MAELSTROM'S EDGE

Rules Preview

RULES INTRODUCTION

Although set in the far future, the rules for Maelstrom's Edge features unit-based gameplay squarely focused on the current real-world combat principles of suppression and maneuver. Both sides must constantly vie for mission objectives, as the game can end on any turn; all while dealing with the ever present threat of enemy reinforcements.

TURN OVERVIEW

A turn in Maelstrom's Edge is broken down into three distinct phases:

COMMAND PHASE

In the command phase, off-table headquarters decide whether or not to send more troops into battle, try to prevent the enemy's reinforcements from arriving and issue orders to their commanders.

- **Roll for Priority:** Players roll-off, with the winner choosing who is the priority player for the turn. The priority player does everything first, including making the first unit activation in the action phase. However, as it can be quite advantageous to see what the opponent does before responding, being the priority player is not always an enviable position!

- **Generate Command Points:** Command points are essentially a currency used to bid for reinforcements, block the opponent's reinforcements and, during the action phase, to reduce suppression on units near your command models. Each turn, you generate command points equal to the current turn, plus additional points for each command model you have on the table.

- **Reinforcements:** Each turn, both sides can bring back a single unit destroyed earlier in the game, but you must win a secret command point bidding war against your opponent in order to do so.

ACTION PHASE

The action phase is, as you'd expect, where all the action happens. Maelstrom's Edge is an alternating activation style game, where players alternate back and forth activating units, rather than one side moving and shooting with all of their units first before their opponent gets a chance to react.

- **First Activation:** The priority player activates one (and only one) of their units.

- **Remaining Activations:** After that, players take turn activating units. However when it is a player's chance to activate a unit, they have the option to activate just one unit, or after seeing how their first activation turns out, they can then choose to activate a second unit. This allows you to either press an immediate advantage by activating two units in a row, or instead activate only a single unit, holding back your remaining units until you see what your opponent will do next.

- **Final Activation:** The non-priority player always has the option of making the very last activation of the turn, by holding off activating their last unit until the priority player has finished activating all of their units first.

END PHASE

The end phase determines the ebb and flow of battle, as both sides check whether they've accomplished enough to rule the day.

- **Calculate VPs & Check for Mission Completion:** Victory points are tabulated at the end of every turn, with each mission having a distinct total that determines when the mission has been completed. If either side reaches the mission completed total and their VP total is a certain margin above their opponent's (usually at least 3 VPs more), then the game ends on that turn! This makes it vitally important to compete for mission objectives from the first turn to the very last.

SUPPRESSION

Suppression plays a major role in Maelstrom's Edge and is tracked through the use of suppression tokens (STs). Units gain STs when they are fired at, take damage, etc. Each time a unit finishes its activation, it gets to remove (shake-off) some of its STs. The more STs a unit has on it, the more likely it will be forced to perform a compulsory action when it is activated.

VERSUS ROLLS

Maelstrom's Edge is a D6 (six-sided dice) based game, and the vast majority of rolls in the game are what is known as a versus roll (VS. roll). Once you grasp the mechanics of a VS. roll, you won't ever need to check a rulebook to see whether your rolls have succeeded or failed. A VS. roll requires two opposing values, known as the attacker and defender values; these are often the characteristics of the two models involved in the roll. For example, when rolling to hit, the attacker value is the firing model's skill (SKL) characteristic, while the defender value is the target model's evasion (EVS) characteristic. The result needed for a VS. roll to succeed/fail is always calculated as such:

- If the **attacker** value is at least double the **defender** value – a **2+** is needed to succeed.
- If the **attacker** value is greater than the **defender** value, but not at least double – a **3+** is needed to succeed.
- If the **defender** value is greater than or equal to the **attacker** value, but not at least double – a **4+** is needed to succeed.
- If the **defender** value is at least double the **attacker** value – a **5+** is needed to succeed.

UNIT ACTIVATION

When a unit is activated in the action phase, you must first take an activation discipline check to see whether it will perform an action of your choosing. If this test is failed, the unit will be forced to perform a compulsory action instead. The chance of passing this test is dependent upon the mental will of the unit versus the amount of suppression they currently have. A discipline check is a single VS. roll, with the attacker value being the unit's discipline (the squad leader's Willpower characteristic), and the defender value being the number of STs currently on the unit.

A unit that has no STs on it automatically passes its activation discipline check, while a unit that has STs triple or more than its discipline value automatically fails.

VOLUNTARY ACTIONS

If a unit passes its activation discipline check, you may choose a voluntary main action for it to perform:

- **Advance & Fire:** A standard tactical advance. The unit moves forward at a steady pace, taking cover where available and fires on enemy positions with aimed shooting.
- **Charge:** A desperate gamble to drive the enemy back. The unit rushes forward at double speed to engage an enemy unit in close quarters fighting.
- **Dash:** High-speed redeployment. A double speed move and the unit can fire wildly (needing to roll 6's to hit).
- **Dig-in:** The unit hits the deck, to maximize protection from enemy fire and recover from suppression, but sacrifices some of its ability to fire defensively in order to do so.
- **Hold & Fire:** The unit plants its feet and fires. They can choose to either blaze away with Suppression Fire, or with the extreme precision of Focused Fire.

COMPULSORY ACTIONS

If a unit fails its activation discipline check, it must perform a compulsory main action dependent on how many STs it has:

- **Compulsory Dig-in:** *The unit has less STs than its unit discipline.* The unit is forced to Dig-in exactly as above.
- **Shaken:** *The unit has equal or more STs than its unit discipline.* Shaken units become pinned and fire wildly at the nearest target. However, if the enemy is too close, then they are forced to retreat instead.

DEFENSIVE FIRE

Any shooting that occurs within 6" of its target is considered to be short range. Although this gives bonuses to the firing unit, it also means the target first gets to fire defensively. The unit firing defensively must take a discipline check, and if they pass, their defensive fire is resolved like a normal round of shooting; however if they fail, their defensive fire is wild (needing to roll 6's to hit). This makes attempting to shoot at an enemy at short range, including attacking at close quarters after a charge, nearly suicidal unless the enemy has been properly suppressed ahead of time!

The Karist Troopers are in the rear arc of the Eperian Contractor unit, as half their models are within the Contractor squad leader's rear arc.

Unit Front/Rear Arcs

UNIT FACING

The squad leader model is the focal point of a unit. Unit coherency and line of sight are determined by the squad leader, as are the unit's front and rear arcs (the rear 180° arc of the squad leader model). Units are more vulnerable when they have been outflanked, including automatically failing their defensive fire discipline check when their attackers are behind them.
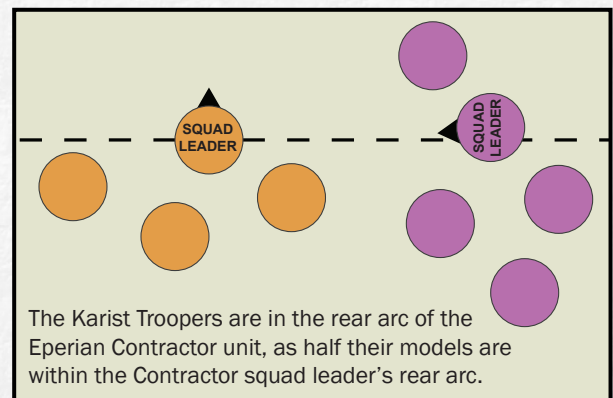
SAMPLE TURN

Below are gameplay examples from the Action phase of Maelstrom's Edge, to help illustrate the basics of the rules. **Matt** is commanding the **Karist Enclave** force, while **Danielle** is in control of the **Epirian Foundation** forces. In the previous command phase, Matt won the roll-off for priority and elected to make Danielle the priority player for the turn, which means Danielle has to make the first unit activation.
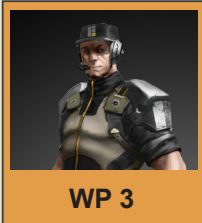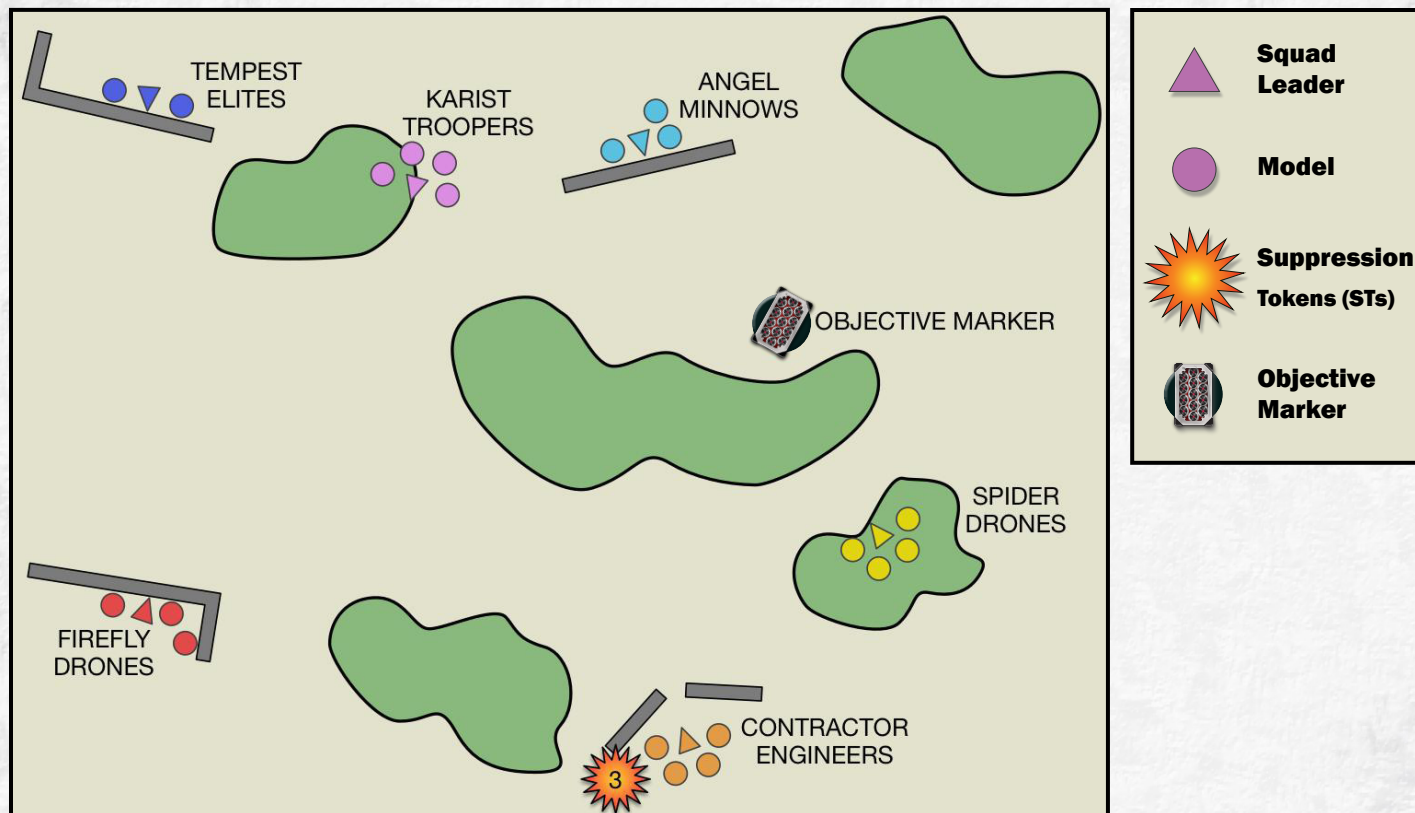

EXAMPLE 1: ADVANCE & FIRE ACTION

1A: ACTIVATION DISCIPLINE CHECK

Danielle elects to activate her Contractor Engineer unit, which has 3 STs on it from the previous turn. The unit's squad leader (the Contractor Team Leader) has a Willpower (WP) characteristic of 3 versus the 3 STs on the unit, which means a 4+ is required to pass their activation discipline check. Danielle rolls a 4, successfully passing the check.

Unfortunately, the Contractor unit does not currently have a valid target to shoot at, as area terrain (the forest) blocks line of sight to the other side of itTherefore, Danielle elects to perform an Advance & Fire action, which allows the unit to move before it fires.

Activation Discipline Check
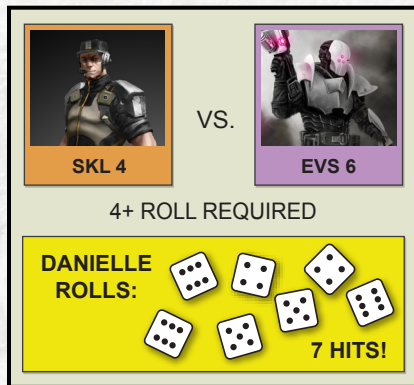
1B: MOVEMENT

An advance & fire action allows the Contractor unit to make a standard single move, which means they can move up to their Move (MV) characteristic in inches, which is 7".

If a unit isn't going to end their move taking cover (with at least half its models in/behind cover), then they gain an additional +D3" (a D3 is just a D6 with the result halved, rounding up). This is rolled before deciding where the unit will move (pre-measuring distances being always allowed). However in this case, 7" is plenty of distance for Danielle to get the Contractors both within line of sight to Matt's Karist Trooper unit and still end their move in cover.

Intervening terrain that models pass over while moving does not affect how far they can move, provided the terrain isn't 2" or taller. If it is, then the vertical distance the model moves (straight up and/or down) is counted.

1C: SHOOTING - ROLLING TO HIT

After moving, the Contractor unit fires a round of shooting, which in this case is directed at Matt's Karist Trooper unit. When a unit is the target of a round of shooting, it automatically gets a ST, even if none of the shots actually end up hitting them.

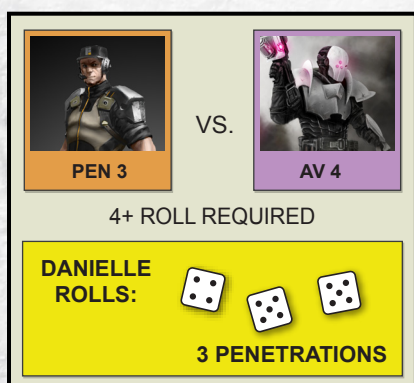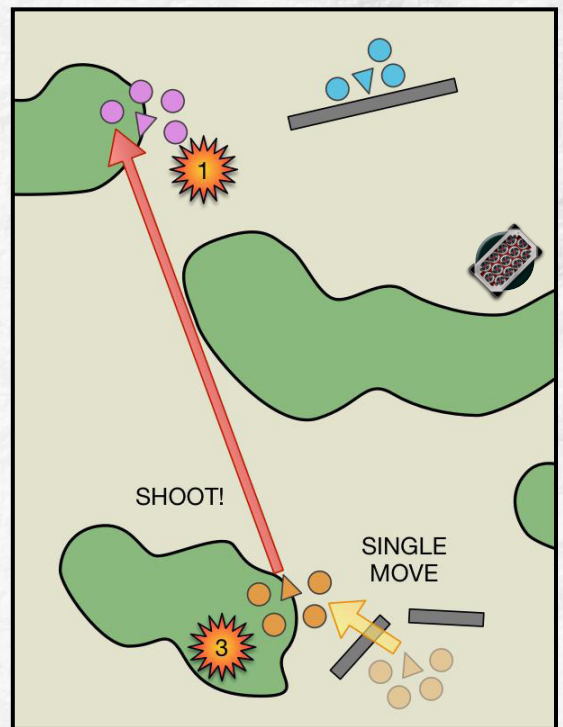Contractors have Maglock Assault Rifles with a Shots (SHO) characteristic of 2. This determines how many dice are rolled when the weapon is fired. As there are five contractors in the unit, this will be a total of 10 dice being rolled to hit.

Rolling to hit is a VS. roll, with the Contractor's Skill (SKL) characteristic of 4 against the Karist Trooper's Evasion (EVS) characteristic of 3. Since the Karist unit is in cover (at least half their models are in or behind cover), they are considered a fleeting target and double their EVS to 6. That means Danielle needs to roll 4+ to successfully hit; but she rolls spectacularly and manages 7 hits!

Single Move

SKL 4 VS. **EVS 6**

4+ ROLL REQUIRED

DANIELLE ROLLS:

7 HITS!

Rolling to Hit

1D: SHOOTING - COVER

Units in cover automatically ignore a certain number of hits based on the cover they're in. The Karist Troopers are in standard cover, which means they ignore 2 of their 7 hits. However, for every hit ignored, the unit gains another ST; which means the Trooper unit gains 2 more STs, for a total of 3.

Standard Cover ignores 2 hits, but they gain a ST for each

Cover

1E: SHOOTING - ROLLING TO PENETRATE

PEN 3 VS. **AV 4**

4+ ROLL REQUIRED

DANIELLE ROLLS:

3 PENETRATIONS

Rolling to Penetrate

The remaining 5 hits on the Karist Troopers must be rolled to see whether they are able to penetrate their armor or not. Rolling for penetration is another VS. roll with the Maglock Assault Rifles Penetration (PEN) characteristic of 3 against the Karist Trooper's Armor (AV) characteristic of 4. That means Danielle again needs to roll 4+ to successfully penetrate; which she manages to do 3 times.

1F: SHOOTING - REMOVING CASUALTIES

The 3 successful penetrations must now be applied by Matt onto specific Trooper models in his unit. However, once a model has a penetration applied onto it, that model must continue to have penetrations applied to it until it is removed as a casualty or the round of shooting is finished. Matt decides to start applying the penetrations onto models that aren't actually in the cover, so as to help keep the unit overall in cover.

Maglock Assault Rifles have a Damage (DAM) characteristic of 1, which means every penetration applied inflicts 1 point of damage. Karist Troopers have a Mass (MAS) characteristic of 2, which means it takes 2 points of damage before they suffer an injury and are removed as a casualty. That means Matt removes only a single Karist Trooper model from the unit, with the leftover point of damage discarded once the round of shooting is over.

Finally, the Karist Troopers gain STs equal to half the damage that was inflicted onto models in the unit (rounding up). That means they gain 2 more STs, bringing them to a grand total of 5 STs from that round of shooting.
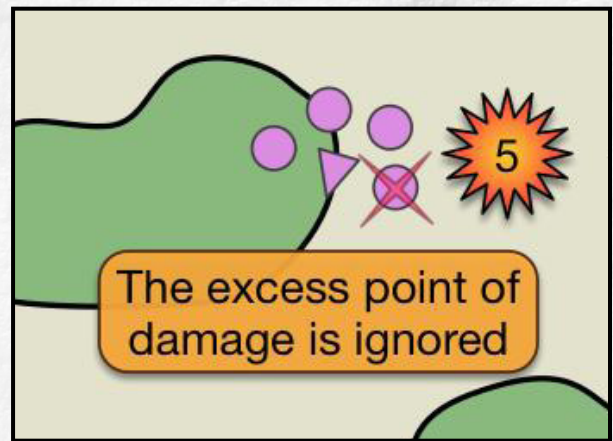
Casualty Removal
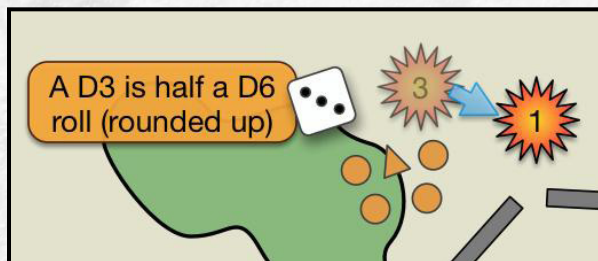
1G: SHAKING-OFF STs

As the Contractors have finished their main action for the turn, Danielle rolls a D3 to see how many STs they remove (shake-off); which results in the Contractors losing 2 STs, leaving them with only 1 remaining.

**Shaking-off STs**

EXAMPLE 2: DASH ACTION

Matt activates his Karist Troopers, and passes their activation discipline check. Matt would love to fire right back at Danielle's Contractors, but while they were within the 24" range of their Maglock Assault Rifles, his Troopers only have an 18" range with their Pulse Carbines. Matt could still elect to fire at a target beyond their range, but those shots would be wild (needing to roll 6s hit), so he instead elects for a Dash action. A Dash allows the unit to make a double move, which is a move up to double the Troopers MV 6 (so up to 12"), plus an additional 2D3" if the unit doesn't end this move in cover.
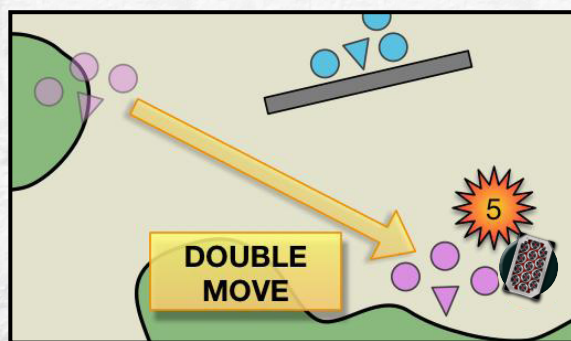
Matt rolls an extra 5" of movement (for a grand total of 17") and decides to claim the objective marker near the forest, by moving one of the Troopers into contact with it. By not ending their move in the forest, not only do they gain bonus movement, but it also means that the Eprians on the far side of the forest cannot draw line of sight to them.

Out of Range

Dash also allows the Troopers to fire a round of wild shooting after they finish moving, but unfortunately they don't have line of sight to any Epirian targets. Finally, Matt rolls to shake-off STs, but only manages to remove 1, leaving them with 4 remaining.
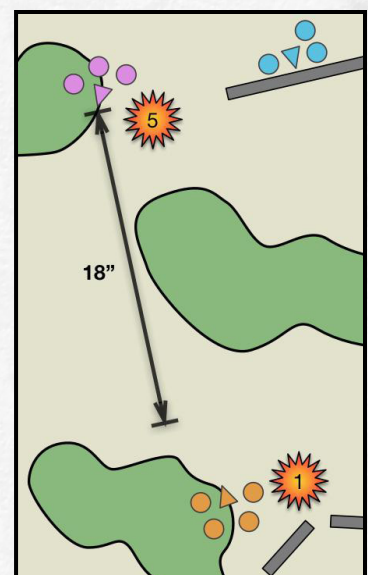
Double Move

EXAMPLE 3: HOLD & FIRE ACTION

Although Matt could pass the opportunity to activate a unit back to Danielle, he instead decides to press the advantage and activate a second unit in a row: his Tempest Elites, who with the 24" range of their Ravager Pulse Cannons, are within striking distance of Danielle's Firefly Drone unit. Matt elects a Hold & Fire action for them, as they automatically pass their activation discipline check because they have no STs.

The Tempests cannot move at all during a Hold & Fire action, but in exchange they get a special round of shooting: either Suppression Fire (which adds bonus STs onto the target), or Focused Fire (which improves their chances to hit). Although Tempests have a high SKL 5, Firefly Drones are extremely agile and have an EVS 5 (doubled to 10 because they are in cover), which means he'd need to roll a 5+ to hit. Therefore, Matt chooses to go with focused fire, improving what they need to hit by one (4+ instead of 5+).

Unfortunately, Matt has a streak of bad luck with his rolls to both hit and penetrate and winds up with only 2 penetrations. Fireflies are small robots and only have MAS 1, which means each penetration causes an injury, removing a total of 2 drones. This also results in the Fireflies gaining 4 STs (1 for being the target of the shooting, 2 more for the hits ignored by cover and 1 more for half of the 2 points of damage inflicted).
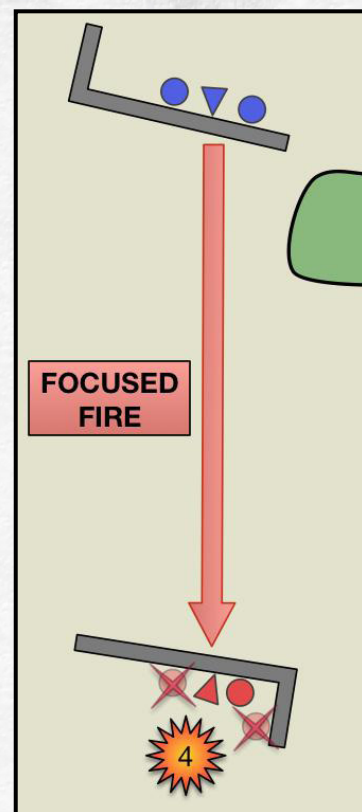
Focused Fire

EXAMPLE 4: SHORT RANGE & DEFENSIVE FIRE
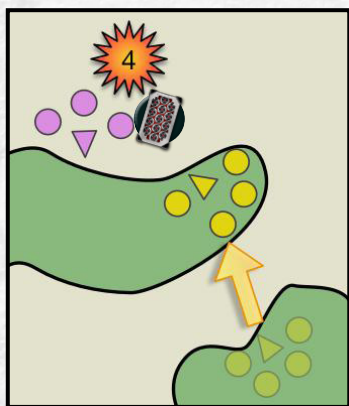
Moving Into a Forest

Danielle activates her Spider Drones which, having no STs, automatically pass their activation discipline check. She elects for them to perform an Advance & Fire action, moving them up into the forest so that they are within 3" of the mission objective, thereby contesting the Karist Troopers. However, being in the forest now means they can draw line of sight out of the forest, but conversely can be spotted from outside of it as well.

Danielle decides to fire at the Karist Troopers. However, as this target is within 6", it is a short ranged shot, which means it first triggers a round of defensive fire from the Troopers. A unit firing defensively must pass a defensive fire discipline check, and if failed, their defensive fire is wild. However, Matt passes the check (needing a 4+, based on their squad leader's WP4 against the unit's 4 STs), which is bad news for the Spider Drones.

Targets of defensive fire always double their EVS for being a fleeting target, but do not count as being in cover otherwise. This results in Danielle losing 3 Spider Drones as casualties and the unit gaining 3 STs before it even gets a chance to fire.

Defensive Fire

However, it isn't all bad news, as the Maglock Dominator Pistol that the Apprentice Bot Handler (the Spider Drone's squad leader) is carrying gets to double the number of shots it fires when at short range (from 2 shots up to 4) and it has DAM 2, which means every successful penetration from the pistol will cause a casualty amongst the Troopers. Furthermore, the Troopers are not in cover, so they do not double their EVS or get to ignore any hits. All of this results in the decimated Spider Drones still managing to cause 2 casualties on the Troopers and generate 4 more STs as well.

Short Range

The Spider Drones finish their activation by shaking-off 1 of the 3 STs they just gained.
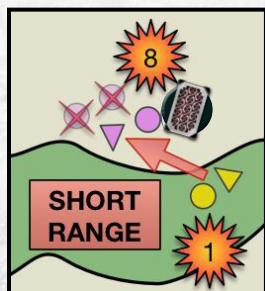
CHARGE ACTION

A Charge action (not shown) allows a unit to make a double move to get into contact with an enemy unit and engage them in a special round of shooting known as close quarters (CQ) shooting. This is exactly like normal short ranged shooting described above (including triggering defensive fire), except that at the end of the round the target must take a CQ discipline check and immediately retreat if they fail it. This makes charging a risky, but valuable tool for pushing enemy units off objectives, out of cover, etc.

EXAMPLE 5: SHAKEN COMPULSORY ACTION

Danielle doesn't want to exercise her option to activate a second unit in a row, wanting to see what Matt does with his final unit, but Matt is the non-priority player this turn (he didn't get the first unit activation of the turn), which means he can choose to save his last unit (the Angel Minnows) for the final activation of the turn. He thereby forces Danielle to activate her remaining unit of Firefly Drones, who promptly fail their activation discipline check. Because there are more STs on the unit than their squad leader's WP, it means they are forced to perform a Shaken compulsory action. Luckily there are no visible enemies within 12" or the shaken Fireflies would have to retreat. Instead, the unit must remain stationary and becomes pinned.
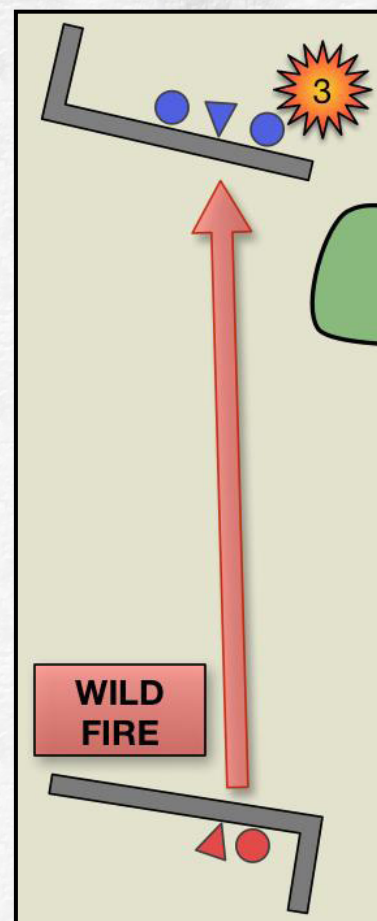
PINNED UNITS

A pinned unit adds +1 to its cover, or counts as being in cover if the unit is standing in the open. On top of that, they get to shake-off an extra +D3 STs when finishing their action. However, the price for this is that they are only able target the closest enemy unit and the result they need to pass defensive fire discipline checks is increased by 1 (so a 4+ to pass becomes a 5+, for example).

Being shaken means the Fireflies can only fire wildly at the closest visible target, which happens to be the Tempest Elites. Fireflies are equipped with a Drone Class Laser System: a low intensity, but long duration laser beam, that each fire 4 PEN 1 shots. So even needing to roll 6s to hit, Danielle still manages to generate 3 STs on the Tempests (1 for being the target of of the shooting and 2 more for hits ignored by their cover), although not surprisingly, no casualties are caused.

Since the Fireflies are both shaken and pinned, they get to shake-off a total of 3D3 STs (instead of the normal D3 STs), which means Danielle rolls plenty to remove all 4 of their STs.

DIG-IN ACTION

If Danielle's Firefly unit had 1-2 STs when its activation discipline check was failed (i.e. less STs than the squad leader's WP3), then it would have performed a compulsory Dig-in action instead of a Shaken action. A Dig-in action still means the unit becomes pinned, but they can choose to either make a single move before they become pinned, or instead remain stationary and fire a round of non-wild shooting. In fact, the Dig-in action is also a voluntary action units can choose to perform if they're looking to protect themselves from enemy fire and/or shake-off extra STs.

Pinned Unit
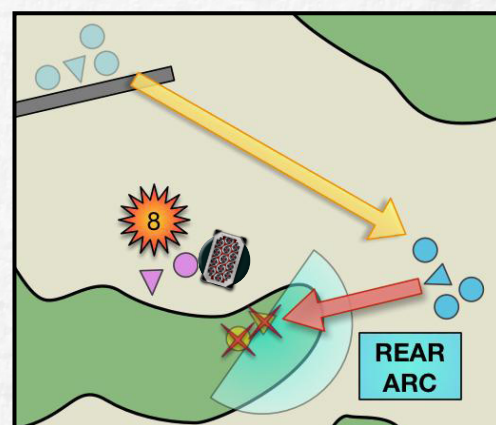
EXAMPLE 6: FIRING ARCS & MOBILE UNITS

Matt gets to make the final unit activation of the turn with his Angel Minnows.

MOBILE UNITS

Angel Minnows and Firefly Drones are both examples of a mobile unit. These units may never perform a Hold & Fire action, but are able to fire at full effect when making a Dash action. This makes them ideal candidates to constantly flank enemy positions.

Mobile Unit, Rear Arc Shooting

Matt elects to Dash with his Minnows (they automatically pass their activation discipline check as they have no STs), and moves them their full double move (16") plus an additional 4" rolled, as they do not end their move in cover. This massive move allows Matt to get at least half the Minnows into the rear arc of the Spider Drone unit (the rear 180° of the Bot Handler model).

The Minnows fire at the Spider Drones, with their cover value being reduced by 1 (down to 1) because they are being fired at in their rear arc. Matt has also wisely kept the Minnows more than 6" away so as not to trigger a round of defensive fire. With a string of lucky rolls, the shooting manages to wipe out the rest of the Spider Drone unit, allowing the Trooper unit to secure the objective marker for the Karists!

     Not final presentation quality

UNIT SPOTLIGHT

Here, we'll take a closer look at two of the core units from each faction to explain more about their profile, special abilities and weapons.

MODEL CHARACTERISTICS

Name	MV	EVS	SKL	AV	MAS	FOR	WP	Model Type
Contractor	7	4	4	3	2	1	2	Infantry (Human)

Move (MV): The number of inches the model is able to move.

Evasion (EVS): Agility and how well the model takes cover.

Skill (SKL): Fighting skill and weapon aptitude.

Armor (AV): Durability and thickness of the model's armor.

Fortitude (FOR): The number of injuries the model can sustain before it is removed as a casualty.

Willpower (WP): The model's morale and mental acuity.

WEAPON CHARACTERISTICS

Name	Range	SHO	PEN	DAM	Special
Maglock Assault Rifle	24"	2	3	1	Burst (6+)

Range (RNG): The weapon's effective range in inches.

Shots (SHO): The number of shooting dice that the weapon generates when fired.

Penetration (PEN): The weapon's ability to penetrate armor.

Damage (DAM): The amount of damage the weapon's projectiles inflict.

CONTRACTOR ENGINEER

Contractor Engineers are Foundation maintenance-hands with basic combat training, who are pressed into service in times of great need; a rather common occurrence these days! Equipped with the sturdy and rapid-firing Maglock Assault Rifle, they are still a force to be reckoned with in large enough numbers, besides their ability to perform minor battlefield bot repairs.

Burst (6+): If a 6 is rolled while rolling to hit with a Maglock Assault Rifle, it causes two hits instead of just one. This makes it the ideal type of weapon to use when firing wildly, as you are already only able to hit by rolling a 6!

Contractor Engineers

Part soldier, part maintenance worker - a mainstay of Foundation defense forces.

Name	MV	EVS	SKL	AV	MAS	FOR	WP	Model Type
Contractor	7	4	4	3	2	1	2	Infantry (Human)
Contractor Team Leader	7	4	4	3	2	1		

Name	Range	SHO	PEN	DAM	Special
Maglock Assault Rifle	24"	2	3	1	Burst (6+)

UNIT SIZE: 1 Contractor Team Leader. 2 Contractors.
EQUIPMENT: Maglock Assault Rifle & Maglock Guardian Pistol.
ABILITIES: Minor Bot Repairs.

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UNIQUE ABILITIES

Minor Bot Repairs: Whenever this unit completes an Advance & Fire or Dash main action, as long as it isn't *on the move** or pinned, it may select one friendly unit within 6" that contains at least half robot models and isn't on the move itself. The target unit immediately removes D3 STs.

*On the Move: When a unit finishes its move, it represents them stopping at that location in order to take up a firing position. However, when a unit finishes **any double move not taking cover**, it can elect to be *on the move*. A unit that is on the move is always a fleeting target, but can only fire wildly, including when firing defensively.

Not final presentation quality

KARIST TROOPER

Clad in bone-white armour with a distinctive tri-lens covering their left eye, Karist Troopers are the bedrock of the Enclave army, defending key locations and forming the core of their attack forces. Their Pulse Carbines are renowned across the galaxy for their deadly electro-magnetically controlled cybel energy packets that tear into the target upon impact.

Explosive (6+): If a 6 is rolled while rolling to penetrate with a Pulse Carbine, that penetration gains +1 DAM. This makes the Pulse Carbine ideal for taking down targets that have a MAS higher than 1.

Karist Troopers

The core of the Karist military caste - highly adaptable and utterly devoted to the ultimate goal.

Name	MV	EVS	SKL	AV	MAS	FOR	WP	Model Type
Karist Trooper	6	3	5	4	2	1	4	Infantry (Human)
Karist Trooper Squad Leader	6	3	5	4	2	1	4	Infantry (Human, Squad Leader)

UNIT SIZE: 1 Karist Trooper Squad leader & 2 Karist Troopers.
EQUIPMENT: Commune Reactor, Pulse Carbine, Pulse Pistol & Rad Grenades.
ABILITIES: None.

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UNIQUE EQUIPMENT

Commune Reactor: Each turn, if the unit fails its activation discipline check it can elect to engage its commune reactors to calm themselves, reducing the result needed to pass the check by 1 (to a minimum of 2+), potentially passing an otherwise failed check. However, if it elects to do so, the unit immediately gains +D3 STs after passing the activation discipline check.

Name	Range	SHO	PEN	DAM	Special
Pulse Carbine	18"	2	4	1	Explosive (6+)

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