


// FIELD MANUAL |

OPERATOR TACTICS: SKIRMISH & IRON LINE

| CLR: ACTIVE 

TWO GAMES

ONE VOLUME

D6 CORE

A5 / TABLETOP

VOL. IV

FIELD MANUAL

- OPERATOR TACTICS CORE BOOK

SKIRMISH & IRON LINE

2066

SPLICE-LEVEL

MASS-BATTLE COMPANION

TWO PLAYERS. SIX OPERATORS.

A TABLE THE SIZE OF A KITCHEN COUNTER.

SKIRMISH RULES. IRON LINE MASS-BATTLE.

CONVENTION + TOURNAMENT MODULES.

// SPLICES // RELAYS // KITBASH DOCTRINE // EDGE TOKENS

FIELD MANUAL

SKIRMISH / IRON LINE



PT. I

SKIRMISH

D6 core. Splices. Six scenarios. Solo mode.

PT. II

IRON LINE

Mass battle. Strain. Signal. The machines first.

PT. III

SAME WAR

Crossover. Skirmish inside Iron Line.

PT. IV

ORGANIZED PLAY

Convention module. The Crackerjack tournament.

BACK

DESIGNER NOTES

Credits. Cross-reference. Changelog.

// OT.SK / EDITION 1 / 2026

SKIRMISH & IRON LINE

THE OPERATOR TACTICS TABLETOP &
MASS-BATTLE FIELD MANUAL

A Tabletop Companion to Operator Tactics by Jesse
Alexander

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WHAT THIS BOOK IS

The hum arrives before the machines do. The operators just fill in the verbs.

This is the tabletop companion to Operator Tactics. Two games in one volume, same rules DNA, two different scales.

Skirmish is the small game. Two players. Three to six operators each. A table the size of a dinner tray. A match runs sixty to ninety minutes and needs no GM. It is the entry point. Learn the attributes, the dice, the wound track, the Edge economy, and you have learned the core of the whole line.

Iron Line is the big game. Two armies of autonomous combat platforms grinding at each other across a 3 by 3 board. Drones, walkers, gun platforms, siege rigs. Same D6, same natural 6 / natural 1, but the abstraction jumps a level. Units instead of individuals. Strain instead of wounds. Signal instead of Heat. The fight that happens before the operators go in.

Both games share a setting, a vocabulary, and a dice core. What this book deliberately leaves out: the campaign RPG, faction deep-lore, the full gene-forged splice rules, the post-Upheaval history. All of that lives in the Operator Tactics Core Book. This volume is for the table.

// HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

New to the system? Start at **Part I • Skirmish**. Play two or three games. Then build an Iron Line army.

Coming from the RPG? Skim Part I's Quick Reference, then go straight to **Part II • Iron Line**. It is the new material.

Running a demo or a tournament? **Part IV • Organized Play** has the convention module and Crackerjack rules.

CONVENTIONS USED

- **The die** is a six-sided die (D6). When two are required, this book says 2D6. When a D66 roll is called for, see Iron Line Core Concepts.
- **Meet or beat.** A roll succeeds when it equals or exceeds the target. A natural 6 always succeeds. A natural 1 always fails. No modifier overrides these.
- **Measurements** are in inches, from nearest point of a base to nearest point of a target.
- **"Operator"** means an individual figure in Skirmish. **"Unit"** means a formation on a movement tray in Iron Line. The words are not interchangeable.
- **Core Book references** point to Operator Tactics Core Book. Anything the full RPG handles, augment packages, campaign Heat, faction politics, is cited there, not duplicated here.

01/

WHAT SKIRMISH IS

Two splices. One objective. No referee.

01 · WHAT SKIRMISH IS

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Two splices. One objective. No referee.

Skirmish is head-to-head tactical combat for one or two players, 60 to 90 minutes, on a table the size of a kitchen counter. Each player fields three to six operators. You alternate activations, you measure in inches, you roll a single D6 for almost everything. When the rules don't cover a thing, the dice do. There is no GM.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Two players (or one, for solo mode)
- Three to six miniatures or tokens per side
- A handful of D6, a tape measure in inches, a small pile of wound and objective tokens
- A 24" × 24" play area with terrain

SETUP AT A GLANCE

1. **Scenario.** Roll D6 or agree. Both players see it before building splices.
2. **Build splices.** 400 points. Minimum three operators, maximum six. No more than two of any class. Both players build simultaneously.
3. **Terrain.** Roll Terrain Profile. Alternate placing pieces. The player who places last does not choose the deployment zone.
4. **Deploy.** Zone chooser deploys first. Infiltrators deploy last, in Stealth, outside 12" of any enemy.
5. **Fight.** Roll Priority. Alternate activations. Complete the scenario. Count VP.

FORMAT	POINTS	OPERATORS
Small	300	3–4
Standard	400	3–6
Large	500	5–6

02/

CORE RULES

One die. One threshold. Meet or beat. The rest is just naming the verbs.

02 · CORE RULES

One die. One threshold. Meet or beat. The rest is just naming the verbs.

Roll 1D6. Add modifiers. Meet or beat your threshold. A natural 6 always succeeds. A natural 1 always fails. No modifier overrides these.

THE ROUND

- 1. Priority.** Both players roll D6. The winner chooses to activate first or second. The loser's first activated operator gets one action this round instead of two.
- 2. Activation.** Alternate, one operator at a time. Each operator gets two actions.
- 3. End Phase.** Smoke dissipates. Objective control is checked. Expired conditions are removed.

ACTIONS

Two actions per activation. **Action Floor:** no combination of penalties reduces an operator below one action.

ACTION	EFFECT
Move	Walk up to MOBI in inches. May split around another action.
Sprint	Both actions. Move MOBI × 2. Nothing else.
Shoot	Ranged attack against a target in LoS within weapon range.
Fight	Move into contact (base-to-base, or within 1" if either model has a base). Melee resolves immediately.
Ability	Use a class signature. Cost is on the operator card.
Interact	Manipulate an objective. Usually TACT or OPINT.
Hide	TACT 4+. Must be in cover, outside enemy LoS. Enter Stealth.
Stand Up	One action. Prone to upright.

MOVEMENT DETAILS

- **Difficult terrain.** 2" spent per 1" traveled.
- **Climbing.** 2" per 1" vertical. Ladders and stairs are 1:1. No handhold: TACT 4+ or no progress.
- **Falling.** One FW per 3". At 6" or more: MW instead.
- **Through friendlies.** Allowed, but you cannot end on them. You cannot move through enemies.

SHOOTING

The threshold for a Shoot attack is **SHOOT proficiency + target's AR**. Good = 2+. Ordinary = 4+. Bad = 5+. Class abilities that modify Shoot stack to a maximum of +2 per attack.

CONDITION	MODIFIER
Light Cover	-1 to die
Heavy Cover	-2 to die
Close Quarters ($\leq 6''$)	+1 to die
Shooting Into a Fight	-2. Modified 1-2 hits an ally.
Long Range ($>24''$)	-1 to die

SHOOTING RESULTS

- **Hit.** Flesh Wound.
- **Natural 6.** Mortal Wound.
- **Natural 6 vs. Heavy Plate (threshold 7+).** 2 Flesh Wounds (shrapnel, overpressure, spalling). The plate holds; the operator inside does not hold as well.
- **Natural 1 — Dry Fire.** The weapon jams. One action to clear. If you are in the middle of Desperation Fire, the Desperation Fire jam rules apply instead.

MELEE

1. **Contact.** Move until your model touches the enemy (base-to-base, or within 1" if either model uses a separate base). One action.
2. **Both roll D6.** +1 if armed with a melee weapon. High wins. Attacker wins ties.
3. **Armor check.** Roll D6. Greater than the loser's AR = wound. Equal or less = absorbed. Natural 6 always penetrates.
4. **Wound.** FW on any win. Natural 6 from the winner: MW. **Against Heavy Plate, a natural 6 on the armor check inflicts MW** (a close-quarters blade finds the seams the bullet cannot).
5. **Locked.** Loser stays in contact. TACT 4+ next activation to break free. Success: 3" clear. Fail: 1 FW, still locked.

Multiple attackers. +1 per friendly already in contact with the defender. Maximum +2.

Anti-Armor Melee (Breach tag). The Breacher's combat kit (breaching hammer, demo-charge pick, cutting torch) counts as an Anti-Armor melee weapon. Against Heavy Plate, an Anti-Armor weapon ignores the Heavy Plate cap — treat AR as 2 for melee armor checks. Other classes may purchase Anti-Armor through Extended Loadouts.

ARMOR

TYPE	AR	PROPERTIES
None	0	—
Light Vest	1	—
Medium Rig	2	—
Heavy Plate	3	-1 MOBI, threshold 7+

When AR pushes the threshold above 6, only a natural 6 wounds. Against Heavy Plate specifically, a natural 6 inflicts 2 Flesh Wounds; against any other armor pushed past threshold 6 (stacked modifiers, cover combinations), a natural 6 inflicts 1 Flesh Wound.

WOUNDS

TRACK	1-2 FW	3 FW	1 MW	2 MW
Penalty	None	-1 all	-1 all, 1 action	-2 all, 1 action
Next	—	4th FW = 1 MW	—	Next hit = OoA

Wound Clarity. Taking an MW clears all FW. MW penalties replace FW penalties.

Out of Action. Removed from play.

STATUS EFFECTS

- **Prone.** Incoming Shoot -1. Crawl at half MOBI. Can Shoot. Cannot Fight or Sprint. Standing up costs one action.
- **Pinned.** Next Move costs both actions. Shoot -1. AR -1. Expires at the end of the next activation.

REACTIONS

Triggered when an operator is targeted by a Shoot within 12" and LoS. Declare before the attacker rolls. Costs one action on the operator's next activation. One reaction per round.

- **Return Fire.** Shoot first.
- **Take Cover.** Move 2" into cover, apply the cover modifier.
- **Duck Down.** Go prone. Incoming attack at -2.
- **Body Shield.** Take the hit for an adjacent ally.

GRENADES

One action. TACT 4+. 3" blast. Ignores cover.

- **Success.** Lands on target. Everything in the blast takes a Flesh Wound.
- **Failure.** Scatter D6 inches.
- **Natural 6.** Dead-center strike: Mortal Wound to the named target only. Everything else in the blast takes a Flesh Wound.
- **Natural 1.** Scatter toward the thrower.

STEALTH

- **Enter.** Hide action. TACT 4+. Requires cover, outside enemy LoS.
- **While Stealthed.** Cannot be targeted by Shoot. Enemies ignore the operator.
- **Breaks when** the operator shoots and hits, fights, fails a TACT roll in enemy LoS, moves through open ground within 6" of an enemy, or **interacts with a scenario objective.**
- **Passive detection.** At end of round, enemies within 6" with LoS roll 5+ to spot.
- **Active detection.** An enemy spends 1 action. The stealthed operator rolls TACT 4+ or Stealth ends.
- **Surprise attack.** +2 to the first attack from Stealth. Breaks Stealth regardless of result.

EDGE TOKENS

Each splice starts with two Edge tokens. Earn one by succeeding at Call the Target or completing a class Performance trigger. Maximum pool of four. Does not carry between games.

Spend one token to **reroll any D6**, or to **add +1 to any roll** (declared after rolling). Spend one token to **remove all Breach Tokens** on a friendly operator (see below).

BREACH TOKENS

Every Flesh Wound opens a window. When an operator takes a Flesh Wound, the opposing player places one **Breach Token** on that operator. The opposing player holds these tokens — not the wounded operator's controller.

Spend a Breach Token at any point before a roll involving that operator:

- **Force a reroll.** The targeted operator must reroll any one die they just rolled. Take the worse result.
- **Escalate the wound.** Convert the next hit against that operator from a Flesh Wound to a Mortal Wound. Declared after the hit is confirmed, before the wound is recorded.

Breach Tokens are cleared when the operator goes Out of Action. A friendly operator's controller may spend one Edge Token to remove all Breach Tokens on them.

Maximum three Breach Tokens per operator at any time. Tokens beyond three are discarded.

CONTACT CEILING

Gene-forged professionals don't break. They recalculate. When your splice reaches half its operators Out of Action — round down — each surviving operator makes a **Contact Ceiling check** at the start of their next activation.

Roll GUTS. Pass: activate normally. Fail: this activation is defensive only. You may Shoot from cover, Move toward your deployment edge, or Duck Down. You cannot Fight, Sprint, or Interact with objectives.

Spend one Edge Token to auto-pass. The Contact Ceiling triggers once per game, when the threshold is first crossed.

LINK-UP

Once per round, instead of a normal activation, declare a **Link-Up**. Activate two friendly operators simultaneously. Each gets one action — not two. Actions may be taken in any order, interleaving freely between the two operators. The second operator still counts as your next activation in the sequence.

You cannot declare a Link-Up if either operator is currently Pinned, Locked in melee, or Out of Action.

DESPERATION FIRE

Both actions. Two Shoot attacks. The second attack is at -2. A natural 1 on the first shot ends this activation immediately — the weapon jams and the second shot does not occur. A natural 1 on the second shot jams the weapon. Clear a jam: one action.

CALL THE TARGET

One action. Target in LoS. TACT or OPINT 4+. Success: the next friendly Shoot against that target gains +1. Earn one Edge.

SITREP – WHEN THE RULES DON'T COVER IT

No GM, no arguments. When players disagree, or the situation calls for randomness, run a SITREP check.

- **Even odds.** 1D6.
- **Unlikely.** 2D6, take lowest.
- **Likely.** 2D6, take highest.

Result: 1 = No, worse. 2 = No. 3 = No, opening. 4 = Yes, cost. 5 = Yes. 6 = Yes, and...

Maximum two SITREP checks per situation. Then commit.

03/

OPERATOR PROFILES

Six classes. Six jobs. Each one knows what it is and what it isn't.

03 · OPERATOR PROFILES

Six classes. Six jobs. Each one knows what it is and what it isn't.

Six roles. Six ways to break the mission open.

Attributes: SHOOT, FIGHT, TACT, OPINT, GUTS, MOBI. Five are rated Good (2+), Ordinary (4+), or Bad (5+). MOBI is measured in inches of movement per activation.

COMMANDO

FORWARD PRESSURE · 100 PTS

SHOOT Good · FIGHT Good · TACT Ord · OPINT Bad · GUTS Ord · MOBI 6"

ARMOR. Medium Rig (AR 2).

RAPID FIRE. One action. Two Shoot attacks. Specialization bonuses trigger once per action.

LOADOUT. Assault rifle (24"), sidearm (12"), frag ×1, combat knife (+1 melee).

PERFORMANCE. Remove an enemy with Fight. Earn 1 Edge.

MARKSMAN

LONG-RANGE FIRE · 110 PTS

SHOOT Good · FIGHT Bad · TACT Ord · OPINT Ord · GUTS Ord · MOBI 5"

ARMOR. Light Vest (AR 1).

STEADY AIM. Both actions, no movement. Next Shoot ignores cover modifiers and gains +1. Counts toward the +2 stacking limit.

LOADOUT. Marksman rifle (36"), sidearm (12"), smoke ×1.

PERFORMANCE. Wound a target at long range or through heavy cover. Earn 1 Edge.

INFILTRATOR

STEALTH & SABOTAGE · 100 PTS

SHOOT Ord · FIGHT Ord · TACT Good · OPINT Ord · GUTS Ord · MOBI 7"

ARMOR. Light Vest (AR 1).

GHOST. Begins in Stealth. Cannot Sprint. A missed Shoot does not break Ghost. A hit does. Silenced weapons never break Ghost. Fighting always breaks Ghost. **INTERACTING WITH A SCENARIO OBJECTIVE ALWAYS BREAKS GHOST** — the moment a Ghost-Infiltrator picks up, plants, or manipulates the objective, Stealth ends and the operator is visible to all enemies with LoS.

LOADOUT. Suppressed SMG (18", Silenced), sidearm (12"), concussion grenade ×1, combat knife (+1 melee).

PERFORMANCE. Full activation in Stealth, undetected. Earn 1 Edge.

BREACHER

DOORS, WALLS, DEMOLITION · 110 PTS

SHOOT Ord · FIGHT Good · TACT Good · OPINT Bad · GUTS Good · MOBI 5"

ARMOR. Heavy Plate (AR 3, -1 MOBI).

BREACH. One action. Auto-destroy a door or barricade, or place a demo charge (TACT 4+, 3" blast, frag effect).

LOADOUT. Shotgun (12", +1 within 6"), sidearm (12"), frag ×1, breaching charges ×2.

PERFORMANCE. Open a route an ally uses next activation. Earn 1 Edge.

MEDIC

FIELD STABILIZATION · 90 PTS

SHOOT Bad · FIGHT Bad · TACT Ord · OPINT Good · GUTS Good · MOBI 6"

ARMOR. Light Vest (AR 1).

TRIAGE. One action. Adjacent. Field Dress: remove 1 FW, no roll. Stabilize: OPINT roll. Natural 6 removes an MW. 4–5 converts an MW to an FW. 1–3 has no effect.

LOADOUT. Sidearm (12"), medical kit, smoke ×2.

PERFORMANCE. Successfully Stabilize an MW. Earn 1 Edge.

TECH SPECIALIST

HACKING & ELECTRONIC OVERRIDE · 100 PTS

SHOOT Bad · FIGHT Bad · TACT Ord · OPINT Good · GUTS Ord · MOBI 6"

ARMOR. Light Vest (AR 1).

OVERRIDE. One action. Adjacent. OPINT 4+. Hack or disable electronic systems. Adjacent is auto-success.

LOADOUT. Sidearm (12"), hacking kit, smoke ×1, recon drone (8" range, LoS, 1 action to deploy).

PERFORMANCE. Override changes the tactical situation. Earn 1 Edge.

04/

SQUAD CREATION AND THE SPLICE

The splice is the unit. State doctrine fires from a square. The splice answers from a triangle.

04 · SQUAD CREATION AND THE SPLICE

The splice is the unit. State doctrine fires from a square. The splice answers from a triangle.

We're not yours. We're not anyone's. We showed up for the contract, and we'll leave when it's done.

THE SPLICE IS THE UNIT

In Operator Tactics, the player unit is a splice. Not a squad. Not a team. Not a crew. A splice: three to six freelance operators assembled under a single contract, mixed in composition and answerable to no flag. The word describes independence from state doctrine. It does not describe headcount, and it does not describe lineage.

“Splice” started as contempt. State militaries used it for mixed-lineage units whose gene-forged heritage didn’t match, whose genomic loyalty couldn’t be verified, whose flag was whoever was paying this week. A Kavast pack commander calling a freelance unit a splice meant: you took operators who were purpose-bred for cohesion and stitched in foreign material. Freelance operators took the word back. It took about fifteen years. By the time a contractor says “my splice,” the contempt has been replaced by something closer to professional identity.

The word still lands hard in some mouths. Most operators wear it clean.

SPLICE VS. STATE DOCTRINE

Nation-state forces are mono-type by design. Kavast fields wolf-lineage cohorts in pack formations. The Protectorate fields raven-lineage flights, a networked sensory array with weapons. The Eastern Compact fields bear-lineage formations built to absorb damage and keep advancing. When the splice fights a state force, the table tells the story before anyone speaks: a wolf, a raven, and two baselines on one contract against an enemy that shares a single augmented baseline.

This contrast is load-bearing. Enemy splices do not exist by default. When the players face a state force, that force is mono-type. When an NPC unit breaks the pattern — an embedded raven-lineage operator inside a Kavast pack, for example — it means something.

BUILDING A SPLICE FOR SKIRMISH

1. **Budget.** 400 points (Standard). Other formats: 300 pts Small, 500 pts Large.
2. **Operators.** Minimum three, maximum six.
3. **Class limit.** No more than two of any single class.
4. **Loadouts.** Fixed per class at Skirmish scale. Swaps are handled by the optional Extended Loadouts module (see below).
5. **Simultaneous build.** Both players see the scenario first, then build at the same time without showing their lists.
6. **Name the splice.** Callsigns, unit tag, a patch, a paint scheme. The splice is a character, not an accessory.

AUGMENTS & GENE-FORGED LINEAGES

Full gene-forged augment rules — Shark, Wolf, Lynx, Bear, Coyote, Rook, and the baseline package — live in the Operator Tactics Core Book. Skirmish does not require augments to play. At this scale, a Commando is a Commando; the lineage is in the paint job, the callsign, and the story the splice tells about itself.

When you bring the Core Book augment rules in, treat the lineage as flavor plus one class-compatible modifier (Core Book, Gene-Forged). The splice rules are about composition, not mandatory mechanical coupling: a splice can be all baselines, all gene-forged, or any mix.

ADVANCED MODULES (OPTIONAL)

Both players agree before squad building. Modules combine.

- **Specializations.** +10 points per operator. Choose one specialization from the class list (see Core Book).
- **Extended Loadouts.** Budget 420 points. Minimum four operators. Swap weapons, armor, or gear for class-legal items; pay the point difference.
- **Battlefield Evolution (League only).** An operator who survives a trigger event earns one permanent ability. Maximum one per operator.
- **Hostile Environment.** Start of each round, both players roll on the Hazard table. Weather shifts, terrain collapses, fires spread.

KITBASH NOTES

Skirmish does not require a specific miniature line. A splice can be painted state-military surplus, bootleg 3D prints, resprayed plastic army men, metal heroics minis from a different game entirely, or tokens. What matters is that your operators are distinguishable from your opponent's at a glance, and that each operator has a recognizable silhouette. A splice looks like a splice: no two operators painted identically, no matching helmets, no shared faction heraldry. The unit is a statement of independence. Paint it like one.

That physical remix is part of the fiction now. The same way the source material had to be constrained from fragments into a playable model, a splice is assembled from partial signals until it becomes something you can test under pressure.

THE DEAD SHELF PATH

There are two ways into Operator Tactics as a physical game. The parts-bin path starts with raw material — sprues, clippers, 40k piles of shame, military model kits, Dollar Tree dinosaurs — and builds up. The **Dead Shelf path** starts with a complete figure that already exists: pulled from a blind box, found at a thrift store, salvaged from your own shelf when the initial excitement wore off. You don't build the figure. You re-context it. You give it a card. You give it a name. You put it in a splice.

Designer vinyl figures — Pop Mart blind boxes, Quiccs TEQ63s, Kidrobot customs, 52Toys Beast-Mechs, the full range of chibi and near-future collectibles — are **Commercial Stock** in both senses of the phrase. In the OT world, Commercial Stock gene-forged were built for entertainment and luxury markets and ended up on the battlefield when the Upheaval reorganized everything. In yours, the figure was built for a collector shelf and is now on the table. The in-world explanation was written before the game existed. No conversion required.

A Pop Mart Skullpanda on your roster is a commercial stock operative with a stealth profile and a history nobody asked about. A Labubu is a commercial stock berserker who was delighted before the first shot and will be delighted after the last. A Quiccs TEQ63 is a heavy operative with a load-bearing silhouette and a deniable origin. Assign the card. Name the operator. Field them.

The figures already in the world are the correct figures. Two decades of blind-box collector culture means the supply chain is the existing waste stream of consumer culture — and that stream stocks thrift store bins in every mid-sized city. You don't have to wait for a kit. The material is already there. This is not a concession. It's what the game is about. If the archive is a simplified interface for a larger pattern, the table is where that interface becomes physical.

COLLECTOR CROSSOVER

If you already own Pop Mart or designer vinyl figures, you already have a splice. The rarity system maps cleanly: standard figures are line operators, secret variants are specialists, mega formats are command-tier heavies, and chase variants are high-value targets — the operators everybody's heard of. For full guidance on faction marking, modification techniques, and vinyl-scale terrain, see the [Commercial Stock document](#).

05/

SCENARIOS

Six missions. Three twists. Pick once. Play it. Argue about it later.

05 - SCENARIOS

Six missions. Three twists. Pick once. Play it. Argue about it later.

Roll D6 or choose. Eight rounds unless a scenario states otherwise. **Scenario VP overrides universal VP** where they differ.

PRESSURE CLOCK

Every scenario runs a **Pressure Clock** with a threshold of 3. The Clock gains one token when:

- The first operator on either side goes Out of Action.
- Operators from opposing splices are simultaneously within 3" of the same objective.
- An operator fails a Contact Ceiling check.

When the Pressure Clock hits 3 tokens, trigger the scenario's Climax Variable immediately. The Clock fires once per game. If Round 5 ends without the Clock reaching 3, roll the Climax Variable automatically.

The Pressure Clock replaces the individual trigger listed under each scenario's Climax Variable. Both players track it openly.

1. CROSSFIRE

Setup. Three objectives on the centerline, evenly spaced. Opposing edges, 6" deep.

Objective. Control objectives (operator within 3", opponent does not). Check on Rounds 4, 6, and 8.

VP. +1 per objective per check (max 9). +1 per enemy OoA.

Climax Variable. When any operator controls an objective at the Round 4 check, roll D6.

2. SMASH & GRAB

Setup. One objective at the board center. Opposing edges, 6" deep.

Objective. Interact (TACT 4+). Carry it. Extract to your deployment zone. The carrier takes -2 MOBI and cannot Sprint.

VP. +5 for extraction. +1 per enemy OoA. No extraction by Round 8: the carrier's player wins.

Climax Variable. When any operator interacts with the objective, roll D6.

3. BLACK SITE

Format. Asymmetric. Play twice, swap roles, compare scores.

Setup. Defender within 12" of center. Attacker from any edge.

Attacker. Reach center. Two Interact checks (OPINT 4+). Extract off any edge.

Defender. Prevent extraction. Stall until Round 8.

VP. Attacker: +1 per Interact, +3 extraction, +1 per enemy OoA. Defender: +3 if extraction prevented, +1 per attacker OoA.

Climax Variable. When the attacker completes the first Interact, roll D6.

4. HIGH VALUE TARGET

Setup. One HVT at the board center. Opposing edges, 6" deep.

Objective. Make contact (adjacent, TACT 4+). The HVT follows at half MOBI. Extract off your edge.

HVT Panic. When an escort takes an MW, SITREP. 4-6 stays. 3 freezes. 1-2 bolts D6" in a random direction.

VP. +5 extraction. +2 for controlling the HVT at end. +1 per enemy OoA.

Climax Variable. When any operator contacts the HVT, roll D6.

5. DEAD DROP

Setup. Corner deployment, 8". Each player secretly notes an objective location in the opponent's half, 6"+ from any edge.

Objective. Reach your drop. Interact (OPINT 4+). Extract off any edge.

Intel. Call the Target on a 6" area reveals a hidden objective. SITREP, even odds. Costs both actions.

VP. +5 for drop + extraction. +2 for discovering the enemy objective. +1 per enemy OoA.

Climax Variable. When any operator completes their drop, roll D6.

6. TOTAL WAR

Setup. No objectives. Opposing edges, 6" deep.

Objective. Destroy the opposing splice.

VP. +2 per enemy OoA. Full elimination ends the game immediately. Otherwise, highest VP at Round 8.

Climax Variable. When the first operator on either side goes OoA, roll D6.

TWISTS (OPTIONAL)

Roll D6 after scenario selection. Both players must agree to use Twists before the roll. A Twist overlays the chosen scenario — it changes conditions but not victory math.

VICTORY & SCORING

Scenario VP overrides universal VP. **Tiebreakers, in order:**

1. Most surviving operators.
2. Fewest total MW on survivors.
3. Most Priority wins during the game.
4. Each player rolls D6. High wins.

LEAGUE PLAY

Run a 4–6 match series. Persistent splices. Cumulative VP wins the league. Between matches, the splice evolves — operators advance, wounds leave marks, and the post-match economy determines who fields an edge next game.

BETWEEN-MATCH SEQUENCE

Resolve in this order after each match.

1 • Wound Recovery. All FW clear automatically. Each MW: roll D6. 4+ to clear (3+ if a Medic is on the roster). Cleared MWs leave no trace. Failed MWs persist into the next match.

Contract Scar. When an operator fails a MW recovery roll, roll D6 on the Contract Scar table and apply the result. A second failed MW recovery on the same operator removes them from the league entirely.

Contract Scars

D6	SCAR	EFFECT
1	Burned Out	Lose one step on one attribute of your choice (Good → Ordinary, Ordinary → Bad).
2	War Wound	Start each subsequent match with 1 FW already applied.
3	Shaky Hands	-1 on all Shoot rolls for the remainder of the league.
4	Marked	Solo mode: enemy AI always targets this operator first if in LoS. Versus play: both players know the scar exists.
5	Running Ghost	No MP earned this match. No other effect.
6	Hardened	Upgrade GUTS one step (Ordinary → Good). Already Good: no change, but the scar counts as cleared.

2 • Milestone Points. Each surviving operator earns 1 MP. +1 MP if their splice won the match.

Advance. Spend 3 MP to upgrade one attribute one step. Maximum two advances per operator per league. No attribute may exceed Good.

3 • Field Pull. After each match, each surviving operator rolls D6. On a 5–6, the splice earns 1 Pull Token. The winning splice earns +1 Pull Token regardless of individual rolls. Spend Pull Tokens between matches or at the start of a match before deployment.

Pull Token Costs

COST	RESULT
1 Pull	Add one consumable to the splice (smoke, breach charge, or stim — agree with your opponent on specifics).
2 Pull	Grant 1 MP to any one operator.
3 Pull	Recruit one Blank at half MP cost (minimum 1 MP).

4 • Earning the Callsign. Unnamed operators are **Blanks**. Track **Performance** for each: first blood, putting an opponent Out of Action, surviving a Mortal Wound hit, or contesting an objective solo for a full round. Each of these counts as one Performance event. One Performance per Blank per match maximum.

After 2 Performance events across 2 different matches, the Blank earns a **Call-sign**. Name them. They are now a named operator. On earning the Callsign, roll D6 on the Callsign Trait table immediately.

Callsign Traits

D6	TRAIT	EFFECT
1-2	Baseline	No trait. The job is enough.
3	Carries the Line	When this operator passes a Contact Ceiling check, one adjacent friendly operator auto-passes.
4	Cold Breach	Once per match, this operator may spend 0 Edge Tokens to clear all Breach Tokens on them (instead of 1).
5	Field Drift	This operator’s first activation each match: +1" to all movement.
6	Last Signal	When this operator goes Out of Action, each friendly operator within 6" auto-passes their next roll (one roll each, applied before the end of the match).

5 • Replace & Catch-Up. An operator with 2 MW who fails recovery: roll D6. 1–2: KIA. Remove them from the roster and recruit a Blank replacement at base cost. 3–6: recovers. Starts the next match with 1 MW and any applicable Contract Scar.

Catch-Up. A splice that lost 2 or more operators in a single match recruits one Blank for free before the next match. Roll D3: 1 = that Blank starts with 1 MP already earned; 2 = that Blank carries one consumable; 3 = that Blank counts as having one Performance event toward their Callsign.

6 • Requisition. After each match, the winning splice rolls D6 on the Requisition table.

Requisition

D6	RESULT
1	Dry. Nothing moves today. No result.
2	Consumables. Add one consumable to the splice (smoke, breach charge, or stim).
3	Double Pull. The splice earns 2 Pull Tokens.
4	Kit Upgrade. Improve one weapon on any operator: increase its range by 2" or improve its Shoot result by one step on one outcome. Agree the specifics with your opponent.
5	Signal Cache. Add 1 MP to any two operators (may be the same operator twice).
6	Windfall. Choose any two results from this table.

06/

TERRAIN AND SETUP

Cover, footprint, line of sight. The board decides as much as the dice do.

06 · TERRAIN AND SETUP

Cover, footprint, line of sight. The board decides as much as the dice do.

Shape the board together. Fight over what you've built.

BOARD SIZE

- **Standard / Small.** 24" × 24".
- **Large.** 36" × 36".

VINYL SCALE

Playing with designer vinyl figures, blind-box collectibles, or any model larger than 40mm? The rules do not change — the board scales. All distances and ranges stay in inches as written. What adjusts is the playing surface.

- **Standard / Small (Vinyl Scale).** 36" × 24".
- **Large (Vinyl Scale).** 48" × 36".

These figures play as **Commercial Stock** in the OT setting — gene-forged built for entertainment and luxury markets that ended up on the battlefield when the world went sideways. The physical objects and the in-world category are the same thing. No adaptation required.

SETUP PROCEDURE

1. Roll the Terrain Profile. Agree on the piece count.
2. Alternate placing pieces. No piece within 4" of a deployment edge. Minimum 3" between pieces. At least one LoS-blocking piece on the centerline.
3. The last placer does not choose the deployment zone.
4. Place objectives per the scenario. Then deploy operators.

TERRAIN TYPES

TYPE	EFFECT
Open Ground	No cover. No cost.
Light Cover	Low walls, foliage. Shoot -1.
Heavy Cover	Reinforced barriers. Shoot -2. Difficult terrain.
Full Cover	Blocks LoS. Cannot be targeted.
Impassable	Cannot enter. Breach creates an opening.
Elevation	See over low obstacles.

LINE OF SIGHT

Measured center of base to center of base. For base-less figures, measure from the center of the model's footprint. If solid terrain breaks the line, no LoS. When the call is disputed, run a SITREP at even odds. Move on.

DEPLOYMENT ZONES

- **Standard.** 6" from your board edge.
- **Corners (Dead Drop).** 8" from the corner in both directions.
- **Infiltrator Exception.** Anywhere on the board, in cover, outside 12" of any enemy. Deploys last.

06A/

VERTICAL PRESSURE (OPTIONAL)

Hold the high ground. Fight for the hard ground. Stay off the skyline.

06A · VERTICAL PRESSURE (OPTIONAL)

Hold the high ground. Fight for the hard ground. Stay off the skyline.

Three optional rules for tables that want terrain to bite. Add any one, or all three. None of them touch the dice core — they change where the fight happens and what a piece of ground is worth. Agree on which are live before you place terrain.

All three reward the same instinct: stop treating the board as a flat plane with scenery on it. The roof is worth climbing. The reinforced wall is worth hiding behind until the last second. The objective is the building, not the chalk circle next to it.

HARDPOINTS

An open-ground objective is a token sitting in the dirt. A **Hardpoint** is an objective placed on a terrain piece — a Heavy Cover barricade, a Full Cover structure, an Elevation platform. Use Hardpoints in place of open-ground objective tokens in any scenario that calls for objectives.

- **Place it on the piece.** When a scenario sets an objective, set it on a terrain feature instead of bare ground. That feature is the Hardpoint.
- **Control.** An operator controls a Hardpoint while its base touches the piece (or sits inside it) and no enemy operator is in contact with the same piece. The cover you want and the ground you score are now the same ground.
- **Contested.** Operators from both sides touching the piece: nobody controls it.
- **Taking Ground.** Win a Fight in contact with a Hardpoint and you hold it. The operator you beat no longer contests the piece — a defeated operator may still be Locked against you, but a man losing the hand-to-hand is not holding the position.
- **Shaken don't hold.** An operator that failed its Contact Ceiling check this round does not count toward controlling a Hardpoint. A splice past its breaking point can still shoot off the position. It cannot plant a flag on it.

WHY HARDPOINTS

Open-ground objectives drag operators onto the killing floor and punish them for scoring. Hardpoints fold the safest ground and the scoring ground into one piece, so the whole match compresses onto two or three terrain features. Expect closer, uglier fights over less of the board.

CONCEALMENT

An operator in **Heavy Cover** that did not Shoot on its last activation is **Concealed**. Beyond 12", enemies cannot draw a target on it — they see the cover, not the body inside it. A Concealed operator can only be targeted by Shoot from within 12".

- **Inside 12"**. Concealment does nothing. The operator is targeted as normal, at the usual Heavy Cover penalty (Shoot -2).
- **Breaks when** the operator Shoots, Sprints, or leaves its cover. Once broken, it can be targeted normally until the start of its next activation. Going loud gives the position away.
- **High ground beats it**. An operator is not Concealed against an enemy shooting down from higher ground with line of sight to it. You cannot hide in a doorway from a rifle on the roof.

Concealment is not Stealth. Stealth — the Hide action, or the Infiltrator's Ghost — makes an operator untargetable at any range and earns its protection with a roll. Concealment is free, comes from the terrain, and only hides you past 12". An operator can have both: one that loses Stealth while sitting in Heavy Cover is still Concealed at range.

THE DECISION CONCEALMENT BUYS

Hold fire and stay invisible past 12", or take the shot and light up. That trade is the entire point of the rule. It slows the alpha strike, rewards patience, and turns a Marksman in a far ruin into a problem you have to walk toward. If first blood comes too slow for your table, widen the band to 18". If it comes too fast, that is the rule working.

HIGH GROUND

Elevation already lets an operator see over low obstacles. With this rule it does more. An operator shooting from an Elevation piece — or any level higher than its target — **downgrades the target's cover by one step**: Heavy Cover counts as Light, Light Cover counts as none. Height beats the wall they are crouched behind.

- **One step only.** Heavy → Light (Shoot -1 instead of -2). Light → Open (no penalty). Full Cover still blocks line of sight — you cannot shoot what you cannot see, however high you stand.
- **Pay for the height.** Climbing costs 2" of movement per 1" of vertical (ladders and stairs 1:1). The roof is worth taking. It is not free to take.
- **The skyline cuts both ways.** An operator on Elevation is rarely in cover itself and is visible to everything with a line to the rooftop. High ground wins the firefight and loses the ambush.

RUNNING ALL THREE

The three rules are built to interlock. The Hardpoint everyone wants is usually the elevated one. The operator holding it from inside Heavy Cover is Concealed until the moment he fires. The enemy's answer is to put a shooter higher still, where High Ground strips the cover and the concealment together. Terrain stops being decoration and becomes the whole argument.

If you only add one, add **Concealment** — it changes the most decisions per game for the least new text. Add **Hardpoints** when your group keeps castling in a corner and ignoring the board. Add **High Ground** when you have terrain with real verticality and want it to earn its place on the table.

VERTICAL PRESSURE — QUICK REFERENCE

- **Hardpoint.** Objective sits on a terrain piece. Control it by touching the piece with no enemy in contact. Win a Fight on it to hold it. Shaken operators (failed Contact Ceiling) don't count.
- **Concealed.** In Heavy Cover and didn't Shoot last activation → cannot be targeted beyond 12". Breaks on Shoot, Sprint, or leaving cover. Higher ground ignores it.
- **High Ground.** Shooting down from Elevation downgrades the target's cover one step. Heavy → Light, Light → none. Full Cover still blocks LoS.

07/

SCENARIO MAPS

Six tabletops. Six fights. Each one shaped to break a different kind of plan.

07 · SCENARIO MAPS

Six tabletops. Six fights. Each one shaped to break a different kind of plan.

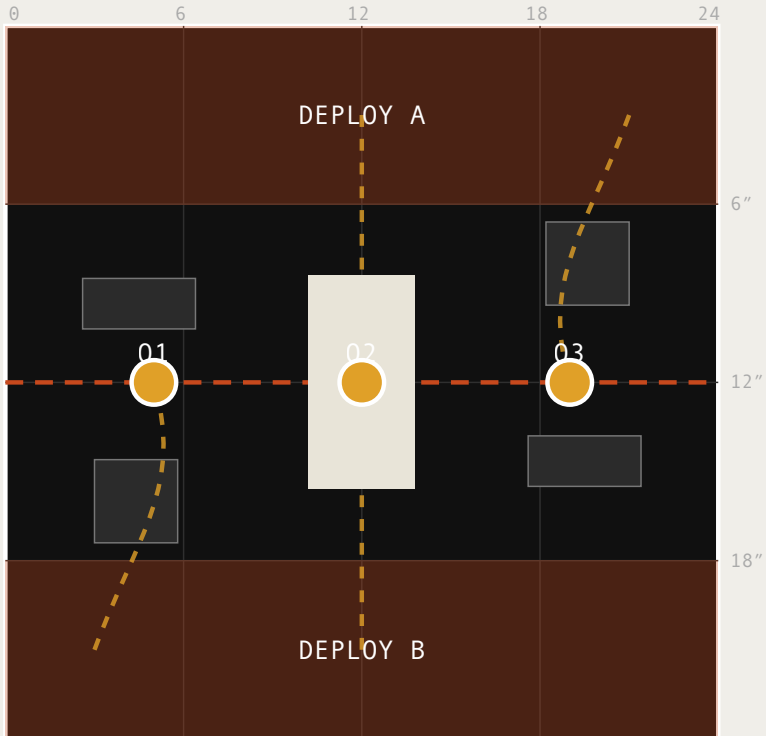
Use these as printed setup templates for standard 24" × 24" Skirmish boards. They are not fixed locations. They are pressure diagrams: objective geometry, deployment, cover rhythm, and the lanes each scenario needs to work.

How to read them. Orange zones are deployment. Cyan marks scenario objectives. White blocks are full cover or impassable terrain. Dark blocks are light or heavy cover. Dashed lines show high-pressure movement lanes, not mandatory paths. Keep at least one LoS-blocking piece near the centerline unless the map says otherwise.

■ Deployment ■ Objective ■ Cover □ LoS block ■ Risk zone

CROSSFIRE · THREE-NODE KILL GRID

THREE OBJECTIVES ON THE CENTERLINE · OPPOSING EDGES, 6" DEEP



Template job: force both teams to choose between sa

TERRAIN INTENT

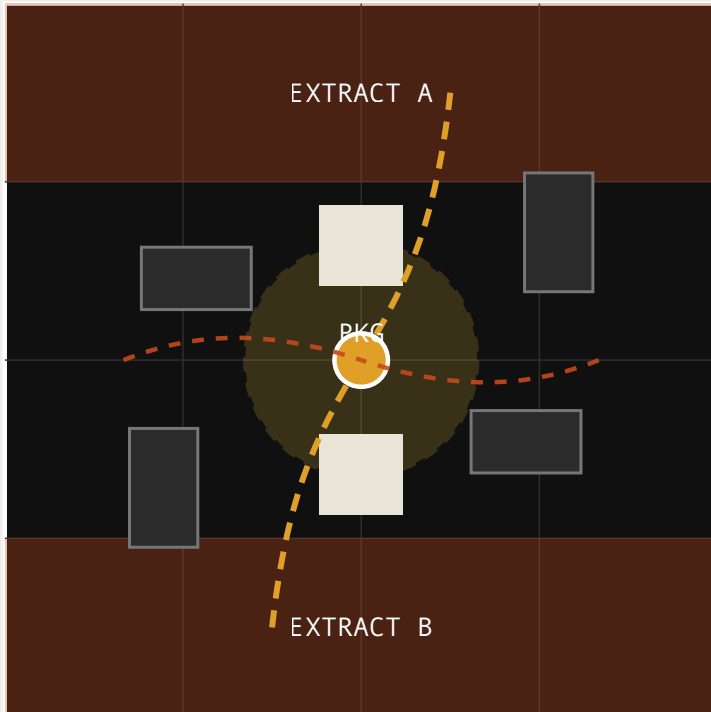
- Center block splits long LoS and makes the middle objective a close-range problem.
- Side cover supports flanks without letting either side castle all three objectives.

TABLE NOTES

- Score on Rounds 4, 6, and 8.
- Pressure Clock spikes when opposing operators contest the same marker.

SMASH & GRAB · CENTRAL PACKAGE RUN

ONE OBJECTIVE AT BOARD CENTER · CARRIER TAKES -2 MOBI AND CANNOT SPRINT



Template job: make the pickup easy, then make carry

TERRAIN INTENT

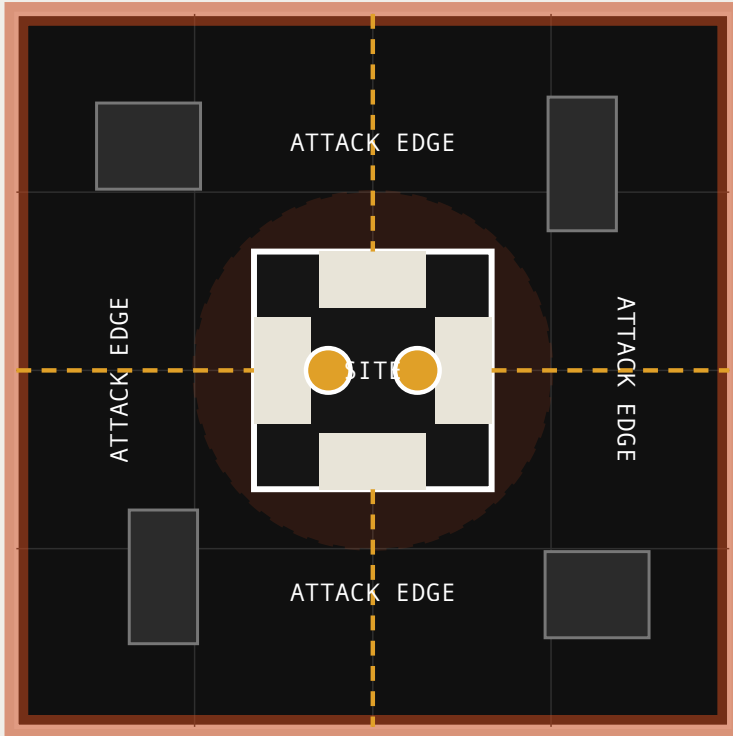
- Two center blocks prevent a clean firing lane into the package.
- Side lanes create interception angles against a slowed carrier.

TABLE NOTES

- Interact with the package at TACT 4+.
- If nobody extracts by Round 8, the carrier's player wins.

BLACK SITE · RING BREACH

DEFENDER WITHIN 12" OF CENTER · ATTACKER ENTERS FROM ANY EDGE



Template job: defender owns the room; attacker owns

TERRAIN INTENT

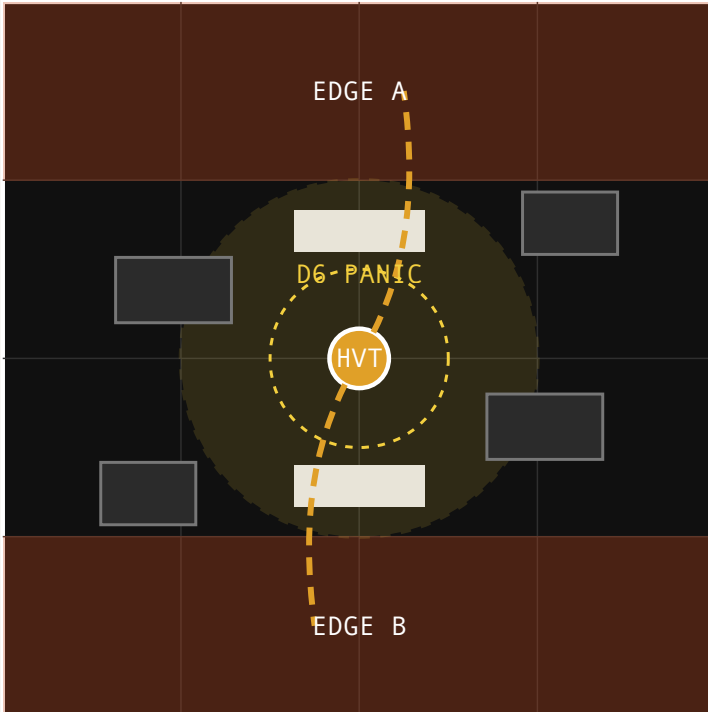
- The central structure needs four readable approaches and two interact points.
- Outer cover gives the attacker staging spots without guaranteeing extraction.

TABLE NOTES

- Attacker needs two OPINT 4+ Interacts, then exits any edge.
- Play twice, swap roles, compare scores.

HIGH VALUE TARGET · PANIC BOX

HVT AT BOARD CENTER · CONTACT, ESCORT, EXTRACT OFF YOUR EDGE



Template job: the center is negotiable until somebo

TERRAIN INTENT

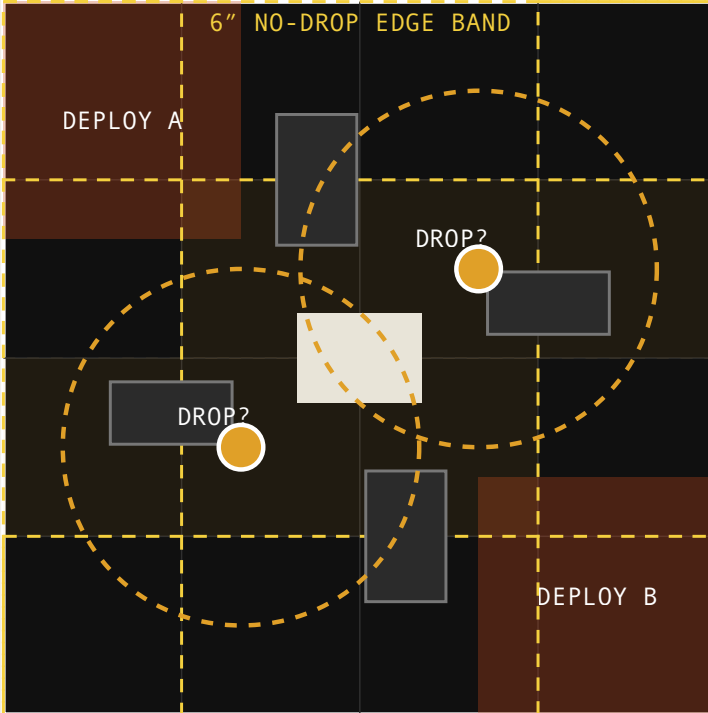
- Keep hard cover near the escort routes, not directly on the HVT.
- The panic rings make bolt movement easy to measure under pressure.

TABLE NOTES

- Contact requires adjacency and TACT 4+.
- When an escort takes an MW, roll HVT Panic immediately.

DEAD DROP · BLIND CORNERS

CORNER DEPLOYMENT, 8" · HIDDEN DROP IN OPPONENT'S HALF, 6"+ FROM ANY EDGE



Template job: secret placement matters, but the leg

TERRAIN INTENT

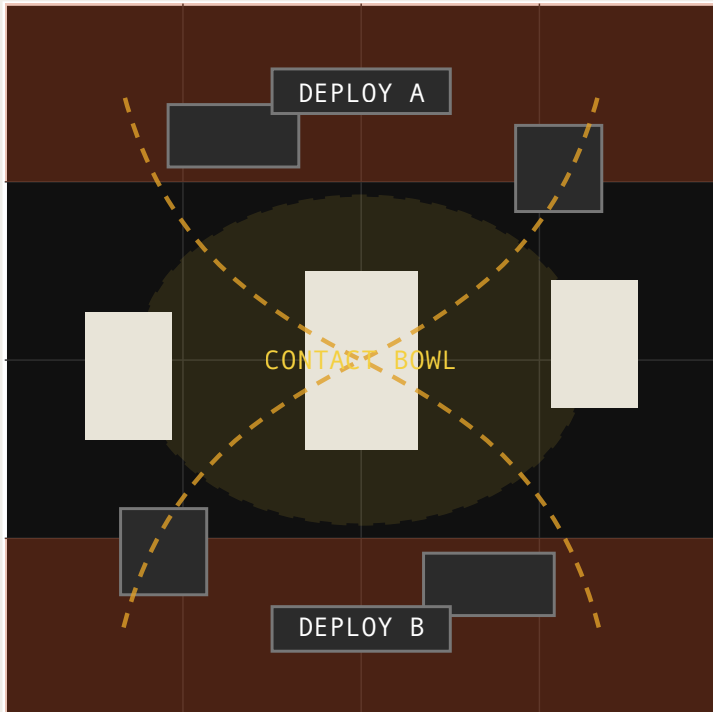
- Central full cover denies a single perfect reveal from either corner.
- Hidden drops should sit in the opponent's half outside the yellow edge band.

TABLE NOTES

- Call the Target reveals a hidden objective in a 6" area.
- Completing the drop plus extraction is worth 5 VP.

TOTAL WAR · CONTACT BOWL

NO OBJECTIVES · OPPOSING EDGES, 6" DEEP · FULL ELIMINATION ENDS THE GAME



Template job: give the elimination scenario angles.

TERRAIN INTENT

- Use more full cover than usual so the match is about closing, not pure range.
- Keep the center hostile but traversable; no objective means contact must be attractive.

TABLE NOTES

- Score +2 VP per enemy OoA.
- The first OoA will usually fire the scenario's Climax Variable.

08/

SOLO MODE

Your splice against the protocol. The opposing force runs on rules, not a face.

08 · SOLO MODE

Your splice against the protocol. The opposing force runs on rules, not a face.

Your splice against the protocol.

Same scenarios. Same rules. The opposing force runs on Enemy AI.

ENEMY FORCE

Build to match your splice's points. For a harder game, scale the opposing force to 110–120% of your own.

ALERT STATES

- **Unaware.** Normal patrol. The enemy does not engage.
- **Suspicious.** SITREP at the start of each round. 5–6 = escalate to Alert. 4 = Alert, no reinforcements. 3 = remain Suspicious; reinforcements arrive in two rounds. 1–2 = remain Suspicious.
- **Alert.** Active combat. Use Target Priority and Action Priority below.

Triggers (Unaware → Suspicious). Gunfire within 12". A failed Hide. A body is found. An enemy within 6" rolls 5+.

TARGET PRIORITY (ALERT)

1. The operator who most recently attacked this enemy.
2. Closest operator in LoS.
3. Most wounded operator in LoS.
4. Operator nearest to the scenario objective.
5. Tie: D6. Odd = left, even = right.

ACTION PRIORITY (ALERT)

1. React if targeted by Shoot.
2. Fight if in contact (base-to-base or within 1").
3. Shoot if a target is in LoS.
4. Advance toward the last known position.
5. Hold if assigned to a fixed post.

09/

QUICK REFERENCE

One spread. The whole game. Keep it open at the table.

TURN SEQUENCE

Priority. Both roll D6. High chooses. Loser's first operator gets 1 action.

Activation. Alternate. 2 actions each.

End Phase. Objectives, conditions, smoke.

RESOLUTION

D6 + modifiers vs. threshold.

Good = 2+. Ordinary = 4+. Bad = 5+.

Natural 6 = success. Natural 1 = fail.

WOUND TRACK

1–2 FW: no penalty.

3 FW: –1 all.

4th FW = 1 MW (clears FW).

1 MW: –1 all, 1 action.

2 MW: –2 all, 1 action.

Next hit at 2 MW = OoA.

REACTIONS

Return Fire / Take Cover (2", apply cover) / Duck Down (prone, –2 incoming) / Body Shield (take hit for ally).

One per round. Costs 1 action next turn.

EDGE

Start with 2. Earn from Call the Target or class Performance. Max 4.

Spend: reroll, +1 after rolling, or clear all Breach Tokens on a friendly.

SITREP

Unlikely = 2D6 low. Even = 1D6. Likely = 2D6 high.

1 = No, worse. 2 = No. 3 = No, opening. 4 = Yes, cost. 5 = Yes. 6 = Yes, and...

HEAVY PLATE

AR 3, –1 MOBI, threshold 7+.

Nat 6 shoot = 2 FW.

Nat 6 melee armor check = MW.

Anti-Armor melee treats AR as 2.

GRENADES

TACT 4+. 3" blast. Ignores cover.

Hit = FW to all in blast.

Nat 6 = MW to named target, FW to others.

Nat 1 = scatter toward thrower.

GHOST (INFILTRATOR)

Breaks on: hit, fight, failed TACT in LoS, open ground within 6" of enemy, **interact with objective.**

Silenced shoots never break Ghost.

BREACH TOKENS

On each FW taken: opposing player places 1 Breach Token on that operator. Max 3.

Spend before a roll: force reroll (take worse), or escalate next hit FW → MW.

Cleared on OoA. Friendly controller may spend 1 Edge to clear all.

CONTACT CEILING

Triggers once when splice hits 50% OoA (round down).

Each survivor: roll GUTS at next activation. Fail = defensive actions only (Shoot from cover or move toward deployment edge). Pass = normal.

Spend 1 Edge to auto-pass.

LINK-UP

Once per round: instead of a normal activation, activate 2 friendly operators. Each gets 1 action (not 2). Actions may interleave freely.

Cannot use if either operator is Pinned, Locked, or OoA.

PRESSURE CLOCK

Threshold: 3 tokens. Clock gains 1 when: first OoA of match, objective contested, or Contact Ceiling fails.

At 3 tokens: trigger Climax Variable immediately. Fires once. If Round 5 ends without 3 tokens: auto-trigger.

10/

WHAT IRON LINE IS

The fight that happens before the operators arrive. Drones, walkers, gun platforms. Same dice. Bigger scale.

10 · WHAT IRON LINE IS

The fight that happens before the operators arrive. Drones, walkers, gun platforms. Same dice. Bigger scale.

Kitbash your army. Burn their signal. Hold the line.

Iron Line is a wargame of massed autonomous combat set in the Operator Tactics world. Two players build armies of drones, combat platforms, and walkers, and crash them across a scarred 3' × 3' battlefield. Games run fast and bloody, finishing in under ninety minutes. Same D6 as Skirmish, same natural 6 / natural 1 rules. The abstraction is one step up: units instead of individuals, Strain instead of wounds, Signal instead of campaign Heat.

Where gene-forged operators are scalpels, autonomous platforms are hammers. Every major power fields autonomous combat systems at scale. When two factions contest a water treatment plant, a Lumicite installation, or a stretch of arable coastline, the machines go first. Iron Line is the machine war — the opening salvo that decides whether the operators get to do their work at all.

SCALE AND TABLE

- **Standard scale.** 1" on the table ≈ 3 m of ground. Any miniature, action figure, toy, vinyl collectible, or 3D print fits. Iron Line's footprint system governs physical placement; exact figure scale is flexible.
- **Standard table.** 3' × 3' (36" × 36"). A kitchen table, a card table, a sheet of plywood on sawhorses.
- **Large games.** 4' × 4' for 4,000+ points or three players.
- **Quick games.** 2' × 2' for <1,500 points.

VINYL-SCALE IRON LINE

Designer vinyl figures map naturally to Iron Line's unit hierarchy by physical size. Mini-series figures (under 5cm) represent Scout Swarms and Drone Infantry. Standard blind-box figures (7–9cm) represent Strike Vehicles and Assault Walkers. Large and Mega-series figures (15cm+) are Siege Walkers and heavy platforms. The physical tiering the collector market built is the unit tiering the game needs. Use the 3' × 3' standard table regardless of figure scale — Iron Line's footprint constraints handle the rest.

WHAT YOU NEED

ITEM	QUANTITY	NOTES
Six-sided dice (D6)	12–16 per player	More is faster. Borrow from board games.
Tape measure	1 per table	Inches. Retractable hardware-store tape works best.
Strain tokens	30–40 total	Small dice, glass beads, pennies, micro-cubes.
Signal tokens	20 total	Distinct from Strain. Different color beads or coins.
Playing cards (optional)	1 standard deck	52 + 2 jokers. For the Interrupt Cards module.
Army	1 per player	Miniatures, tokens, standees, or kitbashed models.
Terrain	6–10 pieces	Cardboard, household scrap, printed terrain, or commercial.

11/

KITBASH DOCTRINE

Build it from anything. Identify it on sight. The Rule of Scrap governs the table.

11 · KITBASH DOCTRINE

Build it from anything. Identify it on sight. The Rule of Scrap governs the table.

The machine doesn't care what it looks like. Neither does the bullet.

Iron Line is built to be played with whatever you have. There is no official miniature line. There are no required components beyond dice, a tape measure, and something to represent your units on the table. The rest is up to you.

WHAT COUNTS AS A UNIT

Anything with a rectangular footprint that fits the size constraints in the Unit Footprint table. A unit might be a movement tray of ten 15mm sci-fi infantry, a single repainted mecha model kit on a 60mm base, three die-cast toy cars glued to cardboard with a pen-cap turret, a 3D print from a free STL site, or a stack of poker chips labeled “DRONE INFANTRY” on masking tape. All valid. The rules do not care about the model. They care about the footprint and the keywords.

BUILDING UNITS FROM SCRATCH

- **Drone Infantry / Skirmishers.** Cheap plastic army men, toy soldiers from a bag of 100, wooden tokens. Anything that says “there are a lot of us and we are expendable.”
- **Assault Walkers.** Bipedal mecha model kits, dollar-store robot toys with glued joints, a clothespin with toothpick arms and a bead head.
- **Siege Walkers.** The big stuff — a thrift-store convertible robot toy, a jar lid on dowel legs, a kids’-meal toy with a gun turret glued on top. If it’s the biggest thing on the table, it’s a Siege Walker.
- **Scout Swarms.** Beads on wire flight stands, paper drones, micro-scale helicopter toys. A cloud, not a single model.
- **Strike Vehicles.** Die-cast toy cars, dollar-store motorcycles, brick-built toy vehicles, toy tanks with guns glued on.
- **Gun Platforms / Artillery Rigs.** Stationary firepower. Cardboard box with a straw barrel. A brick-built turret. Bottle cap with a toothpick cannon.
- **Beast-Mechs.** Toy dinosaurs with guns glued on, plastic spiders, animal figurines with foil cybernetics. They should look wrong. That’s the point.

BUILDING TERRAIN

The OT world is wrecked. Every battlefield is a place where something already went wrong. Cardboard for buildings and barriers. Yogurt cups for cooling towers. Bottle caps for fuel drums. Rocks for boulders. Sand glued to card for wasteland floor. Printed papercraft PDFs for anything else. Fifteen minutes of work produces better terrain than most commercial sets.

COMMERCIAL STOCK

The thrift store bin is a legitimate army source. Designer vinyl figures — Pop Mart series, Quiccs platforms, 52Toys Beast-Mechs, Finding Unicorn editions — read directly as Iron Line unit types. The physical objects already have the right shapes. A large Siege Walker needs to look like the biggest thing on the table. A Mega Pop Mart figure is the biggest thing on the table. That's not a workaround. That's casting.

In the OT world, these figures are **Commercial Stock**: gene-forged platforms built for entertainment, luxury, and spectacle markets that ended up in war-zones when the Upheaval reorganized everything. Whatever they were designed to do before, they're doing this now. The physical object you salvaged from a clearance shelf has the same in-world history. The dual meaning is not a coincidence. It's the framing.

This is also not miniature-agnosticism. Miniature-agnostic is a rulebook accommodation — it means "we're not going to gatekeep your models." This is different. The Dead Shelf path is a first-class design principle. The TC setting is a world where consumer culture's plastic debris outlasted the civilization that produced it. A player reaching into a thrift store bin for their next unit is not doing something the game allows — they're doing something the game is about.

THE ANALOG ARGUMENT

The best armies in this game will not be the most expensive. They will be the ones somebody stayed up too late building from junk, gave a faction name, wrote a backstory for on an index card, and then watched get flattened in round three. That's the hobby. That's the whole thing.

For faction marking, vinyl modification techniques, scale guidance, and the full collector crossover framework, see the [Commercial Stock document](#).

12/

CORE CONCEPTS

Strain. Signal. Breakpoint. The same wound logic, scaled up to the machines.

12 · CORE CONCEPTS

Strain. Signal. Breakpoint. The same wound logic, scaled up to the machines.

RULES CONVENTIONS

Dice may be re-rolled multiple times. On any attack, a natural 6 is always a hit and a natural 1 is always a miss. You may measure distances and check line of sight at any time. Units are always in range and line of sight of themselves. If a specific rule conflicts with a general rule, the specific rule takes precedence.

TARGET NUMBER ♦ THRESHOLD

Iron Line calls the number a die must meet or beat a **Target Number**. Skirmish and the RPG call the same concept a **Threshold** (Good 2+, Ordinary 4+, Bad 5+). Synonymous. Iron Line derives Target Numbers from unit Order matchups, but the core rule — natural 6 always hits, natural 1 always misses — is identical.

THE RULE OF SCRAP

If a rules interaction is unclear, pick whichever option results in the most destruction for all concerned. If the choice is between doing something or doing nothing, choose the option that changes the game state.

FIRST PLAYER

The First Player holds the First Player token. The other player is the Second Player. Most phases resolve First Player first, then Second Player.

SIGNAL

The machines run on signal. Cut the signal and they're scrap with legs.

Your army's **Signal** is the strength of its command-and-control network. Spend it to broadcast Electronic Warfare, boost performance, and call in tactical support. At the start of each Signal Phase: gain 1 Signal per full 1,000 points in your starting list, plus 1 Signal per in-play unit with the Relay keyword. Store unspent Signal round to round up to a maximum of 10. Excess is lost.

BREAKPOINT AND INTEGRITY

Each army has a **Breakpoint**. Every unit starts the game with **Integrity (x)** equal to the army's breakpoint. Default breakpoint is 10 — meaning all units start with Integrity (10). Some missions and twists adjust this.

KEYWORDS

Units carry **Keywords** describing capabilities, equipment, and firmware packages. Each keyword has a Type: Strength, Weakness, Chassis, or Categorical. Types don't do anything inherently, but other rules reference them.

Incrementing keywords. Some keywords have a value: *Armored* (2), *Armored* (+1). If a unit is affected by an incrementing keyword with a plus sign, increment the existing value or assign that keyword at that value. With a minus sign, decrement. At zero or below, the unit loses the keyword.

STRAIN

Strain is what happens to a machine when everything that can break does. As units take fire, absorb impacts, and push their systems past tolerance, they accumulate **Strain Tokens**. Strain represents structural damage, overheated systems, corrupted targeting, degraded firmware. Units begin with no Strain. They may have any number.

STRAIN + WOUNDS

In Skirmish and the RPG, operators accumulate Flesh Wounds and Mortal Wounds until they go Out of Action. In Iron Line, units accumulate Strain Tokens until they reach their Integrity. Strain is to machines what Wounds are to operators. A Broken unit removed from play is equivalent to an operator going OoA. Iron Line doesn't model intermediate wound stages — damage is linear until Integrity is reached — because unit-scale play doesn't need individual-figure wound states.

BROKEN

A unit with Strain equal to or greater than its Integrity gains the **Broken** weakness for the rest of the game. A Broken unit causes cascade failure and is removed during the Scrap Phase. Cascade resolves once per phase: units that become Broken from cascade do not trigger further cascade until the next Scrap Phase. If a Broken unit ever has fewer Strain than its Integrity, it immediately loses the Broken keyword. A unit that is not Broken is operational.

D66

When the rules call for a “D66,” roll two D6. The first is the tens, the second is the units. A 3 and a 6 reads as 36. A 1 and a 1 reads as 11.

MEASURING & ENGAGEMENT

All distances in inches. **Within** = closest point of a unit’s base to the closest point of a target base or feature. A unit is within its own range of itself. Measuring and line of sight may be checked at any time, including during the opponent’s turns.

Engaged. If any part of a unit’s base (or physical footprint, for base-less models) touches or is within 1” of an enemy unit’s base or footprint, both units are Engaged. Engaged units may not make shooting attacks and may not be targeted by shooting attacks (unless the attacker has Shoot Into Combat). A unit may be engaged with multiple enemies simultaneously.

13/

UNITS

Drones move first. Walkers move heavy. Gun platforms move never. Every unit knows its place in the line.

13 · UNITS

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Armies are composed of Units. A unit might be a squadron of twelve drones on a movement tray, a pair of gun platforms on a shared base, or a single siege walker on a scenic base. Every unit has a rectangular or square footprint that fits the constraints below.

UNIT STATS VS. OPERATOR ATTRIBUTES

Iron Line units do not use SHOOT, FIGHT, TACT, OPINT, GUTS, MOBI. Instead, units have Speed, Order, Attacks, Defence, Strikes, and Integrity. This is intentional — at unit scale, operator-level granularity is unnecessary. When an operator splice appears on the Iron Line table as a single unit, see the Crossover chapter.

UNIT STATISTICS

- **Speed (x).** Movement points gained at the start of a Movement Activation.
- **Order.** How the unit moves and fights: Close, Loose, or Free.
- **Attacks.** Weapon power: Weak, Strong, or Monstrous.
- **Defence.** Resistance to incoming fire: Weak or Strong.
- **Strikes (x).** Attack dice rolled in combat. All units start with Strikes (10).
- **Integrity (x).** Strain needed to break the unit.
- **Footprint.** Physical width and depth on the table.
- **Keywords.** Additional rules affecting the unit.
- **Keyword Cost Multiplier (KCM).** Multiplier applied to keyword costs.
- **Points.** Cost when building the army.

UNIT FOOTPRINTS

FOOTPRINT	WIDTH	DEPTH	EXAMPLES
Wide	100–200mm	40–150mm	Drone swarms, gun lines
Narrow	40–100mm	40–150mm	Walkers, gun platforms
Horde	150–200mm	100–200mm	Mass drone formations

ORDER

- **Close Order.** Dense formations. Armored convoys, interlocked shield-wall drones. Target numbers: 3+ vs. Loose, 4+ vs. Close, 5+ vs. Free. Close Order units are Implacable.
- **Loose Order.** Dispersed units. Scouts, skirmishers, fast-attack swarms. Target numbers: 5+ vs. Close, 4+ vs. Loose, 3+ vs. Free. No penalty in Rough terrain.
- **Free Order.** Single platforms. Walkers, siege engines, autonomous behemoths. Target numbers: 3+ vs. Close, 5+ vs. Loose, 4+ vs. Free. Free Order units are Implacable.

UNIT ROSTER

UNIT	SPD	ORDER	ATK	DEF	STR	INT	KEYWORDS	FP	KCM	PTS
Drone Infantry	8	Close	—	—	10	10	Infantry	Wide	x1	300
Drone Skirmishers	8	Loose	Weak	—	10	10	Infantry, Ranged (24)	Wide	x1	300
Armored Infantry	8	Close	—	Strong	10	10	Infantry, Hardened (1)	Wide	x1	350
Heavy Platform	10	Close	Strong	Strong	10	10	Infantry, Autonomous	Wide	x2	400
Scout Swarm	14	Loose	—	—	10	10	Nimble, Ranged (8)	Wide	x2	350
Assault Walker	12	Close	Strong	Strong	10	10	Devastating Charge	Wide	x2	450
Strike Vehicle	10	Free	Strong	—	10	10	Fragile, Devastating Charge	Narrow	x1	350
Gun Platform	6	Free	—	—	10	10	Large, Ranged (36)	Narrow	x2	250
Siege Walker	10	Free	Monstrous	Strong	10	10	Large, Autonomous	Narrow	x2	600

UNIT	SPD	ORDER	ATK	DEF	STR	INT	KEYWORDS	FP	KCM	P
Beast-Mech	12	Loose	—	Weak	10	10	Nimble, Autonomous	Wide	x1	2
Artillery Rig	—	Free	Strong	Weak	10	10	Immobile, Ranged (48), Fragile	Narrow	x2	4

WEAPON & ARMOR ABSTRACTION

Skirmish specifies weapons (Assault Rifle, Shotgun, SMG) and armor rigs with AR values. Iron Line abstracts both. A unit's Ranged (x) represents any effective ranged weapon system at roughly x inches. Weak / Strong / Monstrous Attacks are relative firepower. Armored (+x) and Hardened (+x) are armor increments without specifying a rig. At unit scale, specific loadouts matter less than abstract firepower and durability.

UNIT FLAVOR

Drone Infantry. Cheap, numerous, expendable. The backbone of every autonomous army.

Drone Skirmishers. Fast glass. Shoot and scatter. Light ranged platforms — quad-rotor gunships, wheeled fire support, insectoid suppression swarms.

Armored Infantry. Heavier platforms. Shielded assault drones, riot-suppression units in composite plate, Ural-pattern heavy drones. Slower to break, expensive to replace.

Heavy Platform. When the ground shakes, it's usually one of these. Quad-legged weapons platforms, armored centipede-drones, PRC cybernetic war-constructs.

Scout Swarm. You hear the buzz before you see them. Then you don't see anything. Aerial drone swarms, spider-bot packs, adaptive micro-drone clusters.

Assault Walker. Legs are slower than wheels. Legs go places wheels can't. Shock assault. Close fast, hit with everything, break the line or get torn apart trying.

Strike Vehicle. Glass cannon on wheels. Armed hovercraft, rocket-sled drones, weaponized transports. Punch above their weight on the charge.

Gun Platform. It doesn't move much. It doesn't need to. Walking turrets, hover-mounted railguns, converted construction rigs with bolted-on ordnance.

Siege Walker. The ground gives before the walker does. Colossal armored walkers, mobile siege rigs, bio-mechanical titans grown in the Metroplex roots.

Beast-Mech. It used to be something alive. Now it's something fast. Bio-mechanical constructs, cybernetic animal forms, black-market predator chassis.

Artillery Rig. Somewhere behind the line, something is lobbing shells at you. Rocket batteries, electromagnetic launchers, directed-energy platforms. Artillery may only purchase the following weaknesses: Self-Destructive, Short-Ranged, Degraded, Clumsy (+2).

14/

ARMY BUILDING

Points buy capability. Capability buys behavior. Build the force the city demanded.

14 · ARMY BUILDING

Points buy capability. Capability buys behavior. Build the force the city demanded.

Nobody cares what the machine looks like. They care whether it's still shooting.

Agree on a points limit. Build your army from units and keywords. You also receive one Commander and one Relay Beacon. Standard games run 3,000–5,000 points. There are no caps on any unit type.

CREATING A UNIT

1. Choose a unit type. This sets the base cost and initial keywords.
2. Purchase additional keywords. Any number of strengths. No more than two weaknesses per unit.
3. Weakness keywords have a negative cost.
4. If the unit has a Keyword Cost Multiplier of x2, double every keyword cost.

KEYWORD COSTS

STRENGTH	COST	STRENGTH	COST	WEAKNESS	COST
Bloodthirsty	50	Brutal	125	Berserk	-25
Critical Hits	50	Deadly Shots	100	Clumsy (+2)	-25
Despised	25	Devastating Charge	50	Cowardly	-25
Elite	100	Flying	100	Degraded	-50
Hardened (+1)	75	Hero (+1)	50	Fragile	-50
Hero (+2)	100	Horde	100	Hollow	-25
Implacable	50	Large	25	Autonomous	-25
Merciless	75	Narrow Footprint	25	Self-Destructive	-25
Nimble	75	Ranged (+12)	75	Short-Ranged	-25
Shoot Into Combat	50	Sneaky	50	Slow (+2)	-25
Stubborn	50	Swift (+2)	50	Unruly	-50

STRENGTH	COST	STRENGTH	COST	WEAKNESS	COST
Terrifying	50	Relay	200	Wide Footprint	-50
Commander*	0	Relay Beacon*	0	—	—

*The Commander and Relay Beacon are required keywords assigned once in each army, at no cost.

15/

THE TURN

Setup. Round structure. Scrap Phase. Game end. Four gears, no slip.

15 · THE TURN

Setup. Round structure. Scrap Phase. Game end. Four gears, no slip.

SETUP

1. Roll for Chaos of War (optional).
2. Set up the battlefield. Agree on terrain keywords.
3. Reveal army lists.
4. Determine victory conditions (see ch. 18).
5. **First Player.** The last player to paint a miniature calls “even” or “odd.” Roll D6.
6. **Deployment.** Divide the table in half. First Player chooses a table half. Deployment zones begin 8” from the centerline. Alternate deploying one unit at a time.
7. Draw Interrupt Cards if using (four cards each).

ROUND STRUCTURE

Each round has six phases:

1. **Initiative Phase.** If using Interrupts, draw one card each (five on round 1). From round 2 onward, the player without the First Player token rolls D6; exceeding the current round number lets them seize the token. (On round 1, the First Player token is fixed from setup — no seize roll.)
2. **Signal Phase.** Each player gains Signal (1 per full 1,000 army points, plus 1 per in-play Relay unit). Cap 10, excess lost. First Player may broadcast EW, then Second Player.
3. **Shooting Phase.** First Player activates each unengaged Ranged unit once in any order. Each may gain Distracted to make a shooting attack. Then Second Player does the same.
4. **Movement Phase.** First Player activates each unit once in any order. Then Second Player.
5. **Combat Phase.** First Player resolves combat with each engaged unit. Then Second Player.
6. **Scrap Phase.** See below.

THE SCRAP PHASE

1. **Cascade Failure.** Each still-in-play Broken unit causes cascade: all friendly units within 8" gain 1 Strain. If this causes another unit to become Broken, mark it but it does not cascade further this phase.
2. **Remove Broken Units.** Remove all Broken units simultaneously. Note which were removed this phase.
3. **Salvage.** For each unit removed this phase, the opposing player gains either 2 Signal or (if using Interrupts) one card from the shared deck. Your opponent strips your wreckage for parts, not you.
4. **Reboot.** Any unit that was engaged and is now unengaged may make a free reform.
5. **Clear Distracted.** Remove Distracted from all units.

GAME END

A game of Iron Line ends after 5 rounds, or when one player surrenders.

16/

MOVEMENT, SHOOTING, COMBAT, TERRAIN

Move. Shoot. Fight. Cross the rubble. The same four verbs that built the war.

16 · MOVEMENT, SHOOTING, COMBAT, TERRAIN

Move. Shoot. Fight. Cross the rubble. The same four verbs that built the war.

MOVEMENT

When a unit activates in the Movement Phase, it gains Movement Points equal to its Speed. Unspent points are lost. All friendly and enemy units are impassable.

MAN-OEUVRE	COST	EFFECT
Advance	1+ per 1"	Move directly forward in a straight line in the direction the unit faces.
Wheel	1+ per 1"	Pick one front corner as pivot. Opposite corner swings up to 1" per point. Wheeling backwards gains Distracted.
Shuffle	1+ per 0.5"	Slide directly left or right. Facing unchanged.
Retreat	1+ per 0.5"	Gain Distracted. Move directly backwards. Cannot end in contact with an enemy.
Reform	5 (2 for Loose)	Gain Distracted. Rotate in place to face any direction. No other manoeuvres this activation.

ENGAGEMENT, DISENGAGEMENT, OUTMANOEUVRING

Engagement. A unit that moves into contact with an enemy (base-to-base, or within 1" if either model is base-less) is now Engaged. Engaged units remain engaged until one is destroyed or disengages.

Disengagement and Punishment. If an engaged unit ends its Movement Activation no longer in contact with enemies it started engaged with, it has Disengaged. Each unbroken, unengaged enemy it was in contact with at the start of the activation may immediately make a free combat attack. Punishment rolls dice equal to half the punisher's Strikes, using normal target numbers. Resolved immediately.

Outmanoeuvred. A unit engaged with an enemy's flank or rear gives that enemy the Outmanoeuvred weakness: Integrity (-1) per flanking/rearing unit. A unit may not assign more than 5 attack dice to an enemy's flank, or more than 3 to a rear.

SHOOTING

A unit with the Ranged keyword activated in the Shooting Phase may gain Distracted to make a shooting attack. It rolls Attack Dice equal to **half its Strikes** (rounding down). All dice must be assigned to a single target in range and line of sight.

Line of Sight. If a line can be drawn from the center of the attacker's front edge to any point on the target without passing through another unit or Blocking terrain, LoS exists.

Range. Measured from the center of the attacker's front edge to the closest point on the target.

Implacable. When hit by a shooting attack, ignore any hit that would push this unit above 5 Strain from that single attacking unit's activation. Strain from a different attacker, from Surges/Hacks, from Devastating Charge, or from Scrap Phase cascade still applies normally. Close Order and Free Order units are Implacable by default.

COMBAT

In the Combat Phase, each engaged unit may attack. Resolve: assign dice, roll, place Strain.

- A unit rolls Attack Dice equal to its full **Strikes** stat.
- Dice must be assigned to engaged enemies. A unit must assign at least 3 dice to each engaged enemy. If short on dice, divide as evenly as possible (round up for first enemy, down for the rest).
- Flank cap: no more than 5 dice to a unit in its flank. Rear cap: no more than 3.
- Remaining dice may be freely distributed after minimums are met.

TARGET NUMBERS

ATTACKER	VS. CLOSE	VS. LOOSE	VS. FREE
Close Order	4+	3+	5+
Loose Order	5+	4+	3+
Free Order	3+	5+	4+

Modifiers. Weak Attacks +1 to TN (max 6). Strong Attacks -1 (min 2). Monstrous -2 (min 2). Weak Defence -1 to TN (min 2). Strong Defence +1 (max 6). Natural 6 always hits. Natural 1 always misses. Min TN 2+, max 6+.

PLACING STRAIN

One Strain Token per hit. Apply Implacable (see above). A unit whose Strain equals or exceeds its Integrity becomes Broken.

TERRAIN

Agree with your opponent on each piece's terrain keywords before the game begins.

- **Blocking.** Line of sight cannot be drawn through it. Collapsed overpasses, reactor housings, hab-block ruins.
- **Impassable.** Units may never move onto it. Toxic lakes, craters, minefields.
- **Rough.** Doubled movement cost. Loose Order ignores the penalty. Close and Free Order gain Distracted.
- **Perilous.** For each movement point spent moving through it, the unit takes a single attack as if struck by a Gun Platform (TN 4+, resolved immediately). Rad-zones, chemical spills, unstable ground.
- **Grim.** In the Scrap Phase, each piece of Grim terrain counts as a friendly Broken unit for cascade. Wreckage fields, signal-dead zones, drone graveyards.
- **Obscuring.** Units wholly or partly behind it gain the Cover keyword. Smoke, dust, active ECM fields.
- **Large.** Units touching Large terrain also gain Large. Elevated platforms, rooftops, ridge lines.

COVER MODIFIERS

Skirmish applies Light Cover as -1 to Shoot and Heavy Cover as -2. Iron Line applies cover as a unit keyword. A unit wholly or partly behind Obscuring terrain gains the **Cover** keyword until it moves out; Cover raises the attacker's Target Number by 1 (= Skirmish Light Cover). A unit inside Fortified terrain (bunker, trench, hardened structure — agree at setup) raises the Target Number by 2 (= Skirmish Heavy Cover). Skirmish Full Cover corresponds to Blocking terrain here: line of sight is blocked and the target cannot be shot.

IMPLACABLE AS COVER ANALOG

Implacable is Iron Line's unit-scale cover rule. Where Skirmish applies -1 / -2 as shooter penalties, Iron Line bakes protection into formation keywords: Close and Free Order units are Implacable by default, ignoring hits that push past 5 Strain in a single activation. Loose Order units are not Implacable and rely on Obscuring terrain.

16A/

VERTICAL PRESSURE (OPTIONAL)

Take the ridge. Hold the ruin. Range what breaks cover.

16A · VERTICAL PRESSURE (OPTIONAL)

Take the ridge. Hold the ruin. Range what breaks cover.

The Iron Line cut of the same three ideas, scaled to the machines. Strongpoints, Defilade, Elevated Fire. Optional and modular — add any one. Built to pair with the Skirmish module (06A) so a crossover game runs one terrain logic at both scales.

Iron Line already fights over rubble harder than most mass-battle games. These rules sharpen that: they make the objective the cover, let small machines vanish into the ruins, and finally give a ridge line a reason to exist.

STRONGPOINTS

Most scenarios drop objective markers on open ground. A **Strongpoint** puts them on a terrain feature instead — a Fortified bunker, an Obscuring block, a Grim wreck-field. Use Strongpoints in place of open-ground markers in any scenario that scores objectives.

- **Put the marker on the terrain.** Whatever feature the marker sits on is the Strongpoint.
- **Hold it.** A unit holds a Strongpoint while any part of its footprint lies inside the feature, or touches it, and no enemy unit does. The hard cover and the scored ground are the same ground.
- **Contested.** Footprints from both lines touching the feature: nobody holds it.
- **Broken don't hold.** A Broken unit never holds a Strongpoint. It is leaving the field, not taking it.

WHY STRONGPOINTS

Open-ground markers reward a unit for sitting in a clear lane and eating fire. Strongpoints fold the cover and the score into one feature, so the line forms where the terrain already is. The board stops being a flat killing field with markers on it and becomes a map of positions worth taking.

DEFILADE

A non-Large unit positioned wholly inside an **Obscuring** feature that did not Shoot during the previous round is in **Defilade**. It cannot be targeted by shooting from beyond 12" — at range, it is one more shape in the rubble.

- **Inside 12"**. Defilade does nothing. The unit is targeted as normal, at the Obscuring Cover penalty (+1 to the attacker's Target Number).
- **Breaks when** the unit Shoots, or moves out of the Obscuring feature. A unit that fires has shown itself, and can be targeted normally until it holds fire for a full round again.
- **Too big to hide**. Large and Immobile units never gain Defilade. A siege walker does not disappear into a ruin.
- **Higher ground beats it**. A unit firing down from terrain above the Defilade unit ignores it. You cannot hide in the rubble from a gun on the ridge.

Defilade is the in-play cousin of Sneaky. Sneaky hides a unit at deployment. Defilade hides it during the battle, for as long as it holds fire from inside cover. A unit may use both. The decision is the one Skirmish operators face at a smaller scale: stay dark, or open up and be seen.

ELEVATED FIRE

A unit shooting from terrain higher than its target — a ridge, a rooftop, a raised deck — **downgrades the target's terrain penalty by one step**. Height looks over the wall the target is using.

- **One step**. Fortified (+2 Target Number) counts as Cover (+1). Cover (+1) counts as none. Blocking terrain still stops line of sight — elevation sees further, not through solid mass.
- **It strips Defilade too**. A Defilade unit gets no concealment against fire from above.
- **No verticality, no rule**. If your table is flat, Elevated Fire never comes up. On terrain with real height, the ridge becomes the position the whole line bends around.

RUNNING ALL THREE

The same interlock as the Skirmish module, scaled up. The Strongpoint worth taking is often the high one. The scouts holding it from inside the ruins sit in Defilade until they fire. The counter is to range a unit onto higher ground, where Elevated Fire strips the cover and the Defilade together. Whoever reads the terrain first writes the shape of the line.

If you only add one, add **Strongpoints** — it changes how every game is scored for one paragraph of rules. Add **Defilade** when you field scouts and skirmishers and want them to play like scouts. Add **Elevated Fire** when your boards have levels.

IRON LINE VERTICAL PRESSURE – QUICK REFERENCE

- **Strongpoint.** Objective sits on a terrain feature. Hold it with a footprint inside or touching, no enemy in contact. Broken units never hold.
- **Defilade.** Non-Large unit wholly in Obscuring and didn't Shoot last round → cannot be targeted beyond 12". Breaks on Shoot or leaving cover. Large and Immobile never qualify. Higher ground ignores it.
- **Elevated Fire.** Shooting down from higher terrain downgrades the target's terrain penalty one step. Fortified → Cover, Cover → none. Blocking still stops LoS.

17 /

ELECTRONIC WARFARE

Signal is currency. Relays project it. Suites spend it. Lose the spectrum and lose the field.

17 · ELECTRONIC WARFARE

Signal is currency. Relays project it. Suites spend it. Lose the spectrum and lose the field.

The signal is the battlefield nobody sees. Lose it there and nothing on the ground matters.

Autonomous units run on command-and-control signal. Electronic Warfare (EW) is how you boost friendlies, jam enemies, and exploit the invisible spectrum.

RELAY UNITS

To broadcast EW, you must have at least one Relay unit in play. The Relay is the broadcasting platform — used for line of sight and range of EW abilities.

EW SUITES

Each Relay selects a single EW Suite during army list construction. Multiple relays may take the same or different suites.

BROADCASTING

In the Signal Phase, spend Signal to broadcast an ability with one of your Relays. Name the ability and spend the required Signal. Pulses and Hacks require line of sight. Surges affect every unit in range regardless of LoS.

No Relay on the board. If an army has no unbroken Relay units in play, Pulses may still be broadcast at +1 Signal cost from any unbroken friendly unit (LoS still required). Hacks and Surges cannot be broadcast without a Relay. Losing your last Relay no longer nullifies your entire Signal pool — it downgrades you to Pulse-only at a premium.

- **Pulse** — 2 Signal.
- **Hack** — 4 Signal.
- **Surge** — 6 Signal.

EW SUITES

SUITE	ABILITIES
Overwatch NAF Doctrine	<p>Targeting Lock — Pulse (2). Range 18". Target unit gains Clumsy (+D6) until end of round.</p> <p>Predictive Armor — Hack (4). Range 18". Target friendly unit gains Hardened (+1) and Swift (+4) until end of round.</p> <p>Killzone Designation — Surge (6). All enemy units within 12" must roll over their current Strain + 2 on 2D6 or receive 1 Strain from signal-guided fire. (Fresh units at Strain 0 still need to beat 2.)</p>
Ghostwire SCA Doctrine	<p>Spore Shroud — Pulse (2). Range 18". Target unengaged unit is removed from the board and gains Sneaky. It must return next round.</p> <p>Root Hack — Hack (4). Range 18". Target friendly. Transfer one Chassis-type keyword from that unit to any friendly within 18".</p> <p>Bloom Drift — Surge (6). Place a Void marker within 18". The area within 6" of that marker counts as Perilous terrain.</p>
Iron Curtain EO Doctrine	<p>Jamming Pulse — Pulse (3). Range 18". Target unit gains Fragile and Brutal until end of round. Fragile from this Pulse does not retroactively apply to Strain already on the unit — the target only breaks if it accumulates Strain equal to its Integrity while Fragile is active.</p> <p>Override Protocol — Hack (4). Range 18". Target friendly unbroken unit discards D6 Strain.</p> <p>Dead Zone — Surge (6). All enemy units within 18" gain Cowardly until end of round.</p>
Burning Glass PCU Doctrine	<p>Heat Spike — Pulse (2). Range 12". Target unit gains Devastating Charge and Swift (+4) until end of round.</p> <p>Directed Energy — Hack (4). Range 12". Target friendly unit gains Hardened (+2) and may not be the target of enemy EW, until end of round.</p> <p>Solar Lance — Surge (6). Target friendly unit gains Flying and Swift (+6) until end of round.</p>
Null Signal PRC Doctrine	<p>Firmware Worm — Pulse (2). Range 18". Target enemy gains Autonomous until end of round. If already Autonomous, gains Berserk instead.</p> <p>Ghost in the Machine — Hack (4). Range 18". Target enemy. Until end of round, when that unit assigns attack dice in Combat, it must assign at least 3 to a friendly unit of your choice within 4".</p> <p>Total Override — Surge (6). All friendly units within 18" gain Integrity (+1) until end of round.</p>

SUITE	ABILITIES
Open Source	Signal Boost — Pulse (2). Range 18". Target unit gains Hero (+2) until end of round.
Black Market	Countermeasure — Hack (4). Range 12". Target friendly. When targeted by an enemy EW, choose a unit within 8" to be the target instead. Broadband Scream — Surge (6). Every unit within 12" (friendly and enemy) gains Self-Destructive until end of round.

18/

VICTORY AND CHAOS OF WAR

Win the objective. Lose the line. Every fight ends sideways.

18 · VICTORY AND CHAOS OF WAR

Win the objective. Lose the line. Every fight ends sideways.

The machines don't care who wins. You do.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

During setup, choose or randomly determine (2D6) the victory conditions.

ROLL	CONDI- TION	SETUP & VICTORY
2–3	Signal Dominance	Place three Objective Markers on the centerline (one at midpoint, two 18" out). Both players roll 2D6 per marker; higher roll moves it toward their zone by that many inches. At end of turns 4 and 5, each unbroken unit within 8" of a marker scores 1 VP (2 VP if unit > 500 pts). Max 10 VP per side.
4	Deep Extraction	Before deployment, each player places three Objective Markers in the opposing table half, each >16" from any other. At the end of any turn, a friendly unbroken unit within 4" of a marker (no unbroken enemy within 8") removes the marker for 2 VP (1 VP if not in the enemy zone). Most VP wins.
5	Scorched Perimeter	Choose Attacker and Defender. Defender's breakpoint increases by 2 (units start at Integrity 12). Attacker wins if any unbroken unit is fully within the Defender's zone at game end. Otherwise Defender wins.
6–7	Kill Ratio	At game end, total the points of your in-play units. Highest total wins.
8	Decapitation Strike	If your opponent has no Chassis-keyword units in play at game end, you score 5 VP. Otherwise, score 1 VP per enemy Chassis keyword removed from play. Most VP wins.
9	Wreckage Rights	Place three Objective Markers on the centerline (midpoint + 15" out each way). Each counts as Grim terrain. Just before each Scrap Phase, the player with most unbroken units within 12" of each marker scores 1 VP. Most VP wins.

ROLL	CONDI- TION	SETUP & VICTORY
10	Burn the Relay	Choose Attacker and Defender. Defender gains three free Gun Platforms with the Immobile and Objective keywords within 12" of the centerline. If all three survive, Defender wins. Otherwise Attacker wins.
11-12	Desperate Raid	Choose Attacker and Defender. Attacker places three Objective Markers in Defender's zone. At each round's end, if the Attacker's Commander or Relay Beacon is within 4" of a marker, score 1 VP and remove the marker. Defender gains 3 VP if neither survives. Most VP wins.

CHAOS OF WAR (OPTIONAL)

Roll D66 on each of the Battlefield, Deployment, and Twists tables. Stack the effects.

BATTLEFIELD (D66)

ROLL	BATTLE- FIELD	EFFECT
11-36	Standard	No modifications.
41-42	Rubble and Ruins	Three areas of Perilous + Obscuring terrain.
43-44	Drone Graveyard	Three areas of Grim + Obscuring terrain. Mass wreckage from a prior engagement.
45-46	Elevated Ground	Each player deploys one elevated platform (Large terrain) anywhere in play.
51-52	The Corridor	Two pieces of Impassable + Blocking terrain, 4-8" diameter, 24" apart on the centerline.
53-54	Flooded District	All non-elevated terrain is also Rough.
55-56	Urban Zone	At least six large pieces of Impassable + Blocking terrain.
61-62	Signal Dead Zone	Terrain piece at center. While a Relay is within 4", EW Hacks and Surges cost 1 less Signal.
63-64	Rad-Wash	Each player places one Perilous + Obscuring area in their half.

ROLL	BATTLE-FIELD	EFFECT
65–66	Tunnel Network	Each player deploys a pair of linked Tunnel Entrances. Units within 4" may redeploy from either entrance next Movement Phase, gaining Distracted and 1 Strain.

DEPLOYMENT (D66)

ROLL	DEPLOYMENT	EFFECT
11–36	Standard	No modifications.
41–42	Forced March	Half of each player's units deploy at least 12" back from the centerline.
43	Scramble	Speed 8 or lower deploys at least 12" back.
44	Early Contact	All units deploy at least 12" back.
45	Wide Line	Divide the board at 45 degrees; deployment zones are triangular.
46	Tunnel Assault	Divide perpendicular to the usual axis. Long and thin.
51–52	Ambush	Each player selects 3 units to gain Sneaky.
53	Scattered Insertion	Each unit deploys in a random section (D3: left / center / right).
54	Vanguard Insertion	Deploy only two units in setup. The rest gain Reinforcements.
55–56	Drop Zone	Each player rolls three dice for three Drop Zone markers. Deploy from any controlled marker.
61	Clustered	Each player places a marker. All Infantry must deploy partially within 12" of it.
62	Supply Line	Autonomous units must deploy after the Commander, within 12" of them.
63–64	No Man's Land	Each player places a marker in the enemy half. No unit may deploy within 8" of these markers.
65–66	Last Stand	Choose Attacker and Defender. Defender deploys within 10" of table center. Attacker deploys outside 16" from center. Defender breakpoint is 12.

TWISTS (D66)

ROLL	TWIST	EFFECT
11-26	None	All is as expected.
31-32	Signal Interference	LoS limited to 12" for all units.
33	Fast Ground	All units gain Swift (+2).
34	EMP Residue	Each player gains 3 additional Signal per turn.
35	Power Surge	Both players start with 6 Signal.
36	Frozen Firmware	After moving, unit rolls 3D6 equal/over Speed or advances only 3".
41	Last Resort	Skip Cascade Failure in the Scrap Phase.
42	Hardened Systems	Each player's breakpoint +3.
43	Corrosive Atmosphere	Each round, each player's breakpoint -1.
44	Comms Blackout	Command strength on Commander / Relay Beacon cannot be used.
45	EW Saturation	Each player gains one additional Relay keyword, assigned to a unit that doesn't have it.
46	Hidden Assets	Each player secretly notes two units to gain Hero (+1). Revealed when first used.
51	Veterans	Each player selects one unit to gain Elite.
52	Hand of Fate	Each round, each player draws one extra Interrupt (or +1 Signal if not using).
53	Relay Nodes	First Player places three markers on the centerline, 16" apart. Start of Signal Phase: the player with more friendlies within 4" of each marker gains 2 Signal or 1 card.
54	Long-Range War	Command has range 12".
55	Short Leash	Command has range 4".
56	Ghost Signals	Units take +1 Strain from cascade. Cascade-Broken units trigger further cascade this phase.
61	High Stakes	Playing an Interrupt draws another. (Re-roll if not using.)

ROLL	TWIST	EFFECT
62	Blackout Rounds	Rounds 1 and 2: skip Remove Broken Units.
63	Short Engagement	Battle ends after four rounds.
64	Extended Ops	Battle ends after six rounds.
65	Salvage Rights	Each player selects one unit to gain Brutal.
66	Wreckage Fields	When a unit is removed, place a marker. It counts as Grim terrain.

19/

IRON LINE BATTLE MAPS

Four boards. Four arguments about terrain priced into the same engine.

19 · IRON LINE BATTLE MAPS

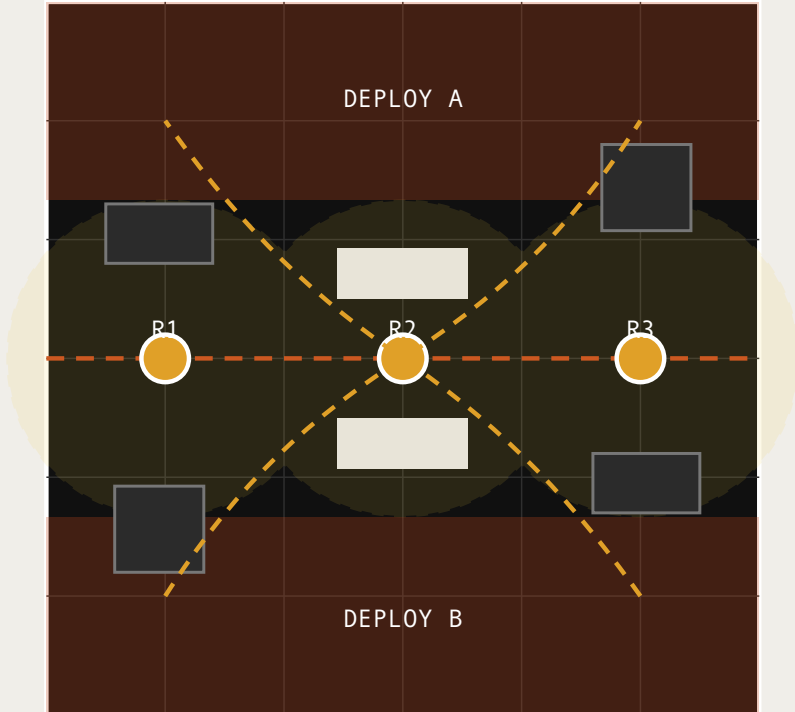
Four boards. Four arguments about terrain priced into the same engine.

Use these templates for 3' × 3' Iron Line battles. They are built for units, trays, facing, relay coverage, and terrain keywords. They do not use Skirmish objective control or operator-scale interaction rules.

Iron Line map key. Orange bands are deployment zones. Cyan markers are objectives or relay nodes. White blocks are Blocking or Impassable terrain. Dark terrain is Obscuring, Grim, Rough, or Fortified as noted. Yellow fields are Perilous, Grim, or scoring pressure zones.

SIGNAL DOMINANCE · RELAY SPINE

THREE CENTERLINE MARKERS · SCORE TURNS 4 AND 5 WITHIN 8"



Template job: Relay units must choose between broad

TERRAIN KEYWORDS

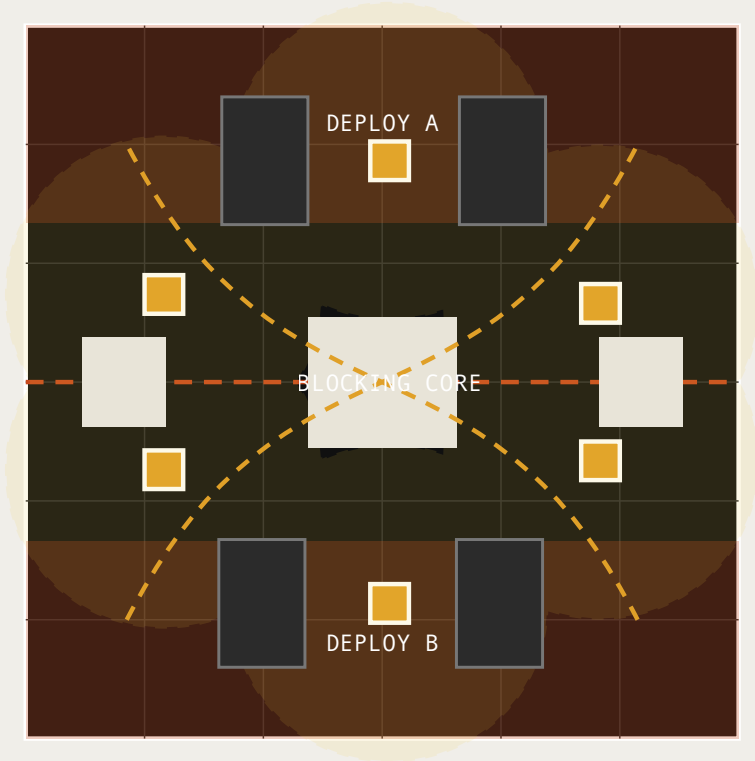
- Center slabs: Blocking.
- Side ruins: Obscuring; mark one as Large if both players want vertical LoS.

BATTLE NOTES

- Each yellow ring is the 8" scoring radius.
- Good for Signal Dominance, Relay Nodes, or Long-Range War.

DEEP EXTRACTION · BROKEN GRID

THREE MARKERS IN ENEMY HALF · REMOVE WITHIN 4" IF NO ENEMY WITHIN 8"



Template job: extraction units can reach prizes, bu

TERRAIN KEYWORDS

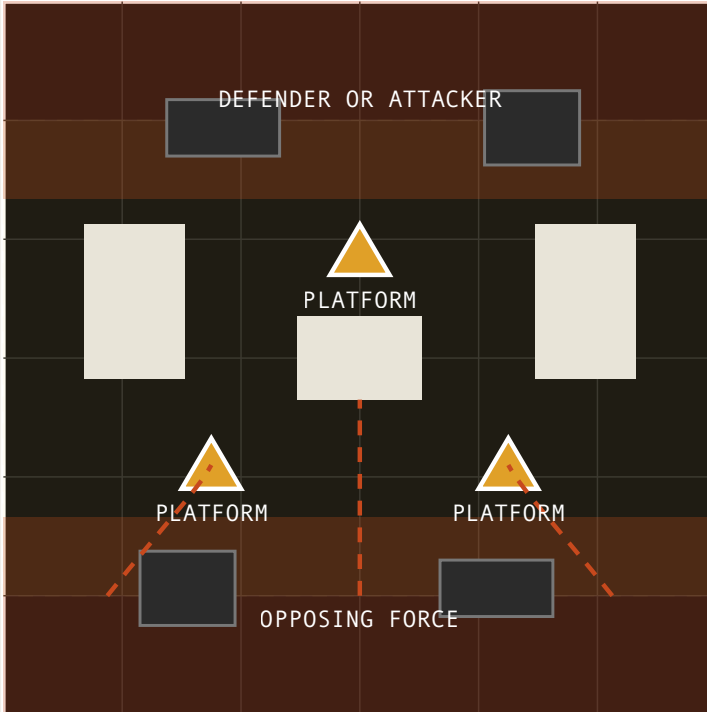
- Center mass: Blocking + Impassable.
- Corner towers: Obscuring, optionally Fortified.

BATTLE NOTES

- Use either player's three enemy-half markers, or all six for larger games.
- Good for Deep Extraction, Desperate Raid, or Tunnel Assault.

BURN THE RELAY · GUN PLATFORM TRIANGLE

THREE DEFENDER PLATFORMS WITHIN 12" OF CENTERLINE · ATTACKER WINS BY DESTROYING THEM



Template job: platforms cover each other, so the at

TERRAIN KEYWORDS

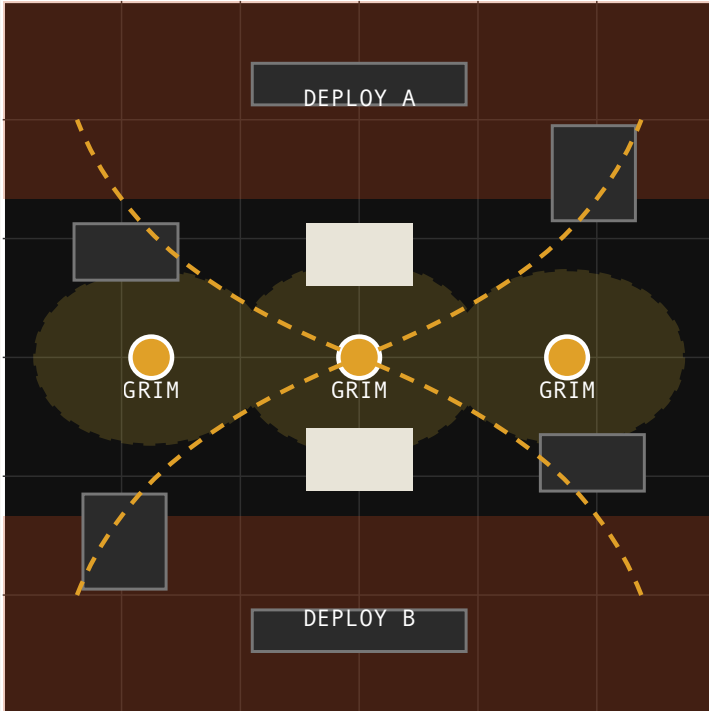
- Platform nests: Fortified if touching the marker.
- Outer blocks: Blocking; side cover: Obscuring.

BATTLE NOTES

- Defender chooses which long edge they hold after seeing terrain.
- Good for Burn the Relay, Scorched Perimeter, or Last Stand.

WRECKAGE RIGHTS · GRIM SALVAGE FIELD

THREE GRIM CENTERLINE MARKERS · SCORE BEFORE EACH SCRAP PHASE



Template job: every scoring decision risks feeding

TERRAIN KEYWORDS

- Yellow fields: Grim + Obscuring.
- White slabs: Blocking; dark strips: Rough or Obscuring.

BATTLE NOTES

- Use the yellow fields as the 12" contest zones if table space is tight.
- Good for Wreckage Rights, Kill Ratio, or Wreckage Fields.

20/

IRON LINE CAMPAIGN PLAY

Build a force. Lose a board. Carry the survivors. Carry the upgrades. Carry the grudge.

20 · IRON LINE CAMPAIGN PLAY

Build a force. Lose a board. Carry the survivors. Carry the upgrades. Carry the grudge.

Two armies. Multiple engagements. The same units keep fighting. What survives gets stronger. What doesn't is gone.

CAMPAIGN STRUCTURE

Run a series of 3–5 Iron Line engagements between the same two armies. Armies are fixed at creation — no new units between battles. What changes is the state of what you have.

Track two resources between engagements: **Field Upgrades** and the **Signal Reserve**.

FIELD UPGRADES

After each battle, each player may apply one **Field Upgrade** to any unit that was not Cascade-Broken at the end of the game. The upgrade is permanent. Write it on the army roster.

Choose one keyword from the list below. A unit may hold a maximum of two Field Upgrades total across the campaign.

Field Upgrade Options

KEYWORD	EFFECT
Hardened	This unit's Integrity maximum increases by 1.
Sharpened	This unit rerolls a single Shoot die once per Shooting Phase.
Compact	This unit's Speed increases by 1.
Anchored	This unit ignores Strain from the first Cascade event each Scrap Phase.
Relay+	This unit gains the Relay keyword (or upgrades an existing Relay to Relay(+1) range).
Savage	This unit's first melee attack each Combat Phase is at Strength +1.

Cascade Loss. A unit that ends a battle Cascade-Broken earns no Field Upgrade that round. If a unit is Cascade-Broken in two consecutive battles, it loses one Field Upgrade of the owning player's choice (if it has any).

SIGNAL RESERVE

At the end of each battle, each player carries forward half of any unspent Signal – round down, maximum 4 carried. This reserve is added to the Signal generated in the first Signal Phase of the next battle.

Reserve cap. No player may begin a battle with more than 4 carried Signal. Excess is lost.

Signal Reserve rewards careful resource management across multiple engagements. A player who burns everything every battle enters the next at a disadvantage.

CAMPAIGN VICTORY

Track Victory Points across all engagements as normal. The player with the highest cumulative VP at the end of the final battle wins the campaign. Ties go to the player with more units surviving the final engagement.

21/

COMMANDERS AND SAMPLE DOCTRINES

The commander is a ghost in the relay. The doctrine is a habit you build before the dust does.

21 · COMMANDERS AND SAMPLE DOCTRINES

The commander is a ghost in the relay. The doctrine is a habit you build before the dust does.

THE COMMANDER

Every army must designate exactly one unit with the **Commander** keyword. This is the AI core, the remote operator link, or the senior combat intelligence directing the battle. Place a token or marker on this unit. The Commander gains Command (+1) and Hero (+2).

Command [x]. Strength, Reserved. All friendly units within 8" of this unit (including itself) gain Integrity (+x).

THE RELAY BEACON

Every army must designate exactly one unit with the **Relay Beacon** keyword — the army's primary signal amplifier. The same unit may carry both Commander and Relay Beacon. The Relay Beacon gains Command (+1) and Hero (+1).

COMMANDER UPGRADES

A Commander may take one upgrade (cost-free). Choose at army creation.

UPGRADE	EFFECT
The Predator Protocol	Conveys Brutal onto the Commander's unit. War Cry: Once per game, in the Combat Phase, another friendly within 8" immediately makes a free attack. Kill Priority: Start of Combat Phase, if this unit is not engaged, it gains 1 Strain.
The Architect Algorithm	Conveys Relay onto the Commander's unit. Deep Reserves: Select two EW Suites instead of one. System Tax: Start of Signal Phase, place 1 Strain on a friendly unit within 12" (may be itself). Processing Overload: If the Commander is Broken, your opponent gains Signal (or Interrupts) based on when it broke — rounds 1–3: 4 Signal / 5 Interrupts; round 4+: 2 Signal / 3 Interrupts.

UPGRADE	EFFECT
The Ghost Network	Conveys Sneaky. Hidden Paths: Once per game, up to three friendlies within 24" gain Flying until end of round. Blind Spot: The Commander's unit may not be deployed at game start.
The Iron Throne	Conveys Swift (+4). Rapid Redeployment: Once per game, after this player finishes their Movement Phase, all friendly unengaged units within 12" may perform a second Movement Phase. Signal Bleed: The Commander's unit cannot gain the Command keyword.
The Scrapyard Mind	No keywords conveyed. Salvage Engine: Once per game in the Scrap Phase, friendlies within 4" ignore the Broken keyword. Jury-Rigged: Enemy units gain Cowardly within 4". Unstable Core: If this unit becomes Broken, opponent gains 4 Signal (or 5 Interrupts).
The Hive Clock	No keywords conveyed. Time Compression: Once per game, at the end of a Movement Phase, a second Movement Phase occurs in which both players may select and move up to three units. Desynchronization: Once per game, at the start of a Scrap Phase, skip the Scrap Phase entirely for both players.

SAMPLE DOCTRINE LISTS (3,000 PTS)

Starting points, not gospels. Kitbash to taste.

NAF ADAPTIVE STRIKE FORCE

OVERWATCH EW · ARCHITECT ALGORITHM

3× Drone Infantry (300 ea = 900)

2× Drone Skirmishers + Deadly Shots (400 ea = 800)

1× Assault Walker + Elite (550)

1× Scout Swarm + Swift (+2) (450)

1× Artillery Rig (400)

COMMANDER on Assault Walker. **RELAY BEACON** on Drone Infantry.

EO ARMORED ADVANCE

IRON CURTAIN EW · THE IRON THRONE

2× Armored Infantry (350 ea = 700)

2× Heavy Platform (400 ea = 800)

1× Siege Walker (600)

1× Gun Platform + Hardened (+1) (400)

1× Drone Infantry (300)

COMMANDER on Siege Walker. **RELAY BEACON** on Gun Platform.

SCA BIO-MECHANICAL SWARM

GHOSTWIRE EW · THE GHOST NETWORK

4× Beast-Mech (200 ea = 800)

2× Drone Infantry + Autonomous (275 ea = 550)

2× Scout Swarm (350 ea = 700)

1× Siege Walker + Terrifying (700)

COMMANDER on Siege Walker. **RELAY BEACON** on Drone Infantry.

PCU DESERT STRIKE

BURNING GLASS EW · THE PREDATOR PROTOCOL

2× Strike Vehicle + Swift (+2) (400 ea = 800)

2× Drone Skirmishers (300 ea = 600)

1× Assault Walker + Brutal (700)

1× Artillery Rig + Short-Ranged (375)

2× Drone Infantry (300 ea = 600)

COMMANDER on Assault Walker. **RELAY BEACON** on Drone Infantry.

22/

INTERRUPT CARDS

A standard deck. Twenty-four named effects. Drop a card, change a moment.

22 · INTERRUPT CARDS

A standard deck. Twenty-four named effects. Drop a card, change a moment.

In war, the plan survives until the enemy's EW suite gets a lock on your relay. Then the plan changes.

Interrupt Cards are an optional module. The core game works without them. Skip this section on a first game; add them once the base rules are familiar. Interrupts add one-shot firmware patches, emergency overrides, and field hacks.

USING A STANDARD DECK

Interrupts use a standard 52-card deck plus two jokers. No custom cards to print. Shuffle and place the deck face-down between both players. Draw at the start of each round. When the deck runs out, shuffle the discard and start again.

- **Ace through 6** in each suit are named effects. Look up the card on the table below.
- **7 through King** in any suit are field re-rolls. Discard to re-roll a single die, at any time.
- **Jokers** are the two strongest effects: Emergency Override and Signal Hijack. On draw, choose which and announce it.

SUITS AND TIMING

SUIT	CATEGORY	WHEN TO PLAY
♥ Hearts	Defense / Recovery	When your units take hits, break, or need repair.
♠ Spades	Aggression / Combat	During Movement or Combat, when attacking.
♦ Diamonds	Signal / Resources	During Signal Phase or any time for economy effects.
♣ Clubs	Disruption / Control	To mess with enemy units or seize the initiative.

NAMED EFFECTS (ACE THROUGH 6)

CARD	NAME	EFFECT
A♥	Reactive Armor	When a friendly would suffer hits, halve the hits, rounding up.
2♥	Shield Matrix	Cancel one hit before Strain is placed on a friendly.
3♥	Field Repair	Friendly unbroken unit discards D3 Strain at start of Scrap Phase.
4♥	Fire Discipline	Friendly unbroken unit gains Integrity (+2) until end of round.
5♥	Brace for Impact	Friendly may disengage without Punishment this activation.
6♥	Ghost Protocol	Friendly hit by shooting may immediately Advance 4".
A♠	Last Transmission	Broken unit gains Brutal until end of round.
2♠	Overclocked	After Movement, if friendly advanced 6"+ and is engaged, it gains Critical Hits.
3♠	Combat Rush	After Movement, if friendly advanced 6"+ and is engaged, discards D3 Strain.
4♠	Precision Strike	Friendly gains Elite until end of round.
5♠	Targeting Override	Friendly gains Hero (+2) until end of round.
6♠	Full Burn	Friendly may take its Movement Activation immediately, even without First Player token.
A♦	Signal Surge	Gain 2 Signal.
2♦	Killswitch	Friendly Relay's next Pulse costs 0 Signal.
3♦	Relay Bounce	Friendly Relay may measure range/LoS from any friendly unit for its next ability.
4♦	Countermeasures	When targeted by EW, choose a unit within 8" to be the target instead.
5♦	Scrap Harvest	Every enemy in contact with a friendly Broken unit gains 1 Strain.
6♦	Sensor Flood	Friendly gains Terrifying until end of round.
A♣	Firmware Patch	Enemies engaged with friendly ignore all Chassis keywords until end of round.

CARD	NAME	EFFECT
2♣	Priority Target	Enemy that gained Strain from panic gains D3 additional Strain.
3♣	Scorched Earth	When a unit is removed, place a marker. Within 4" counts as Perilous for the rest of the game.
4♣	Redeploy	Friendly gains Swift (+4) until end of round.
5♣	Sensor Flood	Friendly gains Terrifying until end of round.
6♣	Scramble	Cancel an enemy EW Suite effect immediately after activation. The Signal is still spent.
Joker	Emergency Override	Friendly ignores the Broken keyword until end of round (played at start of Scrap).
Joker	Signal Hijack	Immediately after Initiative roll, take or give the First Player Token.

23/

KEYWORD GLOSSARY

Every keyword is a habit the unit refuses to break. Read these before army building.

23 - KEYWORD GLOSSARY

Every keyword is a habit the unit refuses to break. Read these before army building.

The firmware package is the unit. Everything else is chassis.

KEYWORD	TYPE	EFFECT
Armored [x] / Hardened [x]	Strength	When receiving Strain from a combat attack, ignore the first x Strain.
Autonomous	Weakness	At the start of this unit's Movement Activation, if it has no Chassis keyword and no friendly Chassis is within 4", it gains Berserk and Unruly until end of round. The Commander's Hero (Chassis) satisfies the check.
Berserk	Weakness	At the start of Movement Activation, if unengaged, target the nearest enemy. Move towards them, ending as close as possible. If the unit fails to move towards the target, it receives D1 Strain.
Bloodthirsty	Strength	When this unit destroys an enemy in Combat, it may immediately make a free reform.
Broken	Weakness (Reserved)	During the Scrap Phase, causes cascade failure and is removed from play.
Brutal	Strength	A natural 6 on an attack die counts as 2 hits instead of 1.
Clumsy [+x]	Weakness	This unit's shooting Target Number is increased by x.
Command [x]	Strength (Reserved)	All friendly units within 8" gain Integrity (+x).
Cowardly	Weakness	May not advance towards the nearest enemy in its Movement Activation.
Cover	Strength (Reserved)	When targeted by a shooting attack, the attacker increases its Target Number by 1 (max 6).

KEYWORD	TYPE	EFFECT
Critical Hits	Strength	On a natural 6 in combat, the hit ignores the target's Hardened keyword.
Degraded	Weakness	At the start of Movement Activation, gains 1 Strain.
Deadly Shots	Strength	Natural-6 hits on shooting attacks inflict 2 Strain each instead of 1. Against targets with Implacable, the second Strain bypasses the Implacable cap (but not Hardened).
Despised	Strength	Enemies engaged with this unit may not disengage.
Devastating Charge	Strength	If this unit advanced 6"+ this round, Target Number for combat is decreased by 1 (min 2) until end of round.
Distracted	Weakness (Reserved)	May not end a manoeuvre engaged with a unit.
Elite	Strength	May re-roll one attack die per attack.
Fearless	Strength	Ignores cascade failure from the Scrap Phase.
Flying	Strength	May move over units and terrain (except Impassable). May not end movement overlapping another unit.
Fragile	Weakness	Becomes Broken when Strain \geq half its Integrity (round up).
Hero [x]	Strength (Chassis)	Gains Strikes (+x).
Hollow	Weakness	May not benefit from the Command keyword.
Horde	Strength	Gains the Horde footprint.
Immobile	Weakness (Reserved)	May not be activated in the Movement Phase.

KEYWORD	TYPE	EFFECT
Implacable	Strength	When hit by a shooting attack, ignore any hit that would push this unit above 5 Strain from that single attacker's activation. Cap is per-attacker-per-activation, not per-round. Non-shooting Strain (Surges, cascade, movement) ignores this cap.
Infantry	Categorical	Marks this unit as an infantry-class platform.
Large	Strength	Intervening units or terrain may be ignored for LoS unless also Large.
Merciless	Strength	When attacking a Broken enemy, Target Number decreases by 1 (min 2).
Narrow Footprint	Strength	Uses the Narrow footprint dimensions.
Nimble	Strength	May reform for 2 movement points.
Outmanoeuvred	Weakness (Reserved)	Suffers Integrity (-1) per enemy unit engaged with its flank or rear.
Ranged [x]	Strength	May make shooting attacks up to x inches.
Relay	Strength	May broadcast EW abilities. Generates 1 bonus Signal per round.
Self-Destructive	Weakness	At the start of each round, gains 1 Strain.
Shoot Into Combat	Strength	May make shooting attacks against engaged enemies.
Short-Ranged	Weakness	Ranged keyword value halved, rounding down.
Slow [+x]	Weakness	Speed reduced by x.
Sneaky	Strength	Not deployed at game start. From round 2, at start of Movement Activation, may be placed anywhere on the table more than 8" from any enemy, gaining Distracted.
Stubborn	Strength	May not be moved by enemy abilities or forced movement.
Swift [+x]	Strength	Speed increased by x.

KEYWORD	TYPE	EFFECT
Terrifying	Strength	Enemies starting Movement Activation engaged with this unit must pass a 2D6 GUTS check (roll over current Strain) or gain Distracted.
Trample	Strength	When this unit advances through a unit with fewer Strikes, that unit gains 1 Strain.
Unruly	Weakness	May not be activated in the Shooting Phase.
Wide Footprint	Weakness	Uses the Wide footprint dimensions (if not already).
Wild	Weakness	At the start of Movement Activation, if no Chassis and no friendly Chassis within 4", gains Berserk and Unruly until end of round.
Close Order	Categorical (Reserved)	Hits on 3+ vs. Loose, 4+ vs. Close, 5+ vs. Free. Close Order units are Implacable.
Loose Order	Categorical (Reserved)	Hits on 5+ vs. Close, 4+ vs. Loose, 3+ vs. Free. No movement penalty in Rough; may Reform for 2 movement points.
Free Order	Categorical (Reserved)	Hits on 3+ vs. Close, 5+ vs. Loose, 4+ vs. Free. Free Order units are Implacable.
Objective	Categorical (Reserved)	Mission objective. May not be activated. May be targeted by attacks as normal. Used in victory conditions.
Reinforcements	Categorical (Reserved)	Not deployed at start. From round 2, start of Movement Phase: controller may deploy within their zone, gaining Distracted. Auto-deployed at start of round 4 if not yet.

24/

SAME WAR, DIFFERENT SCALES

Skirmish runs inside Iron Line. The terrain is the same. The dice are the same. The fight is one fight, told twice.

24 · SAME WAR, DIFFERENT SCALES

Skirmish runs inside Iron Line. The terrain is the same. The dice are the same. The fight is one fight, told twice.

The machines go first. The operators go in when the machines are done. Sometimes the machines aren't done.

Iron Line and Skirmish sit at different magnifications of the same war. Skirmish puts you in the boots of a gene-forged splice running infiltration, assassination, extraction. Iron Line puts you behind the command node of the autonomous platforms preparing the ground before those operators arrive. The two games share a world, a timeline, and a logic. This chapter is how to play them together.

THE MACHINE WAR SETS THE TABLE

Play an Iron Line battle and use the outcome to frame the Skirmish mission that follows. The state of the battlefield after the machine war becomes the scenario for the operator splice.

- **If the attacker won the Iron Line battle.** The approach corridor is clear. The Skirmish mission starts with Alert State Unaware. The operators inherited a prepared battlefield.
- **If the defender won.** The approach corridor is contested. The Skirmish mission starts with Alert State Suspicious. Enemies in the first zone begin with +1 to cover or an extra combatant. The machines failed to clear the ground.
- **If the game was close (within 2 VP or decided on tiebreaker).** The battlefield is unstable. Start the Skirmish mission with one additional roll on a hazard table of the facilitator's choosing. The wreckage from the machine battle is the terrain.

TERRAIN CARRIES OVER

If you played Iron Line on a physical table, leave the terrain where it is. Wreckage markers from destroyed units become Difficult Terrain for the Skirmish mission. Any Grim terrain from Iron Line becomes a zone where GUTS checks are required to enter. Perilous terrain carries over directly. The battlefield the machines fought on is the battlefield the operators inherit.

SIGNAL AND HEAT

TWO DIFFERENT RESOURCES

Signal is an Iron Line per-battle resource — command-network strength, gained each Signal Phase, spent on EW, reset every game. **Heat** is the RPG / campaign-level pressure track — it accumulates across missions, raises Alert State, and triggers Pressure Tokens. They serve parallel design roles (a resource that runs out at the wrong moment) but are not interchangeable. The crossover rules below translate Iron Line outcomes into Heat adjustments for the operator mission that follows.

- If the winning Iron Line player had 4+ unspent Signal at game end, the Skirmish mission starts with Heat -1 (command network intact, providing overwatch).
- If the losing player's Commander was destroyed during the Iron Line game, the Skirmish mission starts with Heat +1 (command structure compromised, enemy intelligence active).

OPERATOR SQUADS ON THE IRON LINE BATTLEFIELD

For players who want to run both scales at once, a splice from Skirmish can appear as a single unit on the Iron Line table.

OPERATOR SPLICE

IRON LINE UNIT · 800 PTS · KCM ×2

Speed 10 · Loose Order · Strong Attacks · Strong Defence · Strikes 10 · Integrity 10

FOOTPRINT. Narrow.

STARTING KEYWORDS. Nimble, Elite, Sneaky, Hero (+2), Narrow Footprint.

ROLE. Expensive, fragile under massed fire, devastating in close quarters. A gene-forged kill squad moving through the machine battle.

CONSEQUENCES. If the Operator Splice unit is destroyed in Iron Line, the Skirmish mission that follows begins with each operator at 2 FW and Heat +2.

MISSION SEEDS FROM IRON LINE OUTCOMES

Each Iron Line victory condition generates a natural Skirmish mission.

- **Signal Dominance → Intelligence Extraction.** The relay network is intact. The splice must reach a data core before the losing faction sends a kill squad to destroy it.
- **Deep Extraction → Rescue.** The objective markers the attacker captured are downed relay nodes. Each contains a stranded combat intelligence that can be extracted for faction intel.
- **Scorched Perimeter → Sabotage.** Either the operators destroy remaining defensive infrastructure, or they rebuild it before the next wave arrives.
- **Kill Ratio → Salvage.** The battlefield is littered with high-value wreckage. Recover specific components before the opposing faction's salvage teams arrive.
- **Decapitation Strike → Assassination.** The enemy commander survived or escaped. Find and eliminate the command node before it rebuilds the autonomous network.
- **Burn the Relay → Demolition.** The relay network must be permanently destroyed, or the operators must defend it against a kill squad sent to finish the job.

25/

THE CONVENTION MODULE

Two hours. Six pre-built operators. One job. Walk in cold, leave wired.

25 · THE CONVENTION MODULE

Two hours. Six pre-built operators. One job. Walk in cold, leave wired.

Earth 2060. A two-hour insertion. Cameras off. Clock running.

A ready-to-run two-hour Skirmish scenario for organized play, store demos, and first-night games. Designed for no-GM Skirmish with one player taking the **facilitator** role — not a game master, just someone who runs the clocks, reads the scripted beats, and operates the opposition using the Solo Mode AI from chapter 8.

THE FACILITATOR'S JOB

A facilitator is not a GM. They do not improvise NPC voices, adjudicate intent, or invent new rules on the fly. Their job is four things:

1. Read the scripted beats aloud at the triggers noted below.
2. Run the Mission Clock and Threat Clock (turn counters).
3. Operate the opposition using the Solo Mode AI (ch. 8). Alert State escalations are scripted.
4. When a ruling is unclear, run SITREP and move on.

The facilitator may also play an operator if the table is short-handed.

DRAMATIC ENGINE

A freelance splice intercepts a silent alarm from a corporate research facility buried beneath a casino district. What was supposed to be a five-minute extraction becomes a timed race through a collapsing chain of command. Every turn burns option space. What the splice carries out shapes everything that follows.

CORE VERB

Extract. The splice pulls someone or something out of a dying situation. Every choice about how shapes what they carry out.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Two to four players plus a facilitator (the facilitator may also play an operator).
- One or more of the three pre-gen operators below (HAMMER, WREN, CATALYST). Add a fourth of the players' choice if the table has four.
- Skirmish rules (this book, Part I).
- D6 — two per player, two for the facilitator.
- Tokens: 5–7 Intel Markers. One Burned Asset Marker per player. One Threat Tracker. One Mission Clock tracker.
- A 24" × 24" play surface with terrain. 6–8 enemy standees. The pre-gens as operator standees. One civilian marker (the asset).
- 120 minutes.

SETUP (5 MINUTES)

Facilitator reads aloud.

BRIEFING

"You're running an after-hours job. Your contact says a research facility buried three levels below the Cascade Casino fired a silent alarm thirty minutes ago. Someone inside needs extraction. The Coalition wants them dead. Your contact wants them alive. You have two hours before Coalition reinforcements lock down the district. Get in. Find the asset. Get out. Carry whatever you can."

Hand out the pre-gens. Place operator tokens in the utility corridor at one table edge. Place two guard tokens at **Checkpoint A-1**, 12" down the corridor. The first roll should happen within 90 seconds.

PRE-GENERATED OPERATORS

HAMMER — REEVES COLE

BREACHER · BASELINE HUMAN · EX-CORPORATE SECURITY

SHOOT Ord · FIGHT Good · TACT Good · OPINT Bad · GUTS Good · MOBI 5"

ARMOR. Heavy Plate (AR 3, -1 MOBI).

LOADOUT. Compact carbine (18"), sidearm (12"), breach toolkit, stun charge, breaching charges x2, combat knife (+1 melee).

THROUGH THE DOOR. Once per operation, break a locked or sealed door (FIGHT 5+) without triggering an alarm. The breach is loud but silent.

STAKE. Reeves recognizes the voice on the contact line. This is the whistleblower who testified against the same handler who tried to disappear Reeves six months ago. They came to bury her. Reeves came to bring her home.

WREN — KAIA ASAKAWA

MARKSMAN · GENE-FORGED (LOW-LIGHT OPTICS) · EX-COALITION JOINT OPS

SHOOT Good · FIGHT Bad · TACT Ord · OPINT Ord · GUTS Ord · MOBI 5"

ARMOR. Light Vest (AR 1).

LOADOUT. Precision carbine (24", +1 to called shots), scope, sidearm (12"), signal jammer, smoke x1.

LOW-LIGHT OPTICS. No darkness penalty. Sees thermal signatures at range. Eyes glow faintly in darkness — cannot pass as unaugmented. +1 to all vision-based OPINT checks.

HIGH ANCHOR. Ignores vertical movement penalties. Roofs, elevated positions, climbing — 1:1.

STAKE. Wren's old command disbanded her unit after the "protective miss." The briefing mentions Coalition involvement. If she can prove Coalition leadership authorized this facility, she can clear her name.

CATALYST — MARCUS WEBB

TECH SPECIALIST · BASELINE HUMAN · INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR

SHOOT Ord · FIGHT Ord · TACT Ord · OPINT Good · GUTS Ord · MOBI 6"

ARMOR. Light Vest (AR 1).**LOADOUT.** Sidearm (12"), access toolkit, encryption breaker, hacking kit, smoke x1, recon drone.**TRAINED UP.** CATALYST has seen enough field action that their SHOOT and FIGHT are Ordinary, a step above the Tech Specialist baseline.**REROUTE.** Once per operation, reroute one security system (alarm, lock, camera feed) for 3 turns. What it protected becomes unguarded. What it ignored now gets monitored.**STAKE.** Catalyst's contact on this job is someone Catalyst burned three years ago. The contact agreed to hire them for one final op. "If you get the asset out clean, I forgive the Caracas disaster."**ACT 1 · INSERTION AND ORIENTATION (25–30 MIN)****Facilitator reads aloud.****SCENE**

"You're in a utility corridor leading down. Cold air, industrial hum. Thermal signature ahead. Two guards at Checkpoint A-1, about forty feet past them. One is reviewing a tablet. One is checking equipment. Neither has clear LoS down the corridor yet. What do you do?"

The checkpoint has three scripted resolutions. The first roll sets the Alert State for Sector 1.

- **Stealth approach** (TACT 4+). Success: team reaches Checkpoint A-1 undetected. Failure: one guard notices movement; the team chooses — engage or fade. Sector 1 starts Unaware on success, Suspicious on failure.
- **Direct negotiation** (GUTS 4+). Success: the guards stand down and let the team pass. Failure: suspicion rises; both guards get one reaction. Sector 1 starts Suspicious either way.
- **Eliminate from range** (SHOOT). WREN or another Good shooter takes the shot. Hit: one guard down, second goes Alert and radios the facility. Sector 1 starts Alert.
- **Anything else.** Shoot out the lights (TACT 4+ to hit the panel; corridor goes dark, enemies cannot see over 6"). Talk their way around. SITREP when unsure.

SECTOR 1 · THE MAINTENANCE DECK

Past A-1 opens into HVAC systems, power conduits, water treatment feeds. Place **Intel Marker 1** partially buried near a flooded console. Two enemy operators patrolling. Alert State inherits from the checkpoint resolution.

An operator in contact with the marker spends one action retrieving it, then one action rolling on the Intel Table (D6).

D6	INTEL (SECTOR 1)
1	Corrupted file. No information. Enemies hear you prying. Alert State increases one step.
2-3	“Project Epsilon — Testing Schedule 2026.” Names a containment ward in Sector 3. Don’t explain further.
4-5	Guard rotation schedule. Next Sector begins one state lower (Alert → Suspicious, Suspicious → Unaware).
6	Encrypted video. Dr. Sarah Chen is alive on Level 2 as of 14 hours ago. Testifying against Coalition command. +1 Edge.

ACT 2 · THE OPERATION (60–65 MIN)

Start both clocks.

- **Mission Clock: 7 turns remaining.** When it hits zero, reinforcements lock down the facility. Doors seal. Extraction closes.
- **Threat Clock: 5 turns to reinforcement arrival.** Starts counting the first time an alarm is raised (operator seen, weapon fired, equipment destroyed). When it hits zero, a Falcon-class drone and a Coalition ground team arrive. All locked doors shift to Hardened. Extraction becomes a firefight.

SECTOR 2 · THE ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL

Stairwell. Cold concrete. Locked doors every landing. Office space meets research containment. Two turns from Sector 3.

Enemy setup. One Enforcer (Commando stat line) at Checkpoint A-2. Two standard operators patrolling between offices. One NPC Officer — Captain Reeves — inside the administrative suite, downloading files. The Officer is not a combatant until engaged. Place **Intel Marker 2** on an unsecured laptop in the office.

How combat starts depends on Alert State inherited from Sector 1:

- **Unaware.** Surprise round — the splice acts first.
- **Suspicious.** Enforcer rolls GUTS 4+. Pass: engages. Fail: calls it in (Alert State escalates next round).
- **Alert.** Combat on sight.

D6	INTEL (SECTOR 2)
1	Security footage corrupted. Nothing learned. Enforcer acts twice next round.
2-3	Badge logs. Dr. Chen entered Sector 3 fourteen hours ago. She has not come out.
4-5	Project Epsilon was illegal biological testing. Command authorized it anyway. +1 Edge.
6	Dr. Chen is on the termination list. Time of death backdated to today. The asset is already dead on paper.

THE OFFICER — SCRIPTED TRIGGER

If the splice enters the administrative suite without raising the alarm, Captain Reeves looks up from the laptop and speaks. Facilitator reads aloud:

“I’m downloading evidence. The project was illegal. Command authorized it anyway. Dr. Chen was going to testify. Command had her terminated. Someone in your chain of command signed off. I don’t care who you are. I care about getting these files out. You help me past the Enforcer at A-2, I give you half the files and a head start.”

Options: accept the offer (the Enforcer stands down once Reeves speaks to them); refuse and continue the mission (Reeves takes the files and leaves through the back); incapacitate Reeves (triggers Alert State and escalates the Threat Clock by 1).

ACT 3 · CLIMAX AND EXTRACTION (20–25 MIN)

The splice reaches Sector 3. The door is sealed. Mission Clock reads 2. Extraction window is closing. Behind the door is a containment ward. Dr. Chen’s body is in a sealed medical pod.

Before opening the door, roll D6 for the Climax Variable.

D6 CLIMAX

- 1 **The System Is Purging.** Automatic destruction protocol. Save the files: OPINT 4+ for two rounds. Or destroy the entire record and walk out with nothing.
- 2 **There Is a Survivor.** One test subject survived. Barely conscious. Genetic markers visible. Extract them instead of (or in addition to) Dr. Chen.
- 3 **Reeves Was Right.** Captain Reeves is already in Sector 3 with the primary files. They offer an alliance or become a rival.
- 4 **The Enforcer Betrayed You.** The Enforcer sealed the door behind you. Coalition team inbound. Fight out or find another route (OPINT 4+ to find maintenance shaft).
- 5 **The Asset Wakes.** Dr. Chen is not dead. Comatose. The door opening wakes her. She is confused, afraid, and can walk — at half MOBI, cannot Sprint.
- 6 **The Climax Is Political.** No guards. No resistance. Sector 3 is empty. The body is sealed. The files are intact. Then a comm cuts in: “Dr. Chen is secured. Stand down. Extraction denied. You are not authorized to remove anything from this facility.” The voice is Coalition command — the splice has been played. The extraction was never the goal. The splice was. The contact who hired them has gone silent. Reinforcements arrive in 3 rounds to collect the splice itself, alive or dead. Fight out, run out, or negotiate a surrender.

THE EXTRACTION CHOICE

Before leaving Sector 3, the splice chooses what they carry out. This choice becomes the Burned Asset Token.

- **A. Save the Body.** Extract Dr. Chen (living or dead). She is evidence and, if alive, a permanent NPC contact.
- **B. Save the Files.** Extract the research documentation. Files are evidence of Project Epsilon. They can be leaked, weaponized, or sold.
- **C. Destroy Everything.** Burn Sector 3. Kill the power. Destroy the research. Walk out clean. No evidence, no asset, no proof.
- **D. Take the Survivor.** Only if Climax Variable 2 triggered. A completely new person. Unknown capabilities. Unknown loyalties.

THE EXTRACTION POINT

One turn to reach the rooftop. If the team is clean (Threat Clock did not expire), the extraction helicopter arrives on schedule. If hot, hold position against Coalition forces for 2–3 rounds. If pinned (extraction cut off), find an alternate route: maintenance tunnels, the adjacent building. Adds 10 minutes of play.

THE BURNED ASSET TOKEN

At the end of extraction, each player receives a physical Burned Asset Token (a coin, a laminate card, anything). Write on it:

[CALLSIGN]'S Burned Asset: [ASSET NAME / DESCRIPTION]

Examples: HAMMER's Burned Asset: Dr. Sarah Chen (whistleblower, rescued alive).

WREN's Burned Asset: Test Subject 9 (survivor, genetic unknown). CATALYST's Burned Asset: Project Epsilon files (data compromised but intact).

Take it home. The token carries forward if the player picks up the full campaign (see Operator Tactics Core Book). The asset saved, the evidence carried, the person left behind — all of it shapes what comes next.

PACING & VARIATIONS

- **30 min mark.** Team should have cleared Act 1 and be inside Sector 1 or at the A-2 checkpoint.
- **75 min mark.** Team should be in Sector 2, making Enforcer / Officer / Intel decisions.
- **105 min mark.** Team should have chosen what to extract and be running.
- **120 min mark.** Operation complete or in final extraction.
- **Running under 100 min.** Cut Sector 2 to a single encounter (Enforcer only). Combine Intel 1 and 2. Reduce Climax Variables to 1D4.
- **Running over 120 min.** Add Sector 4 (containment breach, rogue test subject). Expand Sector 2 with an engineering room. Add a downtime scene between Act 2 and Act 3.
- **Single-operator variant.** One player, one pre-gen. Use Skirmish Solo Mode rules (ch. 8) for all opposition. Facilitator optional — one person can run the whole thing solo.

FACILITATOR – SPEED RULES

Combat is not the interesting part. The decision about whether to fight is. If a combat round takes more than five minutes of real time, something is broken. Reframe: “Who shoots? Who moves? Who hacks? Resolve it, then tell me what happens next.” When a ruling is unclear, run SITREP and move on.

26/

THE CRACKERJACK: TOURNAMENT PLAY

Two thousand five hundred points. Six maps. The Splice that survives the bracket carries the season.

26 · THE CRACKERJACK: TOURNAMENT PLAY

Two thousand five hundred points. Six maps. The Splice that survives the bracket carries the season.

Every faction fields its best. Every syndicate sends its killers. Every year, the world watches.

The Crackerjack is the premier televised military combat tournament in the Operator Tactics world — held annually at the Global Special Operations Training Center (GSOTC) in the Saharan Desert. Teams from every faction, PMC, and black-market syndicate compete for prestige, contracts, and leverage. The arena is calibrated for spectacle. The cameras are always rolling.

This chapter gives you the rules to run the Crackerjack at your table, your local store, or your convention. Tournament format, competition-specific modifiers, scenario variants, pre-built teams, organizer guide. Uses the Skirmish rules from Part I with the modifications below.

THE GSOTC & THE SIEGE OF 2091

The GSOTC sprawls across 10,000 acres of adaptive terrain. It can simulate any combat environment on Earth — flooded urbs, irradiated ruins, jungle canopy, desert canyon, industrial sprawl. It is administered by a joint commission. Rules of engagement are enforced by automated arbitration and biometric med-evac. No faction owns it. No faction controls the broadcast.

In 2091, the Heralds of the Storm infiltrated the GSOTC during the competition, seizing critical systems and taking delegates hostage. The siege ended when Major Liam “Maverick” Gallagher and Captain Anya “Ironheart” Sokolova cornered the rogue operative known as The Viper in the central atrium. The Crackerjack Siege became the most-watched single engagement in the tournament’s history. The network has not shut the feed down since.

COMPETITION RULES

SQUAD FORMAT

- **500 points.** Large Game budget.
- **Five operators exactly.** No more, no fewer.
- **Class limits.** No more than two of any class.
- **Any gene-forged origin stream.** Commercial Stock, Bespoke Commission, Black-Market Deviation, Paleo-Stock, or Aberrant. The silhouette is the story.

BROADCAST RULES

Crowd Momentum (CM). A separate pool from Edge. Each team starts with 1 CM (max 3). At the end of each round, earn 1 CM (max 1 per round regardless of trigger count) if any of the following occurred: an operator removed an enemy from play, an operator completed a Performance Trigger, an operator successfully Showboated, or the team controlled an objective uncontested at round end.

Showboating. Once per game, an operator may declare a Showboat before making a Shoot, Fight, or Ability roll. On success: earn 1 CM immediately (ignoring the per-round cap). On failure: lose all CM.

Medical Extraction. When an operator goes OoA, automated medical drones extract them within 1 round. For tournament purposes, OoA operators are injured, not dead. See Triage below.

COMPETITION COMBAT MODIFIERS

- **Modifier Cap.** Total negative modifiers on any Shoot roll cannot exceed -2. The arena is built for fights, not standoffs.
- **Objective Cover.** Operators on or within 1" of an objective marker count as being in light cover. The GSOTC builds defensive positions into every objective.
- **Advance Under Fire.** A Breacher may spend both actions to move up to double their MOBI. After the move, the nearest enemy with LoS and range may take one free Snap Shot.
- **Call the Target (Competition).** Any operator may spend 1 action: TACT or OPINT 3+ (not 4+). On success: earn 1 Edge and all friendlies gain +1 Shoot against the target this round.

DEPLOYMENT

- **Standard operators.** Deploy within 6" of the table edge.
- **Infiltrators.** Deploy after everyone else, anywhere in the middle third of the board (more than 12" from either edge).

EDGE & MOMENTUM

Edge works as normal (start 2, max 4). Crowd Momentum is a separate pool (start 1, max 3). Both refresh at the start of each match.

TERRAIN PROTOCOL

Before each match, roll D6 for the arena. The GSOTC generates the terrain.

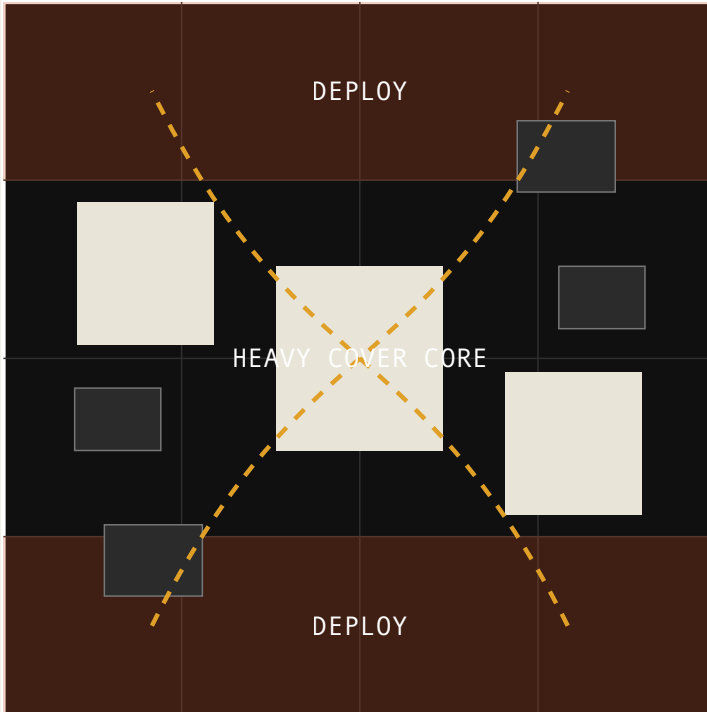
D6	PROTOCOL	SPECIAL RULE
1	Urban Sprawl	Buildings provide heavy cover. All climb distances halved.
2	Flooded District	Open ground counts as difficult terrain. Prone operators: GUTS 4+ or take 1 FW per round.
3	Industrial Complex	Three hackable terminals (OPINT 4+ to activate). Active terminal grants +1 Shoot to nearest friendly.
4	Desert Canyon	No light cover exists. All cover is heavy. LoS limited to 24" (heat shimmer).
5	Jungle Canopy	Terrain beyond 12" counts as heavy cover. Movement through vegetation +1" per 3".
6	Irradiated Ruins	End of each round: every operator in open ground rolls GUTS 4+ or takes 1 FW.

CRACKERJACK ARENA MAPS

These are terrain protocol overlays for 24" × 24" competition boards. Roll the scenario normally, then apply the arena map. Objective locations still come from the scenario unless the overlay marks terminals, flood basins, or hazard zones.

URBAN SPRAWL · CAMERA CANYON

BUILDINGS PROVIDE HEAVY COVER · CLIMB DISTANCES HALVED



ARENA INTENT

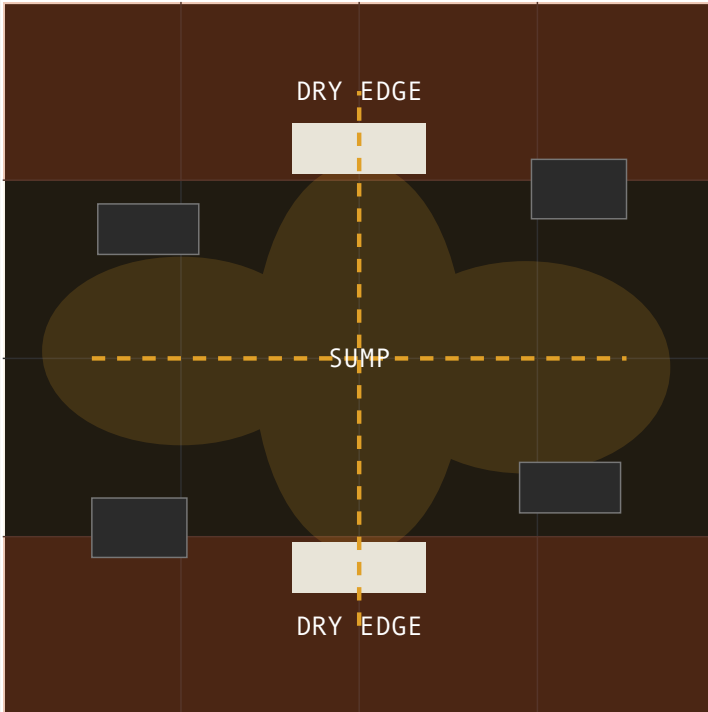
- Use buildings as heavy cover and elevated play.
- Keep alleys wide enough for vinyl-scale figures if needed.

BROADCAST USE

- Excellent for Crossfire and Total War.
- Round 4 Shifting Walls moves building footprints, not the whole block.

FLOODED DISTRICT · SUMP ARENA

OPEN GROUND IS DIFFICULT TERRAIN · PRONE OPERATORS RISK FW



ARENA INTENT

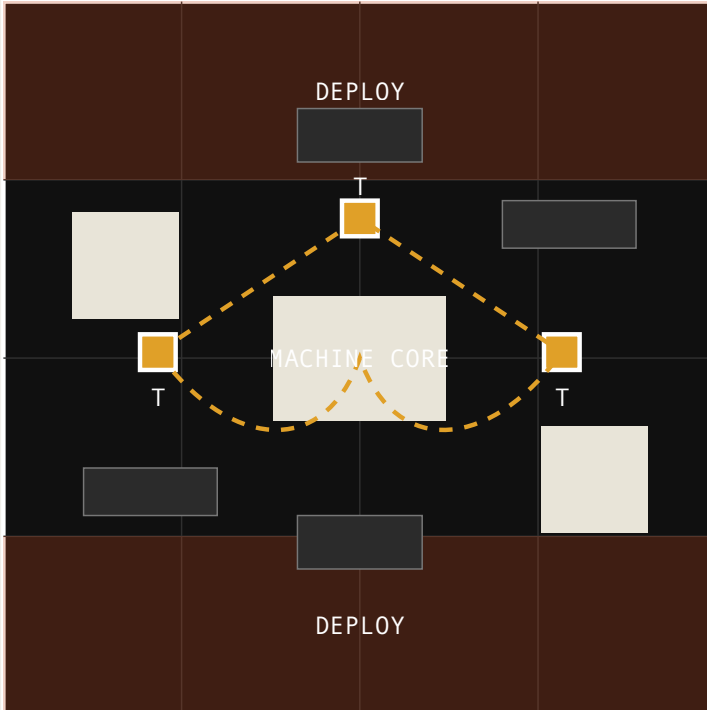
- Flood basins mark the slowest routes; raised strips are safer but exposed.
- Do not remove all cover from the basins.

BROADCAST USE

- Excellent for Smash & Grab and HVT.
- Terrain Flood expands the nearest basin by 3".

INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX · TERMINAL STACK

THREE HACKABLE TERMINALS · OPINT 4+ GRANTS +1 SHOOT TO NEAREST FRIENDLY



ARENA INTENT

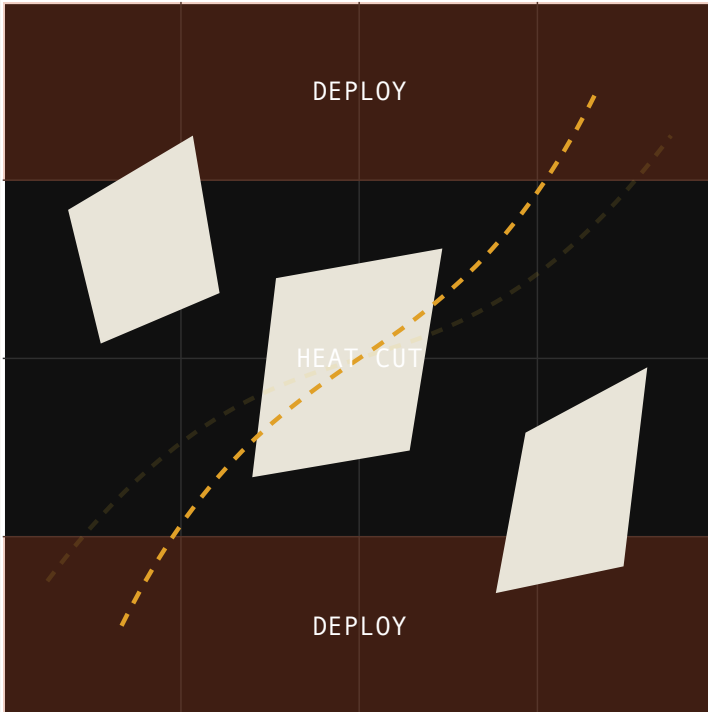
- Terminals sit in exposed lanes with nearby cover.
- Center machinery blocks clean board-length shots.

BROADCAST USE

- Excellent for Black Site and Crossfire.
- Blackout makes terminal control more valuable.

DESERT CANYON · HEAT CUT

NO LIGHT COVER · ALL COVER HEAVY · LOS LIMITED TO 24"



ARENA INTENT

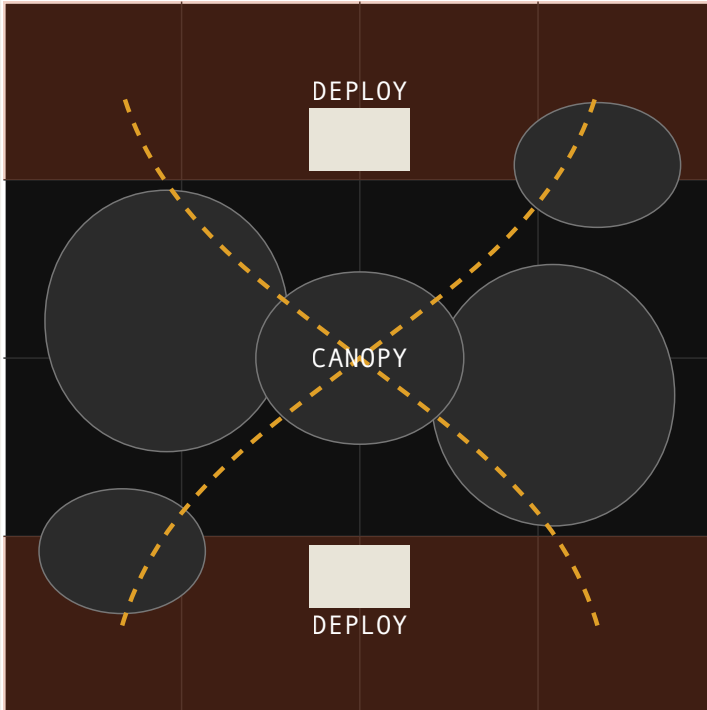
- Every cover piece is heavy; there are no soft positions.
- The canyon path encourages close contact through the center.

BROADCAST USE

- Excellent for Total War and HVT.
- Drone Strike lands in the canyon bend.

JUNGLE CANOPY · GREEN BLIND

TERRAIN BEYOND 12" IS HEAVY COVER · VEGETATION MOVEMENT +1" PER 3"



ARENA INTENT

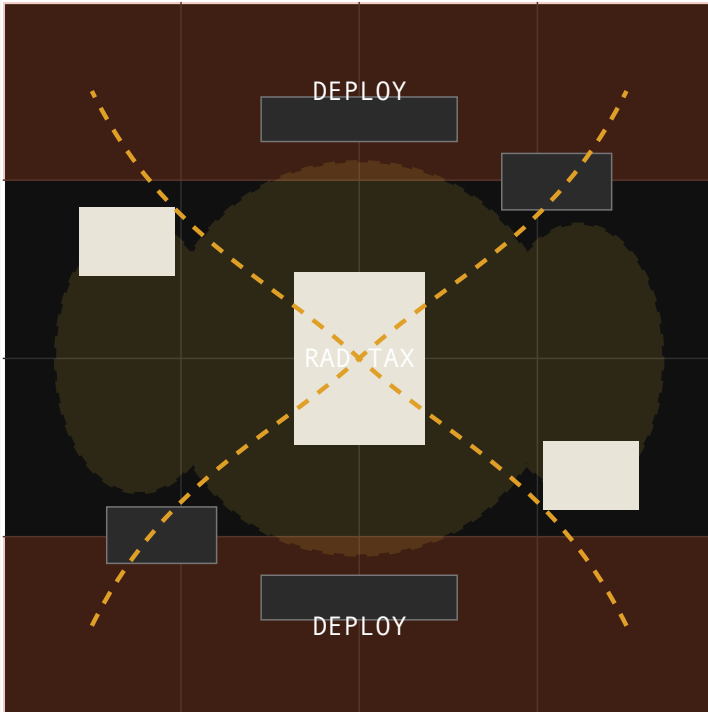
- Canopy masses create hidden approach routes, not walls.
- Fast operators can surf vegetation for tempo.

BROADCAST USE

- Excellent for Dead Drop and Black Site.
- Blackout stacks brutally; warn players before event play.

IRRADIATED RUINS · OPEN GROUND TAX

END OF ROUND: OPERATORS IN OPEN GROUND ROLL GUTS 4+ OR TAKE 1 FW



ARENA INTENT

- Yellow fields mark open-ground danger; cover is survival infrastructure.
- Objective cover matters more than usual.

BROADCAST USE

- Excellent for Crossfire and Smash & Grab.
- Crowd Surge helps the team trapped outside cover.

BACK MATTER

Designer notes. Changelog. Credits. The cross-reference for the Core Book.

DESIGNER NOTES

Skirmish and Iron Line tell the same story at two magnifications. Skirmish is the splice — three to six operators, one contract, a kitchen-table board. Iron Line is the machine war that happens around them — autonomous platforms grinding across a contested zone before the splice inserts. Both games share a D6, a natural 6 / natural 1 rule, and a resource that runs out at the wrong moment (Edge in Skirmish, Signal in Iron Line). What differs is abstraction. Wounds track a body; Strain tracks a machine. Actions measure a person's decisions; Movement Points measure a unit's inertia.

The design priority everywhere is the same: every rule should create a decision. Edge is a resource you can spend to change the story or save to bank against disaster. Reactions cost you your next action. Breach costs you your Heavy Plate-slow operator's entire turn. In Iron Line, Signal is the axis: spend it on EW and your enemy's formation crumbles, or hoard it for the round the relay beacon goes down. The rules are mostly there to make the decisions interesting.

The splice concept is load-bearing. Nation-state forces are mono-type by design — Kavast wolf packs, Protectorate raven flights, Compact bear formations. The splice is the opposite: mixed lineage, no shared flag, assembled under a single contract. This contrast is what makes the setting legible at the table without a lore dump. Your splice looks like a splice. Their enemy looks like an institution.

Iron Line's mechanical DNA — the keyword system, the Order matchups, and the explicit permission to play with whatever's in your parts bin — comes out of the broader tradition of accessible, kitbash-friendly wargaming. The OT-specific layer — Signal, the EW Suites, the Commander / Relay split — is where the setting speaks.

IRON LINE, PLAYTEST REPORT, ROUND 3

The NAF Assault Walker has advanced twice, taking a Strong-defence hit on the center-line. Its Strain is at 7. Overwatch EW has lit up an SCA Beast-Mech pack with Targeting Lock. The Beast-Mechs' next shot is at Clumsy (+5). The Commander's token sits exposed on the NAF Walker — Signal is at 2, the Architect Algorithm's System Tax is coming due again next phase. One more cascade and the middle folds. The SCA player spends their last four Signal on Root Hack to strip the Walker's Strong Defence. The Walker is still standing at the Scrap Phase. The middle holds. Round 4 begins with the line re-forming six inches further south than the defender intended.

CHANGELOG

v1.1 – Iron Line Patch Notes (post-playtest). A 3,000-point Signal Dominance playtest (NAF Adaptive Strike Force vs. EO Armored Advance) surfaced eight balance concerns. The patches below address all eight. Core Order/Signal/Integrity architecture is unchanged.

- **Initiative Seize.** Seize now requires exceeding the round number (not meeting-or-beating), and cannot be attempted on round 1. Previously, round 1 seize was an auto-win on a 1+ and distorted every deployment.
- **Killzone Designation (Overwatch Surge, 6 Signal).** Target must roll over Strain + 2 on 2D6 (previously straight over Strain). Fresh units at Strain 0 still need to beat 2; stressed units are no longer auto-Strained. Closes the “feed Signal, auto-pass tax” loop.
- **Jamming Pulse (Iron Curtain Pulse).** Cost raised 2 → 3. Fragile from this Pulse is now prospective only — it does not retroactively break pre-damaged units. Previously a 2-Signal coinflip could delete a 500-point unit at Strain 4.
- **EW without a Relay.** New Broadcasting clause: Pulses may still be broadcast at +1 Signal from any friendly unit if no Relay is in play. Hacks and Surges still require a Relay. Losing your last Relay is now a degradation, not a hard shutdown.
- **Processing Overload (Architect Algorithm).** Penalty now scales with timing: 4 Signal / 5 Interrupts if the Commander breaks rounds 1–3, 2 / 3 if later. A round-5 commander kill no longer hands the opponent a moot pile of Signal.
- **Artillery Rig.** Cost raised 350 → 400. Allowed weakness list expanded: Self-Destructive, Short-Ranged, Degraded, Clumsy (+2). The rig could not be priced down below 325; it now has real options for counterplay.
- **Deadly Shots.** Clarified that the second Strain on a nat-6 bypasses Implacable (but not Hardened). Prevents the upgrade from being a near-dead 100-point tax against capped targets.
- **Implacable cap.** Now explicitly per-attacker-per-activation, not per-round. Multiple attackers can still chain-Strain a Close Order unit; Surges, cascade, and movement Strain ignore the cap entirely. Close Order + Hardened is still tough — it is no longer unkillable.
- **Example army lists.** Updated to reflect new Artillery Rig costs.

What’s unchanged: Order keyword framework, Signal pool math (1 / 1,000 + 1 / Relay, cap 10), Integrity values, Strike allocation, Scrap Phase cascade, Commander upgrade slate (except Processing Overload timing), all Suite names and Pulse/Hack/Surge structure.

v1.1 – Skirmish Patch Notes (post-playtest). Three internal playtest games surfaced four corner-case exploits and one dead-end interaction. The patches below address all five without touching the core D6 loop or any point cost.

- **Ghost / Interact.** Interacting with a scenario objective now breaks Ghost. Previously, a Ghost-Infiltrator could pick up a Smash & Grab objective and extract through Stealth without counterplay — Game 2 ended Round 3 because of it.
- **Heavy Plate, ranged.** A natural 6 against Heavy Plate now inflicts 2 Flesh Wounds (previously 1). The plate still holds against MW on ranged attacks, but it no longer makes its wearer effectively immortal against small-arms fire — Game 1’s Breacher ate three Marksman nat-6s and two melee hits for a total of 2 FW.
- **Heavy Plate, melee.** A natural 6 on the melee armor check against Heavy Plate now inflicts MW, and the Breacher’s kit counts as Anti-Armor (treats Heavy Plate as AR 2 for melee armor checks). Close-in melee against heavy armor was a dead loop — three-plus rounds of locked combat with no realistic kill path.
- **Grenade, natural 6.** Dead-center strike now inflicts MW to the named target only and FW to others in the blast (previously MW to all). A single TACT 4+ no longer threatens to remove an entire huddle of operators on a 1-in-6 coinflip. The named-target MW keeps the drama; the FW-to-others keeps the splash damage relevant without being catastrophic.
- **Stealth break list clarification.** The general Stealth rules now also list “interact with a scenario objective” as a break trigger, matching the Ghost patch for non-Infiltrator sources of Stealth.

What’s unchanged: point costs, attribute thresholds, Edge economy, Reactions, wound track, action count, scenario VP math, Infiltrator base cost. All five patches are rules clarifications sitting on top of the existing system — no retraining required.

CREDITS

- **Operator Tactics, Terra Conflictus 2066.** Jesse Alexander.
- **Iron Line, keyword / Order / KCM architecture.** Drawn from the wider tradition of kitbash-friendly mass-battle wargaming.
- **Splice canon.** Defined in OT Splice Canon (project reference).
- **Playtest squads & encounter tables.** OT Skirmish Playtest Packet v3, Iron Line Playtest v0.1.
- **Art direction & visual system.** Operator Tactics Core Book design vocabulary.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK WITH THE CORE BOOK

- **Augments & gene-forged lineages.** Full rules in the Core Book. Skirmish treats them as flavor plus one class-compatible modifier.
- **Campaign Heat.** Core Book. Skirmish and Iron Line feed into Heat through the Crossover chapter.
- **Faction politics & setting history.** Core Book. This volume assumes the reader has (or will) read it.
- **Hex-crawl campaign layer.** Separate companion volume (OT Skirmish Hex Crawl).
- **Full solo RPG rules.** Separate companion volume (OT Solo Rules). This book contains only the tiny Skirmish Solo Mode (ch. 8).

QUICK CROSS-REFERENCE

SKIRMISH	IRON LINE	WHAT IT TRACKS
Threshold	Target Number	The D6 result you must meet or beat.
FW / MW / OoA	Strain / Integrity / Broken	Damage accumulation and removal from play.
Light / Heavy / Full Cover	Cover keyword / Fortified / Blocking	Protection from ranged fire.
Heat (campaign)	Signal (per battle)	A resource that runs out at the wrong moment.
Splice	Army	The player's force. Splice = 3–6 operators. Army = 3,000–5,000 points of units.
Operator	Unit	The player's deployable piece at each scale.

v0.1 DRAFT · This book is a playtest document. Rules will change. The splice will remain.

COLOPHON

Operator Tactics: Skirmish & Iron Line. Edition 1. Designed by Jesse Alexander.
Published 2026.

Set in IBM Plex Sans (body), Archivo Narrow (display), IBM Plex Mono (codes),
Newsreader (italic). All Open Font License. Printed on uncoated stock at A5 trim.

Skirmish is the small fight. Iron Line is the loud one. Both share a vocabulary, a dice
core, and a city full of machines that arrived before anyone called for them.

Use this manual standalone or alongside the Operator Tactics core rulebook. The
Splice Punk x TDR aesthetic governs every visual decision. The hum is real. The
dust is real. Bring your splice home.

01 BRIEF PG 1

THE HUM ARRIVES BEFORE THE MACHINES DO. BY THE TIME THE OPERATORS ARRIVE THE WRECKAGE HAS WRITTEN THE OUTLINE OF THE FIGHT.

Skirmish is the small game. Two splices, three to six operators each, sixty to ninety minutes on a kitchen counter. Same D6 core that runs the rest of the line.

Iron Line is the mass-battle companion. Drones, walkers, gun platforms, siege rigs. Same dice. Bigger scale. The fight that happens before the operators are inserted.

Both games share a setting, a vocabulary, and a dice core. Convention module and Crackerjack tournament rules in

02 SPECS FIELD MANUAL

<p>CHAPTERS</p> <p>26</p> <p>PLUS BACK MATTER</p>	<p>SCENARIOS</p> <p>6</p> <p>SKIRMISH / 4 IRON LINE</p>	<p>CLASSES</p> <p>6</p> <p>OPERATOR PROFILES</p>	<p>PLAYERS</p> <p>1-2</p> <p>SOLO MODE INCLUDED</p>
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FIELD MANUAL
 EDITION 01

SPLICES

- ASSAULT
- OVERWATCH
- INFILTRATOR
- BREACHER
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