

Bryan, Thomas, and Wade are skulking through the ruins of a bombed-out rail yard, looking for useful salvage, when they encounter a band of the local warlord's irregular troops doing much the same thing. As is prone to happen with player characters, hostilities ensue in short order. Neither group is able to attain surprise over the other; they sighted each other simultaneously and were expecting combat before it actually began.

GM: Okay, give me OODA checks for initiative, and tell me what your total is. That's your base plus twice your margin of success... if you succeed.

Bryan: (Makes an OODA check, succeeds with a MoS of 2.) We're all carrying our combat gear, right?

GM: That's what you said you were taking when you left camp. Vests and rifles but no packs.

Bryan: Okay, so we're moderately encumbered, that's a base initiative of 9. I've got a total of 13.

Thomas: (Makes an OODA check, succeeds with a MoS of 5.) I think I go first. My total's 19.

Wade: (Makes an OODA check, fails.) I suck. Just a 9 here.

GM: (Makes an OODA check for the enemy troops, fails.) Well, the good news is that they failed too. They're also moderately encumbered, so they'll be starting on 9 also. Initiative order is Thomas at 19, Bryan at 13, and then Wade and the other guys simultaneously on 9.

Wade: Crap.

Thomas: Okay, first action. Um... how far away are these guys and what's the closest cover?

GM: They're inside a hundred meters. Call it Tight range. And you're in a rail yard, so there's nice thick metal all over the place. You wanting to move and take a knee?

Thomas: Yeah, that would be best, if I can get to something with a single action.

GM: No problem. Movement costs 5 ticks, so your initiative drops to 14. And kneeling only takes 2 ticks, so you can do that as your free action with the movement.

Thomas: Initiative 14 still puts me at the top of the stack. We said we all had our guns ready before combat started, so I assume I've got my rifle in my hands. I'll pick a bad guy at random and pop off a burst at him. (Pauses, consults his character sheet.) I'm using my M16A4, so it's got an optimum range of Medium. We're inside Medium, so I'm not taking any penalties for the gun's range, but I do have the usual -2 for ranged attacks at Tight range. And Tight is one band inside Medium, so my attacks have an extra 1 Speed tacked on. So... do I have any other penalties?

GM: No, that was pretty succinct.

Thomas: All right. So I'm rolling at a total -2. I'm making a snap shot - my Speed's normally 5 for that, but the range kicks it up to 6. And I'm firing a 3-round burst, so that's a +2, which nicely cancels out the visual range penalty. (Makes a Longarm [CDN] skill check, succeeds with a MoS of 5.) Got him.

GM: How well?

Thomas: The rifle's Damage is 6, I hit him for 5 more... 11 points. (Rolls for hit location.) Left forearm. And that was a burst, so... (Rolls for additional hits.) Oh, ouch. All three rounds hit. The second one goes to the left forearm also, and the third one... (Rolls for hit location) upper abdomen.

GM: Whoops. That'll be a moderate wound to the torso and a serious wound to the left arm. He's done for the day. Your initiative drops to 8. Bryan, you're on top now.

Bryan: Oh, I'm going for cover. No sense in staying out in the rain.

GM: Okay, 5 ticks worth of movement. You're down to 8 with Thomas. Wade, you and the bad guys are up now.

Wade: No way I'm gonna be the easy target. Cover.

GM: And the same for them; Wade and the bad guys drop to initiative 4. Thomas, the guy you hit doesn't seem interested in continuing to fight, but the other four are still pointing guns your way. You and Bryan are both on 8.

Thomas: Bryan, you want to go first?

Bryan: Naah, you've got the higher OODA.

Thomas: Okay. Second verse, same as the first. New target.

GM: Any recoil penalties from the first one?

Thomas: Oh, yeah. The rifle has Recoil 5, plus 3 for the burst... 8 is one higher than my Muscle, so I'm taking a -1. No, wait, I'm kneeling, so I have +1 Muscle for this. No penalty.

GM: Not bad. But your target is kneeling, too, so you still have a -1 penalty because he presents a smaller profile. Make your attack.

Thomas: (Makes a Longarm [CDN] skill check, succeeds with a MoS of 4.) I'm on tonight. Another hit. Base Damage 6, margin 4... 10 points. (Rolls for hit location). To the right hand. (Rolls for additional hits from the burst.) Just the one hit this time, though.

GM: Well, that's definitely not behind cover. Another moderate wound, but that's enough to take him out of the fight. That was another 6 ticks, so you're down to initiative 2. Bryan, you're up.

Bryan: Three uninjured guys left, right? I pick another one and give him some happy.

GM: Break it down for the home audience.

Bryan: I run the slide on my 12 gauge pump shotgun for dramatic effect and shoot some fool in the face. My optimum range is CQB, and Tight is one range band past that. So I've got a -3 penalty, plus another -2 for visual range and another -1 because he's kneeling. But I'm using buckshot, so I get a +2 bonus off of that. Speed for a snap shot is 8, so this is my last action until next initiative. (Makes a Longarm [CDN] skill check, succeeds with a MoS of 1.) Got him.

GM: How hard and where?

Bryan: My base Damage for buckshot isn't so good... only 5. But I get double my margin of success for it, so it's still a 7-point hit. To the... (Rolls for hit location.) lower abdomen.

Wade: Did you just shoot him in the junk?

GM: Sorry, he's behind cover, too. Your buckshot goes "blang" off a piece of yard machinery. Initiatives are now Wade and the bad guys on 4, Thomas on 2, and Bryan's done.

Bryan: "Blang?"

Wade: How many are still up?

GM: Three, and their actions are going to resolve simultaneously with yours. But let's go ahead and handle what you're doing first. (Scribbles something on a piece of paper.) That's what they're going to do, regardless of what you declare.

Wade: Okay, are they all equipped the same?

GM: I'll say you had a chance to get a look before the fight started. Give me an Awareness check.

Wade: (Makes an Awareness attribute check, fails.) I wasn't paying that close of attention. I pick one and shoot him.

GM: You're still using that G3, aren't you?

Wade: Yup. Battle rifle. It's slow enough that I'm going to have to take a hip shot - I don't have enough initiative for anything better. And that'll finish off my initiative, too. Screw it, I'm flipping the selector to burst. This thing has the

same range bands as Thomas' M16, so I'm at a -3 for the hip shot, a -2 for the visual range, a -1 for my target kneeling, and a +3 for the burst. Easy. (Makes a Longarm [CDN] skill check, succeeds with a MoS of 9.) Oh, yeah. I love this thing. That's a hit for Damage 17.

GM: 17?

Wade: Dude, three of the four dice were successes, and this rifle has Damage 8 before I even start throwing in my margin of success. I pasted him. Oh, yeah... (Rolls for additional hits from the burst.) Two extra hits, neither one to the same location. So that's hits to the... (Rolls for hit location, three times.) Left shoulder, left hip, and center chest.

GM: All right. (Compares Damage, Penetration, and Armor values.) The leg hit gets stopped by his cover, but the other two don't. You drop him like a sack of hammers. But he does get his shot off first. (Flips over the piece of paper.)

Thomas: Hmm. "1 - attack Thomas. 2 - attack Thomas. 3 - attack Bryan." What, Wade just blew one into the next county and he doesn't get attacked?

Wade: Hey, man, I was not an obvious threat when they decided what they were doing. All of five milliseconds ago.

GM: Exactly. Okay. All of these guys have M4A1 carbines, and they're firing snap shots with bursts. This is at their optimum range, so no penalty from the weapons, but they are taking a -2 for visual range. They're at a +4 bonus for the bursts, but recoil is canceling most of that with a -3. So... you may not die after this action. Thomas... (Makes two Longarm [CDN] skill checks, one with a MoS of 3, one failing.) One hit, one miss. Bryan... (Makes a Longarm [CDN] skill check, failing.) that was close. He parted your hair, but he misses you.

Thomas: How bad am I hit?

GM: Base Damage 6, margin of success 3... total damage is going to be 9. (Rolls for hit location.) Right hip.

Thomas: Oh, hey, cover?

GM: Cover stops that bullet, but it was a 5-round burst, so you have more coming in on you. (Rolls for additional hits from the burst.) One in the same location, one in another location, and the last two go wide. The second leg hit also strikes your cover. (Rolls for hit location again.) The third round tags you in the right upper arm. Given that you've been shooting at them, I don't think you can say that your shooting arm is behind cover.

Thomas: Ow. 9 points? My right arm margins are 1, 7, 11, and 14, so that's going to be a moderate wound. Guys, I think I'm done shooting for this fight.

Bryan: It's okay, I think the fight's just about over.

Thomas: Yeah, but I'm the only one with any initiative left. I'm going to use my last 2 ticks to lower my stance and go prone behind cover until I can bandage myself.

GM: Well, hold on. Give me a Fitness check first to see if you enter shock.

Thomas: If I must. (Makes a Fitness attribute check and fails it spectacularly.) Oh, suck. Margin of failure of 9.

GM: Wow. Not only are you in shock, you're unstable and bleeding out. That bullet must have nicked an artery. No more actions for you. I don't think anyone has initiative left, so that'll close out the first exchange of fire. Are you guys going to hold or press?

Bryan: I'm holding. Let's give them a chance to surrender before Wade executes them.

Thomas: Holding. I'm leaking here.

Wade: Aw, man.. okay, fine, I hold.

GM: They're also holding. Wade, you have the highest CUF. Your operational action for the pause?

Wade: I'm yelling for them to surrender.

GM: In what language?

Wade: Is that a trick question? English, it's all I speak.

GM: Oh, yeah, right. No response. Bryan?

Bryan: I'm crawling over and bandaging Thomas with a Render Aid operational action.

Thomas: Oh, bless you.

GM: Okay, give me a Medicine check.

Bryan: In case you were wondering, yes, I am using supplies for this - I need the bonus. (Makes a Medicine [COG] skill check and succeeds.) Hooray for gauze! I stop the bleeding.

Thomas: Yay, I'm not gonna die! Aside from not dying, do I get an action during the pause?

GM: So long as it doesn't interfere with Bryan's attempt to tourniquet you.

Thomas: No fear of that. I'm just yelling for them to surrender. In Czech.

Wade: Show-off.

GM: That is, in fact, their native tongue. Give me a Czech check.

Thomas: I hate you. I speak it at Competent, though - how about an opposed Persuasion check?

GM: That'll work.

Thomas: (Makes a Persuasion [PER] skill check and achieves a MoS of 4.) Not my best performance, but I do have a success... margin 4.

GM: Okay. (Makes a Resolve attribute check for the enemy troops and achieves a MoS of 2.) You did beat them. They're not going to throw out their guns immediately, but they're willing to negotiate.

Wade: If we let them leave, they'll just come back with friends.

Thomas: Hush. You don't speak Czech. For all you know, I'm ordering take-out.

GM: Well, unless someone really wants to press the issue, you're out of combat for the moment. Thomas, keep talking.

Wade: And I'll be reloading for when you fail that Persuasion roll.