and accomplish these objectives for over three years. I hope Saburo sleeps with the lights on.

INT: 8 REF: 15 TECH: 8
COOL:9 ATT: N/A LUCK: 6
MA: 20 BOD: 12 EMP: 9/3/7
REP: 8 SA: 8

NOTES: Eclipse Covert Operations Full-Conversion (*Chromebook 2* pgs. 71,72) with added +2 REF (total of 15), +7 MA (total of 20), Shielding, +5 SP (total of 30 all-

around), +10 SDP (total of 30 all-around). Audio add Level Damper, Sound Editing. Optics add Image Enhancement, and Tele-Optics. Legs add Heavy Pistol (hidden holster), and MML. Arms add Digital Recorder, Techscanner, Electronics Toolkit, Weapons Toolkit. Shaitan has also gotten a lot of therapy.

6● Racer Chiba, ACPA Trooper

Now this is something we at SOF have never done before. Most of the purists over here don't really consider Troopers to be "real" Solos. I mean, it just seems so unfair to put an operative in a armored suit with tons of armor, direct-fire electronics, tactical weapons—and then call it finesse. We were wrong. Racer Chiba is head and shoulders above most solos, and he's re-educated us well!

There is no real background on Chiba. Stories range from the vat-grown ninja-assassin story (someone has been reading those old Gibson





novels again), to the “he is the messiah” angel-o’-death story. All are just stories. It was my privilege to personally interview Racer Chiba for this article. He is human. He did have a family. He was not raised by wolves, demons, or angels (of whatever persuasion). This is the story in a nutshell.

Racer Chiba was born in the wilds of East Los Angeles sometime before the Collapse. He had a normal childhood, was educated to some degree, and then joined the Army. He served in the SouthAm during the worst of it and went c-psycho as the war was winding down. Oddly enough, he was hospitalized, recovering just in time for the “Long Walk.” Instead of making the trek, he joined Jon Meta and others in forming MetaCorp. Eventually, he became the test-pilot for the Jacksuit program. Consequently, he is the world’s most experienced ACPA Trooper! After the JackSuit Division was sold to Militech, Chiba went freelance. His full-cryo’ custom ACPA is one of the finest designs in the world, and incorporates features that (now that I understand what Troopers do) should be on every suit. (see pg. 64 for stats).

Racer Chiba came to this Solo’s attention when he single-handedly extracted Mr. David Sato from the Raven MicroCyb facility at Evergreen, Colorado. After careful satellite reconnaissance Chiba dropped in at night, alone. He subdued a number of guards, defeated an excellent electronic security system, and abducted not only Sato, but his lover as well. This was an amazing operation. The pickup, by Aerodyne Limousine, Ltd. was the perfect conclusion to a perfect job.

INT: 10 REF: 9 TECH: 9
 COOL:10 ATT: 6 LUCK: 6
 MA: 8 BOD: 5 EMP: 8/5
 REP: 8 SA: 8

NOTES: Neural w/plugs (3 sets). tactile boost, w-link, v-link, m-link, d-link.



5• Jenni Flexx, Bodyguard

She could be America’s sweetheart; it is too bad that she hates to have her picture taken. Jenni Flexx is number five. The personal escort of Jesuit rocker and media icon, Jack Maximum, for the last three years, she has averted three assassination attempts (one by taking the shots herself, eight rounds!), one kidnapping and various harassments. Jenni is a driven woman and a fine Solo, but she needs some more breadth in her career to be a real number-one contender.

Handling security for the Justifiable Homicide’s *Long Walk* tour, previous to her tenure with Jack, was a feather in her cap. The entire band did sixteen cities in the U.S., while fleeing several federal investigations, and not a single casualty. Her previous work and training is still somewhat of a mystery. Rumors abound that she once either worked under CIA auspices in

Europe, or she served in the SouthAm (as a SEAL or Sniper). She could not be reached for comment, but only her biosculptor knows how old she really is. This woman knows how to look innocent. The pig-tails, blazer, plaid skirt and knee socks really do it for me.

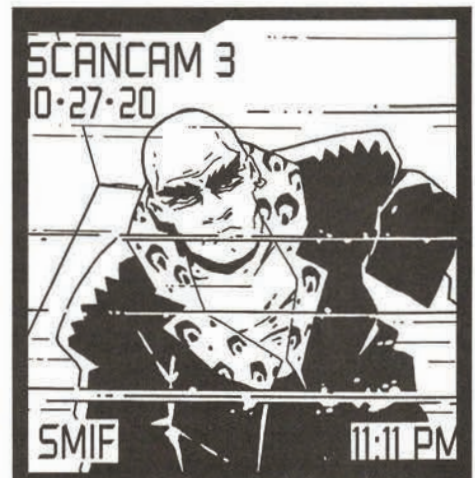
INT: 8 REF: 9/10 TECH: 7
 COOL:9 ATT: 10 LUCK: 6
 MA: 8 BOD: 6 EMP: 8/4
 REP: 7 SA: 8

NOTES: Adrenal booster, neural w/ smartlink, datalink, plugs, chipsocket; lifesaver skinweave, rippers (both); midnite lady; optic (right) w/ image enh, lowlite, TGT, antidazzle.

4• John Jones, “Manhunter”

John Jones does not exist. I have combed databases, exhausted a formidable expense account, and called in a lot of favors. The result: No one has ever met him, or all refuse to admit it. What am I saying—I have film. John Jones is famous. He hunts and captures people for a living, his specialty is lost children and cyberpsychos, but no one knows how to contact him or where he frequents in his off-time.

I have managed to concoct a story from police and eyewitness reports. Evidently, Jones lost his entire family during Martial Law; he loathes the gov-





ernment, and he helps others whose families are in less dire straits stay together. To date, he has rescued thirty kidnapped or missing children, six cyberpsychos, and five or six drug addicts. He seems to simply appear. It is my guess that he has a massive network of people who owe him a great number of favors.

He was not trained by any military or corporation. He may have been a member of a gang or some criminal organization, but all bets are off.

INT: 7 REF: 10 TECH: 6
COOL: 10 ATT: 5 LUCK: 8
MA: 8 BOD: 14 EMP: 10
REP: 7 SA: 7

NOTES: Muscle/bone lace; grafted muscle; skinweave

3 Lance Rock

Rock-star sex-toy he is, but Lance is also a damn fine Solo. He has worked for everyone who is anyone, has been mentioned in songs, and has a new workwear line from Gibson Battlegear. It certainly is a long way from the Italian westerns he used to star in.

Lance Rock is a *nom de guerre*. It is fairly certain he is of western U.S. origin, probably Utah. Being raised in the very conservative state of Utah (and probably as a Mormon) would explain his rampant fetish for young girls (any girls, really). After joining the Marines, and serving two boring tours on the USS Abraham Lincoln, he was ready for a change. When Hollywood slid into the ocean it was never able to reclaim its glory as movie capital of the western world. A young (and good-looking) ex-Marine, Lance adopted his "stage name" and went east to Nashville. He began his career as a Solo on the set of the remake of *For A Few Dollars More*. A group of Nomads, hoping to make a political statement about human rights, attempted to kid-



nap the entire cast. Lance, with the help of the film's security guards, annihilated the entire group (sixteen in all). After westerns died out again in 2014, Lance went to work as a security guard for Penny Prurient. This was also the beginning of his reputation as a womanizer. Not only did she end up getting killed in bed (where he was noticeably absent on that day), she had in an interview earlier proclaimed undying love for him, and in private named him as beneficiary in her will.

After Patty died, Lance went to work for the all-girl band **Cheap Dates**. At one time or another he was photographed in various states of undress with all seven; while that may have been rigged to get the girls in the paper, it did work. His other incidents are too numerous to name, including the seduction of Jesse G Sturm in Gstaad and the assassination of the Karl von Furstenberg poser, but this year he distinguished himself again.

Chanel and Versace have warred just below the surface for almost thirty years now. Admittedly, the shooting only started in 2010, but there are other ways to wage war. Julia Fixx is the hottest model of the decade. Her angular facial features, counterpointed by her stunning body, has put the wo! back in woman. So when she signed a lifetime exclusive with Versace, Chanel was massively upset. After trying—and failing—to establish a new icon for the American market, Chanel decided to do business the old-fashioned way.

They attempted an extraction. Now extracting a model is one of the most difficult tasks in our industry. I know, because I did one. Not only is the target vulnerable to attack from the other side, your employer takes a poor view of any damage the target might suffer.

Not only did Lance Rock successfully extract Julia, he did it by seduction and deceit. He dated her for two months before the fall show in Paris. On the evening before the show, the two dined at the still-fashionable Harry's Bar. After brandy, he shot her bodyguard, and was greeted warmly by Chanel representatives. Not only was this a terrible embarrassment to Versace, their show was postponed for an entire day (so they could alter the outfits that Ms. Fixx was to wear).

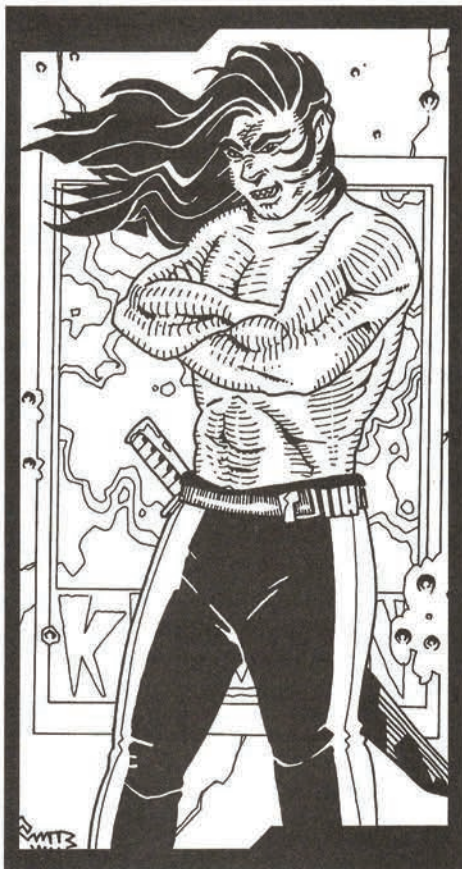
This will almost definitely ruin Lance's career—he will never be trusted by anyone again (especially Julia Fixx). We are always sad to see someone like him go, but we hear he has a three-movie deal with Lucasfilm54...such is life.

INT: 8 REF: 9 TECH: 7
COOL: 10 ATT: 10 LUCK: 7
MA: 7 BOD: 6/10 EMP: 10/9
REP: 8 SA: 9

NOTES: Muscle grafts; muscle bone lace; lifesaver skinweave; toxin binders; nanosurgeons

2 Captain Andrew "Boa Boa" Weyland, PetroChem Water Leopards

One of the most feared Solos in the corporate world, Andrew Weyland has worked for PetroChem for almost five years. The Water Leopards had a considerable reputation even before going over to PetroChem. Extractions and assassination are the favorite pas-



+2; muscle/bone lace; wolvers (both hands); optics (both) w/color shift, TGT, LowLite, TimesSquare



1 ● Morgan Blackhand

times of this hearty crew. Andrew Weyland is a great leader, and his handpicked team of stalwarts have never failed to complete a job. He has survived personal confrontations with Morgan, Jenni Flex, and John Jones (no slouch at hand-to-hand combat), but his experience is too specific for a number-one slot. The Water Leopards have suffered setbacks—they lost two of their original twelve members last year, allegedly due to corporate infighting and poor intelligence. If this is true, then we may see the Leopards go freelance again soon. Who knows, maybe Boa Boa (so called because of his snake tattoo and eye modifications) is a possible number-one contender next year!

INT: 8 REF: 10 TECH: 6
 COOL: 10 ATT: 5 LUCK: 3
 MA: 10 BOD: 10/12 EMP: 8/3
 REP: 10 SA: 10

NOTES: Light tattoo; neural w/chip-socket, smartlink, plugs, Kerenzikov

Still the Solo's Solo, with no hint of stopping now. Morgan is still, and (in my personal opinion) will always be, number one. The entire profession was improved by the release of *The Enforcer's Handbook* (over one million copies audited to date). It is obvious that though Morgan may have taught many professionals all they know, it is not all that the master knows.

Morgan's handling of incidents, like the attempted kidnapping of Kerry Eurodyne last year, show the touch of the master. It is interesting to note that all five of the kidnappers were captured by Morgan (alone), and turned over to Federal Authorities. They were bruised, battered and beaten, but alive. Any Solo can kill, but only a master like Blackhand can eliminate a threat and embarrass the group's sponsors. Still, embarrassing a huge company like DMS can't make it any easier on your career. It is possible that Morgan's profile may make him less employable soon. We certainly hope not.

"IT USED TO BE THAT BEING A 'SOLO' MEANT SOMETHING. YOU WERE A BREED APART, A LONE HUNTER IN THE DEPTHS OF NIGHTED CITY STREETS. NOW, EVERY GONK WITH A BIG GUN AND A CHIPPED-IN ATTITUDE THINKS HE'S A SOLO."
—MORGAN BLACKHAND

INT: 9 REF: 10 TECH: 8
 COOL: 10 ATT: 8 LUCK: 10
 MA: 8 BOD: 12 EMP: 4
 REP: 10 SA: 9

NOTES: These ratings are estimates; no agency has ever precisely quantified Mr. Blackhand.

About The Author:

Juan-Paul "RipperDoc" Duvalier is the pseudonym of a very respected Solo employed by the Berlin Industrial Group. J-Paul has served in most of Europe, Asia, and the United States. His affiliation with the Eurosolo "fraternity" known as the "Angels" is denied by the author.

INT: 10 REF: 10 TECH: 7
 COOL: 8 ATT: 9 LUCK: 10
 MA: 8 BOD: 8 EMP: 10
 REP: 7 SA: 8

NOTES: No cyberware. BattleGloves with wolvers (both), MML (left), 11mm pop-up (left)

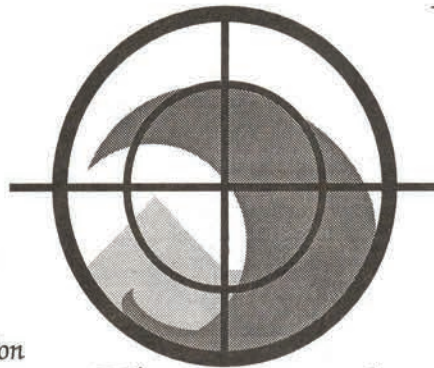
Tsunami Design Bureau

For fifteen years, Tsunami has been providing clients with the finest in high-tech, experimental, and customized weaponry systems and designs. Whether for the battlefield, the target range, or the urban jungle, turn to Tsunami for the finest in technology, design, and accuracy!

Raimei (Tfunderclap) Ramjet pistol

Following close on the heels of our successful Ramjet Rifle is the Raimei pistol. Designed for urban combat against PA suits and Borgs, the Raimei fires a slightly larger 10mm bullet; this design allows for faster acceleration to full speed, but a lower range to avoid damaging incidentals.

The Raimei comes standard with a Maboroshi smartgun link or Zeiss-Nikon COT, but can also be equipped with the experimental Zetatech Super-Safe™ targeting link, which essentially reduces the chances of a miss to almost zero. The weapon is also equipped with security chipping to prevent unauthorized use.



Tsunami

Express competition pistol

Tsunami has produced custom-designed raceguns for a number of IPSC competitors; now that design experience can be yours with the Tsunami Express!

Designed with the professional competitor in mind, the Express is a 5.2mm Electrothermal design that gives the ammo capacity of a Minor class gun with the muzzle velocity and hitting power of the Major calibers. Ergonomically design, computer-controlled tolerances, a custom barrel compensator, and one of the best, most stable, rounds to come out of our munitions lab all combine with a Zeiss-Nikon COT scope to become one of the most accurate handguns on the market today. Perfect for the competitor who doesn't want to be slowed down by their sidearm.

Tsunami Arms Raimei Ramjet pistol (1,100eb) (3,200eb for COT equipped variant)

PIST • +2 • L • P • 10mm ramjet • 6 • 2 • VR • 100m

The 10mm ramjet does 5d6 at Close range, 6d6+3 at Medium, 7d6 at Long range, and 7d6+1 at Extreme range. Each round costs 30 eb; one loaded clip is included in the cost of the gun.

The optional Zetatech smartgun link costs an additional 5,000 Euro, and must be installed in the factory (i.e., when ordered), to ensure proper alignment and accurizing. When used, the operator (who must own a smartlink, cyberoptic, Times Square Plus, and targeting option) must first designate a target; this takes one round (10 seconds); Afterwards, the weapon will only fire if the user has achieved a "hit" on a designated target; roll the to-hit roll (WA+3(smartgun plus targeting)+REF+Skill), and if the shot would have missed, the weapon simply fails to fire (except on a critical failure). Because of a delay in image processing, movement modifiers have an additional -2 added against the Zetatech link (i.e., a moving target with a REF of 11 would be at a -6 to be hit with this link). Up to ten targets can be designated by the user and stored indefinitely, but only one per round.

Game Notes: The Zetatech link is essentially Stutterchipping in reverse; instead of not firing at friendlies (but shooting at everyone else), the Super-safe link only fires at hostiles (but won't shoot at anything else). The software and image databases are stored in the smartgun array, rather than in the user's chipware. It's expensive, but worth it for those who don't want to go shooting up the whole neighborhood. Of course, people with real pistol skill might be better off ignoring the Zetatech link

Tsunami Express racegun (5,300 Euro)

PIST • +3 • L • P • 2d6+3 • 5.2mm ET • 24 • 3 • VR • 75m

5.2mm ammo costs 50eb per box of 50. A battery (good for 50 shots) is 10eb.

The Express isn't really designed to be concealable; The "L" is being generous, but if someone changes the grip (dropping the WA to +2, costs 125eb), it can be done. Because of the barrel compensator's design, this gun cannot be fitted with a suppressor.

Game Notes: The Express is a racegun, not a combat monster, and its design reflects that; lots of satin polished chrome steel, real wood grips, 125lpi checkering on the grips and frontstrap. The battery is loaded into the back of the gun, under the partial slide; clip is in the pistol grip. The wood grips feature a wrist support and ergonomic design. COT scope is attached to the frame, ahead of the slide. There are three adjustable weights under the barrel in front; overall length of the gun is 14".

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DESTROY ALL FLESH!!

A Metalhead Solo Speaks His Transplanted Mind

By Adam Smasher

New York, New York—the city so nice they trashed it twice. This is my stomping ground, so step lightly. Seeing as how I’m a fully-cybernetic Street Samurai, you really don’t want to cross swords with me. Yes, I am living proof that metal is better than meat! In the six years I’ve been bloodletting and brain-spilling in this hellhole, I’ve taken down boosterpunks, powered armor, corporate hit men, children, ground-attack choppers, sword-wielding ninja and assorted breeds of cyberpets. Yes, the life of a full ‘borg Solo is a fulfilling one indeed. I get

plenty of work and I swear at this rate I’ll rid this city of its fleshy infection within, oh—say, fifteen years.

Most of you reading this are competent, skillful professionals who know how to fight and how to kill. You might even think you couldn’t get very much better. Let me tell you—that’s wrong, meat-heads! I used to be a pretty tough customer, back in my meat days. Mom was Russian, dad was from the South Bronx, and I was the meanest kid on my block. I was the leader of my neighborhood combat gang during the Collapse days

(we’d rumble in what was left of Yankee Stadium), and when the Army finally killed off the last of my bloodboys, I signed right up. (I wasn’t stupid—the military had WAY better guns than we did!) Six years as a Marine taught me a lot, and when I was kicked out (“Insubordination” they called it. Yeah, right.) I took up the life of a Street Samurai back in my hometown. I’ve been here in the Rotten Apple ever since, but things have changed. Oh yeah.

Extractions, assassinations, harassment and demolitions jobs came and



went, and I made some good euro, but I didn't realize that my bones and muscles were holding me back! Not until that corporate "reverse engineering" op. See, some bigwig corp (who'll remain anonymous, you know the drill) had hired me and a couple other pros to snatch a prototype gizmo from a competitor. I must've fired off 300 rounds of 7.62 during that op, but a couple of well-placed RPG-A warheads kinda put a damper on an otherwise profitable job.

The docs said I was flatlined for over eight minutes before they got me (my brain, at least) stabilized. I found out my meat had been stewed in the op, but my teammates had brought what was left of my carcass back...in a backpack, for chrissakes! 'Round that time I realized I was getting all my input through interface—turned out most of my sensory organs (you know: eyes, ears, skin...) were gel on some corporate installation's walls. The corp who'd sent me on this op in the first place gave me a tasty proposition: They figured I'd just walked into some bad luck and they liked my resume, performance record, skill, good looks and all that. Anyway, they offered full body conversion in return for a 15-year employment contract.

Now you gotta remember that I hadn't yet figured out the true meaning of "metal is better than meat" at this point. Sure, I knew that a few plugs, chips, cyberlimbs and stuff were real useful in a scuffle. I could never have afforded full conversion, so I never even considered it. But there I was, grey matter in a life-support tank, and I knew if I said "no" to the corpse (that's CORPORate Security Expert to you) I was 'faced with, he'd pull the plug and I'd be tomorrow morning's bodybank special. What would you do, tough guy?

Turned out to be the best decision I ever made. You want strong? How about using a 1000cc racing bike as an improvised melee weapon? You want fast? How about sparring with three black belts at once—with one arm servo removed? You want tough? How about the time I got shot point blank in the chest with a 40mm grenade? It knocked me off the roof of the building, and I fell nine stories onto the

roof of a garbage truck! There was a 40-percent crater in the scow's roof, but I ran back up the building's stairs and punched the soldier's head off when I got to the gonk! Not too shabby, I think.

Like I said, I can't tell you all who I work for, but they sure keep me busy. I'm usually put on offensive field duty, harassing the competition, but sometimes (if the meatheads at internal security are slacking) I'm put on retrieval missions. I've had to chase down and kill off quite a few teams of edgerunners who made the mistake of breaking into and stealing from the New York branch office. This is where being a full 'borg really pays off.

FOR THIS PARTICULAR HUNT, I'D REPLACED MY LEFT FOREARM WITH A TSUNAMI ARMS HELIX GATLING SHOTGUN, BELT-FED FROM A BACK-HOUSED 500-ROUND AMMO-HOPPER.

I remember one time a team of pretty talented specwar types managed to make off with some of the company's key files. I'd wasted two early on, but the last target (clever little meatgirl) managed to get into a mallplex through the backdoor before I could nail her. Let me take a moment here to explain the beauty of

continued on page 69

Tsunami Arms Helix (3000eb)

SHG ● +0 ● N ● P ● 10-Ga/5D6 ● 60 ● 43 ● VR ● 60m ● BOD Min: 18

This massive weapon is arguably one of the most devastating small arms for close-range house-to-house combat—a hex-barreled gatling shotgun which fires binary 10-gauge shells at 1300 rounds per minute! About three feet in length, the gun's six barrels are all a respectable 18" long. The Helix has an inclined rear pistolgrip as well as a top-mounted fore-handle; it has no stock, since it was built to be fired "from the hip." To aid in aiming, there is a top-mounted laser-sighting system with adjustable pattern-matching capability. The Helix is constructed of high-tech composites and lightweight alloys, and weighs 15kg. Its projectiles consist of conventional 10-gauge slugs or packages of shot or flechettes stored in a synthetic canister. The ammo feed, centrally located beneath the tubular body of the gun, accepts either a belt feed or a box magazine which contains an ample supply of binary propellant and stores 60 projectiles; a rotor in the feed aligns the projectiles as it loads them. The weapon's binary propellant eliminates the bulk of a stabilizing element in its ammunition, and instead uses two gasses which separately are stable, but are volatile when injected into the ignition chamber. The design of the Helix keeps the line of recoil low and in line with the grip to lessen muzzle climb on full auto, and the six barrels, all rotating around a central axis, have long, flared muzzles with four compensation ports each. This, combined with the weapon's recoil operation, allows for relatively controllable autofire. The sound made by the Helix is distinct: a heavy, metallic scream.



RECOIL AND THE HEAVY GUNS IN CYBERPUNK 2020

Recoil in *Cyberpunk* is determined primarily by the damage delivered by the weapon. This value is cross-referenced with the size of the weapon, the nature of the ammunition and the rate of fire. All these factors, when calculated together, grant a number (called a **BODY Minimum**) to which the character firing the weapon must compare their BOD stat. If the character's BOD is \geq his weapon's BOD Min, he may fire it without penalty; if the character's BOD is at least 2 points greater than a semi-auto weapon's BOD Min, he may fire it at an ROF of 2 rather than 1. However, if the firer's BOD is $<$ the BOD Min, all penalties are based on a number equal to the firer's BOD minus the weapon's BOD Min (referred to as the "D-fac", or Difference Factor).

Recoil penalties are as follows: If the firer's BOD is $<$ his weapon's BOD Min, he may only fire the weapon at an ROF of 1/2, with WA reduced by -2 per 1 point of D-fac, and must make a (BOD+Strength Feat+1D10) roll vs. the (BOD Min x2). If this roll is failed, the firer takes 1 point of damage per point of D-fac to his firing arm; critical failure means that the weapon is also dropped.

Example: Sid has a BOD of 8, and is packing a Denby 7710 "Ox-Dropper" revolver (.477 caliber, 5D6 damage). $5[\text{max damage } 30/6] \times 2[\text{handgun}] = 10$, so Sid's "D-fac" is 2; he can fire the gun once every other turn, at -4 WA, and may take 2 points of damage to his hand from shooting the damn thing!

Remember, recoil is a one-time calculation—once you've determined a weapon's BOD Min, make a note of it somewhere. In order to prevent complications, any weapon with a BOD Min of 9 or less is assumed to be fireable by anyone (don't worry, all you BOD 6 characters can still fire your Colt-AMT M2000's). If the players and

refs wish, they may use the BOD Min restrictions for all weapons, including those of less than 10. Choose your weapons carefully!

EXAMPLE RECOIL RATINGS:

- Pocket Tsunami 25mm HiVel Pistol (ROF 2): Min BOD 23!
- 12.7mm Gatling w/harness (ROF 100): Min BOD 18.
- MK19 40mm HiVel AGL (ROF 3 or 20): Min BOD 16-18.
- ASP 30mm Autocannon w/harness (ROF 10): Min BOD 16.
- HIVE Gatling w/harness (ROF 120); 10-Gauge "Pistol"/5D6 (ROF 2): Min BOD 15.
- ASP 20mm w/harness (ROF 10): Min BOD 14.
- 12-Gauge Pistol (ROF 2); Malorian 3516 and ACPA 14mm Pistol (ROF 1): Min BOD 12.
- Plamya 30mm AGL (ROF 1 or 10): Min BOD 7-12.
- Browning .50 M2 (ROF 10-20): Min BOD 11-12.
- EMG-85 Railgun (ROF 1/2): Min BOD 11.
- Minigun (ROF 100-200): Min BOD 10-11.
- Tsunami 25mm AGL (ROF 1/3/5): Min BOD 10.
- Militech Crusher SSG; Super Chief .454 Casull: Min BOD 9.
- Budgetarms Laser-Niner (ROF 20); Militech Cyborg Rifle (ROF 20): Min BOD 8.
- Oni Autoshotgun (ROF 20); Franchi King Buck (ROF 4); 25mm Bulldog Auto GL (ROF 3); Militech AM-3 (ROF 1): Min BOD 7.
- FN-RAL (ROF 30); H&K MP2013 (ROF 32); Barrett Light 50 (ROF 1); M203 40mm Underbarrel GL (ROF 1); S&W Tri-Star (ROF 1): Min BOD 6.
- Soviet 30mm Underbarrel GL (ROF 1); Colt-Mauser M2X (ROF 1): Min BOD 5.
- Barrett-Arasaka Light-20 (ROF 1); Militech Mini-GL25mm (ROF 1): Min BOD 4.

RECOIL FACTORS

BASE BOD MIN:

- D6 weapons = (Max Damage/6).
- D10 weapons = (Max Damage/5).

MODIFIERS (MULTIPLY ALL MODS TOGETHER):

- 1-handed (Handgun) = x2.0
- 2-handed, no brace* (some SMGs & shotguns) = x1.0**
- 2-handed & brace* (Rifles, MGs, other SMGs/Shotguns) = x0.5**
- Area Effect (Shotguns** & GLs**) = x1.5*
- EAP (Railguns) = x1.8
- ROF 1-3 (Semiauto) = x1.0.
- ROF 3-15 = x1.75

- ROF 16-30 = x2.0
- ROF 31-60 = x2.5
- ROF 61-120 = x3.0
- ROF 121+ = x3.5

*Brace = Stock, Arm Brace, Shoulder Strap, Harness, Sling, Mono-/Bi-/Tripod, Gyro-Mount, etc.

**Shotguns use Shot damage; GLs use [(diameter in mm)/5] x D6 for max damage; High-pressure/high-velocity Grenades (for Auto-GLs) are x1.5

A Cyberarm acts as BOD 12 for pistol recoil purposes only. A Powered Exo-Mount has BOD 18 for recoil purposes only.



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being a True 'Borg (as I like to call myself): meat Solos, even enhanced ones, can only handle weapons of a "small arms" level before flash, recoil and backblast turn their pathetic skeletons to kibble. Now for this particular hunt, I'd replaced my left forearm with a Tsunami Arms Helix gatling shotgun, belt-fed from a back-housed 500-round ammo-hopper. This thing's recoil would've been murder (literally) to me back when I was a 108kg meathead bad boy in the Marines, but my current high-impact plasteel frame turns the barrage of recoil into a comfy massage. The point is, if I'd been a meathead Solo when I was chasing down this corpcrime weasel, I would've needed a Minigun to clear that mall—and if I'd been packing a Minigun I never would've been able to keep up with the target in the first place!

Lucky for me, I had full metal on my side. I caught up with the creep just as she entered that main hall of the mallplex. I'd been right behind her, so I knew she couldn't have had time to get out of the Saturday afternoon crowds and make use of an escalator or elevator. She was just hidden in the crowd somewhere.. Sweeping the screaming whirlwind of the Helix back and forth across the hall, my 500 rounds of 10-packed frag flechettes cut the crowd real fast. (Why not? I'm never marked with any corporate tags, colors or logos when I'm on an outside job, and I always fit a different facemask each time I deploy.) A quick scan of the bodies found me the meatgirl, all puréed, so I pulled the disks off her and vanished. Love that Environmental Assimilation system.

Dummy Facemasks

Since there are only a limited number of Full Conversion models out there, individual 'borgs often go in for detachable faceplates to grant personalized features. They cost anywhere from 25eb for a cheap, primary-colored one to 500eb for a fully armored custom design. If you have a different one in place each time you go out on an op, who's gonna be able to figure out who you are? Slick, neh?

Of course life as a True 'Borg isn't just mowing down civilians, despite my best wishes. You can still get killed off pretty easily if the opposition's packing military-level hardware; one HLAW and you can pretty much kiss your armor-plated hinder sayonara. But hey! Once again cyber-technology comes to the rescue! See, there are these clever "blokes" in England somewhere who've come up with what they call Reactive Body Armor. No, it's not the kind that explodes off when it's hit! RBA is a suit of flexible body armor which is riddled with laser sensors; when someone's targeting

you with a laser-aimed weapon, the RBA alerts you through your interface plugs. Believe it or not, this stuff is so efficient that it actually allows you to dodge incoming bullets if you're boosted (as any good True Borg should be)! No drek! The beauty is, Cybermatrix is now making Reactive Body Plating for Full Conversions. It does the same thing, but it's built into your frame. 'Course it means you gotta go into combat without wearing fatigues, but so what? Extra armor never layers well with body plating, and what've we got to be modest about? Lemme tell you, my RBP has saved my

True Borgs—Learn the Art Created Especially For You!

The PanzerFaust (translates literally into "armor fist") martial art is a cutting-edge warfare application system. Designed specifically for True Borgs, PanzerFaust allows total exploitation of our superior physical abilities! Additionally, the vast jumping and leaping range common to Full Borgs allows us to perform long-distance kicks and inhuman dodges. If trapped with a hold, our flexibility and additional range of motion allow escape maneuvers impossible for men or Powered Armor. (Some fellow metalheads can spin their hands like propellers and even rotate their torsos 360 degrees!) The effects of full-speed, charging strikes are devastating, with penetration like a shotgun slug! Be taught the best, by the best! Join the Iron Tiger Dojo today.

Warning—Your body must undergo slight modification, involving magnetically-coated joints for full-range, high-speed motion; and specially-hardened plates installed on all striking surfaces (costing only 4000eb).

Iron Tiger Dojo in the Upper Marina district. Off Sterling St., upstairs from the American Bar. Night City, CA. Cash payments only, please.

Game Notes: Damage bonus is 1.5x the Martial Arts skill level, due to the blinding speed and structural strength of full-borgs. Leaping attacks receive +1D6 per 3m of leap performed. The attack is AP (SP is 1/2; damage penetrating hard armors is normal).

Only Full-body Conversions can use PanzerFaust ; the structural stresses involved would do tremendous damage to muscles and bones in a flesh body. PanzerFaust cannot be chipped. This combat art relies so heavily upon speed that the time required to access chipware would ruin effectiveness; this skill must be taught. Also, if a 'borg learns PanzerFaust, because it requires constant training and practice, it's the only martial art he can learn and use. Any previously-learned Martial Arts or Melee skills must be forgotten, and their skill points are lost.

PANZERFAUST (5):

Strike	Punch	Kick	Disarm	Sweep	Block	
—	+3	+3	—	+1	—	
Dodge	Grapple	Throw	Hold	Choke	Escape	Ram
+3	+3	+1	—	—	+4	+3





chassis on more than one blood-splattered occasion.

Cybermatrix™ Reactive Body Plating

HC=1D6, Surgery=MA, Cost=6,000eb. In game terms, RBP allows the Full 'Borg with REF higher than 10 to actually dodge attacks made by laser-aimed weapons (lasersights and smartguns). The attacker must roll vs. the Full 'Borg's REF+Dodge+1D10 instead of against Range Difficulty Numbers. This is new, hard-to-find cyberware; it is not restricted, but it is Poor availability.

**I HEAR
MAGNUM OPUS
IS WORKING ON
AN .88 MAGNUM
VERSION. I
CAN'T WAIT.**

As a True 'Borg, you also discover that you can finally put all those wannabe poser solopunks in their place. How many times have YOU gotten into a "my handgun is the world's most powerful and yours isn't" argument? Well, it's no longer an issue when you're full metal. A couple months ago, I wound up in just such an argument with some porky who insisted that his wimpy 3516 couldn't be beat. I laughed in his face, which he took to mean that I didn't have a better argument. But I did. I dragged my Magnum Opus *Hellbringer* outta my overcoat and klunked it on the table in front of his gawking face. The stainless steel, 4kg revolver made his jaw hang open and his eyes cross. He just kept drooling as I showed him its three .666 Magnum steel-cased cartridges. It was a truly sad sight, so I shot that stupid expression right off his face. That brought him to his senses. I remember his head was just a balloon full of blood to my *Hellbringer*. I hear

Magnum Opus is working on an .88 Magnum version. I can't wait.

Magnum Opus "Hellbringer".666 Magnum Revolver (4,000eb)

P ● +1 ● J/L ● P ● 7D6+3 (.666 Mag) ● 3 ● 1 ● VR ● 80m ● BOD
Min: 15

A massive double-action revolver, this huge weapon holds only three rounds in its solid titanium-steel cylinder, but each one is a .666 Magnum man-killer. It's a break-action design, engaged by a left-side thumb button. Each of the three steel-cased shells holds one .666-caliber lead slug which hits harder than most Magnum or Nitro Express hunting rifles! These rounds will put even the toughest armor to shame. The entire handgun is composed of steel and ultra-strong hybrid alloys (except for the ergonomic combat-style grips, which are made of neoprene), and the ported barrel has a heavy, full-length underlug for balance. While the *Hellbringer* comes with no fancy electronics, most owners supplement the blade-type sights with at least a laser sight; with only three shots, you have to make each one count!

Being a True 'Borg can be good clean fun, if you're a loose enough guy (like me). *Slamdance, Inc.* recently began marketing a close-combat weapon for Full 'Borgs only, and it's stylish, fun, and pretty damn effective. See, I'd been ordered to off the head of security for our primary competitors, and I was supposed to make a statement with this job (yep, the losers in Security were slacking off again, and Mister Head of Security for the Other Guys got the drop on us). Well, I eventually found this guy and cornered him in the underground parking lot of his ritzy-ass conapt. I decided I'd let him get in one good hit before I dispatched him; I knew it wouldn't amount to squat against me anyway, so I waited for him to take his best shot. Thing was, he was so

scared that he froze, so I got impatient and took MY best shot instead. I pulled out my brand new *Slamdance, Inc. Hyper Hammer* and fired it full-on into his solar plexus. The fat slob's whole ribcage caved in, some of his organs jumped outta his mouth (I couldn't identify them—I was busy) and I crushed in the driver's side of his Beemer like it was tinfoil. How sweet it was! The best part was that I'd had our company's logo embossed in reverse on the striking end of the hammer, so this dead, inside-out corpcop had our logo permanently molded into his body! It was a real scream.

Slamdance, Inc. Hyper Hammer (2000eb)

MEL ● -2 ● L ● R ● 9D10AP ● 2 ●
1 ● ST ● 2m

This is a close-combat weapon designed especially for Full 'Borgs. It is a heavy, solid-tungsten sledgehammer designed with ergonomic combat grips, spiked knuckle guards and a thumb switch-activated rocket booster built into the back of the hammer's head. When fired, the rockets blast the hammer around at near-supersonic speed, delivering unheard-of wound potential. Damage ignores soft armor and reduces it 2 levels, and hard armor only counts as 1/2SP and is reduced 1D6+4 levels. The *Hyper Hammer* may be used two times before needing to be refueled (with jet fuel). The handle and grips can be folded down, so that a large person could conceal the *Hyper Hammer* under a trenchcoat—this is made easier by the use of a special shoulder rig, available from *Slamdance, Inc.* for 40eb.

It's gratifying, knowing that each time I swat another corporate meathead, I'm equalizing the ratio of fleshlings to True 'Borgs. They die a lot more often than we do. With full metal in your corner, you can not only get rid of the enemy in safe-



ty, but it can be pretty damn fulfilling. Go Full Conversion, and pretty soon you'll be finding yourself using your biggest guns at point-blank range, just so you can watch the expression on your target's face. It's the best feeling. Ever seen a CLAW do its thing on the competition's secretarial pool? What a sight! They should decorate more offices in red.

**United Armaments
CLAW (1600eb)**

SHG ● +1 ● N ● R ● 4-Ga (8D6) ● 28
● 1/4 ● VR ● 60m ● BOD Min: 11
#000 buck: 8D6, Slug: 9D6+2,
APFSDS: 5D10AP, HEAT: 7D10
(1/2 SP).

Weighing in at 16kg and measuring over four feet in length, this Close Assault Weapon is designed for use by Combat 'Borgs and Powered Armor, and is totally unmanageable by unenhanced troops without a Powered Exo-Mount. The CLAW is a multi-role weapons package, consisting of a semiautomatic 4-gauge shotgun with a modular under-barrel support weapon, all housed in a all-weather, heat-resistant, impact-proof polymer/ceramic composite which is stronger than steel. The 4-gauge shotgun shell was a scattergun round used in the early 20th century to hunt ducks—traditionally, a 4-gauge gun would be bolted down to the stern of a boat, and then the entire boat would be pointed in the general direction of a flock (yes, a whole flock) of ducks or other fowl. After the smoke cleared, the hunters would collect the carcasses floating in the water. In 2020, the 4-gauge has been revived as a extra-high-lethality munition, using shell casings made of a heat-resistant and heat-absorbing plastic which acts as a thermal sink to ensure that the CLAW does not overheat. The 4" Magnum, 4-gauge shell has a bore diameter of 23.75mm (.935-caliber), as opposed to the traditional 12-gauge's 18.5mm bore, giving it the capability to fire an even greater array of sub-munitions than other shotguns. Buckshot (#000), "Beehive" flechette shells,

slugs, APFSDS rounds, shaped-charge HEAT warheads, mini-grenades, non-lethal batons, "Dragon's Breath" thermite blasts, flash/bang bombs, "Slasher" mononets, cratering HEP rounds, and gas shells are all available. The bullpup CLAW feeds from a large 28-round box magazine, but the breech can be locked open to allow special rounds to be singly loaded, and the fully-automatic firing rate is 425 rounds per minute. Beneath the barrel of the shotgun is an interchangeable underlug, which can be fitted with any one of the following support weapons: an 8-shot microwaver, a cartridge-loading Kendachi flame gun, a 4-shot pump-action 25mm grenade launcher, a 4-shot micromissile launcher or a small SMG (Concealability J). Whatever the support weapon is, its magazine loads forward of the CLAW's grip and trigger array and will have its operation slaved to the weapon's computer; the CLAW comes chipped from the factory, with IFF and security functions as standard features, making it fully compatible with ACPA fire-control systems and metalhead neural processors. This weapon is best known for its employment by the Detroit PD's C-SWAT Enforcer 'borgs.

Yeah, being a True 'Borg makes being a Solo a lot more fun. A lot safer, too. And a lot more profitable. I got job security, free ammunition and a purpose in life. I don't mean my job is my purpose—sure, it's important—but I know now what has to be done. Humanity is obsolete, gatos. Meat is on the way out. Think about it: the science-wizards who built our 21st century world are still going strong. They're making robots, cyberforms, AIs, nanoids, even intelligent clones! That's right, the body is already outdated, and soon the mind will be too. It's time for all of us to shed our skins and 'face the new world. Metal really IS better than meat. So do humanity a favor—become a True 'Borg. You gotta start with yourself. You'll be sweeping away the old and ushering in the clean, strong new.

**SO DO HUMANITY A
FAVOR—BECOME A
TRUE 'BORG.
ANYONE WHO
DOESN'T WANT TO
BE FULLY
CONVERTED...
GETS WIPED OUT!**

Then take the fight to the other meat-heads. Anyone who doesn't want to be Fully Converted...gets wiped out! Change yourself, and change the world. Combat superiority is only the beginning! Destroy all flesh!

**Typical Full 'Borg
Small Arms**

14mm Handgun (Magnum Opus "Big Government"—2000eb)
P ● +0 ● J ● P ● 14mm (6D6) ● 13 ●
2 ● VR ● 60m ● BOD Min: 12

12-Gauge "Pistol" (1,000eb)
P ● -2 ● J/L ● P ● 12-ga (4D6) ● 9 ●
2 ● ST ● 30m ● BOD Min: 12

5.56mm caseless "SMG" (1,200eb)
SMG ● +1 ● L/N ● P ● 5.56mm
/5D6 ● 50 ● 25 ● VR ● 200m ●
BOD Min: 10

30mm HiVel caseless Auto-GL
(2,000eb)
HVY ● +0 ● N ● P ● 30mm (Varies)
● 25 ● 15 ● VR ● 300m ● BOD Min:
12

12.7mm "Assault Rifle" (2,000eb)
RIF ● +1 ● N ● P ● 12.7mm (6D10) ●
50 ● 10 ● VR ● 400m ● BOD Min:
12

14.5mm "Assault Rifle" (2,500eb)
RIF ● +1 ● N ● P ● 14.5mm (7D10) ●
50 ● 10 ● VR ● 400m ● BOD Min:
14



COMBAT & SECURITY CYBERFORMS

**By Dick W. Boi,
Worldwide
Sales
Manager,
Adrek Robotics**

Actually, the full-conversion cyborg is a quantum leap in effectiveness for the infantryman of 2020. Full-conversions are, however, expensive to build, maintain, and counsel. Powered armor seemed to be a solution for several reasons. They are not pilot-dedicated, they are more easily repairable, and they had no adverse psychological effects. But, they were more expensive, heavier (limiting their effectiveness in their primary urban environment), and required a skilled pilot to be used effectively. Both options, full-conversion cyborgs and powered armor, are overkill for eighty percent of the security and





intelligence-gathering operations "in the business." Humans, however, are completely inappropriate as well, being too expensive to train and too easily eliminated.

What was required, in many situations, was a simpler unit: something that could patrol or gather data over a period of time, use minimal resources, and be effective in at least self defense. Cybernetically-enhanced animals were just coming onto the scene, and they were an inspiration to further working modification.

The final solution: the Combat and Security Cyberform (CSC).

CERETRONIC: Cerebro-Electronic. A Brain composed of bio-engineered (or transplanted) neural tissue fused with a "dog brain"-style neural net processor. These brains can be programmed like a computer, but react in a similar manner to natural brains.

Instead of a human brain, the CSC's use a ceretronic core. The main difference between human cyborgs and cyberforms is simple. Humans are refitted as cyborgs, with the addition of cybernetic components. CSC's are engineered from the ground up, therefore there is no traumatic instability. The ceretronic core is then housed in a sensor-equipped and (usually) powered frame which provides mobility. Weapons, armor, and other options can then be added to the frame.

Because these brains have organic components, they require nutrients, like water, oxygen, calories, etc. These life-support requirements are handled by on-board systems. A liquid nutrient bath circulates through the brain. Composed of oxygen, glucose, and a few other ingredients, the fluid is virtually waste-free. It is replaced daily (every twenty-four hours). Failure to replace this fluid at the regular interval will result in severe brain damage and death for the CSC. Because of this closed-cir-

THE FINAL SOLUTION: THE COMBAT AND SECURITY CYBERFORM

cuit system, cyberforms are immune to airborne (and waterborne) chemical and biological agents. Most CSC's are also immune to the effects of partial vacuum and shallow-water (up to five atmospheres) diving, since their bodies are usually somewhat pressurized and/or armored. Like all living things, CSC's must sleep, but require only two hours rest per day.

Cyberforms usually have tactile sensors, and therefore a sense of "touch", but in combat they rely primarily on damage reports to determine level of injury. Because of this, cyberforms do not suffer from pain, stun, or shock. They function normally until their body components are rendered useless or destroyed. Because their bodies are mechanical, damage has to be repaired and not healed.

Standard combat cyberforms are equipped with battery packs. These packs can operate the unit at full capacity for 72 hours. The battery packs can be recharged off any high-capacity power supply (such as those used to charge electric vehicles) in four hours, wall current (recharging takes twice normal time), or can be replaced (100eb for a spare). Each cyberform also has an integral emergency battery that will allow it to operate for one half-hour (this battery is mainly intended to sustain the unit during power pack exchanges).

One concern of potential buyers is the loyalty and stability of a cyberform, especially those who have had difficulty with full-conversion cyborgs or cyber-animals. Early attempts at cyberform development involved creating the unit with a wholly biological animal brain, then erasing the "emotions" and programming them to obey. They tried installing override controls, or installing a ceretronic cortex bomb. These early attempts

were failures (and some were serious failures—notably the "Beast of Boston" incident). To solve these problems, modern cyberforms are designed and trained to have the traditional martial virtues of loyalty, obedience, and discipline. These traits help keep a cyberform stable. Another factor that can aid in the control of cyberforms is that each cyberform ceretronic core can be custom made for the purchaser. The cyberform is conditioned to accept the purchaser as its owner. There have been no cases of ceretronic cyberforms going rogue or becoming psychotic.

Combat cyberforms have four statistics: INT, REF, BOD, and MA. The ceretronic rating (INT) of a cyberform represents the power and flexibility of the cyberform's ceretronic core. A standard cyberform can be programmed with a number of skill levels equal to its INT times four. The price for programming a cyberform with a skill is equal to the cost of a comparable skill chip times two. Cyberforms can have a maximum skill level of five. The REF, MA, and BOD stats of a cyberform are the same scale as standard human stats. CSC's know no fear, so COOL does not apply. INT is not really in the same scale, though close. An extremely intelligent cyberform is, in its way, as intelligent as an average human. It is an intelligence more closely analogous to highly trained dogs, or apes.

Cyberforms can be considered as intelligent as average humans, and act accordingly. Since they are part organic and part cybernetic, their thought processes are an odd mix of predatory instinct and computational logic. CSC's do not have the full range of human emotions, and they are fairly linear thinkers. However, their concentration and discipline are



superior to that of humans. They are also not plagued with doubt, fear, lust, cyber-psychosis, or other such human flaws. In battle, CSC's are calm tacticians and are not moved by many of the emotional considerations that would color human thinking.

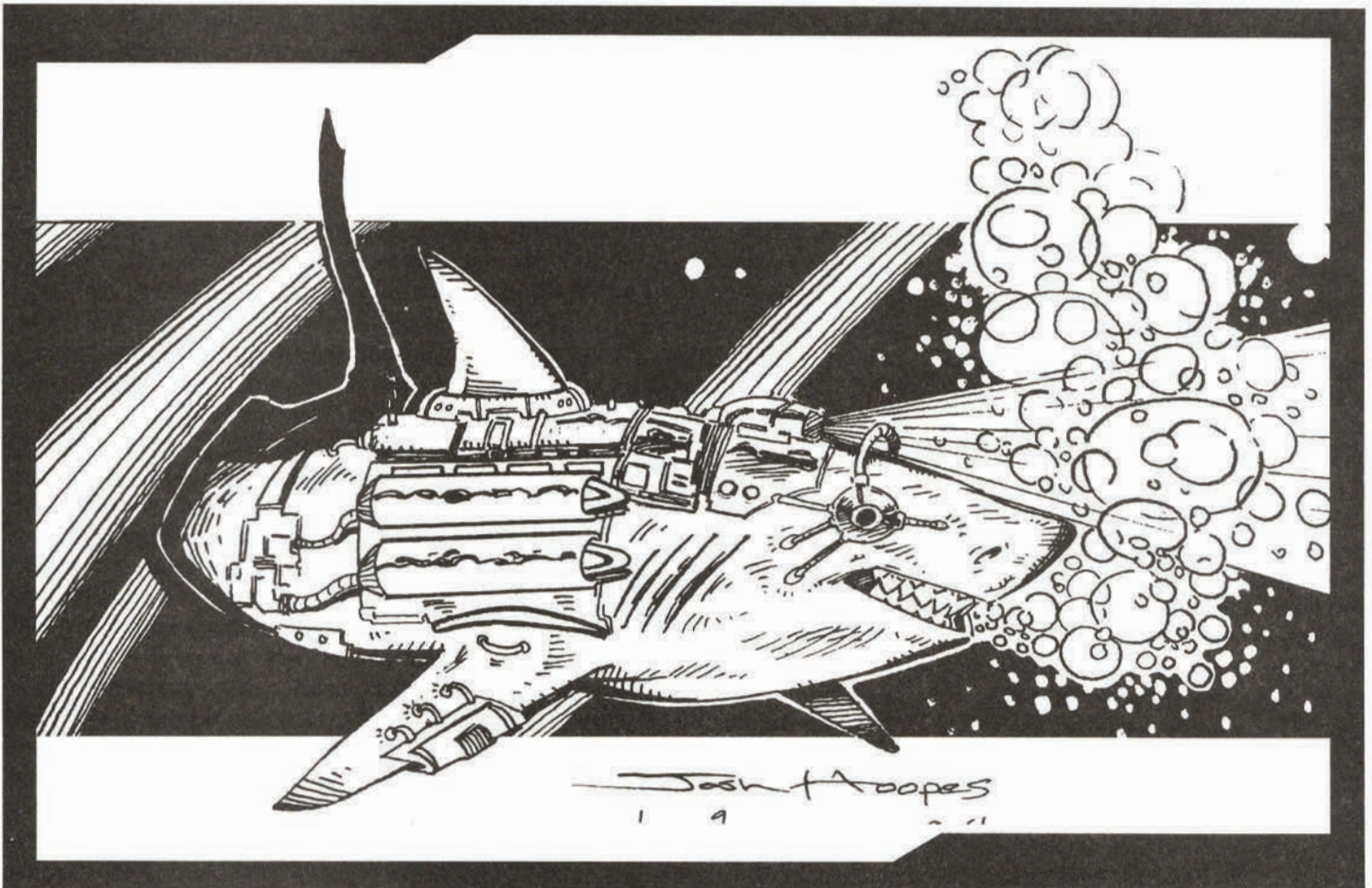
Given the psychology of CSC's and the fact that they can be deadly fighting machines, it is no wonder that the general public is wary of them. Because of this, some areas restrict or even ban CSC ownership. In contrast with the public, many corporations and militaries favor the use of the CSC. They are sometimes more expensive to purchase than full-conversion cyborgs, but they don't draw a salary, complain, or question orders; they have no family, have no rights, and are completely loyal. Corporations have had difficulties in cases of Netrunners using their own CSC's against them. Limiting net-control of CSC's has downgraded this

problem. Now most CSC's require both a computer command and a hardware "key" to change programming.

There are many different kinds of CSC's and many of them are purpose-built. But most fall into one of four different categories: **Small Animal**—lemurs, koalas, schnauzers, terriers, beagles, all types of house cats, and other small animals. **Medium Animal**—German shepherds, rottweilers, tigers, panthers, goats, sheep, pot-belly pigs, etc. **Large Animal**—buffalo, horses, cows, alligators, sharks, dolphins, etc. CSC's in the preceding categories are usually quadrupeds, as that negates the need for a gyro-balancer. **Anthros**—bipedal and basically humanoid. Many have been built to resemble creatures of myth and legend. Usually used as expensive housebots. They require an expensive gyro-balancer.

CSC'S CAN BE DEADLY FIGHTING MACHINES.

CSC frames are made of highly advanced carbon/boron fiber and foamed cerametal alloys. These alloys are 1/2 to 1/3 the weight of living tissue components and stronger than steel. Because of this CSC's are extremely light for their size. All CSC's have an SDP of four times their BOD stat. Cyberforms have no BTM. All damage is calculated against the SDP total. After they have damage equal to three times their BOD they are considered disabled; after they have taken four times their BOD they are considered destroyed. Cyberform armor ablates naturally.





Examples:

100 Series™ from Adrek Robotics

118,000eb

Adrek Robotics brings the finest humanoid security system ever built to the marketplace with their 100 Series™. Start with a heavy-duty combat chassis, and add a high-intelligence system and full combat programming. What you get is the ultimate soldier. We guarantee it!

MISSION: Hunter/Killer Unit
INT 6 REF 12 BOD 10
MA 15 SDP 30/40

Body—

Frame: "100 Series" Humanoid

Brain: High Intelligence (INT 6)

Programs: Track 4, Rifle 4, Heavy Weapons 4, Evade 4, Athletics 4, Brawl 4
Increased Reflex (+4)

Increased MA (+3)

Gyro-Balancer

PROTECTION—

Armor: SP25 (all locations)

EMP Hardened

Extra Life Support (96+24=120hrs)

Extra Battery (72+72=144 hrs)

Electronics & Sensors—

Laser Designator; Military Comm Unit

Optics (Targeting Scope, AntiDazzle)

Audio (Editing, EHR, Level Damper)

Neural (WL, DL, ML, AV Recorder)

Motion Detector (70% effective)

Radar Sensor (100m rng., 70% eff.)

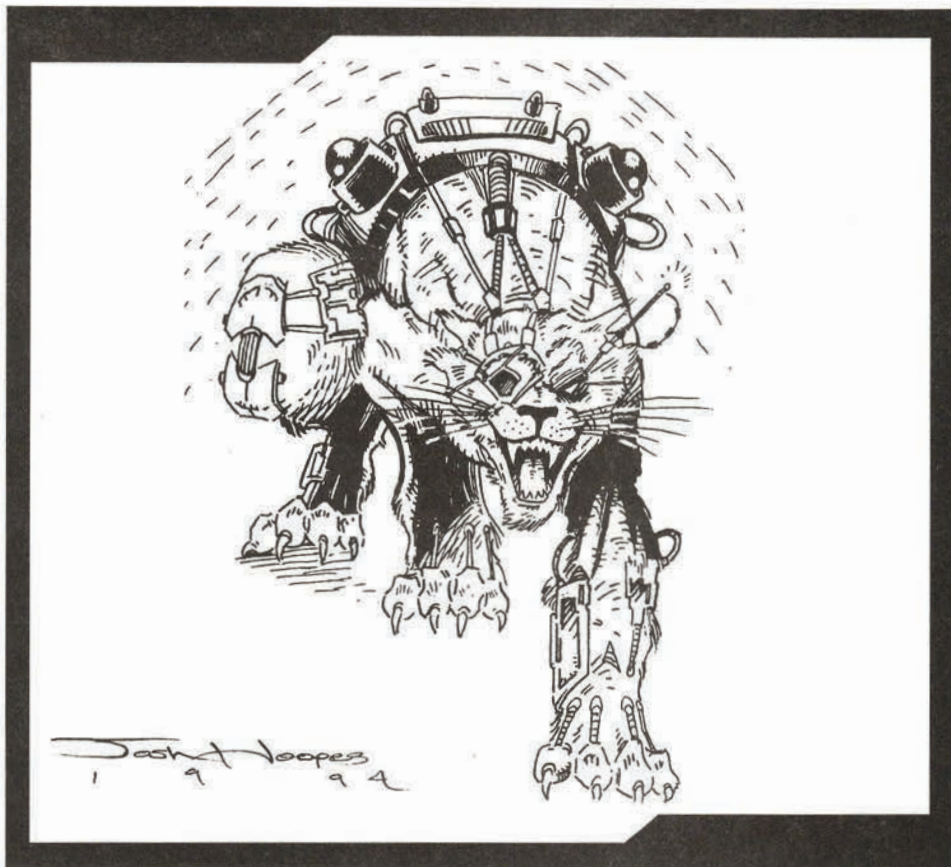
Chem. Analyzer (5m rng., 70% eff.)

WEAPONS—

RipperHand (x2); GripFoot (x2)

Grenade Launcher (Militech) [left arm];

Assault Rifle (FN-RAL) [right arm]



MicroMissile Launcher [left leg];
MicroMissile Launcher [right leg]
Extra Mag (for grenade launcher)
Extra Mags x2 (for assault rifle)
Extra Mag (MML right)
Extra Mag (MML left)
Storage Unit (4 grenades)

Body—

Frame: Medium Animal

Brain: Medium Intelligence

Programs: ProPersonnel,
Shadow/Track 4, Rifle 4, Tactics 4, Brawl 4
Increased Reflex (+3)
Increased MA (+8)

PROTECTION—

Armor: SP12 (all locations)

Extended Life Support

Electronics & Sensors—

Military Comm Suite; Laser Designator

Optics (Targeting Scope, AntiDazzle)

Audio (Editing, EHR, Level Damper)

Neural (WL, DL, ML, AV Recorder)

Compass/Locator

Motion Detector (70% effective)

Radar Sensor (100m rng., 70% eff.)

Chem. Analyzer (5m rng., 70% eff.)

WEAPONS—

RipperClaws (x4)

Assault Rifle (FN-RAL) [torso]

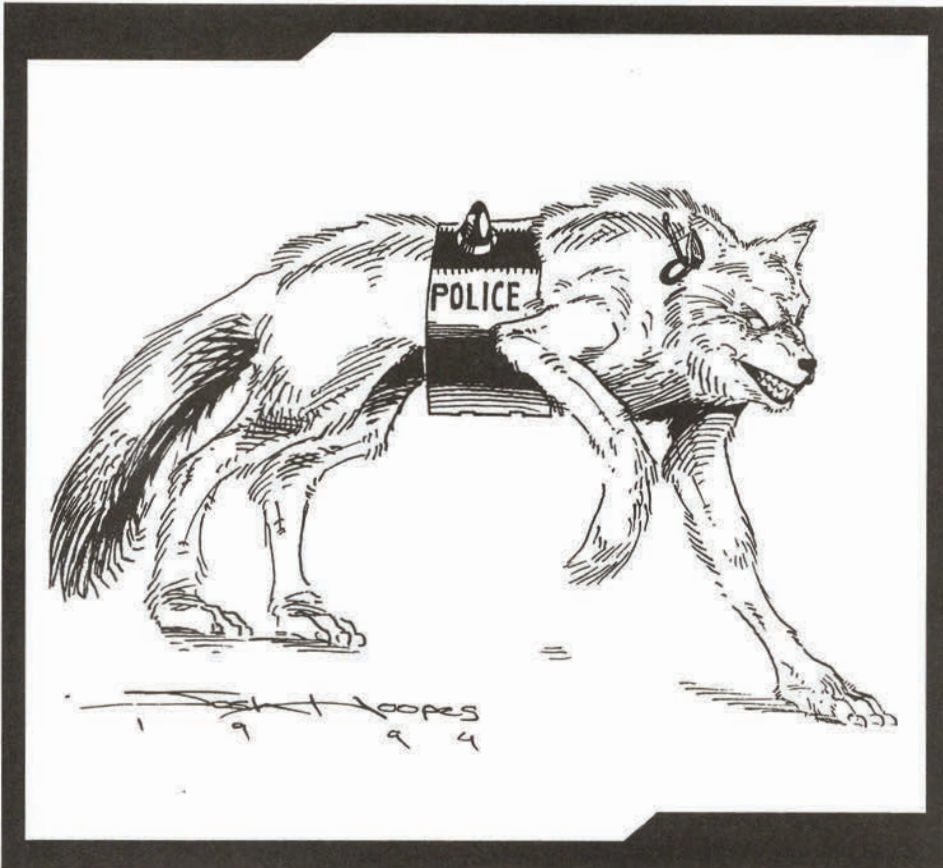
Hellkat Missile Launcher [external]

Extra Mags x2 (for assault rifle)

Chacmool™ Combat & Security Cybercat

62,000eb

MISSION: Area Security
INT 4 REF 11 BOD 5
MA 16 SDP 15/20



Note on ProPolice and ProPersonnel programs:

These programming chips allow the cyberform an encyclopedic knowledge of security-related info or police procedures

In the case of ProPersonnel, this includes all people allowed to be inside a restricted area, with fingerprint, retinal pattern, and coded-question information. The chip usually carries a security charge that will destroy this information should the CSC be near destruction or capture. ProPolice programming gives the cyberform knowledge of search procedure, capture and restraint methods, guard skills, and recognition of general (or selected) law enforcement personnel.

These programs do not have a skill level, as they are composed of data. ProPersonnel programs are usually updated biweekly.

“Max” Police Dog™ from Adrek Robotics 62,000eb

Mission: Law Enforcement Support

INT 4 REF 11 BOD 5
MA 14 SDP 15/20

Body—

Frame: Medium Animal

Brain: Medium Intelligence

Programs: ProPolice, Shadow/Track 4, Rifle 4, Tactics 4, Brawling 4

Increased Reflex (+3)

Increased MA (+6)

PROTECTION—

Armor: SP12 (all locations)

Extended Life Support

Electronics & Sensors—

Military Comm Suite

Optics (Targeting Scope, AntiDazzle)

Audio (Editing, EHR, Level Damper)

Option Suite (TE, LL, TH, UV, VS, WB)

Neural (WL, DL, ML, AV Recorder)

Compass/Locator

Motion Detector (70% effective)
Radar Sensor (100m rng., 70% eff.)

Chem. Analyzer (5m rng., 70% eff.)

WEAPONS—

RipperClaws [x4]

Sub-machinegun x2 (MPK-11)

[torso]

Extra Mags x4 (for SMG)

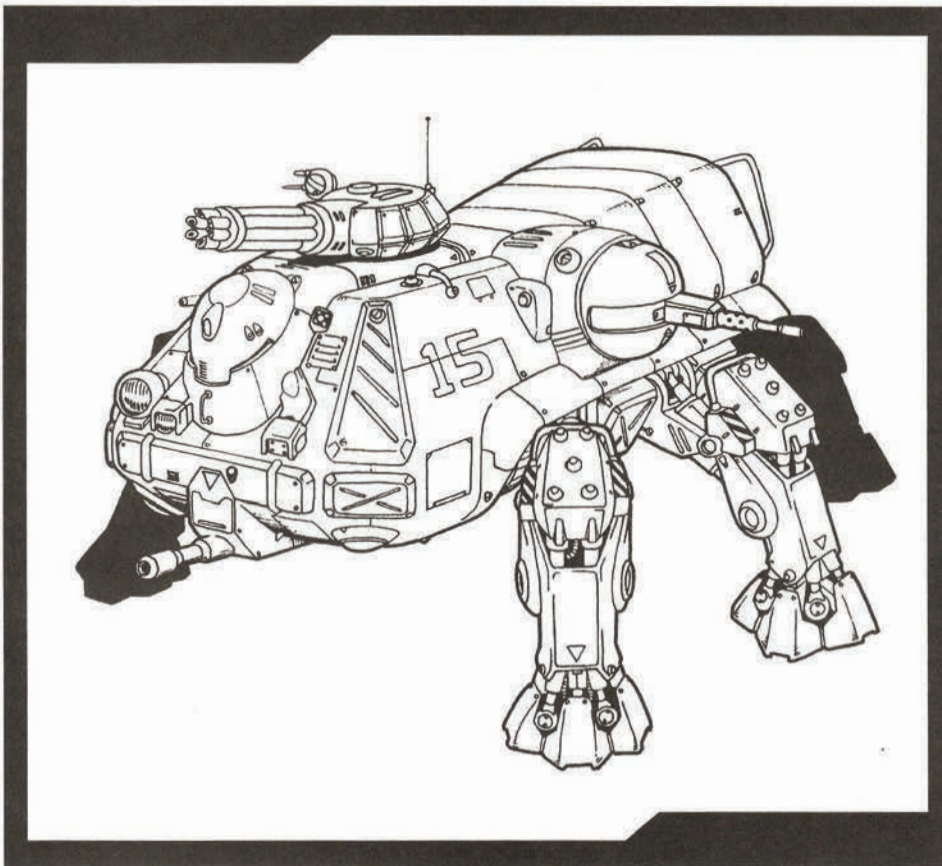
**CORPORATIONS
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THE OPEN ROAD — WALKING STEEL:

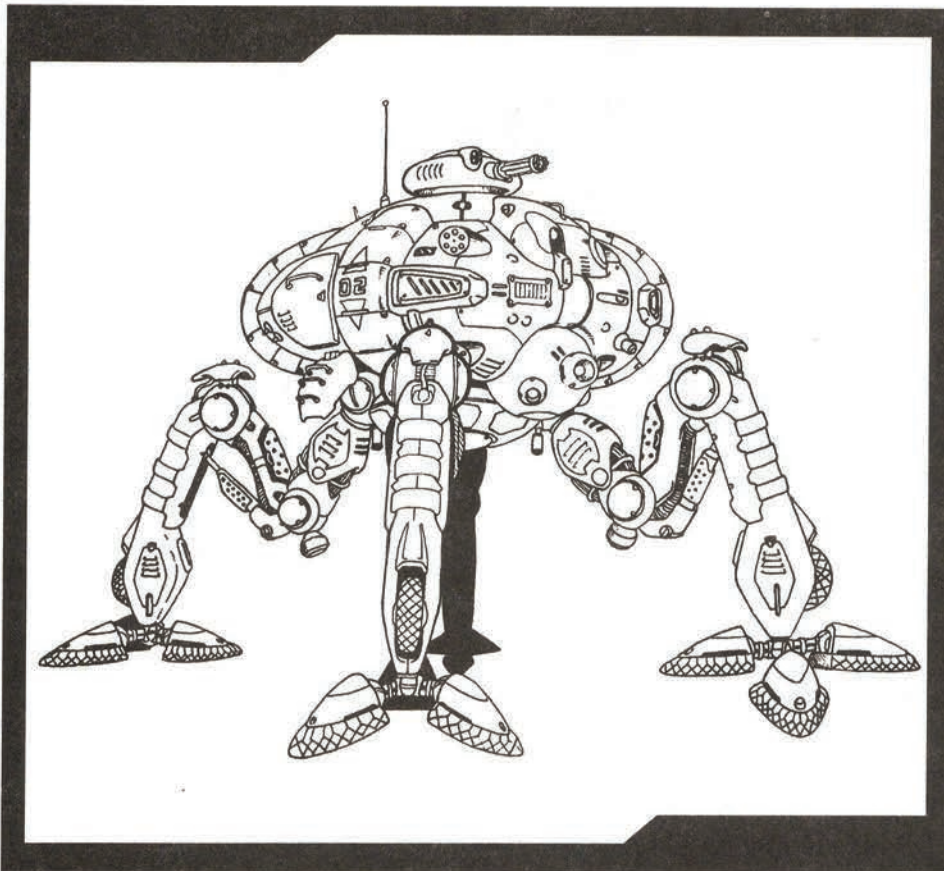
Legged Vehicles in *Maximum Metal*

by the Steely-eyed, Kenshiro-walkin' staff of Solo of Fortune



Back when America was still a world superpower—in the 1950's, to be more precise—an Army study declared about half the world's land surface inaccessible by conventional land vehicles. Millions of taxpayers' dollars went toward proving that steep, heavily wooded, mountainous, or otherwise rough terrain couldn't be navigated by wheeled, tracked, or even air-cushion vehicles—the nightmarish Italian Campaign of WW2 has stood as a testament to this fact. Mundane craft are also stymied by dense woods, swamps, jungles, rain forests, glacier-carved hills and devastated urban landscapes (which can be found in abundance in the 21st century).

In the case of the North American continent, troublesome terrain is a shrinking problem thanks to the deforestation of the great Northwest and Northeast woodlands. However, all is not rosy for "Pave the Earth" enthusiasts: Dense



terrain abounds in the Rocky Mountains, the Dakota Badlands, the Allegheny Mountains, the Ozarks, the Southern swamps and the steep hills of the Missouri Breaks.

The same obstacle to all-terrain transport presents itself world-wide, notably in Japan and Germany. With impenetrable (except by air or foot) land occupying so much of both over-technological nations, their respective military-industrial complexes had a vested interest in developing vehicles that could dominate these lands. Massive research and development projects by both nations (and rampant espionage by and against each other) ensued. Powered armor was quickly cast aside as a possibility—too slow, short range, limited usefulness. Japan and Germany's competitive experimentation and engineering inevitably resulted in the creation of those devices popularized by fiction and scoffed at by practicality: legged vehicles.

Since legged vehicles became practical only through the tandem-feedback processes of neural interface, legged vehicles were eventually dubbed Cyberwalks. Typically, a Cyberwalk's body houses the crew, armament, power plant, fuel and electronics, and is perched between two, three or sometimes even four pairs of powerful, mechanized legs. The well established technologies of so-called "dogbrain" co-processors and expert systems bridged the gap between most Cyberwalks' multi-legged locomotion and the bipedal structuring of their pilots' grey matter. In order to prevent the mass of the hull from causing undue wear on the legs themselves (see *Maximum Metal*, page 59), the leg motors employ at least triple redundancy and the hull is built from lightweight, high-strength composites. Cyberwalks use a combination of myomers and magnetically-actuated "hydraulics" for motive power, and their feet are oversized to ease

ground pressure and ensure balance. Some Cyberwalks can even deploy flywheel-driven tires for higher speed on paved surfaces; it's an expensive option rarely available from the factory. Some bipedal models have been sold on the civilian market as "unique recreational opportunities", while military, police, rescue and corporate enforcement sales have grown slowly but steadily.

Construction

SDP Range	20-200 (Max SDP per pair of legs = 50; no minimum)
SDP Limits	5 SDP per space
SDP Cost	2,500eb per SDP
Spaces	4-40
Top Speed	40mph on open ground, but at reduced speed they can go anywhere.
Range	200 miles
Mass	1 ton per 15 SDP
Acc/Dec	15mph/15mph
Handling	-3

Accessories: Cyberwalks require cybernetic control, so they come equipped with cybernetic linkages. By definition they are also off-road capable. Cyberwalks which can deploy wheels from their legs (a.k.a., "Runabouts") add +33% to their base cost, can travel at 100mph over paved ground and can decelerate at 40mph/turn. Changing motive systems takes one turn, and the vehicle must be at a complete stop. Cyberwalks cannot add Composite Armor, as they already have a special lightweight version. They can have as much armor as they have SDP; this armor costs 5,000eb per SP.

Mobility: Piloting a Cyberwalk falls under the "Operate Heavy Machinery" skill. Cyberwalks have to use the ACPA Environment Damage rules (*Maximum Metal*, pages 59-60). They count as weighing well over 960+ kilos, and have oversized feet.



Combat and Damage: Use the hit location table for ACPA (*Maximum Metal*, page 6), counting Arm hits as Leg hits. Legs have 1/2 the SDP of the Hull, but equal armor. Treat the Hull as a normal vehicle hull to check for specific damage effects on Hull hits.

Bipeds: These Cyberwalks are the smallest (their legs can't support much mass), and the most unbalanced. Bipeds can't use Reactive Armor, since it would knock the vehicle over when activated, and cannot use Auto-pilots (since it takes full concentration to retain balance). Bipedal Cyberwalks are seldom armed; they're too unbalanced and light. But if you must, weapon possibilities include machineguns, miniguns, autocannon, the 20mm gatling (but not the 30mm gatling), the LATG 37mm, grenade launchers, the 75mm cannon, recoilless

rifles, 4mm railguns, rockets and missiles. NOTE: The U.S. government, who was late following the Euro/Japanese design lead, has concentrated on a basic experimental biped design with a mix of armaments, the XML-20/21 series.

Bipeds have the following special construction parameters:

SDP Range	20-50
Spaces	4-10
Range	400mi.
Mass	1 ton plus 1 ton per 25 SDP
Handling	-1

All other construction stats are the same as multi-legged models.

Sample Cyberwalks:

Arasaka Manufacturing "Daikani"

Designed for urban combat, the Daikani ("great crab") is lightly armed, fast, and well equipped to handle groups of soldiers, rebels, or rioters (Arasaka's favorites). Equipped with a Runabout system for high-speed urban travel, the Daikani may soon be sold as a metropolitan police vehicle; trial runs are said to be taking place in Detroit.

TOP SPEED	40MPH (100MPH)	MANEUVER	-1
ACC/DEC	20/15MPH (20/40MPH)	SDP	80 (Body 4)
CREW	2	S.P.	40 (ARMOR 2)
RANGE	200 MILES	TYPE	CYBERWALK (4 LEGS)
PASSENGERS	NONE	MASS	3 TONS
CARGO	NONE	COST	1.1M EB

Special Equipment:

4 man-hours of life support, military radio, navigation system, infrared sensors, satellite uplink, Shocker security system, searchlight, antipersonnel grenade charges, runabout system.

Weapons:

7.62mm Minigun (with 4,000 rounds of ammo) in top-mounted turret, four fixed-forward 6-shot 2" rocket pods.

Messerschmitt KPV-R "PanzerKraken"

Bristling with weapons and laden with armor, the PanzerKraken is a lumbering, super-technical gun platform. Likened to a World War II armored car, the PanzerKraken succeeds where pre-millennium armor failed; in the mental control of a good pilot, it can negotiate mountains and marshes alike.

TOP SPEED	30MPH	MANEUVER	-3
ACC/DEC	15/15MPH	SDP	120 (Body 6)
CREW	3	S.P.	60 (ARMOR 3)
RANGE	300 MILES	TYPE	CYBERWALK (6 LEGS)
PASSENGERS	4	MASS	8 TONS
CARGO	NONE	COST	1.24M EB

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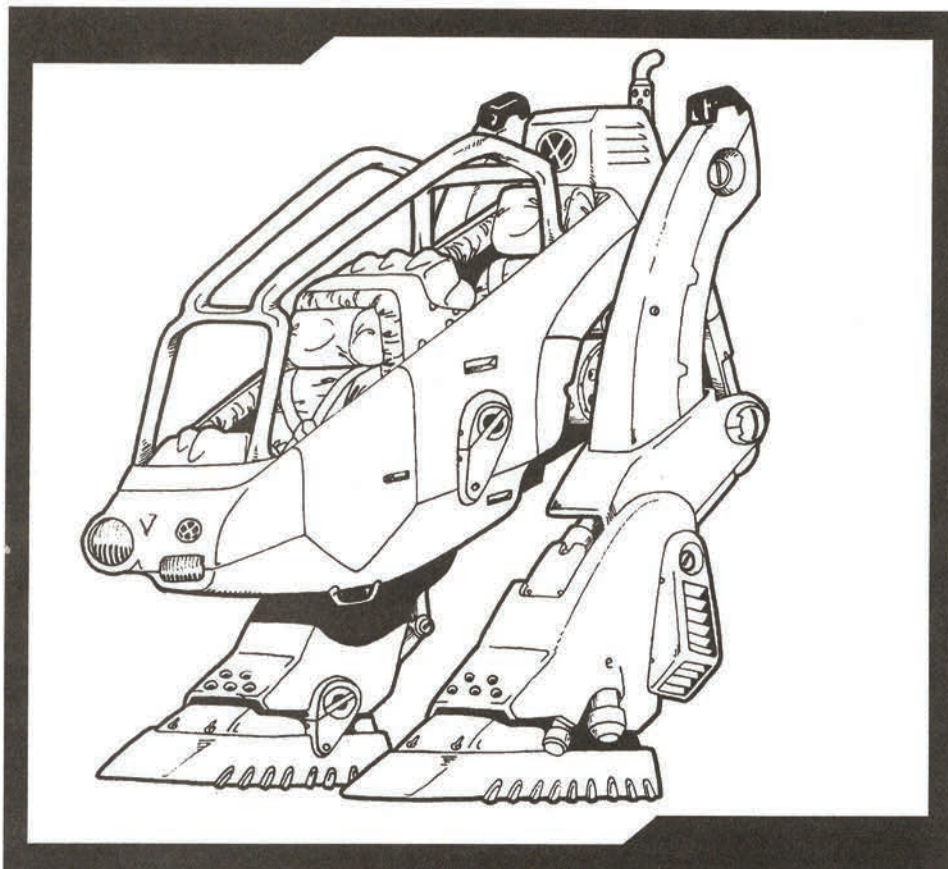
continued from page 79

Special Equipment:

4 man-hours of life support, military radio, navigation system, thermal imaging, amphibious.

Weapons:

20mm Gatling in top-mounted turret, 40mm Auto-GL in fixed mount forward, 12.7mm MG in articulated mount covering left side and forward, 12.7mm MG in articulated mount covering right side and forward, +2 targeting computers for the 20mm Gatling.



Volkswalker

This is a bipedal, civilian model Cyberwalk marketed mostly in the EEC, rarely imported to America due to skepticism and trade wars. It is a two-seat, open-canopy vehicle whose applications are almost purely recreational—the only other possible use would be short-range, low-threat exploration, recon or perhaps patrol. The Volkswalker is unarmored, but its carbon-fiber composite construction does afford it a meager 5SP.

TOP SPEED	40MPH	MANEUVER	-3
ACC/DEC	15/15MPH	SDP	20 (Body 1)
CREW	1	S.P.	5 (ARMOR 0)
RANGE	200 MILES	TYPE	CYBERWALK (BIPED)
PASSENGERS	1	MASS	650KG
CARGO	NONE	COST	52,500EB

Special Equipment:

Standard radio, navigation system, searchlight, cellular phone, crash control systems for driver and passenger.

Weapons:

None.

XML-20 Support Walker

ML-series construction consists of a 40-cubic meter hull, perched ostrich-like atop a pair of powerful, 4 meter tall armored legs. In order to prevent vehicle mass from wearing out the legs, they (and the feet) are oversized. The composite hull is limited in the amount of armor protection available, and the center of gravity prevents these vehicles from employing high-recoil heavy weapons. The protection, armament and mobility problems are sufficient to restrict the ML-series to being a heavy-weapons support unit.

Both the Army and Marines use ML-series vehicles: the XML-20 Support Walker and the XML-21 AT Walker are deployed as rough-terrain backup for infantry and ACPA troopers. Neither has the armor to take on real AFVs, or even heavy ACPA, directly; they hang back and provide fire support.



TOP SPEED	40MPH	CARGO	NONE
ACC/DEC	15/15MPH	MANEUVER	-1
CREW	2	SDP	40 (Body 2)
RANGE	400MI.	SP	40 (ARMOR 2)
PASSENGERS	NONE	TYPE	CYBERWALK (BIPED)

Special Equipment:

4 man-hours of life support, military radio, navigation system, thermal imaging.

Weapons:

20mm Gatling and 7.62mm Minigun in fixed mounts forward, 40mm Auto-GL in articulated mount covering left side and forward, 12.7mm HMG articulated mount covering right side and forward. +2 Targeting computers for Gatling and Minigun.

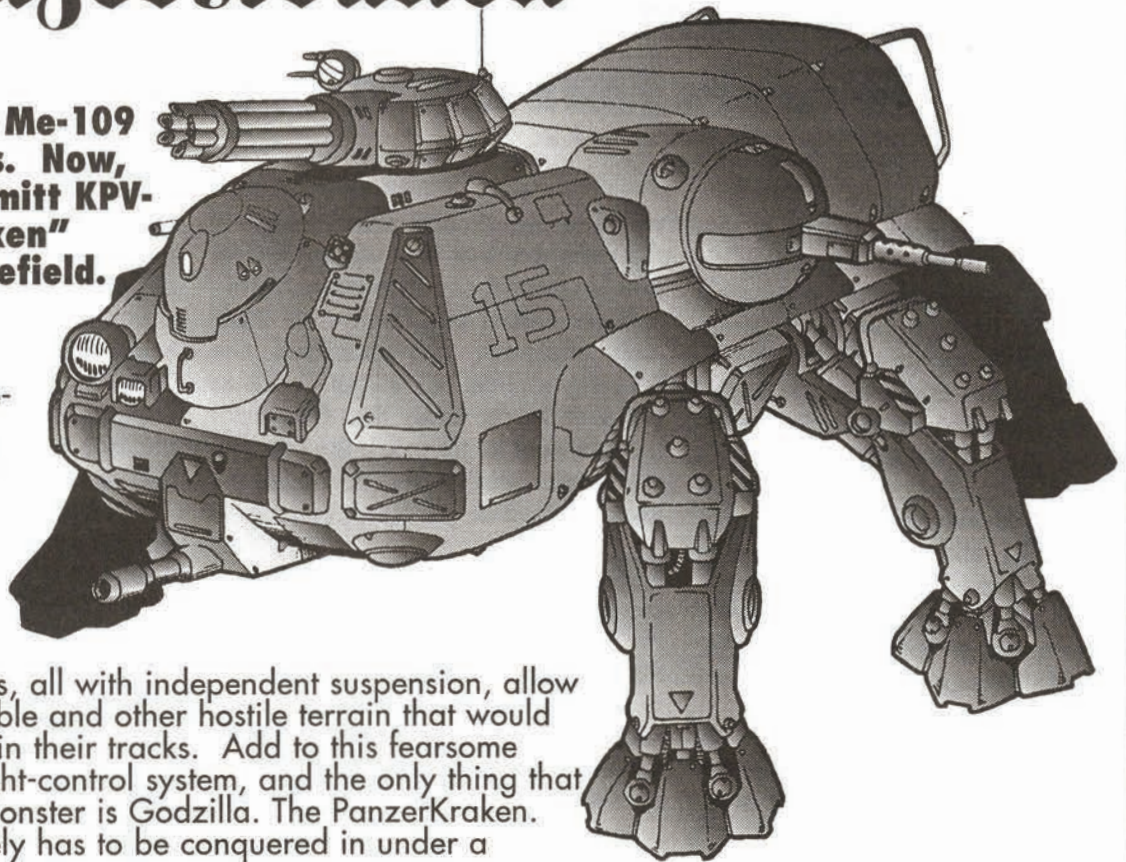
The AT variant replaces the 20mm gat., Auto-GL, and HMG with 4-6 LATGMs.

Messerschmitt KPV-R "PanzerKraken"

In 1942, the Messerschmitt Me-109 ruled the skies. Now, the Messerschmitt KPV-R "PanzerKraken" rules the battlefield.

With enough firepower to level a city and some of the best armor available, the PanzerKraken is the undisputed master of the land combat arena.

Its six legs, all with independent suspension, allow it to traverse rubble and other hostile terrain that would stop other AFVs in their tracks. Add to this fearsome package a thought-control system, and the only thing that could stop this monster is Godzilla. The PanzerKraken. When it absolutely has to be conquered in under a month.



Messerschmitt MGBH. Bonn, United Germany. Net Node 4822.28.109GD.



THE OPEN ROAD — MAXIMUM FIREPOWER

Weaponry Expansions for *Maximum Metal*

Ever since mankind first developed protective coverings to ward off damage, an arms race has existed between the development of offensive weaponry and its ability to penetrate armor, and armor's ability to defend its bearer. Late in the 20th century, armor protection eclipsed weapons with the development of Chobham, the miracle composite that could resist shaped-charge rounds and deflect most solid-core penetrators. The result was a move to smooth-bore weapons shooting even smaller and more dense penetrators at higher speeds.

The problem was that there was only so much that could be done with muzzle velocity; the propellants available couldn't drive a shell any faster without destroying the weapon. Of course, rail guns didn't have this problem, driving a tiny (by MBT-weapon standards) slug at velocities approaching six kilometers a second. For many

militaries, the tactical disadvantage of rail guns was that they were good for nothing except shooting other MBTs—a larger caliber gun could also shoot high explosive, anti-personnel and specialty rounds. But rail guns were so good at killing tanks that the major powers went for them in a big way, and the smaller armies were forced to follow their lead or get out of the way.

Electro-thermal Propellant

Finally, a line of research pursued 30 years ago has yielded significant results. Largely forgotten during the turmoil of the early years of this century, electro-thermal propulsion has resurfaced as a viable military option, first in commercial firearms, then as military weapons

The concept is fairly simple. Conventional solid propellants (developed from gunpowder or something

similar) burn swiftly, producing a great deal of gas expansion for a very brief period of time. This drives the shell forward and out of the barrel. But the gas expansion falls off very swiftly and the only way to improve the amount of gas expansion is to increase the charge...too much charge, and the gun can't hold it.

Electro-thermal propulsion uses a principle of sustained gas expansion. The shell is loaded with a combustible fluid, which is ignited by a massive electrical charge. The charge converts the fluid to a plasma (a highly-ionized gaseous state), at a controlled rate. The result is that the plasma is increased as the shell moves down the barrel, with a correspondingly higher muzzle velocity, less stress on the barrel, and surprisingly, reduced recoil! Of course, the velocity is several times the gun's design velocity (3000+ feet/second for handguns, and up to 7000+ feet/second for larger



weapons), so normal barrels would have the lands (rifling) stripped from them swiftly. The solution is to use smoothbores, already a common military practice.

Not every weapon can benefit from electro-thermal propellant. The idea of using it in a low-velocity weapon is ludicrous— why bother trying to speed up a shell that relies on explosive power for effect? Only the higher-velocity weapons can derive any benefit from it, and only the big armor-piercers at that. Speeding up the shells from most autocannons defeats their purpose, since those guns are usually made for attacking soft targets, not heavy armor. An APC/IFV with an autocannon and a missile launcher is advised to use the missile launcher if facing something that the autocannon can't handle. Small-bore specialty weapons designed for anti-vehicle work are the exceptions (the Barrett-Arasaka 20mm, the 30mm Gatling, and the 37mm LATG).

Electro-thermal Artillery

For the most part, artillery is a low-velocity prospect, unworthy of switching to electro-thermal propulsion. However, there is a benefit to designing a gun just for e-tp, and that is to throw huge shells a long, long way.

20cm ET Gun: A big smooth-bore cannon that throws double-price shells (add the price of a normal shell to any calculations made for special warheads). This gun's stats are the same as those listed for the 200mm howitzer, but the gun costs 500,000 euro and has a maximum range of 45,000 meters.

**AS IF THE
POPULARITY
OF THE NEW
ELECTRO-
THERMAL GUNS
WASN'T ENOUGH,
JAPANESE
ELECTRONICS HAVE
MADE THE
IMPOSSIBLE
POSSIBLE AGAIN**

Follow-up Missiles

As if the popularity of the new electro-thermal guns wasn't enough, Japanese electronics have made the impossible possible again. The long-sought preci-

sion infrared seeking sensors for follow-up missiles are now available.

The follow-up missile concept works on the idea that if one missile hitting a target is a good idea, then several missiles hitting the same spot on the target's armor is a great idea. The missile firer shoots one missile and guides it to the target. At precise intervals after the lead missile is fired, secondary missiles launch (the number depends upon how many the firer is willing to expend in a volley), one after another, and follow the lead missile to the target. Using high-definition IR sensors, the missiles track in and impact on the original impact site, in essence, burrowing into the target's armor.

Follow-up missile fuses/sensors add 10% to the cost of the missile, and may not be added to any other kind of missile (one you design a missile to "follow the leader," that's all it does). When a follow-up missile weapons system is designed, each missile to be launched requires its own launcher—the lead missile uses a normal launcher each follow-up missile to be fired in a volley uses a cheaper launcher (same spaces, 50% of launcher cost).

Every follow-up missile weapons system is designed with a set number of follow-up missiles launchers to be fired along with the lead missile. If the lead missile hits the target, roll 1D10 for each follow-up missile: 1-4, missile hits the same spot on the target; add 50% of its

Electro-Thermal Modified Weapons

Weapon	WA	Damage	#Shots	ROF	Range	Cost
Barrett-Arasaka Lt. 20mm	+1	6D10AP (6)	10	1	750m	3800eb
30mm Gatling	+0	9D10AP (9)	1200	30	900m	37,500eb
LATG 37mm	+3	9D10AP (9)	10	1	1200m	15,000eb
75mm cannon	+1	10D10AP (10)	10	2	1000m	115,000eb
105mm cannon	+1	15D10AP (15)	1	1	1500m	375,000eb
120mm cannon	+0	19D10AP (19)	1	1	1900m	750,000eb
140mm cannon	+0	24D10AP (24)	1	1	2250m	1.5 Meb

All damages/penetrations listed are for armor-piercing discarding sabot. HEAT, HESH, and Beehive (fletcherette) rounds retain their normal damages and penetrations.

Ammo for electro-thermal weapons costs twice the normal ammunition price, no matter what the ammo!



penetration to the lead missile's! 5-9, missile misses the exact impact site and hits the target somewhere else; roll location of hit randomly and determine the missile's normal penetration separately. 10+, missile misses the target altogether. -1 if the target is stationary; +1 if the target is moving at over 300mph. If the lead missile misses, all missiles miss. If the lead missile is destroyed by reactive armor, roll to see of any of the follow-up missiles hit (as above, but with an extra +2 to each roll).

Example: A Militech MT-4 MBT is successfully hit with an HATGM lead missile. The missile hits the tank's glacis plate (the front), and does Penetration 9 to Armor 8—not much. Then three other follow-up missiles zing in, two of which are destroyed by the MBT's AEAMS defensive system. The one that gets through pushes the Penetration up to 13.5, rounded down to 13. Compared to the MT-4's Armor+Body of 20, at least the impact has a chance of hurting the tank.

Rail-gun Response

With electro-thermal guns and follow-up missiles on the market, rail-gun makers were faced with a quandary. The market for anti-tank weapons, dominated for so long by rail-guns, would soon shift to less-expensive weapons unless rail guns got better, fast. With that in mind, IEC rushed development of superior magnetic recoil-damping systems and swiftly put a newer, larger rail gun on the market.

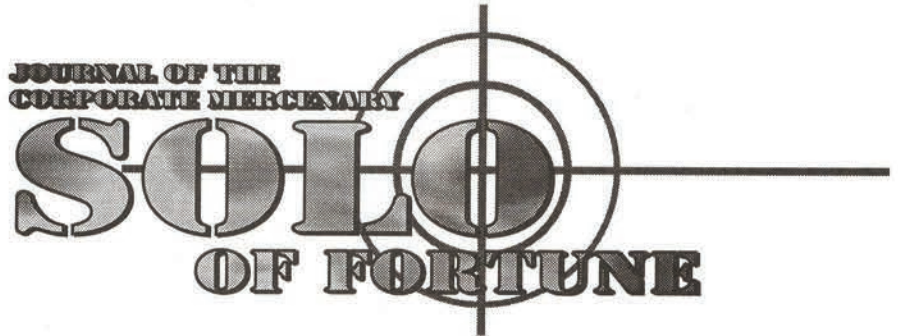
IMPROVED RAIL-GUN RECOIL SYSTEMS: These add 20% (round down) to the amount of spaces a rail-gun takes up, and adds 50% to the gun's cost. However, it lowers the vehicle tonnage necessary to mount the gun by 50% (so a 1 cm gun can be mounted in a 20-ton vehicle, for instance). Rail-guns still require tracked chassis, though!

4CM RAIL CANNON: This cannon requires a tracked chassis of at least 70 tons to withstand the recoil generated. It already includes the recoil system improvements noted above.

HVY • +0 • N • R • 28D10AP (40mm gauss) • 50 • 1/2 • UR • 6 Mil eb • 20 spaces

Weapon	WA	Damage	#Shots	ROF	Range	Cost
4cm rail gun	+0	28D10 AP (Pen 30)	50	1/2	1500m	6 Meb

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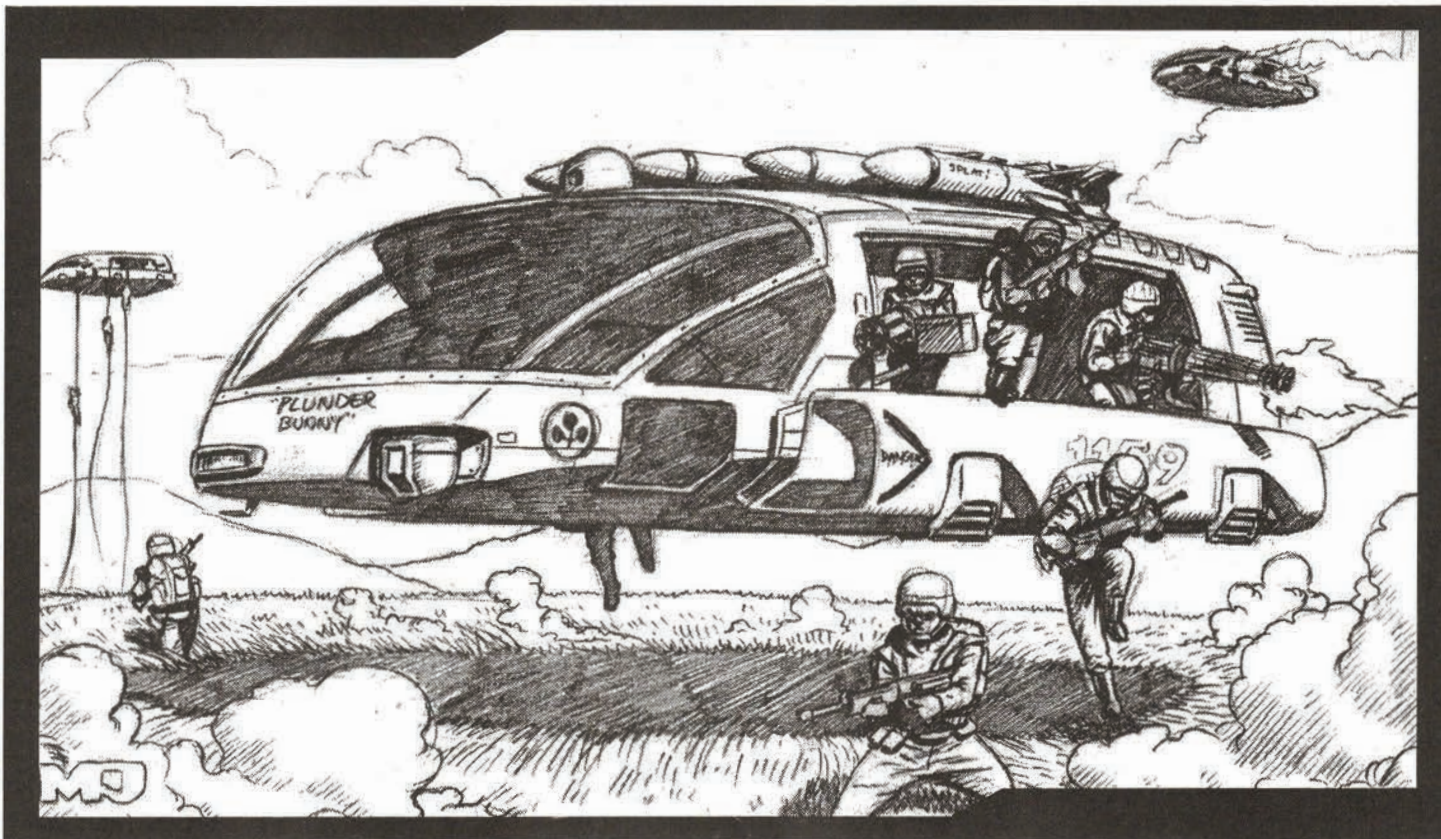
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THE OPEN ROAD—

NEW FROM THE SHOWROOM—



AV-11 Combat Aerodyne

The new light troop/equipment transport for the 2020's!! The AV-11 cargo bay can be configured for equipment or troop handling in mere minutes. Just attach the seats to the retaining bolts on the floors and the AV-11 is now ready for that long-range penetration with your black-ops team.

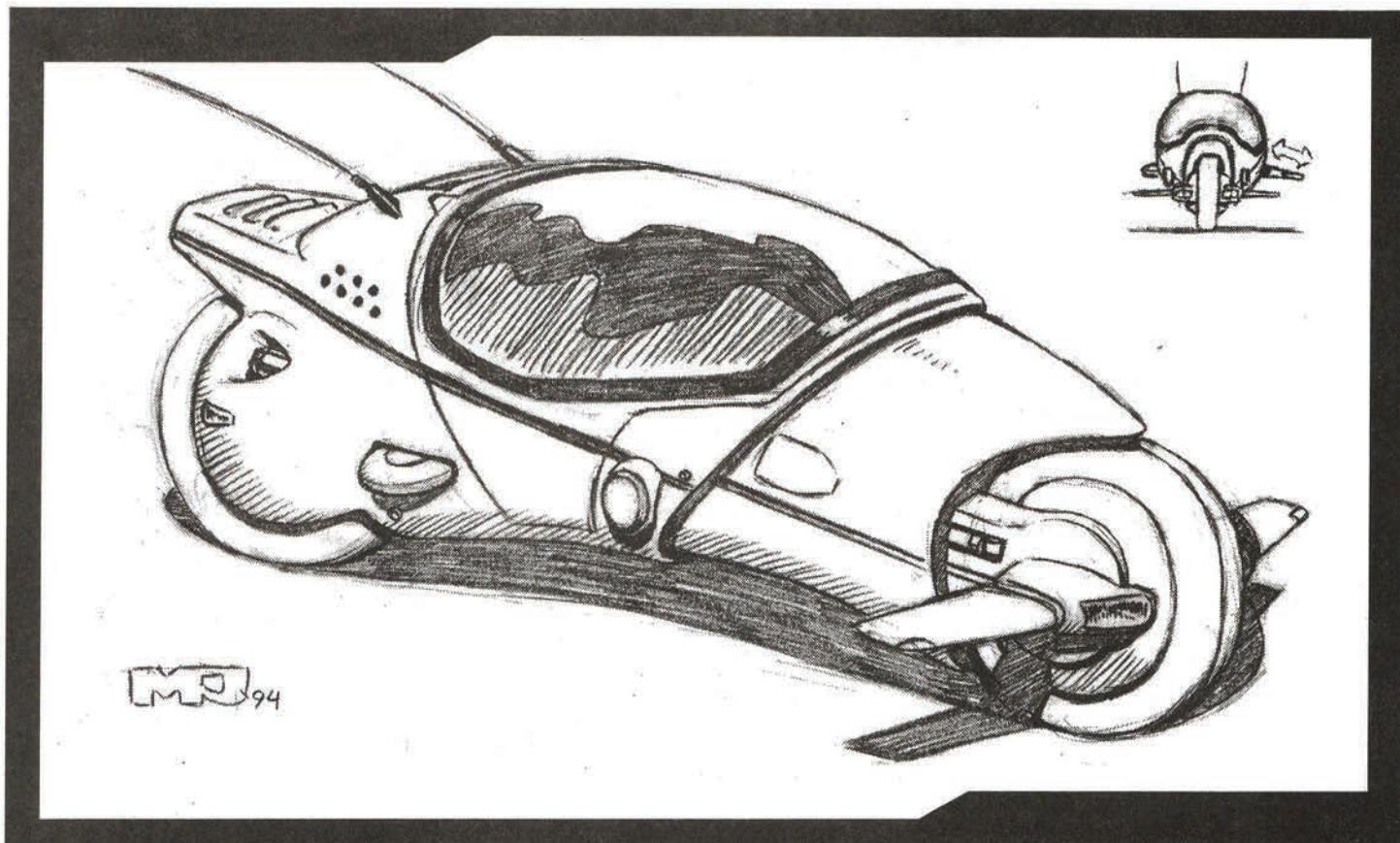
TOP SPEED: 405 MPH
Acc/Dcc: 50/50 MPH
CREW: 2

RANGE: 1060 MI
PASSENGERS: 9
CARGO: NONE
MANEUVER: +3
SDP: 140 (BODY 7)
SP: 45 (ARMOR 2)
TYPE: AV
MASS: 6 TONS
COST: 3.5MEB

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:
 IR Baffling, Crash control systems (crew and pass.), Damage control, Ejection seats x2, Environmental control, Chaff and Flare dispensers, Military radio w/Satellite uplink and scrambler, Microwave rangefinders,

Multi-targeting, Auto-pilot and Navigation systems, Cybernetic linkage, ECM, ECCM, Optics w/Image-enhancement, Telescopes and Low-Light, Thermograph, Laser/Radar detectors, Military Radar with terrain-following and Target ID systems, Entertainment system (audio), Pod wings

WEAPONS:
 Computer weapons sight (+4), 4x 20mm autocannon in articulated mounts (2x each side), 4x Hellfire missiles, Painting laser in high-angle turret, 12 spaces for pod-mounted weapons



Bell Sandpiper

From the shape alone, it is obvious that the Sandpiper is different—many people consider it a one-man, two-wheel sports car! It's an American design from the diversifying Bell corp (who specialize in light aircraft), but they've built up the chassis to shift some of the weight off traditional stress areas. The frame and engine are connected at seven points to stiffen the body and improve handling.

The motorcycle is a recumbent design, with the driver fully enclosed by a forward-closing plastic cockpit shield which operates on hydraulic arms. A roof is a fine thing when the rain is really pouring down, since even the best rain suits don't help you in a real downpour (but then again, a roof can restrict your vision). With a field of vision this close to the ground, you feel like a speed demon even when you're just coasting!

It has quartz halogen headlights flanking the front wheel, placed directly ahead of the modular bank-angle sensors, and, to prevent scrapes while cornering, the Sandpiper has two horizontal-facing mini-wheels on each side of the body.

The bike also sports anti-lock disc brakes and its center-hub suspension is spring-loaded (which might help in a collision). The Sandpiper is large and heavy for a motorcycle, with a very long wheelbase. All in all, a luxurious and unusual package from a company which definitely bears watching.

TOP SPEED:	120MPH
ACC/DEC:	18/60MPH
CREW:	1
RANGE:	400 MI
PASSENGERS:	NONE
CARGO:	0 KG, NO SPACES
MANEUVER:	+3
SDP:	36 (Body 1)
SP:	0 (ARMOR 0)

TYPE:	MOTORCYCLE
MASS:	144KG
COST:	12,380EB

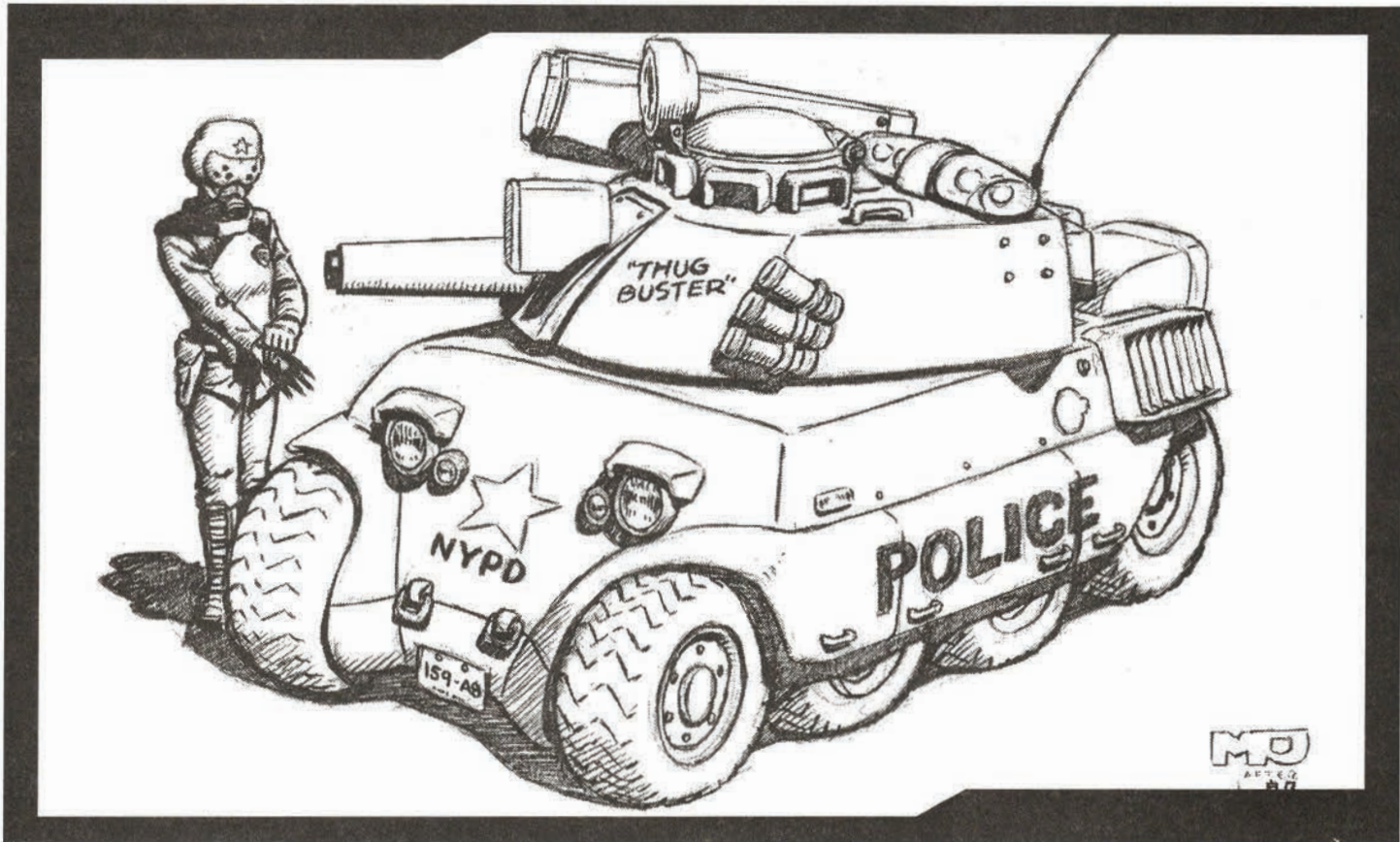
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT & CONSTRUCTION:

Built-up chassis and stiffened frame (SDP 36); antilock brakes (deccel +100%); high-power halogen headlamps; cybernetic control; smartlocked access (Diff 20+); Shocker antitheft system; passenger protection crash system (SP40 vs collision); civilian environmental control.

WEAPONS:
None

NEW ITEM NOTES:

Civilian environmental control: 500eb, no space. This controls heat, cooling, and humidity, just like the normal environmental control, but does not include the filters and gas protection of the military model.



Mitsubishi "Musashi" SWAT Mini-Tank

In today's modern metropolis, political dissidents, religious fanatics and heavily-armed cyberpsychos are almost constantly on the rampage. SWAT teams have faced increased danger from nihilist terrorism, while corporate border skirmishes pose a serious threat to public safety. There is no room in this environment for the under-armed cops of yesterday. Today's enforcers need high-mobility firepower at the tactical level!

The well-prepared police force will use the Musashi mini-tank to protect their city's populace and face paramilitary crime head-on. This compact Mini-Tank is perfectly adapted to SWAT-style urban combat tactics, capable of fire-suppression, support, and even direct attack. A full

neural-interface operating system, employing drive-by-light technology and enhanced fiber-optic camera systems, allows one officer to operate all mini-tank functions. The Musashi can carry a team of cops into danger with complete safety, or evacuate wounded with equal security—and it packs enough punch to deal with corporate-operation threat levels.

Its low-pressure 75mm cannon can use a variety of ammo for all purposes: fire foam, gas, fragmentation, rubber buckshot, shaped-charge, HESH, and proximity-fused anti-air shells can be mixed in the 40-round hopper. The computer autoloader can select the right shell for the job on command. The 10mm HIVE system, adapted from the ACPA weapon, also does double duty (antipersonnel/air-defense), mixing AP, rubber bullets, and explosive rounds (1/2 damage to SP or SDP, but double damage for flesh). This weapon suite allows you to master any situation or

environment the chassis can get you into...or out of

TOP SPEED	50MPH
ACC/DEC	13/50MPH
CREW	2
RANGE	200 MI
PASSENGERS	5, OR
CARGO	5 SPACES, 6500KG
MANEUVER	+2
SDP	200 (BODY 10)
SP	100 (ARMOR 5)
TYPE	TRACKED IFV
MASS	8 TONS
COST	1,400,000EB

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:

Cybernetic linkage; auto-pilot and nav system; military-level radio with scrambler and satellite uplink; 8 IR smoke launchers; fire extinguisher; environmental control; optics w/image enhancement, light amplification, thermograph, telescopic; laser detector; simple security system; armored searchlight; armored loudspeakers; multi-target system; anti-personnel grenade charges



THERE IS NO PLACE FOR THE UNDER-ARMED COPS OF YESTERDAY. TODAY'S ENFORCERS NEED HIGH-MOBILITY FIREPOWER AT THE TACTICAL LEVEL!

WEAPONS:

Stabilized 75mm low-pressure/velocity gun w/autoloader; stabilized 10mm HIVE; both in high-angle turret. +2 computer sights, laser rangefinder. The 75mm has 3 maga-

zines in Hull, and the 10mm HIVE has two magazines in Hull.

NEW ITEM NOTES:

75mm Low Velocity Gun: Using low-pressure propellant techniques, this

gun's recoil is small enough for use on AVs, helicopters and aircraft as a ground-attack weapon.

HVY ● 0 ● N ● R ● var. ● (75mm) ● 10 ● 1 ● VR ● 100K eb ● 600m range ● 4 spaces

Loudspeaker: 250eb, no space.

When you want to make yourself heard, or just want the surrounding countryside to hear your choice of touring music. (Of interest to those who don't want to hear your music: loudspeakers are Small targets, and have 5 SDP. Armored loudspeakers, as found on the Musashi, are 400eb and take 20 SDP before they stop working.)



Adrek Robotics



The First Name in Robots & Cyberforms Presents:

The "LawDog" Remote / Autonomous Patrol Droid-1!

The "LawDog" RAPD-1 is designed to patrol high-threat areas, such as prisons and urban centers, as well as high-level crowd-control situations. The stock RAPD-1 unit is vaguely humanoid in configuration, with human-equivalent senses. Cyberoptic/cyberaudio options are possible, at a 20% discount.

PERFORMANCE STATISTICS—

Size: 2.1mT x 0.7m Dia; Weight: 375kg.

Limb Configuration & Equipment:

2x Manipulator Arms [SP=30 and SDP=30/40] w/Militech Tasers (powered by internal batts.); Avante P-1135 Needleguns (100 round mag); Wolver.

Central torso SP=30 and SDP=40/50 w/Constitution Arms Deluge CCW (600 round mag).

4x Legs [SP=15 and SDP= 20/35]

RAPDs are equipped with Microwave/EMP shielding standard.

An RAPD has a functnal REF of 6. Maximum ground speed is 30kph.

One extra magazine is carried for all weapons. All integral and mounted weapons are treated as smart weapons.

All RAPDs have 4 external weapon mounts and links (2x hips and 2x shoulders). Common optional weapons for the external mounts include the Constitution Arms Hurricane (200 round mag), or the Constitution Arms Cyclone (300 round mag). Crippling the central torso disables the unit.

OPERATING PARAMETERS—

RAPDs are remote-controlled by a human or AI system. Standard control range: 100km, which may be boosted. An interface link is optional [500eb; a +2 bonus to operating skills].

The RAPD-1 has a highly advanced CPU/memory system enabling it to operate independantly in limited situations. It's not a true AI, but it is capable of taking certain actions (detaining unauthorized people or using specific combat tactics). This basic programming allows it to recognize people and objects, handle weapons, take orders, and so forth. Stock RAPDs have the capacity to store up to six skill levels (for example *Melee* +3, *Rifle* +1, and *Awareness* +2) in its memory. These skills are installed by inserting special skill chips. Each chip is priced the same as a comparable skill chip.

RAPD-1s are typically assigned to patrol or guard duties on autonomous mode. If a situation arises that is beyond the intelligence of an RAPD-1 to handle, an operator will provide it with orders or assume direct control.

Current list price—125,000eb

See your nearest Adrek representative for details.

RAPDs - THE RAPID SOLUTION TO YOUR SECURITY NEEDS.



MEDICALLY ALERT— STRIPPED DOWN: THE NEW ETHOS OF CYBERWARE

by **Bill Sharpe**

Yeah, I remember the good old days. Back around 2010, maybe through 2015 or so. Us old dogs who have been in the business far too long remember those days as the Metal Years. I personally was running around with an artificial eye, two cyberlegs, and a cyberarm loaded with so many guns that all I had to do was drive near an airport to cause a security crisis. And I didn't even lose any limbs in combat. Hard-boiled cybergrunts refer to people like me as "electives," meaning that we chose to have meat limbs removed and replaced with cybernetics. It was a fad, and it was a fad that sucked us all in.

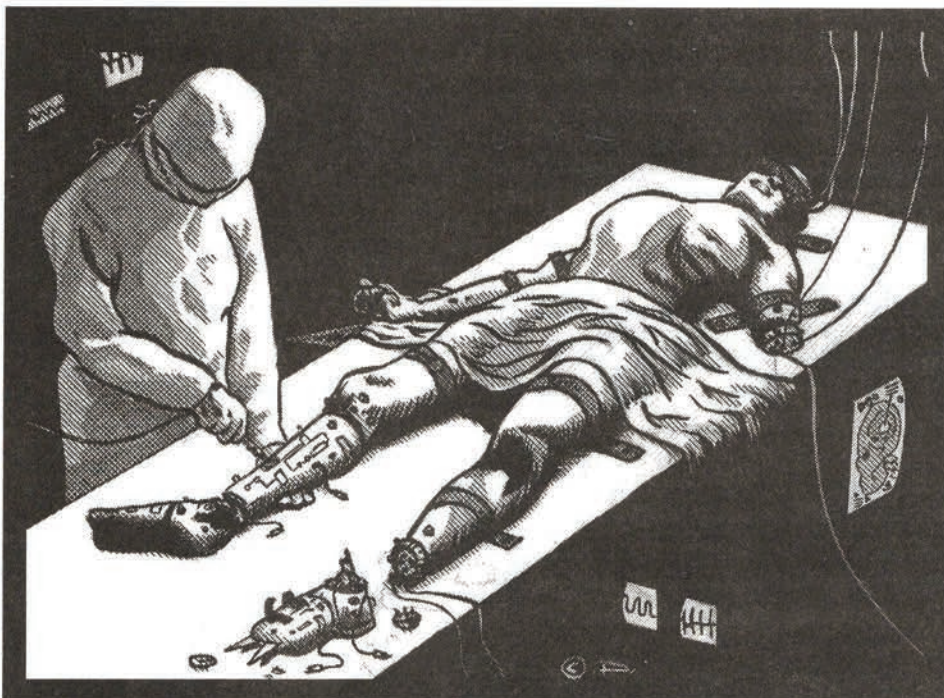
The 'teens were a strange and violent time. Not that these days

aren't a little bizarre, mind you. Cyberware still had the glow of something new and exotic back then. And it was a brutal, violent time. New corporations were beginning to consolidate their hold on power; warring with each other for resources and business. Society was changing in ways that we didn't understand, and life was cheap, nasty, and often short.

Out of this time grew an odd arms race. As the business of being a Solo exploded, a strange kind of arms race followed. All these wonderful new toys were available. You could be faster...stronger...quicker...deadlier than any all-meat person. The problem was that your enemy was plugging hardware into his body as fast as you were. You

had to be half machine just to be competitive. It wasn't a question of a little Kerenzikov booster, or a cyber-eye for good night vision. Now it was about squeezing every last piece of machinery into your body. Three or four limbs. Built-in weapons. Enough boosterware to jump start a car. Nanotech. Skinweave. Interfaces. As fast as Raven Microcyb and Arasaka Neotech could release new cyberware, we'd be plugging 'em in, and making just a little bit more room in our thoracic cavity. Cyberware became a resume item. An advertisement.

Some of us got through the craze alright. Some of us died in combat. For some of us, the toll was worth than death. Now, ten years after the fact, we understand many



EVEN AS THE 37MM ARMOR-PIERCING SHELL KILLED WHAT LITTLE OF HIM WAS LEFT, HE KEPT FIGHTING. ONLY AS I STOOD OVER HIM AND WATCHED HIS SYSTEMS SHUT DOWN DID THE LIGHT OF HUMANITY RETURN TO HIS EYES. AND THEN HE WAS DEAD.

of the ways in which cyberware affects us. At the time, we weren't sure what was happening. All we knew was that some of us finally went too far. One chip. One wire. One 'weave over the top, and something critical in the human body is lost. The machine takes over, and the man is lost. Often forever.

I remember the first man I ever saw go cyberpsycho. His name was Red Jaymes, and he was my second on an eight man wet-squad for a corporation that I'd rather not name. Red was South-Am vet, and he'd been behind a gun for as long as he could remember. The cybernetic marketers had hooked Red on the idea that the only way for him to stay alive was keep plugging in more systems and more upgrades. He was compulsive. "This the thing I need, man," he once said to me. "This is the add that will put us over the top! No one will be able to stop us!" Soon after installing a spinal Enduro-Pak, Red started to lose it. There was just too much machine, not enough meat, and that critical balance in his body was lost. He became something that was truly less than human.

I first noticed the behavior change when Red started going out

of his way to dispatch enemies in cruel ways. If he could get close and use his hands instead of a weapon, that's what he would do. He liked to be close to see the last vestiges of life drain out of his victims. Sometimes I think he regretted having artificial hands...they prevented him from truly feeling the flesh dying in his grasp. Then Red started killing for the hell of it. At first he would try to disguise it in the context of the mission. This explosive went wrong and took out some bystanders. That was the wrong target—got to try again. I took that guy out as a precaution. The rest of my wet team and I turned a blind eye because Red was such a great combat asset. That was how we thought of him. Not as another person, but as a combat asset, like a piece of artillery. Then he went off in our face. On a night infiltration against a riverine target, Red suddenly decided that the rest of us weren't up to his caliber, and we were jeopardizing the mission. He decided that the only way to succeed was for him to go in alone. That made us expendable, and since we wouldn't agree with his plan, we had to be removed. Of the seven of us, Red killed five. I barely escaped. Two days later I lead the heavy detail that tracked him down in Houston, Texas where he was holding off three local Tac Squads and a 'Borg-squad flown in from Dallas. Even as the 37mm armor-piercing shell went through his breastplate and killed what little of him was left, he kept fighting. Only as I stood over him and watched his systems shut down did the light of humanity return to his eyes. And then he was dead.

I have heard many stories from friends who have had similar experiences. And I have interviewed 'borg squads around the country about their experiences (see **December, 2018** issue—Editor). Yeah, I know of guys who went over the edge and were taken alive. They're too banged-up for meat replacements and they're too crazy to take cyber-



netics again. They're just useless lumps of meat tied to cots with tubes sticking into every orifice, or worse, suspended in nutrient baths with nothing but their psychosis to keep them warm.

It looks like the news has been spreading, though. In the last few years I've seen the tide begin to turn a little, and I think that there are a few things behind it. First, too many of the surviving Solos have seen their friends turn into mindless mecha-zombies. Nobody who has seen it first-hand wants it to happen to them, believe me. But it was more than that. A new sense of pride has grown in the second-generation Solos, kids who weren't part of the original cybergrunts in the South-Am war, or part of those first heady days of the true freelancers. The new generation wants to prove that it's all them; that it's all skill. The kids I meet now might have a first level booster, a cybereye, and a smartgun link. Just the basics to keep the speed and alertness up. But the heavy-duty hardware—metal arms and legs, implanted weapons, body plating—strictly passé.

I've worked with some of the second-generation Solos, and, from what I've seen, the best of them have the skills to back their stripped-down chassis. They work on the basics: speed, athletic/tactical ability, and the skills to get off a good, clean shot no matter how much EMP is surging through the air. Four months ago I saw a woman who's only cyberware was a smartgun socket, Sandevistan, and cyberoptics take down a guy who could have stocked an M-5 battle tank with the guns and armor implanted in his body. How'd she do it? Brains. Instead of taking the guy head-on, where she would have been alley-paint in about three seconds, she played to her strengths and the cyberman's weaknesses. Metal is slow, and easily detectable. She was like liquid shadow, leading the 'borg around though an underground

parking garage. She dropped flares to block her heat signatures, and noisemakers to confuse his audio. Then she played hunt and peck; striking quickly, taking out a little chunk, then moving quickly. She had an armor long-coat to deflect some of the shrapnel as Mr. Heavy Duty kept detonating entire cars. How'd

**SO, NEXT
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SELF AGAIN:
WAS IT ME,
OR THE
MACHINERY?**

she get him in the end? Poison dart lodged in the meat section of the guy's wrist. Metal's no good if the meat is dead, and she went straight for the heart. Now that's subtle.

So, next time you go into combat, ask yourself, just how good are you without the toys? And if you win, stop, and ask yourself again: was it me, or the machinery?

Play Notes

Cyberpunk's combat system is designed so that in a high-powered campaign, a huge amount of cybernetics is necessary to survive combat. If you want to de-emphasize cyberware, and bring your characters back towards humanity a little more, try the following.

Emphasize in role play just how rare, and often—ugly, over-cybered people are.

Reward creativity and original thinking in combat, and discourage the unimaginative, brute-force approach.

If players are generating new characters, allow them to trade in some of their initial money for skill points, rather than spending it on cyberware. Possibly 1 skill point per 100 euro.

Award extra experience for cool things accomplished without cyber-assistance.

Play humanity loss and cyberpsychosis by the book.



IPSC RANGE REVIEW

IPSC Night City: Heywood outdoors range

By Jan Brett

I've shot on a lot of ranges, but one of the overall toughest is the range at Heywood. 900 meters of soft sand pathway through rough terrain, forty targets, and some of the strangest obstacles I've seen.

The Heywood range is run by the Night City IPSC club; a more demented and technically oriented bunch I've rarely seen. The outdoors range (they also have an indoors range in Night City proper, out near the docks) is only a stones-throw from the Militech Proving Grounds, which forms a nice back drop; it also means that on occasion the Night City club gets to use Militech's training grounds, which, I am told, are a blast.

The overall shoot changes from time to time, but what I've described and mapped below is one of the more common scenarios. You start with a fairly simple qualifying shot; fifty meters, if you can't shoot that with a pistol, you probably shouldn't be competing. From there you go to a set of three targets, all fairly distant, and then the first of the pop-ups. Next is a hostage set-up called "Isstvan's Hut"; careful, one of those targets shoots back! IPSC; Night City has got a bunch of targets they call gunners; they're basically pop-up targets with IR/radar targeted splatball guns; they don't hurt you, but each hit is a penalty; precious seconds you can ill-afford. After that is a trio of gunners, followed by a steep incline that is hard to get down safely (25+ vs Athletics task; fail means fall for 1D6 bruise and 1D6/2 rounds to get back up); the wag who put up the sign that says "Caution;

Falling Solos" has, I'm sure, been commended for his efforts.

Not far after that is one of the first of several carefully disguised pit traps. These aren't all that deep, but they are wide, filled with soft sand, and hard to see till you're almost on top of them (20+ vs *Awareness/Combat Sense* to detect, 25+ to detect in time to avoid falling in w/o an *Average Athletics* test). A little bit farther down the road you come to a fairly wide stream, with a rickety old contraption that they say is a rope bridge—and that I say is a hazard to life and limb. Still, it's better than swimming, even if they do have a Gunner set up to shoot at you once you've started across the bridge (20+ vs *Athletics* to cross, or 15+ vs *Swimming*; attacks on target are at -3 in either case).

About 30 meters down the road, you'll probably be surprised to see a minisub surfacing out of the water, with its deck-gun pointed right at you! The U-boat is a mock up of an IEC MSV-13, complete with a gunner on the back. The deck gun is really a fully automatic paintball gun; pretty scary concept.

The next threat is a lot more mobile; a remote controlled Panhardt UCV, complete with splatter-shell grenade launcher! What's even worse, although disarming the vehicle isn't that hard (just "kill" the gunner), you have to deal with the driver (also a target), as it tries to run you down! Supposedly, the real driver (safe in a control booth on the bluff) has never actually hit anyone, but I don't think it's for lack of trying. Me, I usually aim for the tires; getting an

accurate kill though the glass is hard. (Tires are small [-4] targets, while the driver has total cover).

Past another pit trap is probably the single most dangerous target: the Sniper. When you start the course, they warn you that there is a single target which failure to neutralize will disqualify you from the match. This is it. The first shot from the Sniper will always miss; but if it hits you after that, you are out of the competition. Hitting the Sniper can be a royal pain, as it's far away, and carefully concealed on the ridge.

Down past the Sniper is a Malay stick trap known as the "Ugly Stick". It's padded so it won't really hurt, but it can certainly knock the wind out of you if it catches you (20+ vs *Awareness/Combat Sense* to avoid, Stun Save at -3 and 1D6 bruise damage otherwise; turns stunned equals damage taken).

After that is a rapid-fire shoot; five targets, all under 30 meters; the idea is to hit them all before they can open fire (double time penalty for hits incurred here).

Then it's the part I really hate: the swimming. If God meant us to swim, she would have given us gills...and not the cyber-variety. Anyway, you have to swim about a hundred meters, and all the while they've got another one of those auto-splatball guns spraying all around you. Then, almost right after you get out of the water, up pop three more gunners, all at real close range. You scramble back up the rock face...it's a little less steep here, but still a pain (20+ vs Athletics, failure



means lose 1D6/2 turns while you try again; Critical failure means you got to the top before falling back down; 1D6 bruise damage, lose 1D6 turns).

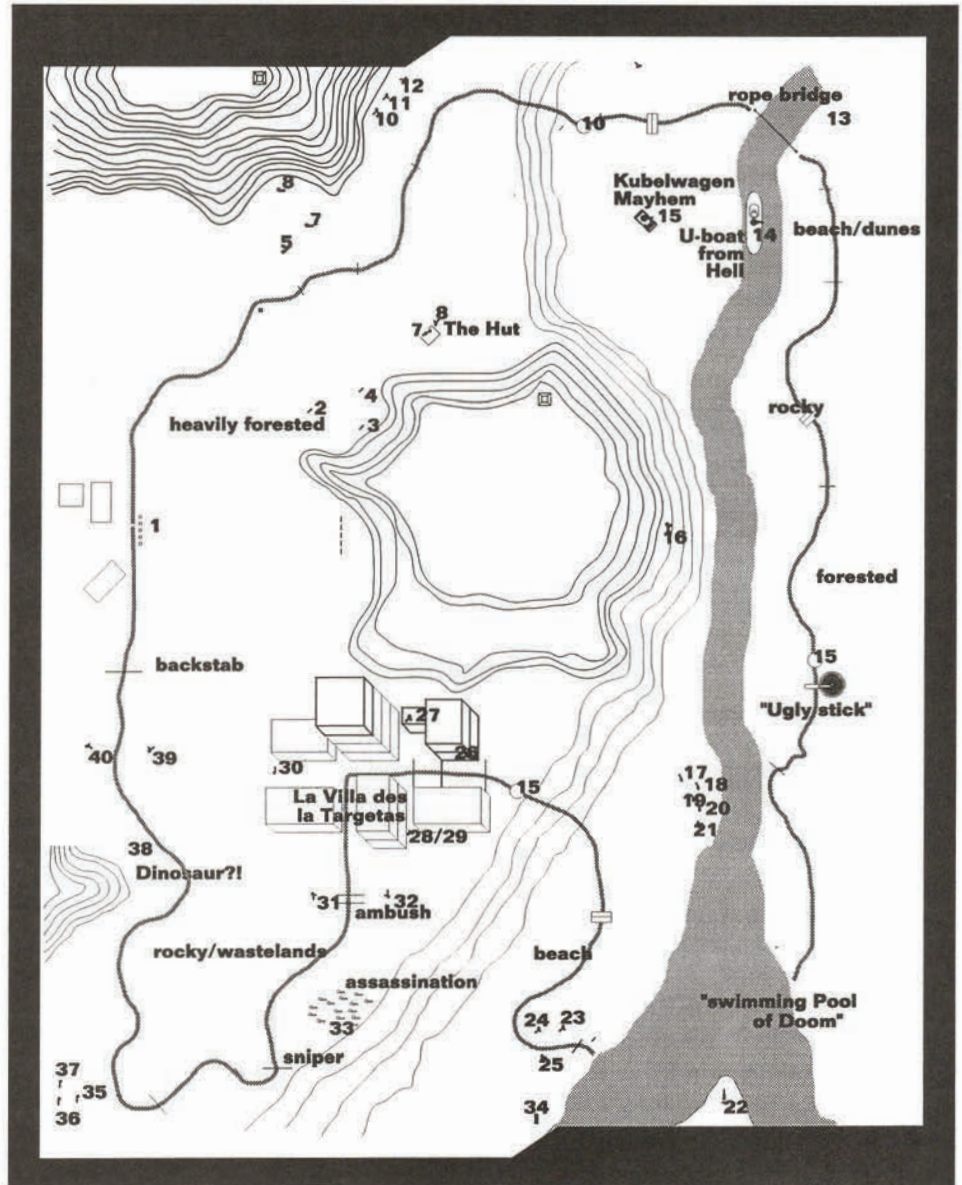
Now you enter the "Urban" part of the run; "Los Villas de la Targetas," which, I am told, is absolutely lousy Spanish (and even worse French), for "The Village of Targets." The target scheme differs almost weekly, and, since each of the buildings is fully-furnished, you sometimes have to do room by room sweeping (worst was when they had a mini-mortar on the roof of the tallest building lobbing paint grenades on you; you had to fight your way up the building to neutralize it or you got lobbed at through the whole rest of the run).

Down the run a bit is a classical "idiot ambush" (you know, two idiots on opposite sides of the road, each with guns—you drop to the ground and they shoot each other), only these two you still have to shoot (apparently they have paint-proof vests). From there is an assassination scenario; you have to shoot the black target while avoiding all the white ones (hits on white targets are a 15 second penalty apiece; go ahead, mow 'em down).

After a nasty sniper job (you have to hit this target; no penalty other than the time you take, but you can't go on until you kill it) and a trio of vanilla pop-ups, is the most bizarre obstacle of the run. As you round the corner of the bluff, you come face to face with a bloody three-and-a-half meter-tall dinosaur!

No, not a real one. It's another remote, cooked up by some techie friends and members of the club. But from 55 meters away (where it starts out), you really can't tell the difference. The thing stands there and roars at you for a while (one combat round), then lumbers menacingly towards you (at a rate of 15m per combat round).

The thing is, with an Impact Rating of 16, this critter is hard to kill; one of those times where carrying a larger caliber gun as my competition piece might be a good idea. And you haven't got much time; if it gets within five meters of you, you're dead. That's



right; Rex there "eats" you, and you get bumped from the competition. At least the blinkin thing doesn't breathe fire...

After all that, you're all clear...or are you? Quick count...thirty-eight targets. But they said forty, didn't they? Yep. The last two gunners pop up in the last 100 meters of the run; 25 meters behind you! If you aren't sharp, you can get pegged several times before you realize what's up. Pretty sneaky.

All in all, a tough course. I can see why the Solos that come out of Night City are plenty tough and smart; the good ones all spend time on this course.

Contact Alex D'everaux at (666) 718-2296 (fax, net, or comm) for membership information and times of operation.

Scoring notes

Scoring is based on completion time, which is how long it took you to run the course, plus any penalties incurred. Each combat round past the first is added into the time (for instance, if a shooter spends four rounds at target #34, they will add an additional half-minute to their time).



Completion Chart

MA	TIME
01-04	10 minutes
05-07	8 minutes, 20 seconds
08-10	7 minutes
11-13	6 minutes, 30 seconds
14-15	5 minutes

Because of the loose, sandy surface, MA 15 is the fastest speed that can be maintained for any length of time.

Penalties

Missed pop-up target	30 sec
skipped target	90 sec
shot fired past "kill"	05 sec
per paintball hit	10 sec
per micro-missile/genius round used	20 sec
hitting a hostage	60 sec

Target Definitions

Target: a man-sized white target, equipped with special gear to make it give off a thermal signature identical to that of a human (so it can be locked onto with thermal targeting and micro-missiles).

Pop-up: Pop-ups are targets with a limited engagement time; after (1D6/2) combat rounds, they fold back down or away, and the "pop-up target missed" penalty is assessed for that target.

Gunner: Gunners are pop-ups that shoot back; each is equipped with a limited auto-targeting paintball gun; they are treated as having (Initiative: 11+D10, Attack: 9+D10, ROF: 3, Shots: 9, UR). They will not aim, semi-randomly spraying paint shells everywhere. (of course, these guns could be replaced with real ones, if someone was feeling vicious, or for an especially high stakes competition; stats would be the same, but ROF: 15, Shots: 45, Damage: 2D6+1).

Hostage: Hostages are pop-ups of a criminal with hostage; the shooter must hit the criminal without hitting the hostage; this will usually require a Called Shot to the head (at a -4 to hit).

Autogunner: these are similar to the gunners, but aren't pop-up (they stay till you kill them). They sit behind a remote-operated, fully-automatic paintball gun with a hopper full of ammo (Initiative: 9+d10, Attack: 8+D10, ROF: 30, Shots: 150, UR). Once again, these could be replaced with real guns; probably old M-60's.

Grenadiers: These use a semi-automatic low-pressure grenade launcher (more like a riot gun) firing Splatshells (Chrome 2, pg.47). Stats are (Initiative 9+D10, Attack 6+D10, ROF 3, Shots 15, ST); like the Autogunner, these will continue to engage until neutralized. Of course, the grenades could be switched.

Sniper: There will usually only be one sniper on the course at a time. Any shooter hit by the sniper is automatically disqualified; out of the show. The first shot from the sniper is programmed to always miss (to be "fair"). Stats are; (Initiative: 13+D10, Attack: 12+D10, ROF: 1, Shots: 10, ST). The Sniper will continue to fire till it's out of ammunition.

Endurance Tests

Running in loose sand is hard; running full out (and maintaining full accuracy) is even harder. At each of the circles on the map, the shooter must make a test vs BOD; the Difficulty number is listed in the circle; Endurance skill is added, but a character's EV

is subtracted (hot and sweaty armor). If a shooter fails any endurance test, they are at a (cumulative) -1 on all actions, and move down one on the completion chart, unless they spend (1D6/3) minutes to stop and rest.

Tripwires

What Jan doesn't mention are the tripwires. Located at different points along the trail are very fine trip wires, carefully painted to blend with the surroundings, these wires are a 25+ vs Awareness/Combat Sense feat to detect before you are tripped by them. Shooters tripped may make a (20 vs Athletics) feat roll to prevent themselves from falling face-first into the ground, suffering 1D6 bruise damage and an extra (1D6/3) rounds delay while you get back up. Of course, by moving down one on the completion chart (moving slower, not running full tilt), you can increase the chances of finding the wires to a 20+ vs Awareness/Combat Sense roll. The tripwires aren't marked on the map because the number and locations change all the time. On any given day there will be D10 wires, placed as the Referee desires; favorites are right in front of the pit traps...(2D6 real damage if a person falls into a pit trap head first).

Increasing lethality

The Heywood course is difficult and grueling, but not especially lethal. Most of the competitors are there to have a good time, or for training, not to get killed for other's amusement. However, it wouldn't be hard to turn this course into a real death trap; just replace all the paint guns with real guns, take off the padding on the Ugly Stick and replace it with a big blade (say 5D6 damage, AP as knife), fill the pit traps with water, or flaming gas, or punji sticks. You get the idea.

As designed, the Heywood course is almost infinitely modifiable; you can add remotes, more robo-dinos (or other critters), PA suits, more targets, whatever. The course changes frequently; the designers, in fact, have a competition to see who can come up with the most challenging (but non-lethal) course .



Target List

Below is a listing of every target on the course, the range (usual) to them, and whether they are behind partial (P), total (T), or no (O) cover, as well as the type, and any notes.

TARGET #	RANGE	COVER	TYPE	NOTES
1	50m	O	target	
2	25m	P	target	
3	35m	P	target	
4	30m	P	target	
5	10m	P	pop-up	
6	25m	P	pop-up	
7	15m	P	pop-up	
8	25m	O	hostage	Isstvan's Hut
9	25m	O	gunner	
10	15m	O	gunner	
11	20m	P	gunner	
12	20m	O	gunner	
13	15m	P	gunner	Rope Bridge
14	20m	T	autogunner	U-Boat
15	10-65m	P	grenadier	Panhardt moves at MA:25; will not get closer than 10m
16	40m	T	Sniper	shooter disqualified if sniper hits; first shot always misses
17	25m	O	pop-up	
18	20m	O	pop-up	
19	20m	O	gunner	
20	20m	O	pop-up	
21	25m	O	gunner	
22	40-65m	P	autogunner	
23	5m	O	gunner	
24	10m	O	gunner	
25	10m	O	gunner	
26	5m	P	gunner	Los Villas de la Targetas
27	15m	O	gunner	
28	15m	O	gunner	
29	15m	O	hostage	
30	50m	O	pop-up	
31	10m	O	gunner	Idiot Ambush
32	10m	O	gunner	
33	30m	O	pop-up	Assassination
34	70m	O	target	Sniper; cannot continue run until target is neutralized
35	20m	O	pop-up	
36	25m	O	pop-up	
37	25m	O	pop-up	
38	25m	O	CyberDino	Requires multiple hits to neutralize
39	25m	O	gunner	Backstab; Awareness/Combat Sense vs 25 or surprised
40	25m	O	gunner	

Weapon Notes

IPSC weapons are divided into three basic categories: Minor, Major, and Extreme calibers. Each category is based on muzzle energy (damage done), as follows:

Minor Caliber:	2d6+2 or less	1
Major Caliber:	4d6 or less	2
Ext. Caliber:	over 4d6	4

The last number is impact rating; this is used to determine equivalency for targets like the cyber-dino, which require more than one hit. To determine how many rounds of a given category are needed, divide the Impact rating of the target by the Impact rating of the round in use (example; cyber-dino has an Impact rating of 16; this means it would take 4 Extreme, 8 Major, or 16 Minor caliber hits to neutralize it).

The Heywood run is geared towards pistols and sub-machine guns (even SMGs suffer a 2 minute penalty in most cases because of their longer range); Assault rifles and other heavy weapons aren't allowed, both because of the chances of injury to other contestants and the gross imbalance of fire-power involved. Micro-missile launchers are allowed (either in integrated weapons or as under-barrel devices), but a stiff penalty is assessed for their actual use (because it is the weapon, not the shooter, doing the work).

IPSC weapons are not cheap; most will run 5,000eb and up, and generally aren't suitable for duty carry due to the advanced (and somewhat fragile) optics, smartgun arrays, COTs, and other large and fragile gadgets hooked up to them. They are, however, very reliable, accurate, fast, and lethal.



Competitors are dying on the Heywood range! One got mauled by the Dino, another cooked by acid rounds from an autogunners. Yet another died after losing both feet to a monowire tripwire. The players have to figure out who's behind the murders...or they may be next.





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YEAR OF CONFLICT —YEAR IN REVIEW!



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