

TRAVELLER

REFEREES BRIEFING 4 : MERCENARY FORCES



SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE IN THE FAR FUTURE

TRAVELLER

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T R A V E L L E R INTRODUCTION

Violence can and does solve problems, if properly applied. Of course, the application of violence can result in new or additional problems, but the original issue is solved at least. Mercenaries offer a short-term solution to the question of where to obtain and how to deliver the necessary violence, and can also solve other problems by being officially deniable. Referee's Briefing 4: Mercenary Forces is a guide to local mercenary outfits and how they operate, letting you know who is for hire, who is recruiting... or who will be storming through your own defences.

Travellers might interact with mercenary forces in a variety of ways. They may be the opposition or backup for a mission, or simply there as part of the scenery whilst the Travellers are passing through a starport. It may be unlikely that the Travellers will join a mercenary unit as full-time members but mercenaries are specialists who sometimes need capabilities beyond their own. On such occasions they may decide that working with a band of competent (or at least expendable) outsiders is in their interests.

Travellers might find themselves as co-belligerents to a mercenary force, serving the same patron or cause but not directly connected. This might bring them into conflict with the mercenaries, especially if there is mutual disapproval of methods. Alternatively, the Travellers might be given a mission that coincides or conflicts with that of the mercenaries. They may, for example, be trying to obtain information from someone the mercenaries have been hired to eliminate, or attempting to sneak into an area the mercenary force is about to storm. The Travellers might even be tasked with 'opening the door' for the mercenaries, perhaps by disabling defences or finding a route through them.

Mercenaries may even hire or temporarily recruit the Travellers directly. A short-handed mercenary force might be satisfied with a few extra warm bodies holding guns, or might need a task completed they cannot handle themselves. This might be for reasons of deniability or simple lack of capability. For example, the Travellers might be sent to obtain advanced weaponry or restricted items the mercenaries do not have licenses for, or sent to cause a 'trigger incident' that will allow mercenaries restricted by the terms of contract to take action.

In short, there are many ways a mercenary force can be part of a Traveller game. It may be an ally, opponent, patron, facilitator or deus ex machina when things go very badly wrong. The mercenary units presented in this book can be used as large-scale characters in the same manner as corporate bodies or world governments, putting an identity on the otherwise generic badasses the Travellers encounter.



C H A P T E R - O N E

THE MERCENARY TRADE

In some societies, the term 'mercenary' carries unpleasant connotations. Someone who is primarily motivated by financial gain, and whose allegiance or morality can be shifted by fiscal means, might be described as 'mercenary'. This is an accepted use of the word, and there are some professional mercenaries who deserve these connotations, but for the most part this usage is quite inaccurate.

A mercenary, properly defined, is a soldier who fights for some organisation other than his national government. Corporate security teams, ex-service personnel hired to guard humanitarian aid workers in a war zone, and even members of a national military's regiments who have been recruited from outside that nation are technically mercenaries. It is true that there are bands of armed yahoos for hire in some areas, and some units do have a reputation for being more flexible than others in regard to whether a change of allegiance can be bought. Most, however, are professional, loyal to their employer, and dependable.

There are various reasons for this. In part it is a matter of discipline and good soldiering. Drop-of-a-hat switches of allegiance run contrary to the psyche of the career soldier, and can harm morale in a unit even if they result in a big payment. Personnel whose job involves going into danger prefer to know where they stand and who they can depend on, and knowing that circumstances can change in a moment undermines confidence. It is also hard to trust superiors and colleagues who you know are willing to sell out their employer.

There is also the factor of employability to consider. A mercenary unit that intends to take just one job then disband need not be concerned with what people think of it, but one that wants to survive and prosper needs to build a reputation for reliability. Established units, or formations set up by personnel previously associated with a 'solid' mercenary outfit, are far more likely to find work than unknown or 'flighty' units. A dependable force can command a better fee and work for more reliable clients than one that has a bad reputation. The sort of client willing to hire just about anyone will often be desperate or untrustworthy, or else will likely be offering a job that no wise mercenary would touch.

Thus, as a rule, mercenaries (both individually and as units) tend to be professional and dependable. A unit entrusts its reputation to its personnel, so will tend to place new and unproven recruits in a supervised position with veterans until they have demonstrated they can be trusted not to do something stupid. Protecting the unit's reputation may at times call for some otherwise questionable decisions, such as taking losses to take or hold a position that is not really of much value.

However, for the most part mercenaries are pragmatic about their trade. They are typically willing to fight hard whilst there is a real chance of winning, but will surrender or retreat when the risks greatly outweigh the gains. This can actually reduce the horror of warfare to some extent; 'true believers' will often fight on and cause unnecessary casualties to both sides where a mercenary formation would declare its job done and quit the field.

Some clients are prone to making unreasonable demands on mercenary forces, or treating them as expendable cannon fodder. A well organised mercenary unit takes as much care with its contracts as its weapons, ensuring there are clear conditions under which it can retire, surrender or refuse an order. Mercenaries make a deal with their employer, which comes down to fighting and taking the risk of being killed or injured in return for payment, but that deal is a two-way street. How much the employer can expect is agreed in the contract, and a client who suddenly demands more may find that his mercenaries refuse combat or even leave his service.

Mercenaries are also, by and large, civilised in their treatment of prisoners and enemy wounded. This is not always the case, especially where a less than professional unit is concerned, but career mercenaries know that one day their personal survival may rest upon fair treatment by captors. They may also find themselves working alongside someone from another mercenary unit or a national force who has been captured by their outfit at one point. Civilised behaviour is often seen as a form of life insurance.

TYPES OF MERCENARY FORCE

There are five main segments to the mercenary marketplace. Significant overlap exists between some, and many units can function in more than one sector. However, most formations specialise in one area or at most two.

Equipment varies considerably. High-end, high-tech weaponry is very expensive to obtain and operate, and may place a unit beyond the budget of its prospective clients. Thus many mercenary units have fairly modest equipment ranging from TL8-10 or so, unless they need a specialist capability that requires high-tech gear.

SECURITY

Security formations range from bodyguards through paramilitary corporate security formations to law-enforcers-for-hire. The latter is a highly specialised area, requiring personnel to quickly become familiar with whatever set of laws they are upholding plus procedures for arrest, documentation, storage of evidence and so forth. Most security formations operate in the simpler world of guarding people or assets. Depending on the situation this can mean covert close protection, armed security in the form of static guards and monitor-watchers, or units equipped to military standards but tailored to a defensive/protective role.

MILITARY

The military sector is also referred to as 'mainstream' or 'warfighting' and is the broadest of all mercenary fields. Units are optimised for combat operations, though these can range from combined-arms battle situations to low-intensity counterinsurgency warfare. Most mercenary formations are 'teeth' of one kind or another, such as armoured forces, artillery, infantry or a combined arms force, though larger units often have their own support formations.

STARMERC

Mercenaries capable of operating off-planet are usually termed 'starmercenaries'. Off-planet in this case generally means functioning as ship's troops, operating on airless or hostile worlds, or crewing a spacecraft or starship. Most starmercenary vessels

are transports for the troops, but some are warships in their own right. These typically provide protection to the client government's commerce or defend the world itself against offworld threats, but may also be hired to carry out a strike against a hostile power or some other organisation such as a pirate group. A world or nation may make war on another by seizing its assets or by attacking its merchant traffic to inflict economic damage. The line between a legitimate commerce-raid by mercenary forces and a pirate attack can be a fine one, so starmercenaries are particularly careful about their contract clauses when undertaking this sort of mission.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Special operations units tend to be small and composed of extremely skilled personnel with very good equipment. Some special operations teams specialise in areas such as hostage-rescue, underwater operations or urban warfare, whilst others are quite flexible. Assault formations, such as troops skilled in meteoric assault from orbit or other situations requiring special training, fall somewhere on the line between military and special operations formations, whereas a four-man team specialising in assassination and sabotage would be very much a SpecOps unit.

SUPPORT AND SPECIALIST

Mercenary support units (e.g. medical, electronic warfare, logistics and the like) are less common than 'teeth' formations but are often hired to round out a mercenary force – often supporting other mercenary units – or to provide capabilities that local forces do not possess. These 'tail' units are highly efficient and can prove more cost-effective than raising a local formation if the situation does not require them for a great length of time. Specialist mercenary units include formations that should never engage the enemy directly, such as drone operators. These formations may not fit the typical soldier model; they may dress in jeans and t-shirts, carry only sidearms for self-defence, and behave in a generally unmilitary-like manner. However, even these rather cavalier units will be skilled at working with more conventional soldiers and can at least comprehend military protocol, even if they do not use it.

C H A P T E R - T H R E E RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISATION

Some mercenary formations are sufficiently large that they maintain several offices and hire out sub-units or the whole force as required. Most, however, are relatively small and either hired by direct contact with the unit's commander or through one of the many registry-and-recruiting organisations. These locate suitable recruits as well as handling hiring and contract details – all for a fee of course. Registry with a properly accredited body is at least some guarantee of a mercenary unit's reliability, and a contract overseen by such a body helps protect the mercenaries from shenanigans on the part of the client.

Some units are too small, too disreputable or too independent to be registered, and must be dealt with directly. The same goes for very large organisations which can afford to replicate the function of a registry-and-recruiting agency within their own command structure. These forces sometimes facilitate the hiring of other units for a client, which treads on the toes of the agencies to some extent. There is little that can be done about this – a dispute between an administrative organisation and a military unit might not end well.

Few mercenary units can afford to hire completely untrained individuals and turn them into competent (and cost-effective) soldiers. Most prefer to hire former military or sometimes police personnel, who can be given a brief orientation and familiarisation course in which they learn about the unit's practices and any peculiarities associated with its weaponry. Large mercenary units do sometimes have a training programme, and some actually specialise in recruitment and training rather than combat operations. For the most part, however, prior service is highly desirable when seeking mercenary work.

Those units that do recruit untrained personnel are often little more than an armed rabble; gunmen-for-hire rather than a well respected mercenary formation. Experience will eventually turn some of these raw recruits into decent soldiers, but personnel turnover tends to be high, typically by way of medical discharges and funerals. It is often (but not always) possible to spot one of these 'amateur' formations, but some do manage

to present a businesslike face to the world and can lead a client to believe they are better than they really are. A few skilled veterans, perhaps with training experience and sufficient motivation, can accelerate the learning curve immensely, but the biggest obstacle tends to be the recruits themselves. Those without military habits tend not to respond well to informal attempts to turn them into soldiers; those with such habits are already there.

Few mercenary units have the facility to conduct more than small-unit and combat training; development for senior leaders and all commanders is usually on-the-job for the most part, and a lot of mercenary officers are hired for what they already know. Their skills may have been gained in a regular force or a larger mercenary formation, and quite often any further development is on an informal basis. Some mercenary training facilities do exist, offering courses for independent mercenary officers in necessary areas. It is also sometimes possible to obtain a secondment to a larger formation or a friendly national force. A few mercenary outfits make personnel training part of their operating model and receive handsome payments when a smaller formation takes on someone they trained up.

The general term for a mercenary unit of any size is 'company'. This is not the same as the military force of the same designation; a mercenary company can be of any strength and may use a different term such as legion, column, wing or something more exotic to refer to itself. However, most outsiders would refer to the formation as a whole as a mercenary company.

Mercenaries can be organised any way the operator wishes. Some clients prefer to hire individuals or small units and build a force tailored to their needs. However, most mercenary formations object to having their organisation messed around with; they have evolved a force structure that works and keeps people alive, and may well decline to be reorganised. Such formations are hired en bloc and slotted into the client's force mix as whole units.

Mercenaries are paid to fight, or to be willing and able to fight when the need arises. Combat effectiveness is their stock in trade; it earns their pay and keeps them alive to collect it. Thus mercenaries tend to try to obtain the best equipment for their job. This does not always translate to bigger guns; often relatively modest equipment is the most cost-effective. This is especially true when a mercenary outfit has to operate on a low-tech world where available support is minimal – it is better to have a reliable weapon that keeps working than a temperamental one that might cease to function or which costs a fortune to keep running.

Reliable, secure communications equipment is widely considered one of the most important things a mercenary outfit can obtain. A skilled formation with good comms can carve up a larger but less cohesive force and since mercenary units are often outnumbered by local units this is a vital force-multiplier. Other supports such as reconnaissance assets, electronic warfare equipment and the like can also make a big difference, though there is a tradeoff between extra or enhanced capabilities and the ability to field a few more rifles at the sharp end.

The majority of mercenary formations are infantry-based, though many include their own small support elements. Thus a company-sized mercenary outfit may have a 'weapons' platoon with support weapons like mortars and man-portable air defence missiles. A battalion might include a few light tanks or self-propelled artillery pieces. The possession of even a modicum of combined-arms capability can greatly enhance the capabilities of a mercenary formation, and allows support to be brought to bear without going through a possibly cumbersome external chain of command.

Mercenary weapons fall into a few typical categories. Some formations use different terms for the various categories, but the meanings are generally the same:

Sidearms, i.e. pistols and the like, are often carried as backup weapons or where heavier equipment is inappropriate. At higher Tech Levels a range of more advanced personal defence weapons such as small submachineguns and miniature energy weapons are available. Some mercenaries like a hand weapons such as a hatchet or sword, and most tend to carry a bayonet or fighting knife under combat conditions.

Small Arms include rifles, which range from sniper weapons to assault rifles, along with close-assault weapons such as shotguns and submachineguns. Laser rifles and carbines are favoured by some formations either for general issue or for certain personnel. A laser weapon can, with the right electronics, act as a laser designator for artillery and missiles. Higher-tech

formations may use gauss weapons. Most mercenaries in a unit are equipped with small arms either as a primary combat system or for self-defence in the course of their duties.

Low-G Weapons are a subset of small arms, optimised for low gravity or microgravity work. Lasers and snub weapons are favoured by many Starmercenary formations for all applications, rather than swapping guns depending on the environment.

Support Weapons are infantry-portable, i.e. they can be carried by a soldier or small team whilst retaining the same mobility as the rest of the squad. Direct-fire weapons are often heavier versions of small arms that are capable of more sustained firepower, e.g. light and general-purpose machineguns. Other support weapons include very heavy sniper rifles/anti-materiel rifles and indirect-fire weapons such as grenade launchers which give an infantry squad a measure of artillery-like capability. Rocket and missile weapons are also common, giving a formation some anti-air or anti-armour capability. At higher Tech Levels, plasma and even fusion guns are capable of combining the direct-fire support and anti-armour roles.

Heavy Weapons are less mobile than support weapons and often moved using light vehicles. At middling Tech Levels, these weapons include mortars, heavy machineguns and light autocannon on mobile mounts. Higher-tech heavy weapons include energy weapons such as plasma guns. Many mercenary formations mount heavy weapons on light vehicles or the infantry force's transports, permitting them to operate in a support role.

Artillery Weapons may be towed or, in some cases, emplaced but are typically mounted on vehicles for mobility. Artillery weapons may be conventional 'tube' artillery (i.e. guns) or rocket and missile systems. Mercenary units tend to favour multirole systems, such as a combined artillery/aerospace defence missile system. Very advanced artillery weapons such as meson guns and associated specialist systems such as nuclear dampers are very rare in mercenary hands. More commonly, mercenaries use light vehicles equipped with rocket or missile systems, providing inexpensive artillery without requiring a great deal of technical and logistics support.

Aerospace Defence weapons range from man-portable missile systems and weapons such as autocannon and light lasers on a vehicle or towed mount, up to heavy PAD (Planetary Aerospace Defence) systems capable of engaging a starship in orbit. Aerospace defence formations offer a capability beyond that available to many planetary governments, and usually incorporate support, sensor and security elements.

Cavalry assets are lightly armoured, highly mobile vehicles which emphasise firepower over survivability. Mid-tech forces tend to use wheeled armoured cars equipped with autocannon or light guns, with more advanced units using grav sleds or light grav tanks equipped with energy weapons and/or advanced missile systems.

Armour assets are tanks (grav or tracked) and heavy wheeled vehicles with thick armour. Mercenary armoured formations are quite rare, though some units have a handful of tanks to back up a larger infantry component. More commonly, direct fire support is provided by cavalry vehicles or armoured transportation that also mounts a powerful weapon. Armour requires a lot of support to keep functional, which drives up the unit's hiring cost. It is usually not cost-effective to deploy top-end assets except for a very short one-fight contract.

As noted above, most mercenary formations primarily comprise infantry equipped with small arms and support weapons. However, many have at least a few vehicles and most will have sufficient transport to move the unit if its role is anything but static security or defence. Wheeled vehicles are common as they are cheap, readily available and relatively inexpensive to keep running. Mercenary units often outfit their vehicles with support or heavy weapons to enhance their capabilities, allowing vehicles to swap from transportation and logistics duty to supporting ground troops at need.

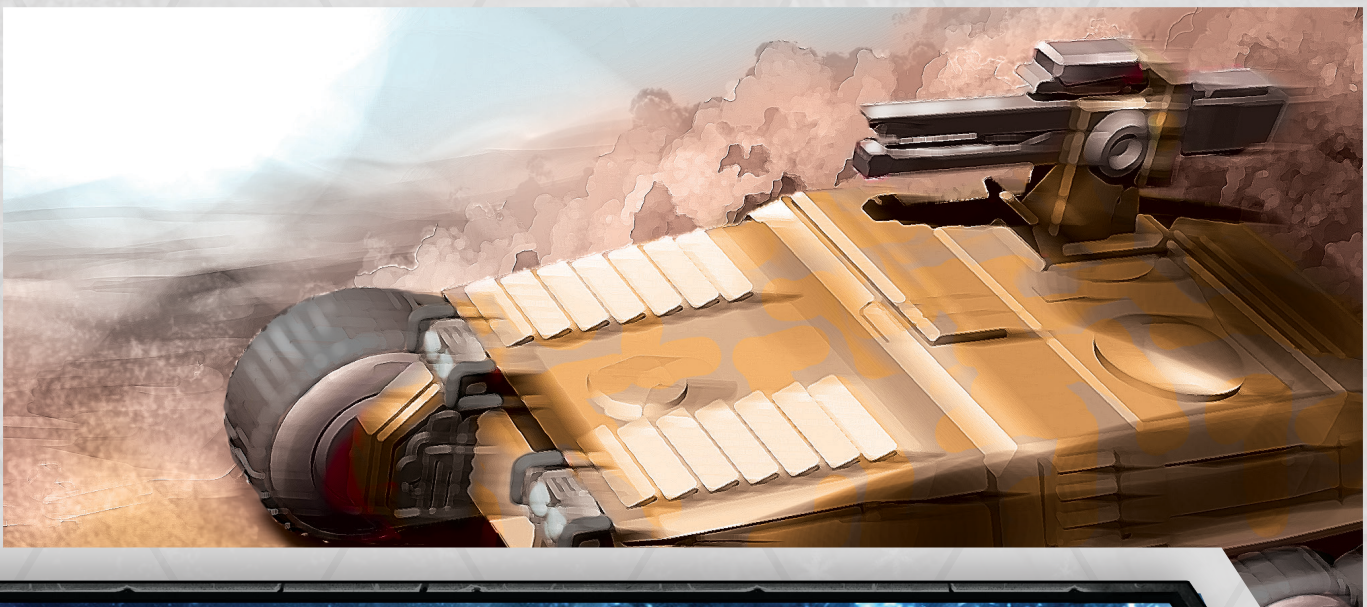
Most mercenary units are built around small teams which are then combined into a larger formation. The smallest unit is typically a fire team of 4-6 personnel with a designated leader and modest range of capabilities. Typically, this would mean a couple of riflemen or the equivalent, a support gunner with a light support weapon and/or a trooper equipped with a grenade launcher.

As the Tech Level increases, weapons often become more sophisticated but their general function remains much the same. A team may have an assigned vehicle, which may or may not act as a mount for its support weapons. Whether vehicles are 'organic' or operated by separate transportation units depends very much on the role of the unit and whether its personnel are expected to do their jobs mostly on foot or to be highly mobile over a wide area.

Above the fire team level, higher formations may be fixed or fluid. The three-element model is very common. Under this model a team is formed of three elements of the lower level (three fire teams to a squad, three platoons to a company, and so forth) though often a support or command element is added to create a unit capable of at least some self-support. Thus a company might have three rifle platoons plus a support or command element; each platoon might have three squads (each of three fire teams and a support element) and so forth.

However, other models are quite common. A mercenary formation may use a unique organisational structure tailored to its style of operations, or build higher formations out of whatever forces are needed. This is common where a mercenary unit provides the client with a force tailored to their requirements out of a pool of available formations. In order to compare unit sizes and capabilities, a fairly standard scale is used, based on traditional military organisation.

This does not necessarily mean that the unit is organised exactly in this manner. Similarly, whilst traditional ranks are often used for equivalence, some units have a completely different system with exotic or pragmatic titles for their personnel.



C H A P T E R - F O U R

MERCENARY PERSONNEL

The majority of mercenaries are non-officers, grouped into three broad categories. Most personnel are concerned with their own tasks only and do not command others, though there is usually a system of promotion to reward long service, leadership potential or specialist skills, which creates a local hierarchy that will indicate who is in charge (or who is responsible, which can be a slightly different thing) when a formally appointed leader is not present.

Most mercenaries in this category have a title that reflects their speciality. Infantry formations may use the term Private for a soldier, Rifleman, or some other term. Trooper is quite common in vehicle-based units due to their cavalry heritage, and is also used by many infantry formations. Bombardier and Gunner are both common in artillery and support units. Various specialist titles (e.g. Signaller, Medic, Operator and so forth) or the general term Specialist are also frequently used. To these are added titles indicating junior leadership, so an infantry unit might have Leading Rifleman a rank. The job of fire team leader may carry with it a specific rank or be held by a Leading Rifleman, Lance-Corporal, Corporal or similarly titled fire team-level leader.

Above general personnel are junior leaders, who often lead a squad or support a higher-ranked leader or officer. 'Leader' in this context indicates an enlisted mercenary, i.e. a non-officer. By convention, officers 'command' the personnel under them and non-officers 'lead', though most mercenary outfits are very keen on the idea that commanders should also be leaders rather than managers.

Many specialists also hold rank in this category, which is normally signified by the traditional mid-level non-commissioned officer title of Sergeant. Various grades of Sergeant exist, indicating increasing responsibility or specialism. Senior leaders also hold Sergeant ranks (or an equivalent), and are denoted by titles such as Master Sergeant, Sergeant Major and so forth.

In some larger units, a class between 'leaders' and 'commanders' exists. These personnel are designated as Warrant Officers or sometimes a traditional term like the German-derived Fannich. The latter is a non-commissioned officer with the potential to become an officer, who is given extra responsibilities as part of his training or assessment.

Most mercenary units use fairly traditional rank titles for their officers; Second and First Lieutenant, Captain, Major, Lieutenant-Colonel and so forth. Mercenary units tend to be small, so officers above the rank of Captain or Major are rare. Rank tends to be realistic and governed by the size of the unit commanded. A force of nineteen personnel commanded by a Colonel would not be taken seriously unless it had some capability that merited such a high rank.

A unit's officers are subdivided into three categories – Command, Staff and Business. Command officers, as the name suggests command fighting forces or parts of the unit, staff officers provide supporting functions such as intelligence, medical care or liaison with local forces, and business officers deal with matters such as legal and contractual details. Often, it is necessary for a unit's officers to wear more than one hat, as the saying goes, but larger formations generally have specialist officers dealing with business matters. These may not have command authority or even any military experience, though some units insist that all their officers can take over a combat situation at need.

As noted above, small teams are typically led by a junior leader such as a Corporal, and generally grouped into squads each led by a more senior leader such as a Sergeant. Several squads (usually three or four but anything from two to six is not uncommon) are grouped into a platoon, or some equivalent formation with a different name, which is usually led by a lieutenant.

Two or more platoons make up a company. This is a different and more precise use of the term company, referring to a fairly specific force size and organisation. Confusion can arise since almost any mercenary unit is referred to as a 'mercenary company' in general parlance, but usually the context is clear.

A company might have 2-6 platoons, though 3-4 is common. Often one platoon will be a heavy weapons formation, the others infantry, though this can vary from unit to unit. A company will be commanded by a captain or major, or equivalent officer, and may have additional officers serving in a staff or support role. Company-sized units (which in practice typically means any force in the range of about 50-250 personnel) are the largest commonly encountered in mercenary service. Larger formations do exist, but may be too expensive for many

clients to hire whereas platoon and company-sized units are suited to a wide role of tasks, and numbers can be made up by hiring additional units.

Some battalion-sized forces exist, and are made up of two or more companies. A battalion will normally be commanded by a lieutenant-colonel who is assisted by various staff, command and business officers. It is not uncommon for a mercenary battalion to exist as an administrative entity only, hiring out its sub-elements as needed. These may include support, vehicle or transportation assets. A handful of even larger mercenary formations may be present in a war zone, usually termed regiments. These are commanded by a full colonel and again will usually hire out sub-elements rather than fielding the whole force. A regiment may contain several battalions and companies of different types, enabling it to field a force tailored to any given situation.

One key factor in mercenary operations is the battle group or combat team. This is a force, usually containing a variety of different troop types, put together for a specific mission or operation. A battle group is often roughly the size of a standard formation, so might be referred to as a 'platoon combat team' or 'company-sized battle group' to give an indication of its general capabilities.

Battle groups may be formed from personnel and units from the same mercenary outfit or from several brought together for the purpose. A battle group that falls somewhere between two formation sizes might gain the indicator 'reinforced'.

For example, a force consisting of an infantry platoon plus a couple of grav cavalry sleds and a heavy weapons squad might be referred to as a reinforced platoon-sized infantry battle group. A commander often does not have time to find out the exact composition of a force, but its indicator gives him the basic information he needs.

Forces of arms other than infantry sometimes use different terms for their units, and not always uniformly. Vehicle formations often use the term squadron instead of either company or battalion (depending on which traditions they follow), whilst artillery tends to use the term battery for its guns. A lot of mercenary units cut through the confusion by using generic terms for all arms, i.e. a force that would be commanded by a lieutenant is a platoon regardless of whether it is made up of tanks, artillery, infantry or supply trucks. This move towards unified terminology has been going on for centuries, but slowly as military traditions are difficult to supplant.



C H A P T E R - F I V E MERCENARY COMPANIES

There are many mercenary formations operating in any given region. Most are modest in size and cannot afford to maintain representatives on several worlds. Instead they have a web of contacts who can refer a potential client to the unit's designated hiring officer – who is often a command officer with a combat unit as well.

Small formations are well suited to covert operations or small-scale conflicts where a handful of skilled personnel can make a real difference. In some cases, the small size of these formations is an asset, and they will not seek to expand even if the opportunity arises. Other units are actively recruiting and intend to grow into company-sized or larger forces.

Units of company size or greater need bigger jobs to do in order to justify the expense of raising and maintaining them. There is a tradeoff between size-induced cost and effectiveness-induced cost.

BRIDGER SECURITY

Bridger Security is a bodyguard/asset-protection unit rather than a military force. Its nine personnel are all trained in close protection (bodyguard) work, and each in addition has specialist skills. These include driving a variety of vehicles, electronic surveillance and counter-surveillance, and trauma aid. The unit is equipped with sidearms and submachineguns plus discreet body armour.

Whilst Bridger's personnel can perform the role of overt bodyguards or be an armed presence at a secure site, they excel in the discreet protection role. All personnel are trained in various forms of etiquette and can fit in at a high-society party or pose as an executive assistant, accountant, legal advisor and so forth. Indeed, one of the components of Bridger's full-service protection system is legal advice intended to keep the client out of trouble before and after an incident.

Bridger Security is well known for its ability to make problems not happen. Forward thinking and good planning, coupled with the use of advanced sensor equipment and a web of contacts who provide intelligence, enable the unit's bodyguards to avoid or head off problems long before they develop. Response to any incident that does occur will be slick, well-practiced and often unpredictable – Bridger Security

deliberately varies its threat-response drills to avoid the possibility of a hostile group taking advantage of set-piece actions.

When the full force is deployed, it normally operates as three, three-person teams. One member of the active team is the principal's bodyguard, the other two block or head off threats, secure routes and watch doors. A second team provides remote backup and situational command, providing information to the active team to enable it to react as efficiently as possible. The third team is kept in reserve as a mobile reaction force or secures the principal's vehicle to avoid tampering. In the event of an active threat this team's function is either to eliminate it from an unexpected direction or 'hold open the door' for the escaping principal and active team.

The exact response to any given situation will be directed by the command team, which also functions as a second reserve in the event of a very serious threat. Bridger Security has never lost a client in its seven years of operation, not even when caught in the middle of a major uprising or an i-hatei attack. Most personnel have been with the firm for a long time, and there are no plans to expand. However, Bridger does have a handful of 'extras' on the books who are sometimes brought in to do peripheral work such as surveillance of possible threats. These personnel would provide replacements if a member of the main force were incapacitated or chose to retire.

ONYX MILITARY SERVICES

OMS is an advisory group rather than a combat formation. It has about a dozen personnel at any given time, of whom most are officers or senior enlisted personnel. Onyx advertises itself as a facilitator to the acquisition of military capability, which translates as offering advice and training to local forces or other mercenary units.

Onyx is particularly skilled at smoothing out the procurement process. For a fairly substantial fee it can obtain hard-to-get equipment and permits for it, and can also help the client get a good deal on more basic equipment. Even with the cut going to Onyx, this can save a national military significant amounts when it

buys uniforms, boots, weapons and other items issued in large numbers. The firm also offers training in how to use this equipment.

On a fairly small scale, Onyx can provide a handful of training personnel and run courses itself, but its forte is train-the-trainer operations. Newly qualified trainers are then assisted through their first assignments until they are highly effective. This process can take some time without expert assistance, but OMS prides itself on the ability to get a national military (or other force) to the point where it can offer good quality training on a large scale more efficiently and quicker than anyone else.

OMS can also advise on strategy and tactics, and provides a useful intelligence-analysis service to its clients. This is especially beneficial in situations where weapons and electronic systems the client has not encountered before are brought into play. OMS can quickly identify the characteristics of a system from its emissions or signature and advise on what might happen next, often preventing an enemy from obtaining 'technological surprise' by fielding a previously unknown system.

Onyx personnel can be encountered in the field, either attached to local forces as advisors or actively leading them. It is sometimes hired as a ready-made command structure by clients seeking to put together a mercenary force or raise a larger body of troops than it would normally have, on a temporary basis. This can cause some confusion, since Onyx at times appears to be a company-sized or even larger force. However, this is not the case – OMS is a small outfit with the ability to guide or directly command a much larger force at need.

MARIX AND COMPANY

'Company' in this context does not refer to a size of military force; the term is used in the sense that this unit consists of Captain Charles Marix and his associates. This is a small unit, specialising in hostage rescue and asset seizure – a polite term for forcibly entering a secured area and making off with something. The unit has 'retrieved' a number of starships taken by hijackers or whose crew have skipped on their mortgage, as well as other precious (and sometimes delicate) items held by armed groups.

Marix and Company can and will operate in a wilderness environment but generally specialises in short-duration missions in an urban setting. The unit is equipped to TL12 standards for the most part, though operators have wide latitude in what gear they choose for personal use.

The force has no fixed structure, but is subdivided into teams of 4-6 operators that contain experts in various areas. The command team handles information

gathering, intelligence processing and similar tasks whilst the mobility team deals with the task of getting operators (and whatever they came to get) into and out of an area. This can mean using vehicles to make a rapid withdrawal after a strike, but the mobility team is also tasked with movement of a more subtle nature. Any sort of movement is this team's responsibility, including breaching doors and walls or more subtle methods of obtaining free movement such as passes and keys. When not required for this role the mobility team acts as a pool of backup personnel for other parts of the unit.

At the sharp end, Marix and Company fields two teams designated Alpha and Omega. These have slightly different skillsets; Alpha takes the lead on direct-entry hostage rescue missions and Omega is the primary asset for more destructive missions. Each team contains 4-6 personnel plus a couple of others that float between the two as needed. Whichever team is primary will be supported by the other, providing marksman/sniper support and acting as a backstop or security element.

In the situation where Marix and Company assaults a grounded starship to rescue the crew, for example, Alpha team would make the entry whilst hostages would be received and passed back to safety by Omega. If the goal were to eliminate the vessel as a threat, Omega team would go in with Alpha as backup, and the methods used would be a lot more direct.

Marix and Company has a good record for success, including assaults on a number of hard targets. However, where possible, Marix prefers a negotiated bloodless solution. Sometimes hearing that Marix and Company have been hired is enough to bring a situation to a close; few hostage takers want to face Omega team.

AUDLEY'S AVENGERS

Many mercenary units have quite dramatic names, and some actually live up to them. Audley's Avengers is not one of those units. Originally a company-sized formation with a fairly good reputation, the Avengers made some poor decisions and have downsized considerably. This is not to say the unit got mauled and all those missing personnel are dead; some were killed or injured but most just moved on to other formations or left the trade.

As a result, Audley's Avengers is little more than a reinforced platoon, though it retains parts of the command structure it used to have as an independent rifle company. The unit currently consists of a command/headquarters element, a full-strength rifle platoon and two additional elements which are designated platoons but in reality are little more than placeholders until recruits can be brought in.

Audley's Avengers

UNIT HEADQUARTERS

COMMANDING OFFICER (CAPTAIN)

Legal/Administrative Officer (2nd Lieutenant)
Chief Sergeant
Communications Specialist

1st (Rifle) Platoon

PLATOON HEADQUARTERS

1 Platoon Commander (1st Lieutenant)
1 Platoon Sergeant
1 Platoon Medic
1 Platoon Marksman

3 RIFLE SQUAD

1 x Squad Leader (Sergeant)
3 x Fire Team

Team Leader (Corporal)
Light Support Weapon Gunner
2 Rifleman

AIR DEFENCE/ANTI-ARMOUR DETACHMENT

Detachment Leader (Sergeant)

2 Man-portable shoulder fired missile systems; 2 personnel

2nd (Scout) Platoon

PLATOON HEADQUARTERS

1 Platoon Commander (2nd Lieutenant)
1 Platoon Sergeant
1 Light Support Weapon Gunner

SCOUT SQUAD

1 Squad Leader (Sergeant)
2 Fire Team

Team Leader (Corporal)
3 x Rifleman/Scout

3rd (Support) Platoon

PLATOON HEADQUARTERS

Platoon Commander (2nd Lieutenant)
Platoon Sergeant
2 Mechanic/Technician

AIR/RAFT SQUAD

Squad Leader (Sergeant)
2 Air/Raft Team

Vehicle Commander (Corporal)
1 Driver
1 Air/Raft

2 TRANSPORT SQUAD

Vehicle Commander (Corporal)
1 Driver
1 Wheeled Offroad Truck

The unit is mostly equipped to TL8 standards. Riflemen and junior leaders (e.g. corporals and sergeants) are armed with inexpensive but effective assault rifles. Squad leaders in rifle units are also designated grenadiers and have an under-barrel grenade launcher. Some personnel also have disposable one-shot anti-armour weapons capable of damaging a light tank but which are not effective against heavy armoured vehicles. Light support weapons are slightly upscaled rifles with little sustained firepower but are light and handy.

The scout 'platoon' is essentially a weak rifle platoon with few support weapons, retasked as a light infantry force for reconnaissance. It lacks support weapons but has become quite skilled in scouting and ambush operations, making a virtue out of necessity. The support platoon consists of two wheeled trucks which mount general-purpose machineguns for the use of the vehicle commander. These provide mobility to some elements of the force and carry supplies and ammunition. The air/rafts are likewise armed with a machinegun and can provide mobile fire support.

Were Audley's Avengers to expand, priority would be given to creating two or, ideally, three full-strength rifle platoons and a support or heavy weapons element. At present the unit is best suited to a light-infantry role and has taken several contracts involving conflict in urban areas where its lack of indirect fire support weapons is not too much of a problem. However, the formation is obviously down on its luck and is shedding personnel faster than they can be recruited. Quality is declining and morale is already very poor. An influx of funds would enable a proper refit and reorganisation, but that requires successful completion of a well-paid contract...and those are not coming the way of Audley's Avengers.

FIRE TEAM

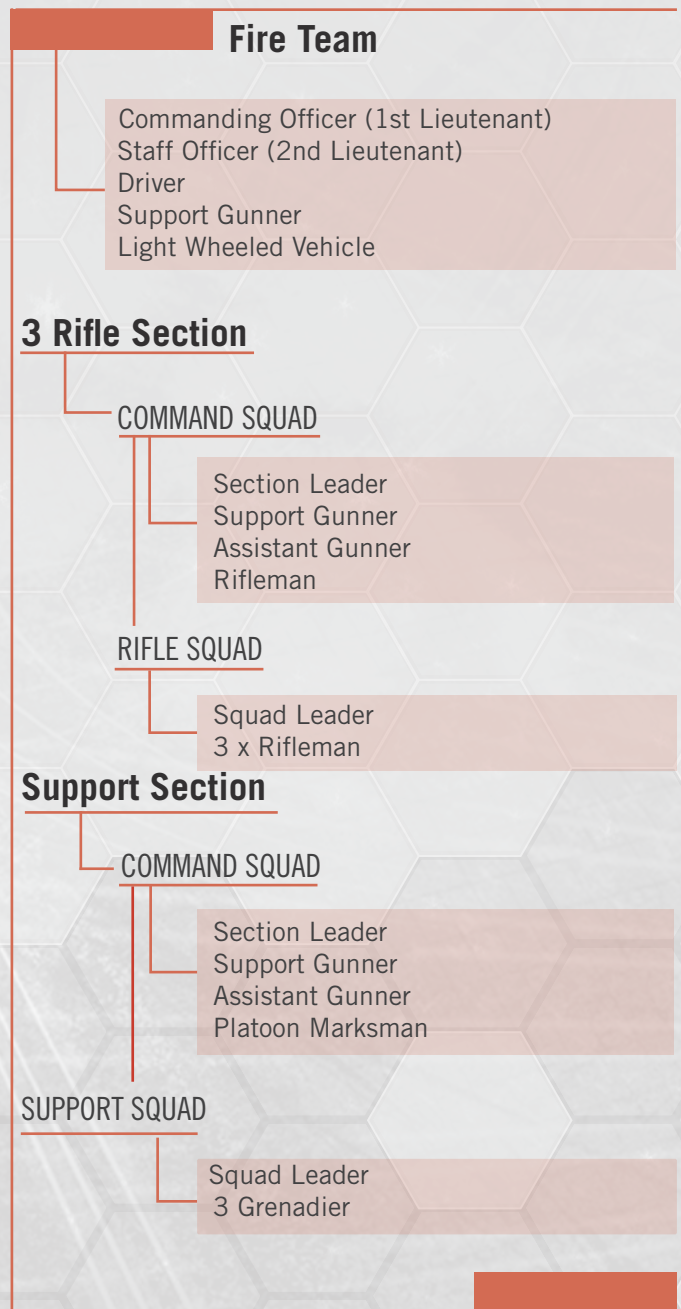
Fire Team is considered a small mercenary unit because it usually hires out platoon-sized formations, but has enough personnel to field a company or two if they all gathered in one place. Fire Team is typical of low-end mercenary units; its personnel are competent enough in a straightforward warfighting or security role but they are soldiers-for-hire rather than an elite force. That does not mean that Fire Team personnel are dumb; these are professional soldiers trained to an adequate standard.

Fire Team will hire out personnel in groups as small as a section, but normally operates as independent platoons. Equipment is typically TL10 standard, giving the force an advantage over many opponents. There are no transportation assets other than a liaison vehicle assigned to the platoon headquarters. This mounts a support weapon; typically, a machinegun of a design based on the Advanced Combat Rifle used by most of the infantry. The Staff Officer is often detached on liaison duty, or kept busy with administrative work rather than operating with the unit. His role is also to ensure logistics go as smoothly as possible, which can be a tough job when working for a low-end client on some backwater world as this unit typically does.

Fire team's organisation is based around the section, an 8-trooper unit split into two smaller teams. Under normal circumstances each section fights or manoeuvres as a unit, though the two squads can split up to provide a secondary fire-and-manoeuve capability. Fire Team's doctrine dictates the section's support weapon is its main offensive capability; riflemen protect and support their gunner rather than the other way around. For this reason, the support weapons used are heavier than the overgrown rifles favoured by some other units; they are full-scale machineguns fed from a large ammunition box. The assistant gunner carries spares for the support gun, and each rifleman also carries ammunition for it.

The grenadiers of the support section are armed with a 30mm magazine-fed grenade launcher that can fire multiple projectile rounds (basically huge shot gun shells) but normally use a range of grenades depending on the mission. High-explosive dual-purpose grenades are favoured for personnel targets, using blast and fragmentation, whilst armour-piercing grenades are available for attacking light vehicles. Grenadiers are also issued a small submachinegun for self-defence.

Officially, the same SMG is the armament of drivers, officers and section leaders (squad leaders are issued a rifle), since official Fire Team doctrine holds that a section leader is more valuable directing his team than shooting at the enemy. However, many section leaders carry a rifle instead. This makes them less obvious high-value targets for enemy marksmen and permits sharing of magazines among the personnel of a section.



SUPPORT ASSETS, INCORPORATED

Support Assets has a solid pedigree going back over a century. The unit has been in continuous existence ever since, mainly operating in border regions. It does not recruit non-humans as its charter does not permit it. However, the force is one of the most well-respected small units in the region.

Support Assets provides heavy weapons and specialist systems operators to forces lacking this capability. The unit will hire out as a whole or in smaller detachments, but individuals are not available; the smallest formation that can be hired is three personnel. This is a precaution intended to prevent individuals from being caught unsupported – local forces may or may not provide a reliable security element but Support Assets personnel will always watch one another's backs.

The usual composition of a 3-man team is a primary system operator (e.g. a sniper, missile launcher gunner, or signals intercept expert) plus an assistant (e.g. a sniper's spotter or a technician) and a third team member who acts as a security element. Assistants and security personnel generally move into a primary operator slot sooner or later and become the leader of their own team, though some prefer to remain in the supporting role. Typically, the primary operator is armed with a personal defence weapon in addition to their main system whilst the other members of the team carry rifles.

Support Assets is an extremely flexible formation whose personnel are often scattered right across the region. It has a good working relationship with several other mercenary formations, often providing support to their infantry personnel. This is a tough unit to get into – you have to be a human with solid military experience to even stand a chance, and even then the unit is very selective about both skills and adaptability. Those who do well in tryouts but fail to find a billet with Support Assets are often snapped up by other units.



Support Assets, Incorporated.

COMMAND DETACHMENT

- Commanding Officer (Major)
- 4 Staff Officer (Captain, Lieutenant)
- Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (Sergeant Major)
- Several administrative personnel (typically 3-5)
- 2-4 Air/Raft

4 FIELD COMMAND DETACHMENT

- Field Officer (Captain)
 - Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (Sergeant)
 - 1 x Driver
 - 1 x Clerk
 - 1 x Air/Raft

ELECTRONIC WARFARE (EW) DETACHMENT

- Commanding Officer (Lieutenant)
 - Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (Sergeant)
 - 2 EW Teams
 - 1 x Primary Operator
 - 1 x Technician
 - 1 x Driver/Security
 - 1 x Air-Raft

SNIPER DETACHMENT

- Commanding Officer (Lieutenant)
 - Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (Sergeant)
 - 3 Sniper Team
 - 1 x Sniper
 - 1 x Spotter
 - 1 x Rifleman

GAUSS GUN DETACHMENT

- Commanding Officer (Lieutenant)
 - Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (Sergeant)
 - 3 Gauss Support Weapon Team
 - 1 x Gunner
 - 1 x Assistant Gunner
 - 1 x Driver
 - 1 x Light Grav Sled

MISSILE DETACHMENT

- Commanding Officer (Lieutenant)
 - Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (Sergeant)
 - 5 Missile Section
 - 2 Missile Team
 - Missile Gunner
 - Assistant Gunner

MOBILE MORTAR DETACHMENT

- Commanding Officer (Lieutenant)
 - Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (Sergeant)
 - 3 Mobile Mortar Battery
 - Battery Leader (Sergeant)
 - 2 Mobile Mortar Team
 - Gunner
 - Assistant Gunner
 - Driver
 - Light Grav Sled

SECURITY DETACHMENT

- Commanding Officer (Lieutenant)
 - Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (Sergeant)
 - 4 Security Section
 - Section Leader
 - 2 Riflemen



BYSTORM SOLUTIONS

ByStorm Solutions is a very specialist unit hired by those who want something utterly destroyed in a short time. The unit is divided into assault and support elements, and only hires out as a whole formation. The teeth of the force is its assault platoon. This formation barely qualifies as a platoon – it contains only twelve effectives – but its firepower and survivability offset these small numbers. The assault platoon is equipped with combat armour and a variety of potent weapons. Most personnel use gauss rifles or gauss assault weapons. Shorter and lighter than a gauss rifle, these fire bundles of pistol-calibre needles to create a ‘gauss shotgun’ effect. Support gunners are usually armed with plasma guns, though missile launchers are also available should the situation warrant it.

The support team is mainly concerned with maintenance of the heavy weapons and security of the mission launch area. It also handles liaison with local forces (which can often translate to just telling them to get out of the way) and intelligence operations. The support platoon’s technicians are armed for self-defence and can crew support weapons not in use by the assault platoon. Usually this is a VRF Gauss Gun, which is mounted on a quick-disassembly platform to permit rapid relocation, but at need the support platoon bristles with missiles and other heavy weapons.



ByStorm Solutions

COMMAND DETACHMENT

Commanding Officer (Captain)
Commander’s Assistant/Bodyguard

ASSAULT PLATOON

Command Team

Assault Platoon Commander (1st Lieutenant)
Explosives Expert
2 Assault Trooper

2 Assault Team

Team Leader
3 Assault Trooper

SUPPORT PLATOON

Command Team

Support Platoon Commander (1st Lieutenant)
Liaison/Legal Officer (2nd Lieutenant)
Intelligence Specialist
Communications Specialist

TECHNICAL TEAM

Technical Team Leader
3 Technician

ENVAANI ESCORT AND PROTECTION

Envaani Escort and Protection is named for a corvette captain whose defence of a seven-ship convoy against a pirate attack has become something of a folk tale. This starmercenary outfit has no connection to the original hero, other than a mostly-imaginary spiritual one. However, it does have a solid reputation and is well regarded. Envaani E&P provides secure transportation, escort and starport defence to clients who can afford its rather high fees.

The unit operates two starships; a 'militarised' Scout/Courier and a 'hardened' Type A2 Far Trader. Both ships have been armed as heavily as possible – the Scout with a triple laser turret and the Trader with the same plus a triple missile rack, but beyond that the advertised upgrades are limited to software and electronics. Both ships can operate independently at need, but for clients who can afford it they travel together, with the Scout usually acting as an escort for the cargo carried aboard the Far Trader. Likewise, starport-defence clients can expect one ship on patrol at any given time, with the other landed but ready to take off at short notice. This is not a lot of military power, but raiders who would target a defenceless outpost are far less likely to attack one that can damage their ships.

There are five main sections to the unit; the two ships, three small security detachments who help secure starports or escort cargoes in transit, a small aerospace defence group with light missile launchers and a technical detachment who can also assist with security tasks.

The unit's organisation is non-standard, and is based around capabilities rather than a typical combat formation structure. Ranks are pseudo-naval in character, with the commanding officer of the Far Trader in overall charge and the unit's operations run out of his office aboard ship.

Envaani Escort and Protection

FORCE COMMANDER

Far Trader Commanding Officer (Captain)

ARMED FAR TRADER

Far Trader Executive Officer (Lt-Commander)

Far Trader Ship's Company

ARMED SCOUT/COURIER

Scout/Courier Commanding Officer (Commander)
Scout/Courier Ship's Company

SHIPBOARD/PORTSIDE SECURITY DETACHMENTS

Security Officer (Lieutenant)

3x Security Detachment

Detachment Leader (Petty Officer)
3x Security Personnel

AEROSPACE DEFENCE DETACHMENT

Aerospace Defence Officer (Sublieutenant)

2xAerospace Defence Detachment

Detachment Leader (Petty Officer)
2x Missile Gunner/Technicians

TECHNICAL SUPPORT DETACHMENT

Technical Officer (Sublieutenant)
5 Technicians

GRAVSTRIKE COMPANY

GravStrike is a company-sized grav-cavalry unit. Its lightly armoured grav vehicles rely more on speed than armour for protection, but can carve up a lower-technology force with ease. The company consists of three 'strike' platoons of four vehicles plus a support/command platoon and mobile workshop.

Each strike platoon consists of three 'combat cars' (the gravitic version of a wheeled armoured car or reconnaissance vehicle), plus a modified G/carrier which transports a small ground-combat force as well as a support weapon system. This is a turret carrying a light gatling laser and small missile launcher suitable for dealing with most air threats (but not starships) or intercepting incoming missiles.

The combat cars mount plasma guns as their main armament and a light gatling laser for close-in and missile defence. Their sensor equipment is sufficiently good to allow the force to act as a reconnaissance asset as well as undertaking the strike role.

The command platoon contains a mix of vehicles, including a single light grav tank with much heavier armour than the combat cars, an electronic warfare vehicle and a G/carrier similar to those in the strike platoons, plus the command vehicle which is a modified version of the combat cars. The workshop detachment has an armoured recovery vehicle and a mobile workshop as well as vehicles carrying supplies and a small security element. This is the same as the infantry complement carried aboard the personnel transports – eight infantry personnel equipped with combat armour and advanced combat rifles.

GravStrike Company

COMMAND PLATOON

- Command Vehicle (grav combat car)
- Fire Support Vehicle (light grav tank)
- Electronic Warfare Vehicle (g-carrier)
- Personnel Transport/Support Weapon Carrier (g-carrier)

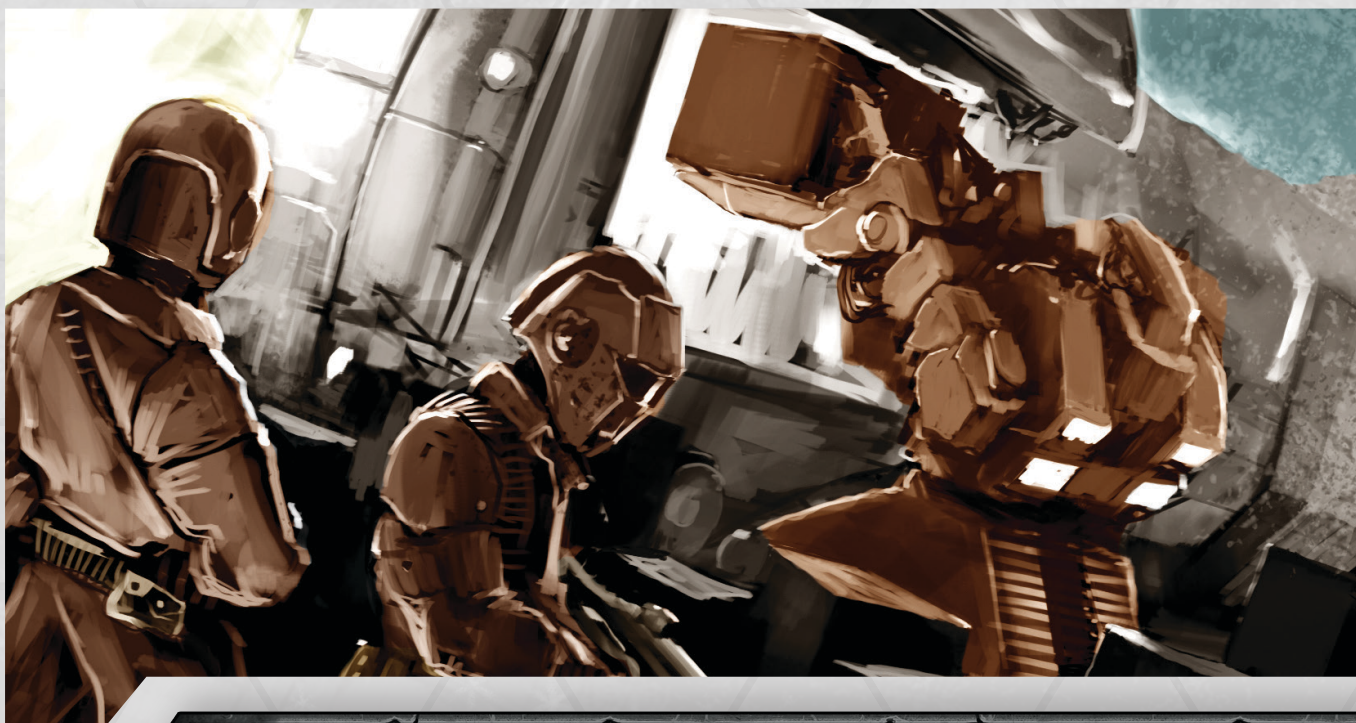
3 STRIKE PLATOON

- Command Vehicle (grav combat car)
- 2 Strike Vehicle (grav combat car)
- Personnel Transport/Support Weapon Carrier (g-carrier)

WORKSHOP/SUPPORT PLATOON

- Armoured Recovery Vehicle (grav)
- Mobile Workshop Vehicle (grav)
- 3 Supply/Support Vehicle (g-carrier)
- Security Element

- Personnel Transport/Support Weapon Carrier (g-carrier)



ALPHA AEROSPACE DEFENCE

Alpha Aerospace Defence, or AAD, is a specialist mercenary unit providing defence against orbital and airborne threats. It does not hire out its component parts; a client gets the whole capability and pays for it, or nothing. AAD insists that even if the client only wants the orbital missile capability, the shorter-range weapons are necessary to protect and support it.

The unit's main capability is provided by two mobile erector-launchers capable of firing a boosted naval missile at any target within orbital range. This does in theory give it the capability to make a ballistic attack on a distant target, but AAD has never been asked to do so. The missiles used are standard naval weapons with conventional warheads, though they have an additional first-stage booster using chemical rockets to assist in reaching high altitude quickly. One missile is carried on the erector-launcher, with each of the two reload handling vehicles assigned to the launcher holding six more.

The unit uses a family of eight-wheeled lightly armoured trucks to carry its weapon systems – two each for orbital defence missiles, air defence/antimissile missiles, and rapid-fire lasers – and heavy equipment, plus a smaller four-wheeled version for personnel transportation and towing trailers full of spares and supplies. The 4-wheel vehicles are armed with a mix of light autocannon and machineguns. The unit provides for its own security with a small infantry force who ride in an APC version of the 8-wheeled truck. After bad experiences in the past, AAD prefers not to be assigned a local force for protection.



Alpha Aerospace Defence COMMAND DETACHMENT

Command Vehicle

Force Commander (Major)

2 ORBITAL DEFENCE MISSILE DETACHMENT

Command Vehicle

Erector-Launcher Vehicle

2 Reload Handling Vehicle

2 AIR DEFENCE MISSILE DETACHMENT

Command Vehicle
Missile Platform Vehicle
Ammunition Vehicle

2 DIRECT-FIRE DETACHMENT

Command Vehicle
Laser Platform Vehicle

WORKSHOP AND LOGISTICS DETACHMENT

2 Workshop Vehicle
2 Support Transports

SECURITY DETACHMENT

3 Mobile Infantry Section

12 Infantry Personnel
8-Wheel APC

AETHERWAR COMPANY

The rather whimsically named AetherWar Company has been unkindly described as a 'bunch of nerds-for-hire'. It specialises in electronic and communications warfare, and also cyber operations ranging from providing security to breaking through it. The unit is a 'company' in the loose sense rather than being a company-sized military unit, but it does have some combat capability.

Technicians and experts are assigned small submachineguns for personal defence, and are trained in their use. Many are former army or navy personnel and even those who do not have such experience are familiar with the military environment. Clients expecting a collection of ill-disciplined egotists are often surprised to find that AetherWar has a uniform – albeit one that looks more like professional civilian dress than military combat gear – and a fairly well-defined command structure.

AetherWar Company operates out of a garishly-painted grav truck, with a handful of grav and wheeled vehicles available for other tasks. Its personnel complement varies over time but generally consists of about a dozen experts in the fields of electronic warfare, cybersecurity (and breaking it) and communications intelligence, plus a six-person analysis and command team. This force of roughly 16-20 people is supplemented by about a dozen drivers, security personnel and trainees. It is widely rumoured that AetherWar Company also has a force of infiltrators and 'social engineers' who have little contact with the main group but instead gather information that can be used to break security or even blackmail hostile personnel.

AetherWar Company is capable of discerning the secrets of an enemy or bringing down a corporation; even a government. It has done so for various clients, but has also been known to assist the authorities in breaking criminal organisations. So long as the pay is right, AetherWar Company is willing to take on any task involving some form of information transfer or storage.

INSURRECTION, INC

Insurrection, incorporated is a specialist formation which provides revolutionaries and rebels with an all-in-one package to ensure success, or so the company's literature claims. Most of its personnel are advisors, training providers and specialists, though it does have a small direct-action arm and a rather larger pool of personnel who can provide security or leadership-by-example to the client's followers.

The usual client is a revolutionary movement wanting to fight (or currently fighting) a guerrilla war, usually against a more advanced and better equipped enemy. However, the unit is quite willing to take on other low-intensity warfare operations, such as range wars between colonists or even starting a counter-revolution. Among the services provided by Insurrection, Inc is rabble-rousing, either directly or by means of 'incidents' provoked by its agents. The company will also offer training in oratory and the correct use of propaganda. Indeed, its literature is a catalogue of 'propaganda packages' and 'weapons procurement solutions' which can be provided to the client for the right fee.

The company can and does undertake direct action, though normally in the form of assassinations, ambushes and other small-scale operations that further a client's cause rather than open warfare. For the latter, it helps the client recruit fighters, trains and equips them and the company's personnel will lead them in action if that option is chosen (and paid for).

If Insurrection, Inc were to simply take the field as a fighting force, it would not be all that potent. Its direct-action operators are skilled and motivated, and have access to force-multiplying technology, but they are basically light infantry whose ability to take on, say, an armoured division would be quite limited. However, if permitted to operate in its accustomed manner the same force could cripple a division by cutting off its supplies, creating a hostile countryside full of partisans, and sabotaging some of its equipment.

C H A P T E R - S I X TOOLS OF THE TRADE

16/32324

GAUSS ASSULT GUN

This short weapon uses gauss technology not on a single round but on many flechettes, creating a rapid-firing 'shotgun' effect when fired. Its small size makes it convenient on board ships and among vehicle crews, yet it retains a powerful short-ranged punch.



Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	Kg	Cost	Magazine	Magazine Cost	Traits
Gauss Assault Gun	12	20	4D	2	Cr1200	36	Cr35	AP 5, Auto 2

16/32784

LIGHT ASSULT GUN

This is a heavy 20mm caliber rifle, fed by a 5-round magazine. It is intended to be truly man-portable, delivering extremely hard-hitting power at squad-level, though its low rate of fire and small magazine mean its user must be adequately supported in a fire fight. The light assault gun may use the variant ammunition types found in the Ammunition chapter of the Central Supply Catalogue.



Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	Kg	Cost	Magazine	Magazine Cost	Traits
Light Assault Gun	8	800	7D	40	Cr4000	5	Cr100	AP 5

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16/31904

LIGHT GATLING LASER

An attempt to put together a multiple barrel laser system in a small package, the light gatling laser is low-powered compared to similar support weaponry but is capable of delivering a hail of fire. This alone can defeat or at least scare off lower Tech Level enemies, but it quickly runs out of steam against heavily armoured targets. However there is little in its class that matches it for price vs. performance.



Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	Kg	Cost	Magazine	Magazine Cost	Traits
Light Galter Laser	9	180	3D	18	Cr4500	100	Cr300	Auto 4, Zero-G

16/78104

VRF GAUSS GUN:

The very rapid-firing gauss gun is a support weapon that uses electromagnetic technology to deliver withering bursts of fire. Often used as an anti-personnel weapon on vehicles, consumption of ammunition is prodigious, and large hoppers have to be used to ensure adequate supply in combat. The VRF gauss gun may use the variant ammunition types found in the Ammunition chapter of the *Central Supply Catalogue*.



Weapon	TL	Range	Damage	Kg	Cost	Magazine	Magazine Cost	Traits
Light Galter Laser	12	750	4D	250	Cr20000	400	Cr1000	AP 5, Auto 8

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