

STAR SAGA

Rulebook

Introduction

Welcome to Star Saga, a game of high adventure in a futuristic world of space travel, advanced technology, and myriad alien races. The competitive game allows for up to five players, pitting the scheming Nexus player against a group of intrepid Mercenaries on an important mission. Alternatively, the game can be played co-operatively or even solo, with the Nexus' actions taken over by the game itself.

This book will take you through an introductory mission to learn the basics. Once you're an experienced spacefarer, you can use the accompanying mission book or any of the expansions available from Mantic to explore further.

This book will assume that there is a Nexus player controlling the minions. If you are playing co-operatively, look out for the green 'Artificial Nexus' boxes in the rules – these will highlight the differences when playing the game without a Nexus player.

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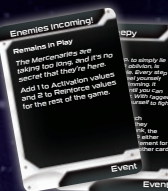
Game Components



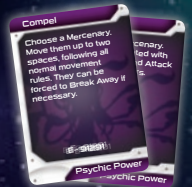
Rulebook and Mission Book



6 Mercenary Cards



14 Event Cards



5 Psychic Power Cards



5 Boss Cards



7 Minion Cards



36 Nexus Cards



22 Skill Cards



4 Deployable Equipment Cards



34 Equipment Cards



10 Dice



22 Damage Counters



8 Reinforcement Counters



4 Darkness Counters

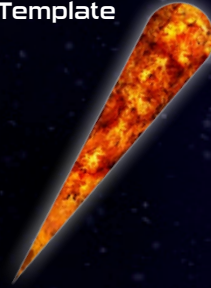


2 Casualty Counters



10 Experience Counters

Flame Template



Range Rulers



8 Locked Door Counters



6 Mercenary Counters



Mercenary Start Point Counter



6 Mercenaries



4 Lab Technicians



4 Corporation Rangers



2 Force Fields



Explosives



2 Sentry Guns



5 Bosses



6 Security Guards



4 Plague Victims



6 Corporation Marines



4 Cabinets



6 Terminals



2 Containment Tanks



6 Tables



6 Crates



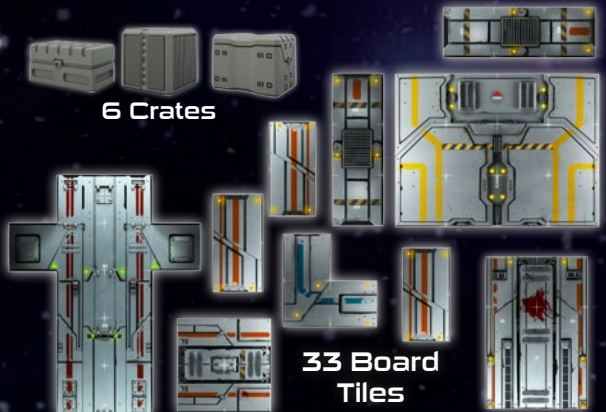
4 Double Doors



6 Doors



2 Weapons Lockers



33 Board Tiles

Setting Up

For your first game, take the components listed on the next page and set them up as shown.

1. Miniatures


Miniatures are used to represent the Mercenaries and Minions in the game, and are moved around the board using the squares marked onto the tiles. Each miniature is assumed to take up the entirety of the square it occupies, no more, no less, regardless of the shape of its base or any protruding arms or weapons.

2. Mercenary Counters

At the start of each game, each Mercenary should be assigned a Mercenary counter at random. This is placed next to their character card, and is flipped over once the Mercenary has taken their turn. No Mercenary may act while their counter is face-down. Once the last counter has been flipped over, they are all placed face-up again.



3. Nexus Deck

This deck of cards controls the Nexus' minions throughout the game, and will also introduce events that trigger new parts of the story. For this mission, make up the deck using only the 12 cards with the  symbol. Shuffle them and place them to the side of the board.

Once you are ready to play, the Nexus player should draw the top 3 cards from this deck to form their starting hand. This is kept secret from the other player(s).

In future games, each mission will tell you which cards are required to construct the deck.

Artificial Nexus

When playing without a Nexus player, one of the Mercenary players is considered to be the 'acting' Nexus. This is always the player to the left of the Mercenary player that most recently acted unless the players agree otherwise. This player must draw cards, move models and roll dice on the Nexus' behalf. In addition, **no starting hand** is drawn from the Nexus deck when playing without a Nexus.

4. Mercenary Start Point

This marks the position on the board where the Mercenary models start. If there is only a single Mercenary, it is placed in this space. In larger games, any additional Mercenaries must be placed adjacent to this space, or as close as possible if the adjacent squares are full.



5. Reinforcement Points

These counters should be placed with the active side facing up. These squares represent areas off the map that are under the Nexus' control, and the Nexus player may use these to bring more minions onto the board.



Mercenaries may not stand or place any sort of counter on these squares.

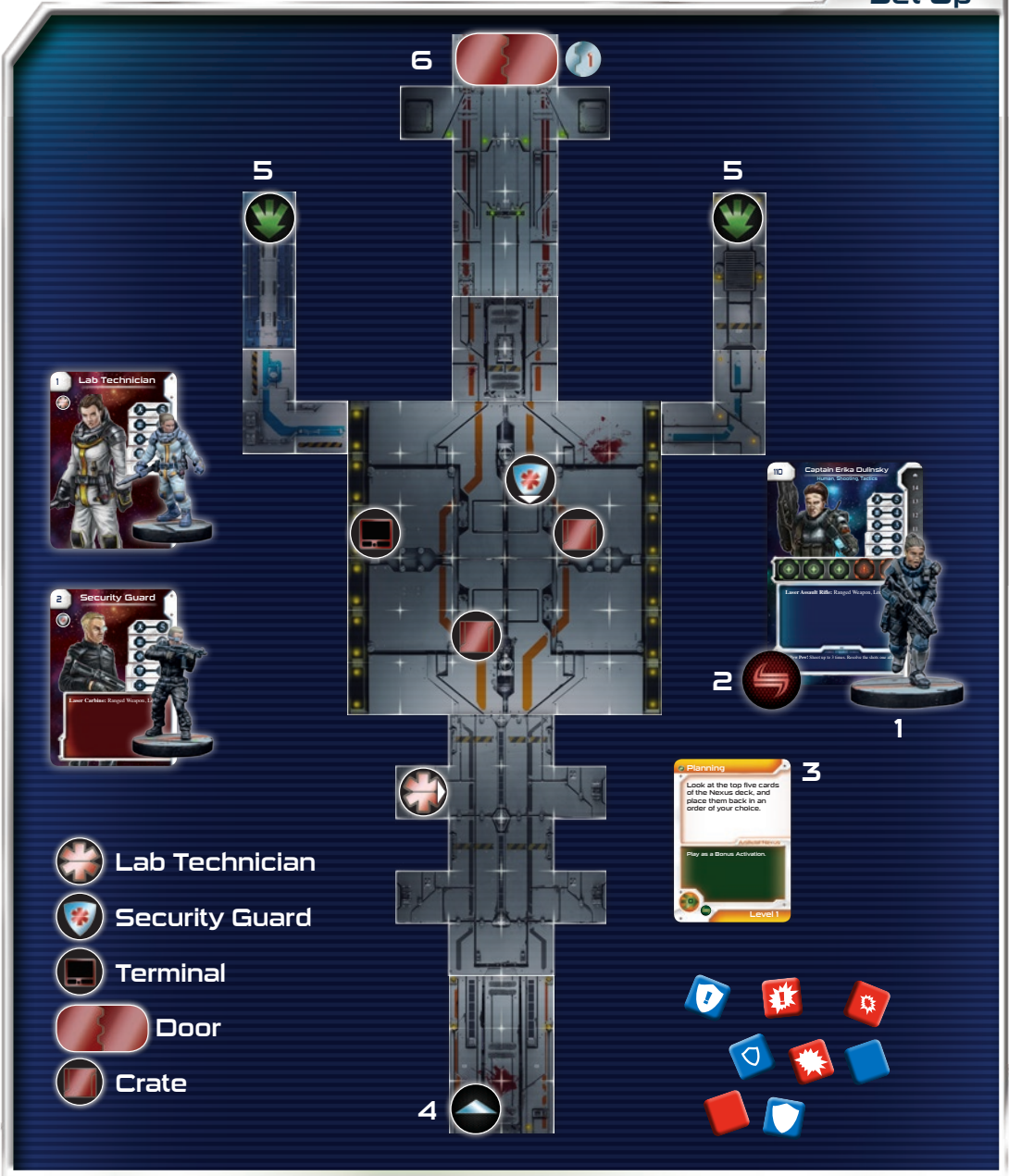
Sometimes Reinforcement Points may straddle multiple squares. Any of the squares covered may be used to bring on minions, and Mercenaries may not stand or place any sort of counter on any of these squares.

If a Reinforcement Point is ever deactivated, flip the counter over to show the other side.

6. Locked Doors

Some doors will start the game locked. Locked doors are denoted by a counter, with a number representing how difficult it will be to disable the lock. The Mercenaries must find a way to unlock or destroy these doors before they can pass through them.





Tutorial

When you are ready to play, the Nexus should read the following out loud to the Mercenary players:

You drop down from the ventilation system into a brightly-lit corridor, and take a moment to catch your breath and get your bearings. A stencil on the wall indicates that security checkpoint B, where your team are waiting, is straight ahead, but the door only opens from your side. You will need to hack into the terminal up ahead to disable the lock before opening the door itself. The door is just a short walk away - easy, if it weren't for the surprised and very hostile looking guards that have just noticed you...

Now read through the rules step-by-step. Each time you get to a red box like this one, turn back to the board and try out what you have just learnt.

Sequence of Play

The game is played in a series of rounds, each consisting of three phases:

- Mercenary Phase
- Nexus Phase
- End Phase

We'll start with the Mercenary Phase.

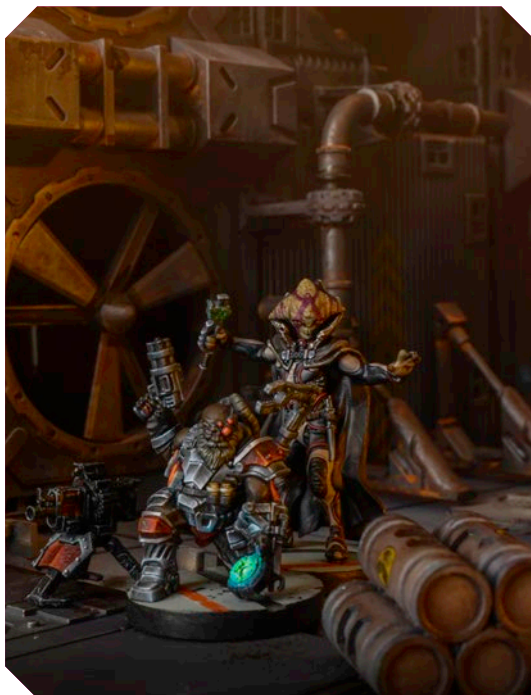
Mercenary Phase

In this phase, the players move and take Actions with their Mercenary models. Each Mercenary has a **turn**, which must be completed before moving onto the next.

The Mercenary players may decide between them the order in which they will act in each round.

In its turn, a Mercenary may **move** and/or then perform **one Action, in that order**. A Mercenary may do nothing if the player wishes.

In this mission there is only a single Mercenary, Captain Erika Dulinsky, and so she will take **1** complete turn in each Mercenary phase, before the Nexus player acts.



Feats

Feats are heroic special abilities that can be used by each Mercenary once per mission. Instead of taking a normal turn, a Mercenary may instead decide to use any Feat detailed on their Mercenary Card. If a Hero has multiple Feats, each can be used once per mission.

Note that you cannot move or perform an Action when using your Feat unless specified otherwise – the Feat replaces the Mercenary's entire turn. Any Actions taken as part of the Feat (if the Feat allowed a Mercenary to shoot for example) follow all normal rules for that Action. Otherwise, Feats can be used even when in an enemy's front arc.

Important

How Many Turns?

Unless stated otherwise in the mission briefing, as above, the Mercenaries take **4** complete turns during the Mercenary Phase. Most games are played with 4 Mercenaries, and so each will act once.

However, it is possible to play the game with different numbers of Mercenary models, meaning that some may take multiple turns, or some may not take a turn at all within a round.

Moving Positioning

During the game, models are placed into various squares on the board to show their location.

The model must face one side of the square – this is its **facing**, shown by the arrow in the diagram below.

The 8 squares surrounding the model are **adjacent** to it – this will be referenced in certain rules, and are shown by the red and blue squares.

The 5 squares to the front and side of the model, shown in red, are called the model's **front arc**. The 3 remaining blue squares behind the model are its **rear arc**.

Models have a 180° arc of sight, shown by the white dotted line. Anything on the red side of the line is considered to be in front of it, and anything on the blue side of the line is behind it.

Example



Generally, a model can only attack enemies in its front arc in close assault, and can only see and shoot at enemies in front of it.

Some models have **360° Vision**. These models consider all adjacent squares to be their front arc, and can see and shoot in all directions.

Moving Models

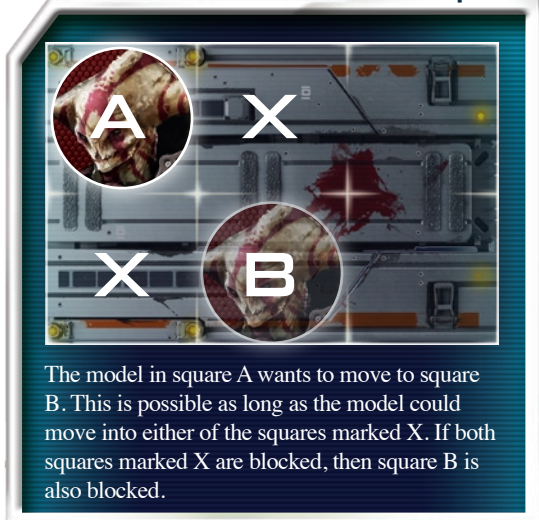
Each model has a Movement value on its card:



The model can move up to this number of spaces in its turn, using the following rules.

- A model may change its facing freely during movement, and must decide on its final facing when it stops.
- A model cannot enter a square containing any other model.
- Models may move diagonally as long as movement into one of the squares either side of the diagonal would be permitted, as shown in the diagram.

Example

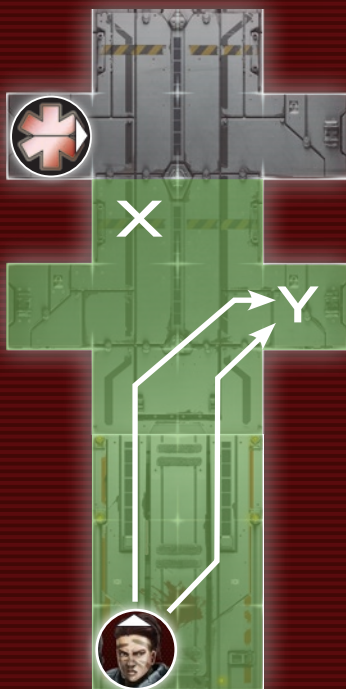


The model in square A wants to move to square B. This is possible as long as the model could move into either of the squares marked X. If both squares marked X are blocked, then square B is also blocked.

- If a model moves into the front arc of an enemy model its movement ends.
- If a model starts its turn in the front arc of an enemy model it cannot move freely. It has two options:
 - It may remain in the same square and change its facing.
 - It may move out of the front arc of that enemy, exposing itself to an attack. This is called breaking away (see page 22).
- If the rules require a model to move onto the board for any reason, they move as normal, with the specified entry square (usually a Reinforcement Point) as their first square of movement. If the entry square has a model already standing on it, the model may not move onto the board.
- Models can only move off of the board when specified by the mission. To do so, they must reach the edge of the board and still have movement remaining.

Tutorial

Captain Erika Dulinsky has a Movement value of 5, so she can move anywhere in the green area.



If Dulinsky moves into square X she must immediately stop as she will be in the Lab Technician's front arc. However, as an expert marksman, Dulinsky is usually better off keeping her distance and taking out her enemies from afar.

Move Dulinsky to square Y, and turn her to face into the corridor. Taking cover in the alcove will protect her from enemy fire but still allow her to fire back. Note that there are multiple routes she could have taken to her target square – some are shown in the diagram, but there are many more options. Remember this – it will be important to know where you can move if there is something blocking your way later.

Now her movement is complete, Dulinsky can perform an Action.

Actions

After a model has completed any movement, it may perform a single Action. The most common Actions are:

- Shoot
- Close Assault
- Open/Close Door
- Access Terminal
- Interact with Scenery

No Action may be performed while in an enemy model's front arc except close assault.

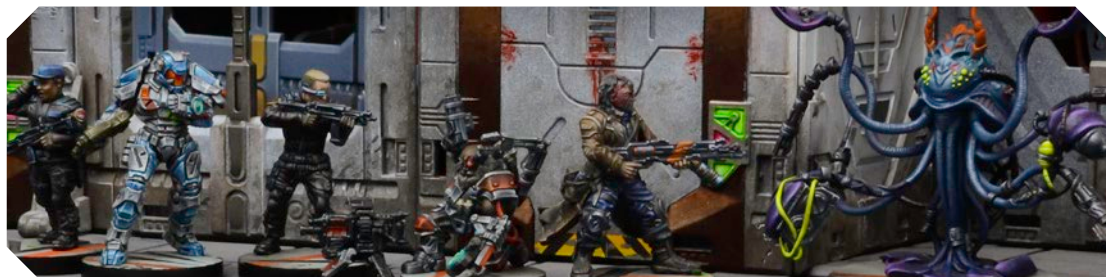
These Actions are explained over the next few pages. In addition, there are other Actions that do not have a standard set of rules – these will be granted by a character's abilities or equipment, and will be detailed on the cards.



Tutorial

Dulinsky's only option here is to shoot – she is not close enough to a door, terminal or enemy to do anything else.

Read the following sections on Shooting and Resolving Attacks, and then have a go yourself.



Shooting

To make a shoot Action, a model must have a **Ranged Weapon** listed on its card. If it has multiple Ranged Weapons, it may only fire one for each Action.

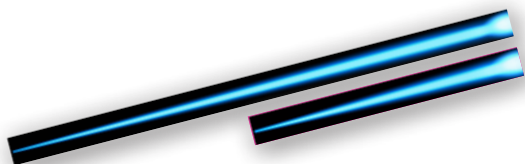


It cannot make a shoot Action if it is in the front arc of an enemy model, or if its target is adjacent to a friendly model.

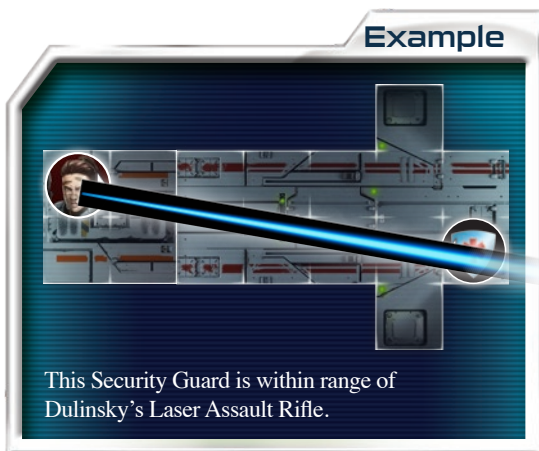
Before firing, the shooting player must check if the target is within **range** and **line of sight**.

Range

Range will usually be either **Long** or **Short**, and is measured using the two range rulers in the box.



Hold the ruler over the board. As long as it can reach from **the centre** of the shooting model's square to **any part** of the target model's square, the target is in range and can be shot at.



Some weapons will have **Unlimited** range. There is no need to check the distance to the target for these weapons – they are always in range.

Line of Sight (LoS)

Models may also only shoot at models they can see.

A model can only see targets in front of it (see Positioning on page 7).

Use the straight edge of the range ruler to mark a line between the centre of the shooting model's square and any part of the target square, just as you did for the range. If you can draw any line that does not pass over another model or any **blocking** scenery such as a wall (see Scenery on page 10), the target is visible. Otherwise, it cannot be targeted.

Some attacks do not require line of sight – they target enemies psychically or via other means. These attacks always ignore all scenery, do not suffer darkness or cover modifiers, and may target enemies that are adjacent to a friendly model. They are still required to be in range.

Resolving the Attack

Once you've established whether you can see your target, follow the rules for Resolving Attacks on page 11 to see if you damage it.

Template Weapons

Some weapons have their range listed as **'Template'**. This means they use the flame template included in the box. The pointed end of this must be placed over the centre of the shooting model's square. It can be pointed in any direction, and will hit **all** models whose squares are even partially covered by the template.

Cover does not apply against template weapons, but if the entire width of the template crosses any blocking scenery any further targets are not affected.

Roll to attack each model separately.



Scenery

When faced with heavy fire, models will do everything they can to find a place to hide. The game includes a selection of scenery pieces, such as the computer terminals used by the models, as well as crates, tables and other inanimate objects. Some of these, such as the terminals and others detailed in the mission book, will have their own rules.

All of these can be used to dodge enemy fire.

Scenery shorter than a model such as crates, terminals and tables are called **obstacles**, and can be seen and fired over, but with a cover penalty for doing so – see below.

Scenery taller than a model such as a weapons locker is called **blocking** scenery, and cannot be seen or fired over, but can be fired past if line of sight can be drawn.

Other models and the walls (the blank spaces between the tiles) are also blocking.

Cover

Unless a shooting model can draw line of sight to **every part** of a target model's square without crossing an obstacle, a wall, or another model's square, the defending model is in **cover** and will gain a bonus to their defence roll (see Resolving Attacks on page 11).

Obstacles adjacent to the shooting model are ignored for the purposes of cover.

Pot-shots

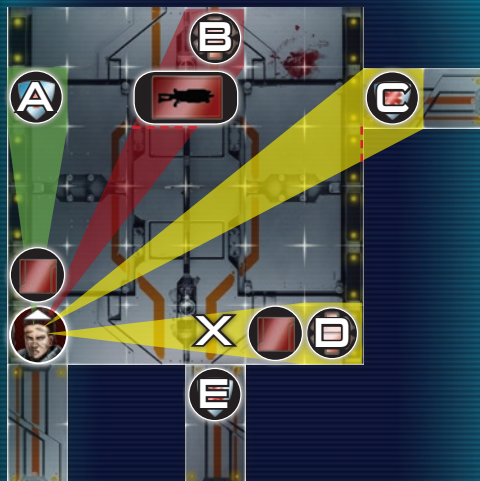
Models in cover can pop out to take pot-shots at enemies that would be blocked or partially obscured from their current position. In effect, they lean around the corner to take the shot from a better vantage point.



A shooting model may 'lean' into any adjacent empty square to take their shot, drawing range and line of sight and determining cover from the adjacent square rather than their own. The model is not moved during this shot.

Example

Determining Cover



Dulinsky has entered a room, and has five possible targets.

- Minion A is in the open, with every part of its base visible, and can be shot at as normal. Dulinsky is adjacent to the crate and can therefore see over it without penalty.
- Minion B is behind a weapons locker, which is blocking scenery, and therefore the minion cannot be shot.
- Minion C can be seen, but is in cover due to the blocking wall marked in red.
- Minion D is behind an obstacle, and is therefore visible but in cover.
- Minion E is behind Dulinsky, and therefore cannot be shot.

Dulinsky herself will be in cover when fired at by Minions A and C due to the obstacle in front of her. Minion B cannot see her. Minion D can see over the adjacent crate to fire at her without a cover bonus.

Minion E cannot see Captain Dulinsky from its current position and could not normally shoot her. However, because square X is empty, it can lean around the corner to take a pot-shot with no cover bonus applying.

Resolving Attacks

All attacks in Star Saga, both shooting and close assault, are resolved using the combat dice included in the box. The attacking model always rolls the red attack dice, and the defending model always rolls the blue defence dice.



1. Roll the Dice

The attacking model takes a number of dice equal to their Shooting or Assault value, depending on the type of attack they are making.



The defending model takes a number of dice equal to their Defence value.



There are some standard modifiers that may change the number of dice that you roll, to a minimum of one:

- -1 attack or defence die if the model is injured (see page 19)
- -1 defence die if the attacking model is behind the defender
- +1 defence die when shooting if the defending model is in cover
- -1 attack or defence die in close assault if the model is outnumbered (it is in the front arc of more than 1 enemy model)

In addition, sometimes models will have equipment or special rules that give them bonus dice – check this before you roll.

Once both players have determined the number of dice to roll, they roll them simultaneously.

2. Block Attacks

The defending model compares their dice roll to the attacker's to see how many hits they can avoid.

Each blast icon (☠☠☠) represents a successful attack, and each shield icon (🛡🛡🛡) represents a successful block or dodge.

Each blank die (🔴🔵) has no effect, and is discarded immediately.

The defending model may use each shield icon rolled to block any single blast icon of the same strength or weaker.

| Die Result | Effect |
|------------|-------------|
| 🛡 | Block 1 ☠☠☠ |
| 🛡 | Block 1 ☠☠ |
| 🛡 | Block 1 ☠ |

Discard all defence dice, and all blocked attack dice. If there are no attack dice left, the attack has been unsuccessful. Otherwise, damage has been caused – move on to step 3.

3. Deal Damage

Each remaining attack die will cause a single point of damage to the defender.

If the defender is a minion, for each point of damage place a damage counter on or next to the model's base. Once the number of damage counters is equal to the model's health, the model has been crippled – remove it and its counters from the board.



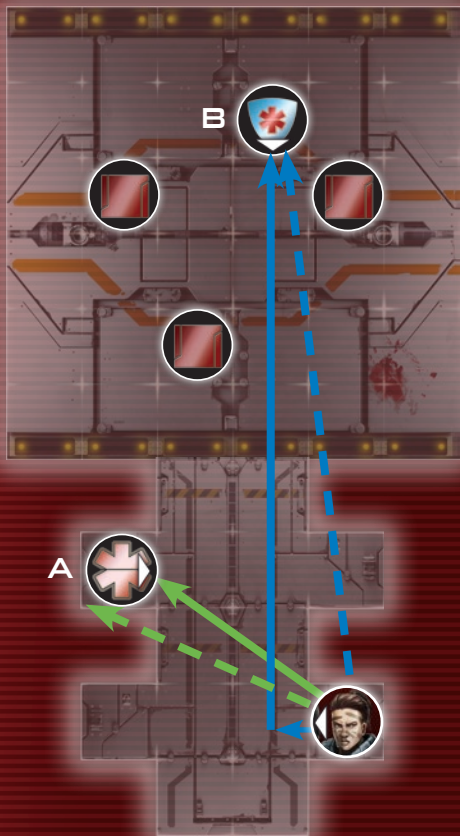
If the defender is a Mercenary, for each point of damage place a counter on the first empty space on their health track. For more on Mercenary damage, see page 19.

Important

Re-Rolling Dice

Some special abilities or equipment may allow you to re-roll certain attack or defence dice. This is always decided after all dice on both sides have been rolled, but before any attacks have been blocked. If a die is re-rolled, the second result stands, even if it is worse than the first.

Captain Dulinsky has multiple targets to choose from here. The Lab Technician (A) is closest, and will be more likely to hold her up in the corridor, and the alcove he is hiding in will provide a cover bonus. The Security Guard (B) on the other hand is in the open and could be more dangerous later on, so may be a better option.



Let see how each attack would work.

A. Holding one end of the range ruler over the centre of her base and pointing it towards the Technician, Dulinsky can see that he is well within **range**.

The line in the diagram above shows that she also has **line of sight** to the Technician – a line between her and any part of her target that does not cross a wall or another model.

Although she can see him, she cannot see every part of his square – to see the back corner her line of sight (the dotted line) would cross the wall. This means that Lab Technician is in cover.

Now she must resolve the attack. She takes a number of red dice equal to her Shooting value (4), and the Technician takes blue dice equal to his Defence value

(1). As he is in cover as described above, he takes an additional blue die. Both players roll their dice.

Dulinsky [4 red dice]

Technician [2 blue dice]

The blank is discarded. Then, each blue die can block a single red die. As shown above, both of the Technician's dice have successfully blocked Dulinsky's attacks, but one of the attack dice cannot be blocked. This causes a point of damage and a counter is placed next to the Lab Technician.

B. From her current position, Dulinsky cannot see the Security Guard, even though it is in range. As shown, her line of sight crosses the wall. However, she can take a pot-shot. By 'leaning' around the corner and taking the shot from the empty square in front of her, she has a clear view of every part of her target. The Security Guard has a Defence of 2, so the dice are rolled as follows:

Dulinsky [3 red dice]

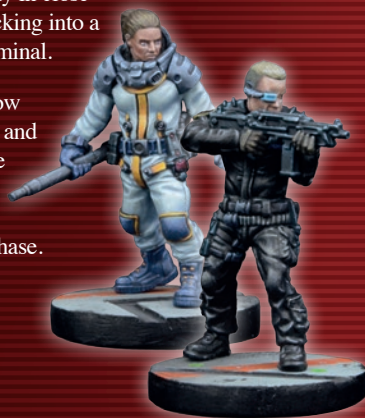
Guard [2 blue dice]

Although the Guard has successfully blocked one of Dulinsky's attacks, two points of damage still make it through. As the Guard only has a Health value of 2, this is enough to kill it and it is removed from the board.

Now try each of these options for yourself and see what results you get.

Later in the game you will need to use the other Actions, so read them through, but remember this process – it's the same whether you are grappling with an enemy in close assault or hacking into a computer terminal.

Now you know how to move and fight, it's time to move onto the first Nexus Phase.



Other Actions

Close Assault

A model may make a close assault Action against any enemy model in its front arc.

Follow the rules for Resolving Attacks on page 11 to see if you damage your opponent.

Opening and Closing Doors

To open or close a door, it must first be unlocked. Some doors will start the mission unlocked; other must be unlocked via terminals. An unlocked door may be opened or closed by any model with the door in its front arc.

Slide the door sideways off of the board to show that it has been opened. If a model closes the door, slide it back into the space in the corridor. A door may not be closed if a model is standing in the doorway.

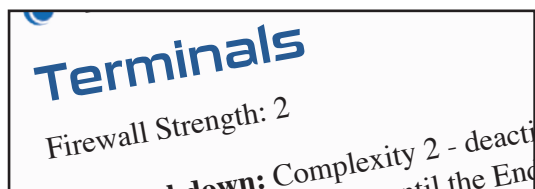


Accessing Terminals

Around the board the Mercenaries will find computer terminals that give them access to the mainframe. Hacking into these terminals to destroy the Nexus player's defences will be vital to their mission's success.

A model can access any terminal in their front arc. Terminals are most commonly used to decode the level's door locks, but most missions will have additional options available to a prospective hacker. The Nexus player should read out these options to the Mercenary player when they attempt to access a terminal, and the Mercenary must declare whether they want to unlock one of the visible doors on the board, or choose one of the other options. Unless otherwise specified by the mission, a terminal can be used to unlock any door that is currently on the map.

Accessing a terminal is done in the same way as resolving an attack, with the model as the attacker. However, instead of using the model's Shooting or Assault value, the attack uses their Tech value. The mission will state a Firewall Strength for the terminal - this is how many defence dice the Nexus player rolls.

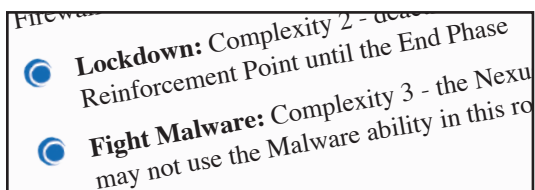


There are no standard dice modifiers when accessing a terminal.

Once all blocked attacks have been discarded, any remaining attack dice represent a successful hack.

When disabling a door lock, each remaining attack die will reduce the strength of the lock by 1 - flip the counter or swap it for another to show a lower number. If this number ever reaches zero, remove the counter entirely - the door is unlocked.

Other options on the list will have a complexity - the amount of 'damage' required to bypass the Nexus' system. These options are usually time-critical, so the threshold must be reached in a single attack roll rather than reduced by multiple attacks.



Early on in the story it may only take a single success to hack the system, but as you work through the missions the Nexus player will increase their security protocols, and having a specialised Technician in the group will be vital.

Access Denied

Some doors in a mission might have a counter displaying this symbol. This means that the door cannot be unlocked via regular means, and the Mercenaries will have to find another way to get the door open. When the Mercenaries access a terminal, often the Nexus player will provide a hint as to how this could be done - the Nexus player should read out the Access Denied section from the terminal menu along with any other options.



Interacting with Scenery

As the Mercenaries explore, they may find intriguing scenery pieces that could be critical to their mission. The players can use an Action to try and interact with any item in their front arc – the Nexus player should check the mission book to see if there is any effect. The Nexus player does not have to tell the Mercenary players in advance if there is anything exciting to find – it's up to the Mercenaries to explore!

For example, the Mercenaries may come across a crate or a weapons locker in a room. One of them could try using their Action to search it – they may find something inside.

Sometimes a Mercenary will only be able to interact with scenery if they have the right piece of equipment – they may require a key-card to open a locked cabinet for example.




Each piece of scenery can only be used once unless the Mission states otherwise.

Finding Loot

Although some scenery pieces will have a specific effect, most just contain valuable items that the Mercenaries can 're-appropriate' to their cause.

At the start of each Mission (see page 20), the Nexus player will set aside a deck of cards containing the items that can be found.

If the Mission book advises that a scenery piece contains **Loot**, the searching Mercenary player should roll a single attack die:

| Die Result | Effect |
|---|---------------------------------|
|  | Draw 2 Loot cards |
|  | Draw 1 Loot card |
|  | The Mercenary has found nothing |

Nexus Phase

In this phase, the Nexus player will act, moving and attacking with their minions and using special abilities to hinder the Mercenaries' progress. The phase has five parts:

1. Use Special Abilities
2. Make Activations
3. Reinforce Troops
4. Make Bonus Activations
5. Draw Nexus Cards


1. Use Special Abilities

Each of the Nexus player's cards details a special ability, which may be used by discarding the card. The Nexus player may use as many abilities as they like from their hand, resolving them one at a time before moving on to the next.

Remains in Play

Some cards have lasting effects that continue to apply until they are discarded. Cards that 'Remain in Play' should be placed at the side of the board, visible to all players.

Reactive Abilities

Some cards will have a  symbol following the heading. This means that they are used as a reaction to the Mercenaries, and can be used in the Mercenary phase. The exact time that they can be used will be stated on the card.

2. Make Activations

Each Mission lists a number of minions that may be activated in each turn. They are activated one at a time, taking turns one at a time in the same way as the Mercenaries – moving and then taking a single Action.



Minions may Shoot, Assault or Open and Close Doors. They will only access terminals or interact with scenery where specified by the mission. Minions will never open a door if the zone on the other side has not yet been revealed, unless a special rule instructs otherwise.

No minion may be activated more than once in this part of the turn. If there are not enough minions to activate, any further activations are wasted.

3. Reinforce Troops

The Nexus player's cards also have a secondary function – reinforcements. Instead of using a card's ability in step 1, it can be discarded for its Reinforcement value, seen in the bottom left corner of the card. This can be done once per phase.



This value represents the extra minions that have come to help defend against the Mercenaries. Rather than a number of models, this number relates to the total Reinforcement cost of the minions, shown at the top of their card.



For example, a card with a Reinforcement value of 4 would allow you to bring on 4 minions with a Reinforcement cost of 1, or 2 minions with a cost of 2, or a 3 and a 1, or any other combination up to the Reinforce value on the card.

Each briefing will list the reinforcements available to the Nexus in that mission.

Reinforcements are placed off of the board, next to any Reinforcement Point counter. These minions are **waiting**. Waiting minions may move onto the board via the Reinforcement Points in subsequent turns. Until they are on the board, these minions may not make any Actions.

If the Reinforcement Point a model is waiting at is blocked by another model, or has been deactivated, the model must remain waiting until it is able to enter the board.

If the player does not have enough minion models to fulfil the Reinforcement value of the card played, any remaining Reinforcement value on the card is wasted.

Note: Even if other effects increase the Reinforcement values in a game, a card must always be discarded to bring on any new minions.

4. Make Bonus Activations

If the Nexus player has any cards left in their hand, they may be discarded to take extra activations.

For each card discarded, the Nexus player may activate any one minion, in the same way as in step 2. This number is never modified by other effects such as alarms. This can include minions that have already been activated earlier in the turn, or ones that have just been placed as reinforcements. No minion may be given more than one bonus activation per phase.

5. Draw Nexus Cards

If the Nexus player has not played any cards in this round, they must first discard one card from their hand. Then, the Nexus player must draw from the deck so they have **three** cards in their hand, unless they already have three or more.

However, if any bonus activations were used, the Nexus player only draws back up to a maximum of **two** cards.

If the Nexus player ever goes to draw a card and the deck is depleted, the discard pile should be shuffled to form a new draw pile.

Once the player's hand is refilled, the Nexus phase is over.



Event Cards

There is another type of card in the Nexus deck – Events. These cards reveal the next part of the story and will often include instructions to the players that will have an effect on the game. When these cards are drawn, they must be resolved immediately, and the Nexus player must draw another card instead.

Event cards are not discarded when resolved – they are removed from the game completely. They are **not** shuffled back in when the deck runs out.

Artificial Nexus

Without a Nexus player, the Nexus phase is carried out quite differently. The phase has three parts:

1. Special Abilities
2. Make Activations
3. Reinforce Troops

The Nexus will not have a hand of cards to play, and so all cards are played straight from the deck. Although the acting Nexus will draw the cards and roll the dice for the minions, the card deck itself will determine **which** minions or Mercenaries are activated as detailed in Choosing Targets on the next page.

1. Special Abilities

Firstly, the acting Nexus should draw the top card from the deck and carry out its special ability, if possible (see Choosing Targets on the next page).

No Target?

Note that some cards may have no eligible targets at all (for example drawing the *Surprise Attack* card when there are no inactive Reinforcement Points). In these cases, the card text is ignored, and the cards are discarded like Bonus Activations. The Target Mercenary for these cards is determined using the symbol as normal. See Step 2 – Make Activations for more details.

2. Make Activations

The acting Nexus should then carry out a number of activations, depending on the number stated in the mission.

The first minion to act will be the one closest to the Target Mercenary (see Choosing Targets on page 17), chosen using the card drawn in step 1. The second minion will be the one furthest away from the Target Mercenary. The acting Nexus should alternate between nearest and furthest until the Activation value for the mission has been fulfilled, or there are no more minions left to act.

Minions will act according to the Minion Activation Table on the next page, resolving the first option from the list that they are eligible to complete, with the following exceptions:

- If a minion moves into the front arc of a Mercenary at any point, the minion will stop and make a close assault Action against it.
- Minions will always move off of Reinforcement Points if possible.

- If a minion is in a position where it is preventing another minion from seeing or reaching a Mercenary, it will move until it is no longer blocking the way, if possible.

Important: If there are not enough minions on the table to fulfil the Activation value for the mission, more minions will turn up! Once all present minions have been activated, use the Reinforcement value of the card (if any) to place Reinforcements, **and** then make one more activation.



3. Reinforce Troops

Once all activations have been made, the acting Nexus should draw a second card from the top of the deck. Its ability is ignored – only its Reinforcement value is used.

Reinforcements are selected in descending order, starting with the highest cost minion available, then the second highest, and so on, until you reach the limit on the card. If you reach the lowest cost minion and haven't used up the Reinforce value yet, start again from the highest and work down again. If there are multiple minions available of the same cost, the acting Nexus must choose which is brought on.

For example, if the Reinforce value was 5, and the available minions were cost 1 and 2, you would bring on a Security Guard (cost 2) and then a Lab Technician (cost 1). As you haven't used up the full value yet, you would start again at the highest, and bring on a second Security Guard.

If you had a Reinforce value of 8, and the available minions were cost 1-3, you could bring on a Corporation Marine (cost 3), then a Security Guard (cost 2) and then a Lab Technician (cost 1). As there is still a value of 2 remaining to fulfil the card, you would bring on a second Security Guard – the highest cost minion available.

All reinforcements are placed in wait at the closest active, empty Reinforcement Point to the Target Mercenary.

Choosing Targets

All Nexus cards that target specific models have a symbol at the bottom of the card. This symbol determines which models are used to follow each card's instructions.



The symbol represents a Mercenary on the board. Most commonly this will be a coloured circle that matches one of the coloured Mercenary tokens, but there are a few other symbols:

| Symbol | Mercenary |
|--------|--|
| | The Mercenary furthest from the start point |
| | The Mercenary with the most damage counters |
| | The Mercenary in the front arc of the most minions |
| | The Mercenary eligible to be shot at by the most minions |

The Mercenary specified by the card is the **Target Mercenary**, and will be the subject of any card effects where the players must choose a Mercenary.

If there are two or more Mercenaries equally eligible (both with the same number of damage counters for example), the acting Nexus must pick which one is the Target Mercenary.

If there is no eligible target (no Mercenary is damaged for example), then the Target Mercenary is the one that acted most recently.

If the card directs you to move or take an Action with a minion, you must use the minion(s) closest to the Target Mercenary.



In any other situation, the acting Nexus chooses the target of any card text.

Note: As with all A.I. rules, every now and then a situation may arise that isn't quite covered by the rules. In these cases, the acting Nexus should decide what to do, based on the most sensible option, or the most cinematic!

Minion Activation Table

Certain areas on the mission map may specify an Action that minions must take. If a minion is within one of these areas, they must follow these instructions.

Certain minions may specify an Action on their card that the minion must take in certain circumstances. If a minion is eligible to take such an Action, it must follow these instructions.

If the minion has a Ranged Weapon, and is within line of sight and range of one or more Mercenaries, it will shoot the closest eligible target that is not in cover, or the closest eligible target if all are in cover.

If the minion has a Ranged Weapon but no eligible target, it will move towards the closest Mercenary via the shortest possible open route. It will stop either when it has moved its full Movement value, or when it moves within line of sight and range of a Mercenary, at which point the minion will shoot it.

If the minion has no Ranged Weapon, or all targets are ineligible (because they are in the front arc of a friendly model), it will move towards the closest Mercenary via the shortest possible open route. It will stop either when it has moved its full Movement value, or when it moves into the front arc of an enemy model.



In our example Nexus Phase, the Nexus player has the following cards:

1. Stealthy Advance, Reinforce 0
2. Preparations, Reinforce 2
3. Field Dressings, Reinforce 1



Special abilities must be used first, so the Nexus player decides to use Field Dressings to heal the damage on the Lab Technician that Captain Dulinsky shot in her turn. The card is discarded, and the damage counter removed. The Nexus player decides to save the Stealthy Advance card for later. The Preparations card could be used to draw more cards increase the available options. However, at this stage in the game the Nexus player decides that the card's Reinforcements value will be more useful, and moves onto their activations.



This first mission allows 1 activation per turn. The Security Guard in in the distance won't be much use for now, so the player decides activate the Lab Technician, who may move and act just like a Mercenary.

The Technician moves to the space in front of Captain Dulinsky, and attacks her with a close assault Action, resolved just like her attack on him in the previous phase.

If you choose to do the same in your game, and a point of damage is scored, read the section on damage on the next page.

Now, the Nexus player may reinforce their troops. The Preparations card's Reinforce value of 2 allows the Nexus player to bring two points worth of models onto the table. That could be two Lab Technicians, or a single Security Guard. For this first turn, the Nexus player takes a Security Guard model and places it off of the board, next to the Reinforcement Point. This model may move onto the board later.

The Nexus player has one card left in their hand - Stealthy Advance. They could choose to use it for a bonus activation, moving the new Security Guard onto the board, or attacking again with the Lab Technician for example.

However, doing so would reduce the Nexus player's options in the following turn, so the player decides to make no further activations for now.

To complete the Nexus Phase, the player draws two more cards, taking them to a hand of three.

There will be no End Phase in this round as there are no lasting effects to be dealt with, so it's back to the Mercenary phase and Captain Dulinsky's next turn.

The Mercenary player's objective in this game is to get to the terminal, unlock the door, and then open the door to let your comrades in.

The Nexus player's objective is to cripple Captain Dulinsky.

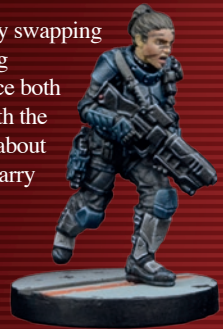
The terminal has a Firewall Strength of 1.

You now have everything you need to play through the rest of the game – play a few more turns, checking back to the book if you need to. Never forget your objective though. Whether you've destroyed all your enemies or not, it's often best to keep moving towards the door – you don't want to get held up and outnumbered!

When you open the door and the game ends, the Nexus player should read the following:

You slam your fist against the keypad to release the door and it slides slowly open. Instantly the sounds of battle fill the room and a ricocheting shot from the firefight on the other side forces you to duck down. Glancing around the edge of the door again, you can see the rest of the team moving towards you under heavy pursuit. You make a quick calculation and push the button again. The door's mechanisms groan as they switch gear and start to close the entrance again. "Everyone in!" you yell. "Now or never!"

When the game is finished, try swapping sides and playing again, trying different tactics this time. Once both players are fully confident with the rules, turn to page 20 to read about the rest of the missions, and carry on with your adventure!



End Phase

In this phase, various things will happen in order to prepare the game for the next round, such as shields being replenished (see page 23).

These rules will be mentioned in the appropriate places on the cards or in the mission book.

Mercenary Damage

All Mercenaries will have a health track on their card – a series of spaces to represent how long they can stay alive.

For each point of damage caused to a Mercenary, a damage counter is placed over the first empty space on this track, starting from the left.

These spaces will be either red or green. While a Mercenary still has green spaces remaining, they do not suffer any ill effects. However, when there are no uncovered green spaces left, the Mercenary is **injured**, and will suffer penalties to their dice rolls as detailed on page 11.

Crippling a Mercenary

Once all of the spaces on a Mercenary's health track have been covered with damage counters, the Mercenary has been **crippled**. Remove them from the board and replace them with a casualty counter. This counter does not block movement or line of sight, but can be looted by other Mercenaries (see page 23).



Each time a Mercenary is crippled, the number of Mercenary turns per phase is reduced by 1 for the rest of the game, to a **minimum of 2 turns per phase**.



Example

Wrath
Judwan, Assault, Speed

110

Pistol: Ranged Weapon, Short, No LoS required. Cannot target scenery. If any damage is caused, you may remove one point of damage from Wrath or any other Mercenary within short range.

Juan Blade: Wrath may make a close assault. Action: roll one defence die.

Dance of Death: Wrath may make a close assault. Action: he may move up to 1 space. If he continues to do this until he fails, he is crippled.

Energy Vacuum: Make a Life Drain attack against all enemies within range.

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Life-Drain: Ranged Weapon, Short, No LoS required. Cannot target scenery. If any damage is caused, you may remove one point of damage from Alyse or any other Mercenary within short range.

Stun: If Alyse damages a minion in close assault, that minion may not act until the next round.

In the above example, Alyse and Wrath have both taken two points of damage. Alyse has only red spaces left uncovered, so she is injured. Wrath has green spaces left uncovered, so he is not injured.

Missions

The accompanying Mission Book will detail everything you need to know to play through the story. It is broken into a series of **Missions**, each representing a chapter in the Mercenaries' journey, with different obstacles to overcome and objectives to achieve.

Tutorial

The game that you have just played through while reading the rules is **Mission A: The Lone Operator** on page 10 of the Mission Book. Open the Mission Book now to that page and follow this section to see how everything is laid out.

IMPORTANT: If you intend to play as the Mercenaries and you don't want spoilers, **do not** read past Mission A until you have completed the campaign. Only the Nexus player should read the Mission Book – anything that is relevant to the Mercenary player(s) will be explained to them as the story progresses.

Each Mission will be broken down into the sections listed below.

Mission Briefing

Each Mission begins with a section in *italic* text that should be read aloud to the Mercenary player(s) before starting the game. This will set the scene for the Mission so the players know where they are and what they need to do.

Victory

This section details the game conditions that each player must meet to win. These conditions should be read out to all players following the Mission Briefing. As soon as either side has achieved their victory conditions, the game is over.

This section may list specific models that must be killed, or specific doors that must be opened. These doors may not be on the board at the start of the game. If this is the case, they must be pointed out to the Mercenary player(s) later in the game, once the zone containing them (see page 24) has been placed.

Mercenaries

This section will list the Mercenaries and Equipment required to play the Mission.

Once you get past the initial training missions, Star Saga is designed so that you can play through the story with any miniatures from the range – you don't always have to use the ones that come in the core set. Therefore the missions will list the participants as a number of credits.

Credits are spent to hire Mercenaries, learn skills and purchase equipment for your team, using the values listed in the top corner of their cards. For more on skills, see page 30.

Example



For example, Mission 1 has a limit of 460 credits. You may decide that you want some ranged firepower in the team, and choose Captain Dulinsky as your first choice. She costs 110 credits. Just in case you come across some tough tech, you decide to also take Curby for 125 credits. Neither Dulinsky nor Curby are the toughest of mercs, so you round out the team with Alyse to heal them and The Devil to soak up damage and clear packed corridors with his flamer. This comes to a total of 455 credits. With 5 credits left to spend, you choose for Alyse to start the mission with a Medi-Pack.

If you don't want to put together your own team, each Mission has recommendations for the characters and equipment you should take. This is a good starting point for your first few games.

Nexus

The Nexus section is broken into three parts.

Card Deck

This section will explain how to construct the Nexus deck for the game. The selected cards will determine the difficulty of the mission, and also the timing of in-game events.

The section will be explained in a series of numbered steps, listing the required cards, how many of them

to draw, and what order to place them down in. The instructions will generally list the cards by Level, and the deck is colour-coded to match.



Level 1 cards are yellow, level 2 cards are orange and level 3 cards are red. Event cards are black.

Activations

This can be found next to the map and lists the number of minions that may be activated per turn.



Reinforcements

This section lists the minions available to the Nexus player when placing models at Reinforcement Points in this Mission. This will usually be listed next to the map as a maximum cost, but some Missions might have additional restrictions.



Terminals

This section will list the Firewall Strength (number of defence dice) for the terminals in this Mission, along with the options available to a Mercenary hacking in.

These options should be read out to the Mercenary player(s) when they access a terminal. However, do not list any options that relate to doors that are not yet visible to the players – only mention them once the relevant zones have been placed.

Loot

This section details the equipment that the Mercenaries can find when searching the scenery pieces on the board.

Some scenery pieces will contain specific equipment, in which case the relevant card should be located and taken from the loot deck, and then the deck reshuffled. Sometimes however, a piece of scenery might contain a Mission Bonus – an item unique to the mission that cannot be otherwise obtained. These are the black cards in the equipment deck.

Most other scenery pieces will contain loot as detailed on page 14. Equipment that can be found in this manner is represented by the green cards in the equipment deck.

These should be shuffled and put to the side of the board before the game, and then drawn when necessary.

Special Rules

This section will list any additional rules that apply to the Mission with instructions for anything the players may need to do. Not all Missions will have Special Rules.

Mission Progress

This section follows on from the Mission Briefing – it contains sections of italic text that are to be read aloud to the Mercenary player(s) at certain points in the game, listed in **bold**. This text may simply describe a room or enemy that has been revealed to the players or it may explain a twist to the original mission.

Following the italic text there will sometimes be instructions to the Nexus player explaining any new rules that apply from this point in the game.

Tutorial

That's it! You're on your own now! If you want to get a bit more familiar with the basic mechanics, play through Mission A again until you're confident.

Missions B and C will gradually introduce new rules and characters – you can use these to learn the more complex aspects of the game. These missions will use some of the additional rules on the following pages, but you don't need to read them all just yet. Just familiarise yourself with the headings for now, and come back and read each section as and when it comes up.

Once you've completed Missions A-C, you'll be ready to properly begin your journey. Assemble your party, turn to Mission 1, and off you go!

Note: For a deeper Star Saga experience, you can link all of your missions together into one long story. To find out more, see Campaigns on page 28.



Additional Rules

This section covers all the additional rules to the game. They won't come up in every game, so it will be easier to learn them as and when they come up rather than digesting them all at once. For now, just familiarise yourself with the headings so you can come back to this section when you need to.

Breaking Away

Models that start their turn in an enemy model's front arc do not have to fight if they don't want to. If they prefer they can try to escape by breaking away.

A model may only break away if the first square that it moves into is not in the front arc of any enemy models. A model that breaks away may still move into an enemy's front arc later in that turn.

When a model breaks away, each enemy that has the model in its front arc will get a chance to attack it as it moves. This is called a **free strike**. Resolve all the free strikes before moving the model and resuming its turn.

A free strike is resolved like any other close assault Action, with the same modifiers (see page 11).

Example

For example, if Alyse is on her last health point she might want to break away from a Marine before she gets crippled. The three squares shown in blue behind Alyse are not in any enemy's front arc and so there is space for her to move into. Before the model is moved, the Marine gets to make a free strike, resolved like a normal close assault. If the Marine wounds Alyse she will be crippled. If she avoids any more damage she will be able to break away and move as shown.

Equipment

The card and rules for each Mercenary already account for their basic weaponry - Dulinsky's rifle or Wrath's sword for example. However, as you venture further you will find that your Mercenaries collect extra equipment along the way, represented by equipment cards.

These cards are placed next to the Mercenary's card once collected, and any rules granted by the equipment may be used by the Mercenary.



Swapping Equipment

Equipment cards can be traded between Mercenaries during the game. As an Action, a Mercenary may give, receive or swap equipment cards with any other adjacent Mercenary.

Crippled Mercenaries and Equipment

If a Mercenary is crippled while they hold any equipment cards, other Mercenaries are able to pick them up. Place the cards to the side of the board near the casualty counter and ensure that the counter is equipment side up.



The counter may be collected as an Action by any Mercenary in the same square. Once they have collected it, flip the counter over to show that there is no equipment left, and place the equipment next to its new owner's Mercenary card.

Deployable Equipment

Some characters carry equipment that can be placed onto the board itself rather than carried, like Ogan Helkkare's Sentry Guns. This will be specified on the cards.



These pieces of equipment have no effect until they are deployed onto the board.



Once placed, the position of the equipment should be marked with the appropriate counter or model, and the card should be placed near it at the side of the board

as a reminder of its rules. From that point on it will follow the rules as stated on the card, and it may be targeted by Nexus cards as if it were a Mercenary.

Shields

Some equipment in Star Saga can grant energy shields to the characters, absorbing damage to keep the models alive for longer.

Energy shields are represented by blue spaces on the left of a Mercenary's health track that must be filled with damage counters before their health is depleted. Some characters (such as Curby) have a built-in shield on their card, whereas some require equipment to benefit from an energy shield. In this case, the equipment card granting the shield should be placed to the left of the Mercenary card, in line with the health track as seen below:



These spaces are not counted for the purposes of determining if a Mercenary is crippled – the Mercenary is removed if all the red and green spaces on their health track are covered, even if there are blue shield spaces still empty.

When a Mercenary with a shield takes damage from a shooting attack, damage counters are placed onto these shield spaces, starting from the left as normal, and only once they are covered can damage be placed on the Mercenary's main health track.

Shields have no effect in close assault – no counters may be placed on the shield spaces and damage will start accruing from the first empty green or red space.

There are some other effects in the game that will make a shield inactive. If this happens, the shield spaces are ignored just like with a close assault attack.

Replenishing Shields

In the End Phase of each round, shields will be gradually replenished – remove a damage counter from each character's rightmost covered shield space.

Zones

When setting up an adventure, not all of the map may be visible at the start – only the Nexus player will know the full extent of the mission.



Some maps are divided into one or more areas by the doors. Initially, the Nexus will only lay out the tiles from where the Mercenaries start up to and including the first door(s). This is the first zone. Each subsequent area that is separated by one or more doors is a new zone.

When a door is opened the Nexus lays down the tiles for the adjacent zone, but no further. Depending on the adventure, this may be the remainder of the map, or there may be still more for the Mercenaries to explore. Minions and Reinforcement Points only take part in the mission once the zone they are in has been revealed.

Important

Not Enough Models?

The situation may arise where a newly placed zone includes more minions than the players have available, due to the models being used as earlier Reinforcements. In this situation, place as many models as you are able to, substituting alternative models of equivalent points value if you have them, on or adjacent to the marked squares.

For example, if the map required one more Corporation Marine (3 points) than was available, the Nexus could instead place a Security Guard (2 points) in its place, and a Lab Technician (1 point) adjacent to it.

Artificial Nexus

When playing without a Nexus player, at least one of the Mercenary players will need to look at the map and special rules in order to set up the game. Wherever possible, you should limit this to one person, and try not to look at any zones beyond the first until you need to, to retain the element of surprise!

Destroying Scenery

With such a huge variety of powerful weapons available, it is of course possible to destroy the furniture as well as the enemy.

Mercenaries can target scenery pieces with shooting and close assault attacks just like an enemy model. Scenery caught under a Template weapon is affected just like any other model. Scenery pieces do not have a front arc, and can be shot at even from adjacent squares. Minions may not destroy scenery.

Some missions will specify the number of defence dice rolled by certain scenery pieces. If not stated otherwise they use the following values:

- Crates: 2 dice
- Doors: 5 dice
- Everything Else: 3 dice

Scenery pieces never suffer any modifiers to their dice rolls. Scenery pieces are destroyed and removed from the board once they have taken a single point of damage.

If a door to a new zone of the board is destroyed, the new zone is placed immediately. Unless a mission briefing says otherwise, mercenaries may not destroy doors marked with

Be careful – once a piece of scenery has been destroyed it cannot be used, so you can no longer search a destroyed cabinet, or use a destroyed terminal. If there are no terminals left on the board the Mercenaries will have no way to access the Nexus' mainframe to open doors or turn off alarms.



Darkness

There will be times during the Mercenaries' journey that they will have to travel in the dark – switching off the lights is one of many tools at the Nexus's disposal.

Darkness counters can be placed into any square on the board. The counter does not block movement or line of sight, but the area within 3 squares of the counter is considered to be **dark**.



While this counter is in play, all attack rolls targeting a model in the dark suffer a -1 modifier. In addition, line of sight may not be drawn against a model in the dark at more than short range.

Models in the dark may only change facing before or after their movement (not during), and only while they are in contact with a wall or scenery piece that they can use to orient themselves.

Models standing in the dark may only move in a straight line, in the direction they are facing. If they move directly into a wall or scenery piece during their move, they immediately stop moving and may change their facing one last time, as above.

Models that arrive onto the board into the dark must choose their facing before being placed.

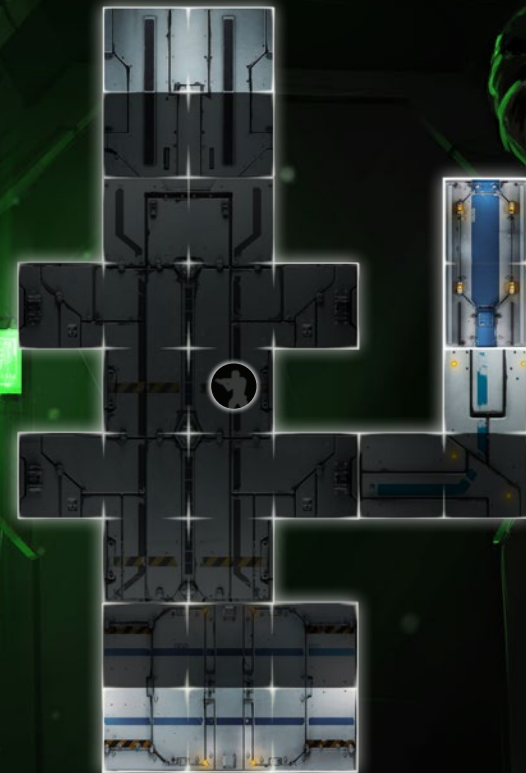
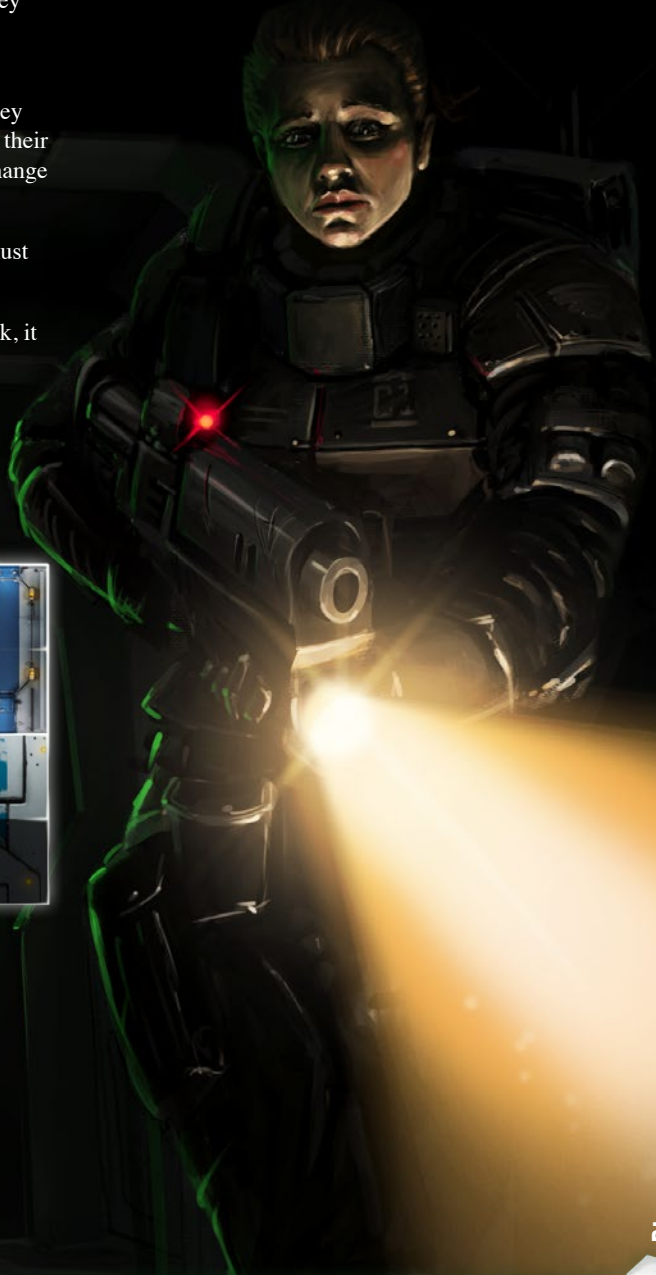
If a model moves so that it is no longer in the dark, it may act normally.

Nexus Interrupt Cards

In some missions the Nexus player will have access to Interrupt cards. These are drawn from the deck as normal. However, they are not used in the Nexus Phase.

Instead, they allow the Nexus player to activate models in between turns in the Mercenary phase, taking the Mercenary players by surprise.

You cannot play an Interrupt card before the first Mercenary's turn, or after the last Mercenary's turn in each Round. In addition, you cannot play two Interrupt cards in a row without a Mercenary taking their turn between them.



All greyed out squares are in the dark.

Stealth

In some missions, it will be vital for the Mercenaries to stay quiet to avoid detection. Certain missions will specify that the Nexus player starts the game **unaware**.

An unaware Nexus player will not have full control of their minions. The Mercenary players must use the following rules to act stealthily and keep them unaware.

Moving Stealthily

While the Nexus is unaware and a Mercenary moves, the minions might hear them. After the Mercenary's movement is complete, but **before** they take any Actions, the Nexus player must make an attack roll for each minion that meets the following criteria. If a minion fulfils multiple criteria, they will roll dice for both. Minions adjacent to a Mercenary do not roll dice.

- 2 dice for each minion within short range of the Mercenary, irrespective of walls or scenery.
- 1 die for each minion between short and long range of the Mercenary, irrespective of walls or scenery.
- 1 die for each minion that had line of sight to the Mercenary at any point during the Mercenary's move.

In response to each 'attack', the Mercenary must roll a defence die for each square of their Move value that they did **not** use. For example, if the Devil (Move 5) moved three squares, he would roll two dice.

For each point of 'damage' scored by the Nexus player, they must move that minion one square towards the Mercenary, by the shortest possible route. If there are multiple routes of equal length, the Mercenary player chooses the route.

Provided that the Nexus player is still unaware of the Mercenary's presence (see below), the Mercenary may then take their Action as normal.

Some Actions will also cause noise and draw minions towards the Mercenaries. If a Mercenary uses their Action to open or close a door or to interact with a scenery piece, the same process is followed, with the Mercenary rolling 3 dice.

Distraction

While the Nexus player is unaware, the Mercenaries have access to a new Action – Distract. This represents the Mercenary throwing something or making a noise to send the guards in the wrong direction.

The Action is targeted at a minion. No line of sight is needed. If the minion is within short range, the Mercenary rolls two attack dice. At long range, the Mercenary may only roll a single die. In response, the minion rolls a defence die. For each point of damage scored, the Mercenary player may move the minion a single square.

Alerting the Nexus Player

After each model's turn (both Mercenaries and minions), the Nexus player may be alerted to the presence of the Mercenaries. The Nexus player will cease to be unaware when any of the following things happens:

- A minion has line of sight to a Mercenary that is not in cover or in the dark.
- A Mercenary within long range of a minion has used a ranged weapon. Silent weapons do not count.
- A minion has been attacked but is still alive.

Note that this only applies between turns, not during.

If the Nexus player is alerted during the Mercenary phase, the phase ends immediately, all Mercenary counters are turned face-up, and the Nexus phase begins. If the Nexus player is alerted at any other time, the game continues as normal from that point.

The Nexus Phase

While the Nexus player is still unaware, the Nexus phase will happen slightly differently. The Nexus player may not use any abilities, bring on any Reinforcements, or draw any cards. All they may do is make activations, and discard cards for bonus activations.

In addition, while the Nexus player is unaware, the minions are slowly patrolling, rather than rushing into battle. They may only move **one** square when activated, regardless of their Move value. When making bonus activations, they may move two squares.

Artificial Nexus

When playing without a Nexus player, while the Nexus is unaware the Target Mercenary is always the one that acted most recently. Otherwise the Nexus phase plays out as described above.

Bosses

In some missions, the Nexus player will have access to models far more powerful than their regular underlings. These are called Bosses. They are unique characters that only appear in the game when specified by the mission book – they cannot be requisitioned as reinforcements.

Once they have been placed on the board, they are activated just like any other minion. However, they may **always** act in every Nexus Phase, over and above the Activation limit for the mission.

In addition, Bosses will often have more special rules than regular minions, and are harder to kill – they will have a health track on their cards just like a Mercenary.

Large Models

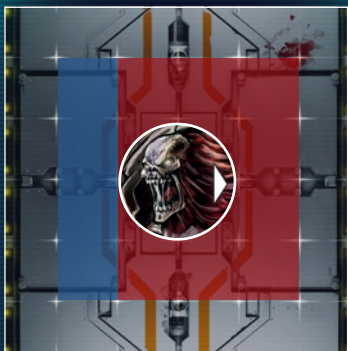
Most models have a base that occupies a single square. However, some creatures such as Chovar have bases that cover four squares (2x2), and in the future we may see creatures on even larger bases!

Models that cover four squares (2x2) are called Large models.

Arcs

Large models follow the same principle as single square models: they have a front and a rear arc. The difference is that their arcs consist of more squares than regular figures.

Example



The 4 squares behind the model (shown in blue) form its rear arc. The remaining 8 (shown in red) are its front arc. Note that this means that a Large model can be in an enemy's front and rear arcs at the same time. The Large model will only get the bonus for attacking from behind if it is fully behind its enemy.

Movement

Because of their size, Large creatures will be unable to travel through narrow corridors or enter small alcoves. They must remain within the larger rooms and wider corridors where their base can fit on the tiles at all times.



Move the model a single square at a time - ensuring that for the entirety of the movement the whole of the model's base remains only on squares permitted by the normal movement rules for single-square models (see page 7). They may change facing as normal.

Line of Sight and Cover

Large models may draw line of sight from any of the individual squares they are standing on. Otherwise line of sight is worked out as normal.

Large models also find it more difficult to get into cover, and again, the individual squares are used instead of the whole base to determine this. If a shooting model can draw an unobstructed line of sight to every part of **any one** of the individual squares the Large model is standing on, the Large model is not in cover. It is only in cover if the shooting model cannot draw unobstructed line of sight to any complete square.

Campaigns

While in real life you will usually play just one Mission at a time, for our Mercenaries each Star Saga story is one long journey from start to finish – as soon as they defeat one challenge the next is upon them.

To represent this in the game, you can choose to link your Missions together in what's called a campaign. Each game you play will affect the next, and your chosen character will improve their skills as time goes on.

Starting a Campaign

Each campaign, whether it's the Eiras Contract or any other story in the Star Saga range, begins at Mission 1 in the respective Mission book. Using the number of credits allowed for that Mission, the Mercenary player(s) should select their team as normal.

This team can be put together from any combination of Mercenaries and equipment. You could choose to use the starting characters as they come, or you could take your favourite character from a previous campaign with all of their accumulated skills and equipment, and put them in your starting team for a new campaign (paying all the necessary credits of course).

You will notice that the number of credits available for the Missions increases throughout the Mission book – this is to allow for the improved skills and equipment collected by your Mercenaries as they advance. When playing a campaign, these credit values are not used. It will be your choices that affect where they end up – it's not all decided for you!

Winning and Losing

The Eiras Contract is a linear campaign, so the Mercenaries must complete each Mission before they can progress to the next, unless stated otherwise in the Mission Book. If the Mercenaries fail a Mission, they must retreat, heal their wounds, and attempt the Mission again.

Of course, second time around they will have more experience, and will know what to expect. The Missions have been designed to vary in some key aspects (e.g. the order of the card deck and location of Loot) to keep the story different on subsequent attempts.

Between Games

In a campaign, the game doesn't end when the victory conditions are fulfilled! You will need to deal with your Mercenaries' injuries and reorganise your party,

but if you've done well you can also use the downtime to contact Blaine for assistance.

There are a few things you will need to keep track of on your Mercenaries' behalf, so keep a pen and paper handy when playing a campaign.

Important

Mercenary Counters

When playing a campaign, it is still important to deal the Mercenary counters randomly at the start of each mission, rather than them keeping the same ones.

Injuries

Mercenaries that are still fully active at the end of a Mission are returned to full health between games, and there are no further effects.

Mercenaries that end a Mission injured or crippled will have wounds that impede them in following games, and often their wounded bodies will get looted by the enemy before their team can recover them!

Each crippled or injured Mercenary should roll a Defence die for each damage counter on their health track. If they roll any kind of shield, the damage counter is removed, ready for the following game. For each blank rolled, the counter is not removed and it will remain on the Mercenary's health track at the start of the following game.

In addition, if a crippled Mercenary's equipment was not retrieved by another member of the team during the Mission, they must discard one of their equipment cards, drawn at random, after the game.

Reorganising the Party

During a Mission, it's common for Mercenaries to find equipment that isn't best suited to them, and they may not have time to pass it onto their comrades during the game. Between Missions, Mercenaries are free to exchange equipment between them as they wish.

In addition, some Missions will have additional rules that may apply to the team after the game – make sure the Nexus player reads any such rules to you in full.

Blaine's Benevolence

Throughout the Missions, the Mercenaries will gain Victory Points (VPs). These represent valuable assets stolen from the enemy base, be it advanced tech that can be sold, classified intel that Blaine can use for blackmail and exploitation, or simply cold, hard cash.

Whatever the case, in return for the retrieval of these assets, Blaine will send supply drops to the team with new equipment.

VPs are earned independently by each Mercenary, and should be noted down. Between games, they can be spent to purchase new equipment for your Mercenaries. Blaine does not trouble himself with trivial information, and will respond much better when provided with lots of juicy intel at once. Sometimes it may be better to go without any new equipment for a mission or two in order to buy something truly special once the VPs have built up.

Between games, VPs can be exchanged for credits at the following rate:

| VPs Exchanged | Credits Awarded |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 5 |
| 2 | 11 |
| 3 | 18 |
| 4 | 26 |
| 5 | 35 |

Any credits awarded should be noted down.

Spending Credits

Credits can be used to purchase equipment at the cost listed at the top of the card. Mercenaries may purchase any items from the green Loot deck, as well as from the blue Rare Items deck. Some items cannot be purchased, and will have a cost of ‘-’.

Mercenaries can also use credits to pay for training and learn new skills. Skill cards may be purchased in the same way as equipment cards, but at a higher cost. If a chosen Skill comes from one of the Mercenary’s attributes, it will cost double the printed cost. If it comes from a different attribute, it costs triple the printed cost.



Any chosen cards are removed from the deck and placed next to your character card. The cards are kept with the Mercenary – their effects will apply in all future games with that Mercenary, and the items are no longer available to purchase or find until the card is lost or discarded – there is only a limited supply.

The printed credits values of the new equipment or skills are included in the Mercenary’s value in future games, until lost or discarded.



Experience

As you progress through the story, life will get tougher and tougher for your mercenaries. However they can learn from these experiences and improve their skills just as you can!

To represent this, when playing a campaign the Mercenaries will earn experience points (XP) in each mission, whether from destroying their enemies, hacking into the enemy's systems, or achieving their objectives. This should be kept track of during and between Missions.

Experience can be earned in the following ways:

| Action Taken | +XP |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Inflct a point of damage on a minion | 1 |
| Inflct a point of damage on a boss | 2 |
| Reduce the strength of a door lock by 1 | 1 |
| Successfully achieve any other hacking option on a Terminal | Equal to Complexity of hack |
| Complete a Mission without being crippled | 10 |
| Other actions listed in the Mission | Variable |

As it is collected, experience is tracked using a marker that is moved along the Experience track at the side of each Mercenary card.

Whenever the counter reaches the end of the track the player must take an experience counter, and move the marker back to the bottom of the experience track, carrying over any XP still to be added.



At any time, during or between games, Mercenaries may trade in experience counters to **level up**.



Example

Captain Dulinsky currently has one Skill card (Aimed Shot), one experience counter, and her experience track is currently on 14.

She shoots, and inflicts a point of damage on the Marine across the room, gaining the final XP required to take her to the end of her experience track. She moves the marker back to the bottom of the track and takes a second experience counter.

She now has two counters – one more than the number of skill cards she possesses. This means that she is eligible to level up.

She trades in the counters, placing them back in the box, and shuffles together the cards that match her attributes – Shooting, Tactics, and Human, as well as the General cards. She draws the top three:

- *Expert Shot*
- *Reprioritise*
- *+1 Shoot*

As her shooting is already fairly proficient, this time she decides to take the Tactics Skill *Reprioritise*, so that she can be more flexible as part of the team. She places the Skill card next to her character card, and returns the others to the deck.

Levelling Up

To level up, a Mercenary must trade in a number of experience counters one higher than their current number of skill cards (see below). For example, if a Mercenary is just starting out and has no skill cards, they can level up with just a single counter, but a Mercenary that already has three skills will need four counters to level up again.

The upgrades available to a Mercenary when levelling up are determined by their attributes, listed under their name on their card. These attributes match up to the skill cards included in the game.





When a Mercenary levels up, take all available skill cards that match the Mercenary's attributes, as well as all available General skill cards, and shuffle them together, face-down.

Then, draw the top 3 cards from the pile – these are the upgrades available to your character at this time. You may choose 1 of these cards, and return the others to the deck.

The chosen skill card is removed from the deck and placed next to your character card. The skill card is kept with the Mercenary – its effects will apply in all future games with that Mercenary, and it is not included in the deck when any Mercenary levels up in the future.

The points value of the new skill is included in the Mercenary's value in future games.

New Attributes

Once a Mercenary has become proficient with their natural skills, they can branch out into other areas. At any time, a Mercenary may trade in 3 experience counters to add an attribute to their character card. The next time they level up they may shuffle in the cards from their newly learned attribute.

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Mission Setup (page 20)

- Mercenary players choose their characters and take the relevant cards.
- Nexus player constructs the card deck as per the mission and draws a starting hand of 3 cards.
- Nexus player places the first zone (page 24).
- Nexus player reads out the Mission Briefing and Victory Conditions.
- Mercenaries are placed on and adjacent to the start point.
- Begin the first round.

Sequence of Play (page 6)

1. Mercenary Phase
2. Nexus Phase
3. End Phase

1. Mercenary Phase (page 6)

- 4 Mercenary turns per phase.
- Counter must be face up to act.
- During its turn, each Mercenary may:
 - Move, and/or then
 - Perform 1 Action
- Or
 - Use a Feat (once per game)
- Then
 - Flip over their counter.
- When the last counter is turned face-down, all counters are turned face-up

Moving (page 7)

- Models may move a number of squares up to their Movement value.
- A model may change facing freely during movement.
- A model cannot enter a square containing any other model or scenery piece.
- A models may move diagonally as long as movement into one of the squares either side of the diagonal would be permitted.
- If a model must immediately end its movement if it enters the front arc of an enemy model.
- A model can only leave an enemy's front arc by breaking away and suffering a free strike (page 22).
- Mercenary models may not enter or place items on a square containing a Reinforcement Point.

Actions (page 8)

- Shoot
- Close Assault
- Open/Close Door
- Access Terminal
- Interact with Scenery
- Swap Equipment

No Action may be performed in an enemy's front arc except close assault.

Shoot (page 9)

- Check range and line of sight, measuring from the centre of the shooter's base. Then see Resolving Attacks.
- Models may not shoot at targets behind them.
- Walls and other tall scenery block line of sight.
- Crates and other short scenery provide cover (page 10).
- Template weapons hit all models even partially covered. Roll separately for each.
- Pot shots – a model may choose to draw line of sight and determine cover from any adjacent empty square (page 10).

Close Assault (page 13)

- A model may make a close assault Action against one enemy in its front arc. See Resolving Attacks.

Open/Close Door (page 13)

- A model may open or close any unlocked door in its front arc.

Access Terminal (page 13)

- A model may access any terminal in its front arc.
- Terminals may be used to unlock doors. The Nexus player must read out any additional options.
- The Mercenary must choose an option before rolling.
- Roll the Mercenary's Tech value against the mission's Firewall level – see Resolving Attacks. No standard modifiers.
- Each remaining attack die may reduce the strength of a lock by 1, or may be used against the Complexity of another option. This Complexity must be reached in a single roll.
- Doors with a symbol may not be unlocked.

Interact with Scenery (page 14)

- A model may interact with any piece of scenery in its front arc.
- The Nexus player must check if there is anything specific to find.
- If not, the Mercenary finds Loot. Roll an attack die.

| Die Result | Effect |
|------------|---------------------------------|
| | Draw 2 Loot cards |
| | Draw 1 Loot card |
| | The Mercenary has found nothing |

Swap Equipment (page 23)

- Give, receive or swap items with any adjacent Mercenary.

Resolving Attacks (page 11)

- Attacker takes red dice equal to their Shoot or Assault value.
- Defender takes blue dice equal to their Defence value.
- Standard Modifiers:
 - -1 attack or defence die if the model is injured (see Damage, below)
 - -1 defence die if the attacker is behind the defender
 - +1 defence die when shooting if the defender is in cover
 - -1 attack or defence die in close assault if the model is outnumbered (in the front arc of more than 1 enemy)
- Compare Results
- Each remaining attack die causes 1 point of damage.

| Die Result | Effect |
|------------|---------|
| | Block 1 |
| | Block 1 |
| | Block 1 |

Damage (page 19)

- If damage equals health, model is crippled and removed.
- Mercenaries and Bosses – once green spaces are covered, model is injured.
- If a Mercenary is crippled, put their equipment aside and place a casualty counter where they fell. The cards may be picked up by a Mercenary in that square as an Action.
- Damage from shooting (not assault) can be placed on blue shield spaces. These regenerate in the End phase.

2. Nexus Phase (page 14)

a. Use Special Abilities

- Discard a Nexus card to resolve its rules.
- = Reactive abilities used in the Mercenary phase.

b. Make Activations

- Activate a number of minions stated on the map. Minions may move and then take an Action, just like Mercenaries.
- Minions may only use Shoot, Close Assault and Open/Close Door Actions.
- No minion may activate more than once.
- Bosses always activate, over and above the activation limit.

c. Reinforce Troops

- Discard a Nexus card to use its Reinforcement value (once per phase).
- Place minions with a cost totalling no more than this number in wait at a Reinforcement Point.

d. Make Bonus Activations

- Discard a Nexus card to activate a minion.
- This may be a minion that has already acted, or that is waiting at a Reinforcement Point.
- No minion may be given more than one bonus activation per phase.

e. Draw Nexus Cards

- If no cards have been played this round, discard one card.
- If any bonus activations were played, draw up to a hand of two cards. Otherwise, draw up to a hand of three cards.
- If the draw pile is empty, shuffle the discard pile to form a new one.
- Event cards are resolved as soon as they are drawn, and the Nexus player must draw another card instead. When resolved they are not placed in the discard pile.

3. End Phase (page 19)

- Check for any card or mission effects that start or stop in the End Phase.
- Reactivate inactive Reinforcement Points.
- Replenish Shields.

Experience

| Action Taken | +XP |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Inflct a point of damage on a minion | 1 |
| Inflct a point of damage on a boss | 2 |
| Reduce the strength of a door lock by 1 | 1 |
| Successfully achieve any other hacking option on a Terminal | Equal to Complexity of hack |
| Complete a Mission without being crippled | 10 |
| Other actions listed in the Mission | Variable |