


// GM + SOLO COMPANION |

OPERATOR TACTICS: THEATER OF THE MIND

| CLR: ACTIVE 

ZONE PLAY

RPG + SOLO

D6 CORE

A5 / NO MINIS

COMPANION

GM + SOLO GUIDE

- OPERATOR TACTICS RPG

THEATER OF THE MIND 2066

RUNNING THE RPG AND SOLO GAME

BY ZONE

NO TAPE MEASURE. NO TABLE.

THE MAP IS IN YOUR HEAD.

ZONES, NOT INCHES. DRAWN TERRAIN.

SHADOWDARK RANGE. MALIFAUX SIGHT.

// RPG // SOLO // ZONE PLAY // THEATER OF THE MIND // TC2066

GM + SOLO COMPANION

RPG COMPATIBLE



PT. I

ZONE SYSTEM

Distance ladder. Drawn terrain. Shadow sight.

PT. II

RUNNING IT

Sketch the map. Convert any mission off the page.

PT. III

SOLO

Enemies as cards. The oracle calls position.

REQUIRES

OT: RPG OR CORE BOOK

TC2066 // SPLICE PUNK

A5 / NO MINIS

OPERATOR TACTICS

THEATER OF THE MIND

Running the RPG and Solo Game by Zone

EDITION 01 · 2026 · TERRA CONFLICTUS

OT.TM // GM + SOLO COMPANION // A5

A way to run the Operator Tactics RPG and Solo game with no tape measure and no table. Operators move between named distances: Engaged, Close, Near, Far, Distant. Terrain is drawn as zones and tagged with traits. Line of sight is judged by height and shadow. Requires the Operator Tactics RPG or core book.

Skirmish and Iron Line keep their tape measures and are out of scope. The core D6 engine, every Shoot modifier, and the solo tools run unchanged. Only the way you handle space changes.

Design and Writing: Jesse Alexander

Setting: Terra Conflictus 2066

Lineage: Shadowdark, Mythic D6, Malifaux

CONTENTS

Ch. 00 Introduction - (p. 4)

Ch. 01 How Space Works - (p. 6)

Ch. 02 The Map and the
Mission - (p. 11)

Ch. 03 Solo Operations - (p. 15)

BACK MATTER

Quick Reference -

00/

INTRODUCTION

Put the tape measure away. The fight happens where you say it happens.

This is a way to run Operator Tactics with no tape measure, no three-foot table, and no built terrain. You draw the ground as boxes and arrows, or you describe it out loud. Operators move between named distances. The whole map fits on an index card.

Use it for the **RPG** and the **Solo game**. Nothing else.

SCOPE

Skirmish and Iron Line are tabletop wargames. They keep their tape measures, their boards, and their terrain pieces. Do not run them this way. Everything here is for GM-led RPG play and the solo engine, the modes where the action lives in the fiction instead of on a measured surface.

This mode pairs with larger figures. A 54mm operator that would never share a 24-inch board with eleven others sits on the table as a display piece while a token, or nothing at all, marks position. The model is art. The zone is the game.

WHAT CHANGES, WHAT DOESN'T

Almost nothing changes. The engine is the engine.

Unchanged. One D6, meet or beat. Good 2+, Ordinary 4+, Bad 5+. Two actions an activation. Three Flesh Wounds, two Mortal Wounds. Every Shoot modifier. Stealth, Alert States, Supply State, the Contaminated tag, Pressure and Edge. In solo: the five tools, the SITREP oracle, the Enemy AI Protocol, the Situation Engine. All of it runs as written.

Changed. Three things, and only these.

- **Distance is named, not measured.** Engaged, Close, Near, Far, Distant.
- **Terrain is drawn or spoken, not built.** Zones with traits stamped on them.
- **Line of sight is judged, not traced.** Tall things block. Behind tall things is shadow.

Learn those three and you can run any published OT mission off the page, inches and all.

One rule sits over all of it: **space is a relationship, not a coordinate.** When you are unsure, ask the fiction, drop it on the ladder, and let drama beat geometry. The rest is detail.

01/

HOW SPACE WORKS

Five distances. Tall things block. Behind tall things is shadow.

Space in this mode is a relationship, not a coordinate. Everything sits on a five-step ladder, and every range in the game lands on one of the steps.

ZONES AND BANDS

Two tools, and they are not the same tool.

A zone is a place on your sketch: a room, a yard, a stretch of street. It is where someone is.

A band is the distance between two operators: Engaged, Close, Near, Far, Distant. It is how far apart they are.

They run independently. Two operators can stand in the same zone and still be Close or Near apart. A big zone can hold several bands of separation. A small zone collapses to a single band. Track zones on the map. Track the band between whoever is shooting at whom.

THE DISTANCE LADDER

BAND	THE FICTION	USE IT FOR	OLD INCHES
Engaged	Knife range. Hands on.	Fight. Melee. Grapples.	base contact / 1"
Close	Same room. A few steps. A shout.	Close-quarters bonuses, surprise, takedowns.	0 to 6"
Near	Across the room. The killing range.	Standard firefight. No penalty.	7 to 18"
Far	Across the street. Down the corridor.	Reaching shots. -1 to Shoot.	19 to 30"
Distant	The far edge of the fight.	Snipers. Overwatch lanes. -2 to Shoot.	31"+

You don't announce inches. You announce the step. The guard is Near, behind Heavy Cover. The sniper is Distant, up on the gantry. That is a complete tactical picture.

Every range modifier you already know still applies. Far is still -1. Distant is still -2. You are renaming the ruler, not rebuilding it.

Engaged is the contact band. You reach it by closing into melee: the Fight action, a takedown, hands on the target. Stepping one band closer when you are already Close puts you Engaged. You don't drift into melee by accident. You move into it.

MOVING

You move by changing the band between you and what matters.

Move. One action. Step one band closer or farther. Or reposition anywhere inside your current zone: slide to that window, get behind that pillar.

Sprint. Two actions. Change two bands. Nothing else this activation. You are committed.

Reach. One band away is a Move. Two bands is a Sprint. Three or more takes longer than this turn. That is the whole movement question, answered without measuring.

Difficult ground. A zone with the Difficult trait costs your whole Move to enter or cross. That Move buys you the crossing, or one band of distance, not both. Rubble, floodwater, a wall of wrecked drones. It costs you the tempo.

Vertical. Climbing to the next level is one Move with a ladder or stair. Without one, roll TACT 4+. Fail and the action is gone, same as core.

Bodies. Move through friendlies, never enemies. You cannot end your move stacked on an ally.

OPTIONAL: WHEN AN INCH MATTERS

Sometimes a chase or an escape turns on exact speed. One band is about six inches. Most operators cross one band per Move. A fast operator, MOBI 8 or more, may reposition free inside the destination zone on arrival. Reach for this only when the distance is the drama.

SEEING: LINE OF SIGHT AND SHADOW

No models to trace between. You judge sight by height.

Low or tall. Low terrain, walls, wrecks, crates, railings, gives Cover, but you see and shoot over it. Tall terrain, buildings, container stacks, solid walls, is Blocking. Sight stops at it.

Shadow. The ground behind a Blocking feature sits in its shadow. Anything in that shadow is out of sight from the far side: it cannot be seen and cannot be targeted. Step out of the shadow and you are exposed again.

Elevation cuts the shadow. High ground sees over low cover and down into shallow shadow. You can target the operator crouched behind a low crate, but he still claims the crate's Cover modifier. Elevation removes the line-of-sight block, not the cover bonus. Tall Blocking terrain stays Blocking unless your height clearly overlooks it.

The default. You see everyone in your zone unless terrain, shadow, smoke, darkness, or Stealth says otherwise. You see into the next zone unless something Blocking sits between you. When two players disagree where a Blocking edge falls, run SITREP at Even and move on.

TERRAIN TRAITS

Stop building terrain. Start tagging it. A zone is a box. Its traits are what you write inside the box. Combine them freely.

Cover (Light or Heavy). -1 or -2 to anyone shooting in. Light is low walls and brush. Heavy is sandbag lines, barricades, rubble, vehicle hulks: the cover you fight from inside, which is why Heavy Cover is also Difficult to move through. A single clean wall is not Heavy Cover. It is Blocking.

Blocking. Tall. Stops line of sight. Casts shadow. Cannot be shot through.

Difficult. Costs your full Move to enter or cross. Rubble, mud, floodwater, dense growth.

Hazardous. End your activation here and it bites. The Contaminated tag is the standard one: GUTS 4+ or take 1 FW; gene-forged take 1 FW with no roll. Passing through is safe. Stopping is not.

Elevated. High ground. Sees over low cover, into shadow. +1 to Shoot from above, -1 to shooters below. Climb to reach it.

Impassable. No entry without a Breach.

One zone, many traits. A collapsed market hall is Heavy Cover, Blocking, and Difficult at once. On your sketch it is a box that reads RUINS: HvyCvr / Block / Diff. That is the entire terrain rule for that space. Done.

SHOOTING AND REACH AT A GLANCE

Combat resolves exactly as core. Declare a target you can see, set your threshold, stack modifiers, roll. The only thing the ladder touches is the range modifier.

TARGET IS	SHOOT MODIFIER
Engaged or Close	+0 (Close Quarters weapons: +1)
Near	+0
Far	-1
Distant	-2

Cover, elevation, prone, suppression, surprise, assist: all of it carries over untouched. Reactions trigger when you are shot at from Near or closer (the core within-12-inch reaction range, read onto the ladder). Overwatch fires at the first enemy that moves into a zone you can see. Grenades hit everyone in the target's zone. At building or district scale, that is the local cluster around the target, not the whole block. On a scatter they drift into a random adjacent zone. A natural 1 drifts back toward the thrower.

02/

THE MAP AND THE MISSION

Boxes and arrows. Pick the scale the scene needs. Run any mission off the page.

You are not drawing a battlefield. You are drawing a decision space.

DRAWING THE MAP

The zone sketch. Boxes and arrows. Each box is a zone: a room, a yard, a stretch of street. Write its traits inside. Draw lines for the routes between boxes, and mark which routes are Difficult, Blocked, or watched. That diagram is the whole map. An index card holds a building.

Build on the five bones. Every site has the five functional zones: Insertion, Approach Corridor, Objective, Kill Zone, Extraction. Draw those five boxes first. Detail the ones the operators actually reach. The Kill Zone is the open ground that punishes a straight line. Give it Distant sightlines and no cover, and make them respect it.

PICK A SCALE PER SCENE

Zoom the zones to the action.

- **Room scale.** Each zone is a room or a corner of one. For breaches, interrogations, the inside of the objective.
- **Building scale.** Each zone is a floor, a wing, a courtyard. For patrols, infiltration, a running fight through a complex.
- **District scale.** Each zone is a city block, a flooded sector, a checkpoint. For approach, escape, the chase out.

The rules do not change when the scale does. A Move is still one band. You are deciding what a band means this scene, a hallway or a city block, and you can change it between scenes as the camera pulls in and out.

Draw it or speak it. A sketch helps when geometry gets thick. A sentence works the rest of the time. You are in the loading dock. Heavy Cover behind the pallets, a Blocking container wall to the north, the lit office is Near through the door, and the yard past it is open Kill Zone out to Distant. That description is a legal, complete map. Say it and play.

CONVERTING A PUBLISHED MISSION

Every OT mission, scenario card, and stat block is written in inches. Read them straight and translate as you go. Two tables do all the work.

DISTANCES BECOME BANDS

THE PAGE SAYS	YOU SAY
base contact / within 1"	Engaged
within 6" / Short / close quarters	Close
7 to 18" / Medium	Near
19 to 30" / Long	Far
31"+ / Extreme	Distant
MOBI in inches	one band per Move (Sprint is two)

TRIGGERS BECOME BANDS

THE PAGE SAYS	YOU SAY
"within 6"" (detection, surprise, stealth breaks in the open)	Close or Engaged
"within 8"" (alert, spotting checks)	Near or closer
"within 12"" (reactions, Aware on nearby gunfire)	Near or closer
detection in Low Light (4")	Engaged or adjacent only
grenade blast (3")	the target's zone
flashlight cone (6")	one zone you point it at (room or building scale)

Two numbers stay numbers, because they are not distances: wounds and dice thresholds. Everything spatial collapses onto the ladder.

WHEN YOU'RE NOT SURE

You will hit a question the ladder does not obviously answer. Resolve it in this order and keep moving.

1. **Ask the fiction.** Where would this realistically be? Most of the time the answer is obvious and you just say it.
2. **Drop it on the ladder.** Pick the band that fits. Do not agonize between Near and Far. Pick one and commit.
3. **Roll SITREP** only if it is a true coin-flip. Apply the result. Two checks per situation, maximum, then you decide.

Drama over geometry. When the cinematic answer and the precise answer disagree, the operators are wherever makes the next decision hard. You are not simulating a battlefield. You are running a scene that bites.

03/

SOLO OPERATIONS

Your splice against the protocol. The oracle calls position.

The solo engine was built for this. It already runs the world with oracles and protocols instead of a measured board. The inches were always the soft part.

THE ORACLE IS YOUR SPACE REFEREE

When position is genuinely uncertain, ask SITREP. Is there cover between me and that muzzle flash? Did backing off to Far break his line? Is the extraction route still clear? Two checks per situation, then commit. The dice decide the geometry you cannot see.

TRACK EACH ENEMY AS A CARD

An enemy's entire position is three facts: its zone, its band to you, and its alert state. Write them on a slip. Soldier, Objective zone, Near, Committed. When it moves, update the band. That is Fog of War's waypoint token, running in your head, with no model on a board.

CONVERT THE ENEMY TREES

The Enemy AI Protocol and the Solo Enemy Trees are written in inches. Translate them the same way you translate a mission.

- "Fire only if the operator is within 8"" becomes fire only if you are **Near or closer**.
- "Move 3" toward the last known noise" becomes shift **one band** toward it.
- "Gunfire within 12" makes it Aware" becomes gunfire **Near or closer** flips it Aware. Shot at directly is Committed.
- "Advance, no LoS, full MOBI toward last known position" becomes move **one band** toward your last known zone.
- "Hold" becomes stay in the zone, take cover, do not chase.
- Heavy: "within 10" is Aware" becomes **Near or closer** is Aware. "Max 2" per activation" becomes it shifts **one band only when forced**, and never chases. Its suppression zone is a named box on your sketch.
- Hostile Asset: "moves 4" toward the nearest exit" becomes **one band** toward the exit each activation.

Everything else in the Protocol runs unchanged: Action Priority, Target Priority, Threat Keywords, the activation trees. "Closest operator in LoS" just means the one in the nearest band you can see.

Solo at the table. You roll up to breach a relay station. You sketch five boxes: dock, corridor, control room, the open server floor (Kill Zone, Distant sightlines, no cover), and the roof exit. A Grunt card reads Corridor, Near, Passive. You move Close and knife it. SITREP at Likely for a clean takedown: 5, Yes. No noise. The card flips to removed. The control room is one band on. You have not measured a thing, and the station is completely real.

QUICK REFERENCE

One spread. Keep it open at the table.

One spread. Bands, movement, sight, terrain, conversion, solo. Keep it open at the table.

DISTANCE LADDER

Engaged (melee) · Close (to 6", +1 close quarters) · Near (default, +0) · Far (-1) · Distant (-2).

MOVE

One action: change one band, or reposition in-zone. Sprint: two bands. Difficult: full Move to cross. Climb a level: one Move, or TACT 4+.

LINE OF SIGHT

Low terrain: Cover, see over it. Blocking terrain: stops sight, casts Shadow. In shadow: cannot be targeted. Elevation sees over cover and into shadow.

TERRAIN TRAITS (STAMP ON A ZONE)

Cover (Light -1 / Heavy -2, Heavy is Difficult) · Blocking · Difficult · Hazardous (Contaminated: GUTS 4+ or 1 FW; gene-forged auto 1 FW) · Elevated (+1 down / -1 up) · Impassable.

THE MAP

Boxes are zones, arrows are routes, traits written inside. Five bones: Insertion, Approach, Objective, Kill Zone, Extraction. Scale per scene: room, building, district.

CONVERT A MISSION

THE PAGE SAYS	YOU SAY
to 1"	Engaged
6"	Close
7 to 18"	Near
19 to 30"	Far
31"+	Distant

THE PAGE SAYS	YOU SAY
within 12"	Near or closer
blast 3"	whole zone
MOBI inches	one band per Move

SOLO

Each enemy is zone + band + alert state on a slip. SITREP for uncertain position, two checks maximum. Enemy tree inches convert by the same table.

UNSURE?

Fiction, then ladder, then SITREP. Drama over geometry.

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

The five-step ladder is Shadowdark's Close, Near, Far, widened to fit OT's range bands. The zone-and-oracle handling of space is the lineage of D6 play like Mythic D6, where position is a relationship, not a coordinate. The terrain traits and the Blocking-and-Shadow line of sight are Malifaux's terrain language, flattened from 3D onto a drawn map. None of it touches the core engine. It is a different lens on the same war.

OPERATOR TACTICS: THEATER OF THE MIND

Edition 01 · 2026

A GM and Solo companion for the Operator Tactics RPG. A way to run the game theater-of-the-mind style: zones instead of inches, drawn terrain tagged with traits, line of sight judged by height and shadow.

The core D6 engine is untouched. Thresholds, the two-action economy, wounds, every Shoot modifier, Stealth, Alert States, the solo tools, and the Situation Engine all run as written. Only the handling of space changes. Skirmish and Iron Line are out of scope.

The distance ladder comes from Shadowdark. The zone-and-oracle handling of space is D6-system lineage by way of Mythic D6. The terrain traits and the Blocking-and-Shadow line of sight are Malifaux, flattened onto a drawn map.

Typography: Archivo Narrow (display) · IBM Plex Sans (body) · IBM Plex Mono (codes) · Newsreader (italic)

// THE MAP IS IN YOUR HEAD //

01

BRIEF

OT.TM

NO TAPE MEASURE. NO TABLE. THE MAP IS IN YOUR HEAD.

Theater of the Mind is the GM and Solo companion for running the Operator Tactics RPG with no tape measure, no table, and no built terrain.

Operators move between named distances. Terrain is drawn as zones and tagged with traits. Line of sight is judged by height and shadow. Any inch-based mission converts off the page.

The core D6 engine is untouched. Skirmish and Iron Line keep their rulers and are out of scope.

02

SPECS

GM + SOLO

<p>PARTS</p> <p>3</p> <p>+ QUICK REF</p>	<p>BANDS</p> <p>5</p> <p>ENGAGED TO DISTANT</p>	<p>FORMAT</p> <p>A5</p> <p>RPG + SOLO</p>	<p>ENGINE</p> <p>D6</p> <p>RPG CORE</p>
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03

CONTENTS

A5 FORMAT

00	INTRODUCTION	03	SOLO OPERATIONS
01	HOW SPACE WORKS	B	QUICK REFERENCE
02	MAP + MISSION		

ZONE PLAY
NO MINIS

RUNS

- **RPG**
- SOLO
- ANY MISSION
- THEATER OF MIND

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