

Beam Saber Quick Start Guide

by Austin Ramsay

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Beam Saber is a game about the pilots of powerful machines in a war that dominates every facet of life. They are trying to do their time and part, and get out physically and mentally intact. The organizations that perpetuate The War through all of known space are too incomprehensibly huge to take down. There is no “winning” The War, there is only surviving it. Hopefully you can help others get out too.

This game is best played with 4 or 5 players, with one player filling the role of Game Master, and the other players will be the protagonists of the story.

WHAT THIS DOCUMENT IS

This is the Quick Start Guide for Beam Saber. It doesn't have all the rules nor all of the resources for players. The in depth rules have been cut out, especially those that rely on long term play. The Quick Start is for a quick taste of what Beam Saber can be. If you like what you see go to the end of this document and check out the Want More? Section, or go to <https://austin-ramsay.itch.io/beamsaber>.

Playtester Resources

The **Pilot Playbooks** can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SL7zeVdCyTMD63wQlOnpYMIuhANEzHA13SwA4m4pWgA/edit?usp=sharing>

The **Pilot Character Sheets** can be found here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zUoxRo4pvY7pkKxHU6yKBKQ8AUQWC3z8/view>

The **Squad Playbooks** can be found here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DL81S-4nSuD3cPZZjeHVCOVCHTM4Q7C444ye2fHp_hoE/edit?usp=sharing

The **Squad Sheets** can be found here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D6YnqlseVxG1mzB3-nCMIivvI_8WfMBw/view

The **Reference Sheets** can be found here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/16d4pHfknBg62Pkbu4NYt1StxU_qU1pd/view?usp=sharing

The **Random Tables** document can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xKEbQcE24XkMY3e6LzAasChD-kXetWqghmO9zTk8ONg/edit?usp=sharing>

A wonderful fan by the name of Erik Rådman (<https://twitter.com/erikradman>) created these **fillable pilot and squad sheets**:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Vc8JI9FaXK2-jLQ8FqUOKuuBFiQuNs0WW62p_6L25MA/edit?usp=sharing

Cory McDaniel (<https://twitter.com/Hadrian>), a great fan of the game, made some **Roll20 macros** for Beam Saber. Copy everything between the bars, make sure there are no line breaks and you're good:

<https://pastebin.com/qxadXfKY>

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THE BASICS

The way the game works is simple; you tell a story with your friends. Taking turns, you describe the heroic feats, nefarious deeds and everything in between that all the characters in your story get up to. Sometimes, the outcome of those actions are in question, that's when you turn to the dice.

THE SETTING

It is centuries after the majority of Humanity abandoned a rotting Earth, blighted by their follies. The Exodus ships left Humanity's cradle in varying states of quality and completion. Ships failed, were raided or cannibalized, and jettisoned all but the essentials. History, art,

and play all fell in the face of necessity. After the Exodus, five factions rose to power as ships fled in all directions across space.

The Jovangellian Empire, now lead by Regent General Bellamine would see Humanity united under their dynastic rule.

Exodus Republic Incorporated's directing board of corporations desire the profitable control of the populace.

The Democratic Federated Systems' bickering politicians believe that self-directed government must be brought to all people.

The Adamant Council of Nor say they have the will and cunning that are necessary to ensure Humanity's survival.

The Church of the Celestial Myriad believe that its guidance will push Humanity to ascend to heights worthy of the stars.

Long into The War between these factions for control, it was realized that one of the backwater planets in conflict was *probably* Earth. Changed from the calamitous intervening years, it is now mostly healed by its respite from Humanity's swarm. It would be a great symbolic victory for the faction that conquered the planet, but other, more valuable worlds continue to be the focus of The War.

A dense cloud of orbital debris surrounds 'Earth', preventing consistent satellite survival and easy travel between the ground and stars; intermittent space combat around the planet and throughout the system complicates this further. A handful of space elevators provide the best access to space, but only one remains in the hands of the planet's inhabitants.

Commonly called Independents, there are millions of people who lived on Earth before The War found the planet. Regardless of if this planet really is Humanity's birthplace, it is Earth to them and their home. Across the planet, they resist the Offworlders, their organizations, and their War in many different ways. Much of that resistance has gathered in the Izya region where the last Independent space elevator stretches into space. This is where you come in.

THE PLAYERS

Each player creates a pilot, and the group as a whole creates the squad that they all belong to. They then fill the role of that pilot, and help to bring them and the world to life as an engaging, fleshed out existence. The players also determine the tone and style of the game through play, with oversight from the GM.

THE PILOTS

The pilots do what they need to in The War so they can get out intact. They start as nobodies, beneath the notice of even their own faction; but as they keep crawling out of the meat grinder, people take notice. Cash, personnel, materiel, and glory are awarded to them, but with that comes vendettas, suicide missions, internal politicking, and greater challenges. As they rise to each challenge (or don't), The War continues to heap hardship upon them. There are several pilot types players can choose from, each facing The War in a unique way, and all have a powerful vehicle to command.

Aces are daring drivers.

Bureaucrats are clever functionaries.

Empaths are compassionate psychics.

Envoys are diplomats and spies.

Hackers are subversive technicians.

Infiltrators are stealthy operators.

Officers are calculating tacticians.

Scouts are pathfinders and snipers.

Soldiers are terrifying infantrymen.

Technicians are chemists, mechanics, and biologists.

The players can select any combination of pilot types; you can even have a squad of all Aces, for example. See the Pilot Creation section to learn more.

THE SQUAD

The pilots are part of a squad, which is created through a consensus by all the players. Just like a pilot, the squad gets a “character sheet”.

The Consulate spies and politicks.

The Frontlines grind the enemy to dust.

The Logistics deliver the goods.

The Mechanized Cavalry strikes fast and hard.

The Profiteers sell what people can't get.

The Recon are spies, thieves, and sneaks.

The R&D advance The War's technology.

The ████████ neutralize targets.

No matter what squad you choose, you can pursue any kind of mission. These directives simply add focus to the game play. See the Squad Creation section to learn more.

THE GAME MASTER

The GM describes the world that the characters live in; the battle torn ruins, the bustling communities, the seemingly lifeless spaces that lay between them, and their inhabitants. All

non-player characters are played by the GM, giving each a desire and method to acquire it. Opportunities for the pilots (and the consequences of them) are presented by the GM.

PLAYING A SESSION

The gameplay of Beam Saber is similar to the structure of a TV series' episode. There's a central conflict that will likely be resolved by the end of the session that probably feeds into the larger narrative of the campaign, and is supported by some side stories. A single session of play will likely be two to six hours as determined by your group of players.

In a session, the players and GM will work together to choose a mission that interests everyone out of character, then roleplay having it assigned to their pilots or taking action themselves. They make a couple dice rolls and get into the mission as they come to the first obstacle. The pilots leap into action, make rolls, suffer consequences, and complete (or fail) the mission. After that, they have downtime where they recover, cut loose, and develop personal projects. Then it is time to prepare for the next mission and start all over again.

Generally one mission, a downtime period, and possibly preparation for the following mission constitutes a single session. As your missions get more complex (or you get more familiar with the rules), try experimenting with missions that take more than one session to complete (or more than one mission per session).

Once you've had about a dozen sessions, you might have completed a major plot thread or two. Consider inserting a break in the narrative, like the end of a story arc or a time skip, and restarting with a couple new pilots, squads, and starting situation.

BEFORE YOU START

Read all of the Beam Saber documents. You don't have to absorb everything contained in them, that mostly comes from playing the game. With each session you'll have a better grasp of the rules. If you're the only person in your group who has read the book, don't worry; everyone can learn together. The first session (or the second, third, fourth, etc.) doesn't have to have perfectly expressed rules. Eventually, you will all reach a level of comfort with the rules that you're happy with.

Something that everyone *does* need to do is to get excited about the concept of the game. Make sure they all know it's a game about extraordinary pilots trying to survive a grueling, generations long war. Share some of the Touchstones below that they know.

"Imagine if instead of humvees, the marines in Generation Kill had been in mechs with swords and energy rifles!"

If they aren't excited by this point, it could be that this isn't the game for them.

Have a look at the Starting Situation and get a strong feel of the involved squads and their goals. You could also make your own starting situation that puts your players in a thrilling scenario to kick things off. This game runs on momentum, so you don't want everyone to be unsure about where to begin.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

- One Game Master and two to four players.
- Several six-sided dice, ideally four per player, but at least six total.
- Printed or digital copies of the pilot playbooks for each character, a squad playbook for the group, and reference sheets to share.
- Have these rules on hand for reference.
- Pencils, and some blank paper and/or index cards for notes and drawings.

TOUCHSTONES

The following are media that can be used to pitch the game to potential players.

AUDIO

- Opening theme: Set It Off by Audioslave (2002)
- End theme: Victory by Janelle Monáe (2013)
- Ace Combat Zero OST by Tetsukazu Nakanishi et al. (2006)
- Friends At The Table Season 2: COUNTER/Weight, by Austin Walker et al. (2015)
- Revolutions Podcast, by Mike Duncan (2013)

TV SERIES

- Mobile Suit Gundam: The 08th MS Team, by Takeyuki Kanda et al. (1996)
- Macross Plus by Shōji Kawamori and Shinichirō Watanabe (1995)
- Mobile Suit Gundam by Yoshiyuki Tomino (1979)
- War In The Pocket by Fumihiko Takayama (1989)

- Escaflowne by Kazuki Akane (1994)

- Iron Blooded Orphans by Tatsuyuki Nagai (2015)

- Generation Kill by Susanna White and Simon Cellan Jones (2008)

- Armored Trooper Votoms by Ryōsuke Takahashi (1983)

- Legend of the Galactic Heroes by Noboru Ishiguro (1988)

MOVIES

- Fury by David Ayer (2014)

- Redline by Takeshi Koike (2009)

- Mad Max: Fury Road by George Miller (2015)

VIDEO/COMPUTER GAMES

- The Armored Core series by FromSoftware (1997)

- The Front Mission series by Square Enix (1995)

- The Mechwarrior series, by various studios (1989)

ROLE PLAYING GAMES

- Blades In The Dark, by John Harper (2017)

- Apocalypse World second edition, by Meguey Baker and Vincent Baker (2016)

- Dungeon World, by Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel (2013)

BOOKS

- Hammers Slammer series, by David Drake (1979)

- The Black Company series, by Glen Cooke (1984)

MAKING THE GAME YOUR OWN

When we play role playing games, we're engaging in an act of creation. All of the rules in this game exist to help focus you and those you play with towards making the best possible

tale of pilots struggling to survive in a futuristic war. Hopefully, you'll find inspiration in the guidelines, fiction, and constraints in this document, but you'll undoubtedly come up with great ideas completely divorced from it.

Much of the setting details are left vague or unexplained; this is intentional, as it allows each group to build a unique world from the details that arise through play. For example, it's never specified what powers the vehicles; just that they can run out of what powers them. Maybe that detail will never come up in your group, or it might be integral to the story that you tell. With everyone building the world together, it becomes uniquely yours.

THE START

The action roll is the most frequent cause for a player to roll dice. It will be explained in depth in The Core System section but for now this will get you started.

BASICS OF AN ACTION ROLL

Each action in this system has a potential positive outcome and (usually) a possible negative consequence. This is determined by rolling a specific number of d6s (six sided dice) equal to the relevant action rating. The number of dice rolled can be increased or decreased by modifiers such as +1d (add one die) or -1d (subtract one die). The highest number rolled on any die determines the result, which can be positive (on a 6), negative (on a 1-3), or both (on a 4-5). Positive outcomes make progress towards a desired goal, with an amount of progress determined by the action's circumstances. Negative consequences are undesired occurrences ranging from missed opportunities to injury or death, with a level of severity also determined by the action's circumstances.

CLOCKS

A Clock is an abstraction that measures the progress of an ongoing challenge or approaching issue. These take the form of a circle divided into 4, 6, or 8 segments. The more segments a Clock has, the more complex the challenge or the longer the delay until the issue arrives.

A Clock is almost impossible to fill with the outcome of a single action. If a challenge is basic enough that a single action could solve it, it doesn't require a Clock and instead the outcome should be judged by the Effect level. If the Effect is Limited, a single segment is filled (called a "Tick"); Standard gives 2 Ticks, Great gives 3 Ticks, and a critical gives improved Effect or with Great Effect gives 5 Ticks. For threat Clocks, the GM may give 1 or 2 Ticks if a pilot rolls less than a 6. When a Clock is filled, the challenge it represents is

overcome or the danger comes to pass.

Creating Clocks is not about the method used to fill them, but the obstacle or danger they represent. The Clock should be “Bored Investors” or “Unstable Prototype” for getting additional funding, not “Talk Up Investors” or “Overheat The Prototype.” The pilots can try any methods that make sense in the narrative to fill the Clocks.

Extremely complex obstacles that have multiple steps can be split into multiple Clocks; for example, an enemy battleship could have Clocks for “Point Defense Cannons,” “Space Marines,” and “Security Program.” The squad would have to get past each layer in turn to capture the ship.

If the squad is facing off against multiple opponents, or a single very dangerous opponent, a Clock can be used to represent the foes’ ability to continue being a threat. The way in which they are threatening is suitable to their type; soldiers fight, guards detect, politicians manipulate crowds, etc. Like all obstacle Clocks, this can be filled with any action that pushes the narrative towards the obstacle being overcome. Once that Clock fills, the foe has been evaded, run off, destroyed, talked down, or whatever outcome is fictionally appropriate.

Unsurprisingly Clocks can also be used to measure the passage of time. Usually this takes the form of a threat Clock as the passage of time is usually a concern if something bad is approaching (though the arrival of friendly reinforcements might also apply). Unlike other Clocks, time Clocks add segments when a suitable amount of time has passed in the fiction. A tick might represent a few seconds, minutes, or hours depending on the scale of time passing in the current scene. The easiest way to handle this is to decide which pilot would be most affected by the Clock filling, and then add a tick every time they make an Action Roll.

If something happens in the fiction that would complete the objective or instantly summon the problem represented by a Clock, then that Clock is filled and it comes to pass. For example, if the squad is sneaking through a secure facility and has an “alarm is raised” Clock, crashing a vehicle into the facility will instantly fill the Clock rather than add a few Ticks. Likewise, if they are trying to fill a “destroy samples” Clock and set off a nuke inside the building, that Clock is full. Period.

POSITION

Position is how dangerous or tricky an action might be. The GM will select an action’s Position as Controlled, Risky, or Desperate.

- If the pilot has a clear shot, a major advantage, or is free of danger, their Position is likely Controlled.

- If the pilot is confronting head on, under pressure, or on equal footing, their Position is likely Risky.

- If the pilot is in great danger, performing a perilous trick, or reaching past their limits, their Position is likely Desperate.

Most actions will be Risky, and that's the default Position if there's any doubt. If dice are being rolled, then there's a risk of failure. If the risk is great, then make it a Desperate Position, but if there's less risk, make it Controlled. If there is *definitely* no risk, it is a Fortune Roll (pg ?) instead.

When a pilot takes a Desperate action they also take 1XP, as their pilot extends themselves and learns from the event.

GUIDELINES FOR RESULTS BASED ON POSITION

Here are some guidelines for what each level of Action Roll result looks like for each Position.

Controlled

You act on your terms or exploit a dominate advantage.

- Critical: The action is a success with increased Effect.

- 6: The action is a success.

- 4/5: The pilot hesitates. They can withdraw and try a different approach, or else succeed with a Controlled consequence.

- 1-3: The pilot falters. They can press on by seizing a Risky opportunity, or withdraw and try a different approach and action.

Risky

You go head to head, act under fire, or take a chance.

- Critical: The action is a success with increased Effect.

- 6: The action is a success.

- 4/5: The pilot does it, but there's a Risky consequence.

- 1-3: Things go badly. They don't succeed, and experience a Risky consequence.

Desperate

You overreach your capabilities, or you're in serious trouble.

- Critical: The action is a success with increased Effect.

- 6: The action is a success.

- 4/5: The pilot does it, but there's a Desperate consequence.

- 1-3: This is the worst outcome. They don't succeed, and experience a Desperate consequence.

EFFECT

Effect is how substantially a pilot will change their situation with an action. The GM will consider the method and action a pilot is using to reach their goal, and decide if they will have Great, Standard, or Limited Effect.

- If the pilot would make greater gains than usual, they have Great Effect. The pilot fills 3 Ticks on a relevant Clock if applicable, and the GM should detail how the additional benefits manifest.

- If a pilot would make a typical amount of progress, they have Standard Effect. The pilot fills 2 Ticks on a relevant Clock, and the GM describes the expected outcome.

- If a pilot would make a small headway, they have Limited Effect. The pilot fills 1 Tick on a relevant Clock, and the GM describes the partial or diminished result.

To determine the Effect of an action, the GM takes several factors into consideration:

- Potency of an action. For example attacking a tank with a hand grenade (lower Effect) vs attacking a person with a hand grenade (improved Effect).

- Quality of gear. Fine gear provides improved Effect.

- Scale of the action. Differences of scale like a lone person fighting a small gang provides lower Effect, or improved Effect for the reverse. This also applies to differences in size when appropriate.

- Tier differences between the pilot and the target. Acting against higher tier targets provides lower Effect, or improved Effect against lower tier targets.

Sometimes the negative factors on Effect will be so overwhelming that they reduce it below Limited. This is a zero Effect situation, so that course of action will achieve nothing. There is no benefit past having Great Effect, unless it dominates the circumstances (see Dominating Effect on page ??) to such a degree that there is no risk involved. In such a case, there is no need for a roll. The only way to succeed past Great Effect is with the blind luck of a crit.

When a special ability for a pilot, squad, or piece of gear provides “improved Effect”, it is applied after the GM has determined the base Effect.

After an action’s Position and Effect are determined, the pilot may choose to improve their Effect at the cost of Position (or vice versa) if it makes sense in the fiction. They could take their Risky Position, Standard Effect action and change it to Desperate Position, Great Effect if they want a more dangerous and effective path. The same applies to moving from a Controlled Position to a Risky Position. Position can even be lowered from Controlled to Desperate so that Effect can be improved from Limited to Great. Remember that Effect cannot be better than Great.

THE CORE SYSTEM

When a pilot does something where they aren’t guaranteed to succeed, they make an Action Roll to determine the result.

ACTION ROLL

1. **The player** describes what their pilot does, and what their goal is.
2. **The player** selects the action that their pilot is using to fulfill their goal.
3. **The GM** then tells the player what their Position (how dangerous the action is) and Effect (how effective the action is) will be with that action. Default to Risky Position with Standard Effect if unsure.

4. **The player** mentions any circumstances or special abilities affecting their pilot that might alter the Position or Effect suggested by the GM.
5. **The player** and **the GM** agree on the final Position and Effect.
6. Applicable bonus dice are added.
7. **The player** rolls dice equal to their action rating and any bonus dice, then selects the highest number rolled. If they have a total of zero dice, they roll two dice and select the lowest number rolled as their result.
8. If the result is 6, the action succeeds fully. If the result is 4 or 5, the action succeeds partially or fully but with a consequence. If the result is 3 or less, the action fails and something bad happens. If they roll two or more 6s on a non-zero dice roll, they get a critical success, which means the action succeeds fully and there's increased Effect.

BONUSES TO ROLLS

Any combination of the following can be used to increase a pilot's chances of success.

- The GM or any of the players at the table may suggest a **Devil's Bargain** (pg ??) for this action, giving the pilot +1d at an unavoidable cost.
- The player decides if they want to push themselves for either +1d, increased Effect, or the ability to act despite having level 3 Harm by spending 2 Stress (if a pilot action) or 1 Quirk (if a vehicle action).
- Up to one other pilot may spend an amount of Stress equal to their **Connection** (pg ??) with the acting pilot, providing the acting pilot with benefits equal to the Stress spent. The potential benefits are +1d, improved Position, increased Effect, or acting despite having level 3 Harm. See Teamwork (pg ??) for more detail.

DEVIL'S BARGAIN

Pilots in Beam Saber are desperate survivors, and sometimes they act despite the obvious consequences. To support this mechanically, the GM or any player can suggest a Devil's Bargain for a pilot taking an action. Here are some possible bargains:

- Collateral damage, unintended harm.
- Sacrifice supplies or an item.
- Betray a friend or loved one.
- Offend or anger a faction.
- Start and/or Tick a troublesome Clock.
- Suffer Harm.
- Complicate a relationship or Connection.

The cost of the Devil's Bargain occurs regardless of the acting pilot's level of success.

Additionally, the fallout of the bargain can NOT be reduced or negated with a resistance roll or by spending armor. They got the bonus die and must pay the agreed price.

Sometimes no one can think of a good bargain to offer and that's fine. Other times the pilot may not want to take any bargains, which is also fine. If it's needed, the GM has final say on the acceptability of a Devil's Bargain.

CONSEQUENCES AND HARM

Consequences are the fall out of enemy actions, bad situations, or rolling less than 6 on an action. The Consequences that are applied are chosen by the GM based on the fiction, the style, and the tone of the game. Sometimes circumstances will dictate that more than one Consequence happens.

There are six types of Consequence:

- **Reduced Effect** represents the pilot's execution being hindered. This consequence reduces the expected Effect level of an action by one grade.
- **Complication** represents new dangers, approaching issues, or unexpected troubles. This might be an immediate difficulty such as losing trust with a faction, having a vehicle's gear turned into junk, or a toxin being released. Or, it could be an issue that has yet to fully manifest, represented by the GM creating a new Clock, Ticking one that is already present, or removing Ticks from a clock. The severity of the complication and whether it is immediate or delayed, is determined by the GM and the circumstances.

- **Lost Opportunity** represents the situation changing as a result of the conflict. There was a chance to reach the objective with the chosen action, but that window has closed. If the pilot wants to try again, they must put themselves in a worse Position, or use a new tactic, represented by using a different action.

- **Cost** represents an unforeseen expense tied to the action. A bouncer might let you through, but only with a Cash bribe. Maybe you make a nuisance of yourself and lose Trust with a faction.

- **Worse Position** represents the pilot slipping into a more dangerous situation as the conflict's circumstances shift. This may also show the growing tension of the scene. If a pilot was in a Controlled Position, they move to Risky. If they were Risky, they move to Desperate as their problems mount.

- **Harm** represents an enduring affliction. This could be an injury that hurts the pilot physically, mentally, emotionally, or socially as is suitable to the situation. When a pilot suffers Harm, the GM gives them a descriptor of the Harm and a numerical level to describe the severity. For example getting kicked might produce level 1 Harm "Bruised," but getting kicked off a roof could be level 3 Harm "Concussion." The higher the level of Harm, the more impactful it is narratively and mechanically.

If the nature of the Harm applies to what a pilot is currently doing, they receive the penalty associated with that injury's level. Level 1 causes reduced Effect, level 2 gives -1d, and level 3 means the pilot cannot act without pushing themselves or receiving assistance. A pilot can have up to two level 1 Harms, two level 2 Harms, and one level 3 Harm. The penalties from multiple injuries of the same level stack, as do injuries of different levels, but only if they all apply to the narrative.

If a level of Harm is full and a pilot suffers an injury of that level, the new injury worsens becoming one level more serious. If a pilot already has level 3 Harm and suffers additional level 3 Harm, they instead get a level 4 Harm. Level 4 Harm is a ruinous, permanent injury, often (but not always) representing death. The nature of the permanent affliction should be determined by the circumstances.

Something to keep in mind with consequences is that they should never negate the success of a 4/5 roll. If a pilot is luring a mech into a minefield and the pilot rolls a 4/5, don't say that

the mech avoids the trap. Instead, perhaps the enemy is lured into the minefield, but the pilot also steps on a mine in their haste.

SELECTING CONSEQUENCES

Here's a list of consequences that can be inflicted should a character roll less than a 6 on an action roll. When selecting one of the options, be sure to show in the fiction how that change has come to pass. For example, moving from a Risky to Desperate Position might be described as a foe disarming a pilot.

Controlled Consequences

- Adjust a Clock by 1 Tick.
- Reduce Effect by 1 level to a minimum of Limited. Only choose this on a result of 4-5.
- Create a new threat Clock and add a tick to it.
- Move to a worse Position.
- The action failed and the chance for that chosen action to work has passed. A different action must be used to overcome the obstacle or it can be attempted again at a worse Position. Only choose this on a result of 1-3.
- Take level 1 Harm.
- Take level 1 Damage.
- Spend 1 Cash, Personnel, or Materiel point.
- Lose 1 Trust with an appropriate faction.

Risky Consequences

- Choose 2 Controlled consequences.
- Adjust a Clock by 2 Ticks.
- Reduce effect by 2 levels to a minimum of Limited. Only choose this on a result of 4-5.

- Take level 2 Harm.
- Take level 2 Damage.
- Spend 2 Cash, Personnel, or Materiel points.
- Lose 2 Trust with an appropriate faction.
- Junk a piece of vehicle gear.

Desperate Consequences

- Choose 3 Controlled consequences.
- Choose 1 risky consequence, and 1 Controlled consequence.
- Adjust a Clock by 3 Ticks.
- Take level 3 Harm.
- Take level 4 Harm when appropriate.
- Take level 3 Damage.
- Take level 4 Damage when appropriate.
- Spend 3 Cash, Personnel, or Materiel points.
- Lose 3 Trust with an appropriate faction.

RESISTANCE

When a pilot or their vehicle suffers consequences, they can choose to avoid those consequences with a resistance roll. The player tells the GM how they are resisting the problem and if the GM agrees that it's a reasonable way of avoiding the problem, it is automatically reduced... at a cost. The GM will tell the pilot if a resistance roll will negate the consequence or just reduce its severity, and what attribute applies. The pilot will spend Stress or exhaust Quirks depending on the attribute employed.

- **Insight** resists consequences from deceit or empathy.

- **Prowess** resists Consequences from bodily harm or exertion.
- **Resolve** resists Consequences from mental fortitude or stubbornness.
- **Expertise** resists Consequences from a machine being damaged or strained.
- **Acuity** resists Consequences from a machine being hacked or disoriented.

A pilot resisting a Consequence with Insight, Prowess, or Resolve suffers 6 Stress minus the highest die result from the resistance roll; for example, if the highest result is a 6, no Stress boxes are filled, but a roll of 1 causes 5 boxes to fill up. If a pilot gets a critical result with a resistance roll, they heal 1 Stress instead of spending Stress. Once a roll has been made, the player must commit to suffering that Stress; they cannot change their mind if they roll poorly.

A vehicle resisting a Consequence with Expertise or Acuity must exhaust 4 Quirks minus the attribute rating being used to a minimum of 1. For example if a vehicle has at least one point in Maneuver and Battle its Expertise rating is 2, so resisting with Expertise would require exhausting 2 Quirks.

After the roll is made, the Consequence is reduced by a degree the GM feels is appropriate. Level 3 Harm may become level 2, while a worse Position might be negated entirely. Any one Consequence can only be resisted once. Further reducing a consequence can be done by spending appropriate armor.

Whether the GM completely negates Consequences with resistance rolls or just reduces their impact will help set the tone of the game. Grittier games will have Consequences that are reduced while more upbeat games will have consequences avoided entirely.

If the GM dictates that multiple consequences are inflicted, then the affected player can choose to resist some, all, or none of the consequences, and then make resistance rolls for each.

ARMOR AND SPECIAL ARMOR

When a pilot or vehicle suffers Consequences, they can reduce the impact by spending an appropriate armor. For pilots the standard gear “Armor” grants one use per mission, and “Heavy Armor” grants one additional use for a total of two uses per mission. Pilot Armor and Heavy Armor can only be taken once each. For vehicles the standard gear “Armor” grants one use per mission, but multiple copies of the Armor gear can be taken on the same vehicle. When armor is spent tick the appropriate box on the character sheet; Armor or

Heavy Armor in the pilot section for pilot armor, and any armor box in the vehicle section for vehicle armor. Once an armor is spent, it can't be used again until the beginning of the next mission.

Most armor only protects against physical Harm, but some abilities, such as the Infiltrator's Shadow, work on non-injury threats. These abilities are activated by spending a pilot's Special Armor through ticking its box on the character sheet. Once the Special Armor is spent, it can't be used again until the beginning of the next mission. If a pilot has more than one ability that uses Special Armor, only one of those abilities can be activated per mission.

Vehicles can also sacrifice any gear that takes up at least 1 Load in place of armor. When this is done, any Load slots that the gear occupied are replaced by "junk." This indicates that the sacrificed gear doesn't function, but still occupies Load on the vehicle. Junked slots are unavailable until materiel points are spent to change them to undeclared.

FORTUNE ROLL

A Fortune Roll is a tool the GM can use when they are unsure of an outcome and want to let the dice decide. There are three common ways to use a fortune roll:

- When the GM doesn't want to make an arbitrary decision on a situation the pilots are not involved in, such as two NPCs having a conflict off screen.
- When there is no clear roll to be made for determining the outcome, such as the effect of injecting an untested drug to keep it out of a competitor's hands.
- When a player is making an Action Roll in a completely safe situation and there is no chance for a consequence to affect them.

When making a Fortune Roll, any trait with a rating can be used to determine the roll's dice pool. Some examples are:

- When a NPC squad acts, their tier may be used to determine the Fortune Roll.
- When a friendly Fire Team acts without pilot supervision, use their quality for the Fortune Roll.
- When the power of technology is unleashed in an uncontrolled fashion, its Magnitude may be used for a Fortune Roll.

- When a pilot gathers information, their relevant action rating may be used to determine the amount or quality of information they receive.

Major contextual factors should also give +1d if it is advantageous, or -1d if it is a hindrance. If a relevant trait doesn't exist, roll just 1d or build a dice pool based on the applicable contextual factors.

GATHERING INFORMATION

The conversation that takes place as part of this game is the primary means for players to understand the world and what's happening. However, there's always going to be too much information going on for the GM to provide everything the players need or want to know. This is where gathering information comes in.

When a pilot wants more specific information about the game world, the GM will decide if that information is common knowledge or if there's an obstacle to having it. The GM should consider the pilot's playbook, Tragedy, History, and Opening to determine if that information is common knowledge to them. If it is, then the GM will simply answer the question.

If there is a barrier to obtaining the information, then an Action Roll is necessary, with the pilot picking an action suitable to their method for acquiring the information. If successful, the GM will answer the question honestly, and provide detail equivalent to the Effect level of the action.

If the information is not common knowledge, but there is no barrier, a Fortune Roll is used to determine the quality of the information learned. A 1-3 provides limited information, a 4/5 provides standard information, and a 6 provides great information.

Gathering information requires a suitable opportunity, meaning that the information must either be on hand in the heat of the moment, or acquired ahead of time. If you don't get the amount of information you wanted you can try again, but it'll probably have to be later.

Sometimes the information desired is blocked by a complex obstacle, such as a messy crime scene or an overabundance of archived texts. For instance, if gathering the desired information requires an extended period of time, the pilot should begin a suitable long term project. Once the project's Clock is filled, the pilot is able to ask several questions on the topic and gets the amount of detail that they would get from a Great Effect roll.

When a pilot attempts to Gather Information during a mission, it will likely take the form of a setup roll. In addition to the information that the pilot may get from a successful result, they will frequently gain improved Position or Effect as appropriate. A result of less than 6 will

cause consequences as usual.

Each pilot playbook has a list of questions that might be useful for them to have answered.

These are suggestions and a good place to start, but any pilot can ask any question. Get the information the mission demands.

THE GAMEPLAY CYCLE

The style of play of Beam Saber is made up of two cycles, one nested inside the other. The interior cycle is the one explained in The Basics section. The larger cycle is about the game as a whole.

The game starts in the Free Play phase, which is very fluid. The pilots have scenes together or with NPCs, they make Action Rolls when necessary, and suffer consequences from those actions. Don't worry about exploring the story moment to moment, or even chronologically, this period is for the pilots to explore their personal stories apart from the entire squad. When they are ready to have another mission (either because they choose to or something in Free Play or Downtime forces one on them) it's time for planning the mission. This is done by selecting Rules of Engagement, a Target, an Objective, an Employer, a Loadout, and a Tactic. Choosing the plan then triggers the engagement roll, ending Free Play.

After Free Play, comes the Mission phase; this is when the pilots perform the daring feats and experience close calls in pursuit of their objective. They roll dice, spend Stress, take Harm, have flashbacks, and finish the mission. Once the mission is over, the game moves onto the Downtime phase.

Downtime phases are for the squad to get their just rewards and take a breather. They'll get resupplied for their efforts, gain and lose trust with factions, experience consequences for their actions, and prepare for the next mission. These will take the form of Rewards, Trust, Squad Status, Entanglements, and Downtime Activities. After the pilots have spent all of their Downtime Activities, the game returns to the Free Play phase and the cycle continues.

PLANNING THE MISSION

When it is time to move from Free Play to the Mission, the squad puts together the skeleton of a plan. This plan consists of an Employer, a Target, an Objective, Rules of Engagement, a Tactic, and a Loadout. Select them in that order before the mission begins.

If any of the pilots want to gather information about the mission ahead or perform a Downtime Activity (likely by spending cash) for the mission, this would be a good time to do so. Such information and assets can be used to find the strengths and weaknesses of the target, and then take advantage of them. Remember that gathering information does not require a Downtime Activity and can be performed at any time, but the pilot must have had sufficient opportunity to do so, which might require a flashback. If the squad wants an asset that is not provided by the mission, they can use any Downtime Activities they have left from the previous downtime period or spend cash to gain additional ones. Remember that an asset can be acquired during a mission with a flashback.

The **Employer** is the faction tasking the squad with completing the objective. They are represented by an individual, probably belonging to a squad of the faction, who may hide the faction they represent from the pilots. The players and GM should discuss whether to reveal the employer's hidden identity to the players if the pilots don't know. Things to consider in this are: the players' comfort with working for each faction, how much dramatic irony the players want in their pilots' actions, if the players want to be surprised, and if the GM is all right with the task of doing the bookkeeping alone.

If the squad is carrying out the mission for themselves or a squad that isn't working for a faction, the employer is Independent. Working for this faction means that the squad won't get a supply roll as reward or increase their trust with the employer faction. Any pay offered for completing the mission will be fairly small (1 or 2 Supply Points), if there is any pay at all. The reward will more likely come from capturing resources during the mission, and should take up Load as appropriate. Independent missions are intentionally more challenging. Striking out on your own is rough, but at least you won't have someone looking over your shoulder.

If the squad wants to do a mission that would normally be Independent but still want a supply roll for payment, they should consider seeking out an employer. This might take the form of a long term project or a sequence of events during free play. If there's an objective the squad wants accomplished, there's probably a faction that wants the same and just needs to be talked into it.

The **Target** is the squad (and by extension the faction) that will be harmed by completing

your mission. For the mission to further the goals of the employer, there *will* be someone trying to stop it, and overcoming those defenses will damage them in some way. If there really isn't someone stopping the mission, consider expanding the mission's objective to one that will create conflict, or making the objective a long-term project instead.

The **Objective** is the purpose of the mission, and the employer's goal. This might be getting supplies through a blockade, negotiating a ceasefire, destroying a factory, or stealing research data. Some missions may have multi-part objectives, all of which need to be done to complete the main goal. Other missions may have side objectives that the Employer wants completed but are not necessary to fulfill the main goal, which is *the* objective of the mission.

The **Rules of Engagement** are the directives that an Employer places on its squads. These define the circumstances, conditions, degree, and manner in which the use of force (or actions which might be construed as provocative) may be applied. The GM is the primary source for what rules are in effect on a given mission, but they should make sense for the fictional context, and all the players should agree that the selected rules won't ruin the game's fun. A faction trying to improve its popular support will have more rules about how to interact with civilians than one interested in military victory at all costs. Record the rules in effect so that they can be referenced at the end of the mission. If the rules have been consistent across missions, you may want to keep the list for recurring use. The GM Guidelines have a list of suggestions for possible rules.

The **Tactic** is the method that the squad is going to use to accomplish the objective. This is a general strategy, and requires a detail that explains how the mission opens. Select one of the following Tactics, and then determine the detail.

- Assault is open violence against the target. The detail is the point of attack.
- Deception is luring, tricking, and manipulating the target. The detail is the method of deception.
- Scientific is engaging with technological power. The detail is the unusual procedures used.
- Social is when the squad negotiates with, bargains with, and persuades the target. The detail is the social connection.

- Stealth is for taking action undetected. The detail is the point of infiltration.
- Transport is carrying cargo and people through danger. The detail is the route and the means.

The **Loadout** is the amount of gear that each pilot is bringing on the mission. Each pilot decides if they are going to be carrying a Light [Load 3], Medium [Load 5], or Heavy [Load 6] Load for themselves. A Light Load will mean that the pilot is quicker and less conspicuous, and able to blend in with civilians, providing increased Effect when applicable. A Medium Load makes the pilot look like they are well equipped for a difficult task. A Heavy Load slows the pilot and makes it clear that they look like a member of an armed group, providing decreased Effect when applicable.

The pilots also choose how many materiel points they want to spend on changing their vehicle's load. The specific items carried by the pilot and vehicle are not chosen at this time, just what the maximum number of items will be.

ENGAGEMENT ROLL

After the mission is planned, play jumps right into the action and we catch up with the squad when they encounter their first obstacle. To see how severe the situation is when the squad gets into it, we make an **Engagement Roll**. This is a Fortune Roll that starts with 1d for plain old luck. Additional dice get added for major advantages, and dice get removed for disadvantages. Possible advantages and disadvantages may include any of the following:

- Is the mission bold? Take +1d. Is the mission especially complex? Take -1d.
- Does the mission exploit the target's vulnerabilities? Take +1d. Is the mission's Tactic ineffective against the target? Take -1d.
- Does the squad receive external support for the mission? Take +1d. Is anyone interfering with the mission (other than the target)? Take -1d.
- Are there any other factors that affect the mission? Take +1d for each one that benefits the squad, and -1d if it hinders them. This might include differences in squad tier, specialized equipment, or unusual terrain.

The engagement roll is based on the fact that the pilots are skilled survivors and have

cleverly prepared for the first obstacle. There is no need for sneaking closer, checking for traps, or other cautious inaction. The result of the engagement roll will cover those details so that the game can jump to the action and the first challenge. Special preparations and consideration of niche complications are covered by spending Stress during the mission to have Flashbacks.

If the result of the engagement roll is 1-3, the starting Position of the squad is Desperate, 4/5 gives them a Risky Position, and 6 provides a Controlled Position. The GM will then craft the scene to reflect the Position the squad find themselves in. Engagement rolls can not crit if two or more 6s are rolled. This Position lasts only as long as it makes fictional sense.

Once the result from the Engagement Roll is determined, it's a good time to take a short break so the GM can figure out what exactly is happening at the start of the mission.

LINKED MISSIONS

There will be times where a mission will require multiple plans be executed together. A common situation is one where the squad wants to act on two fronts. For example; part of the squad might attack the fortifications as a diversion, while the other part sneaks into the enemy base. How this is handled depends on if the first part *needs* to succeed for the second part to be attempted.

- If the first stage of a plan will benefit the latter stage, but is not required, it can be handled with the setup teamwork action or through a Flashback. With a success, the setup will improve the Position or Effect of squadmates. A failed setup might cause trouble for the second part of the plan. If a setup is done before the engagement roll is made, consider giving the squad +1d or -1d depending on the result of the setup.
- If the first stage of a plan is required for the latter stage to be attempted because it creates a necessary opportunity, it should probably be a mission of its own. For example; the squad might have a mission to steal an enemy Ace's unique vehicle to use in a later false flag mission to ruin the alliance between two foes. In this case, each part is its own mission with downtime between them as normal.

Which approach is used is largely a matter of interest. If the players are interested in the moment to moment action of the first stage, it should be its own mission, even if it isn't necessary. Likewise, the story of a required stage can be simplified with a setup action if the players are not interested in exploring it. Give them what's required for the latter stage, and if

the setup is a failed roll, hand out consequences as the fiction demands.

PILOTS

Beam Saber is a game about pilots and their massive war machines. While the vehicles may get a lot of attention, they are just dead metal without the pilot. An empty husk waiting to be filled with potential. You are that potential. Pilots are people who will take a sliver of hope in a desperate situation and use it as wedge to victory. Be the pilot, find the sliver.

PILOT CREATION

The directions that follow are useful for creating your pilot step by step; however, if you want to randomly generate your pilot in part or in whole, jump to Appendix A for methods to do that.

1. Choose a playbook. This will guide your pilot's methods.
2. Who were you before The War stole from you? This is your History. Put 1 point into a pilot or vehicle action that expresses it.
3. How has your pilot experienced the costs of war? This is your Tragedy.
4. What were you doing before you joined the Squad, but after your Tragedy? This is your Opening. Put 1 point into a pilot or vehicle action that expresses it.
5. Add the 3 starting action points from your chosen playbook to your character sheet.
6. Put 2 points split between any pilot and/or vehicle actions. Each action cannot exceed 2 points. Note that when making your vehicle later you will have 3 more points which can ONLY be used in vehicle actions.
7. Choose an ability from your playbook.
8. Choose an Ally and choose the squad that they belong to from either the premade squads, or make a squad for that they belong to, or choose a squad that another player made. This squad can be from any faction. Your squad has +1 Status with their squad.
9. Choose a Rival and choose the squad that they belong to from either the premade squads, or make a squad for that they belong to, or choose a squad that another

player made. This squad can be from any faction (including your patron). Your squad has -1 Status with their squad.

10. Write your name, pronoun, call sign, and look.

11. Write the names of each of the other members of your squad on your Connection Sheet and put 1 Tick in their Connection Clock. Create 1 Belief you have about each pilot, or choose an example Belief listed in any playbook.

PILOT LOOKS

Pilots in Beam Saber come from all walks of life. Some are grizzled veterans, others are former pop idols, a few are teens trying to cope with their newfound situation. Here are some suggestions for how to describe their appearance.

- **Face:** masked, beautiful, scarred, young, decorated, rugged, calm
- **Eyes:** artificial, cold, mocking, trusting, trustworthy, uncertain, warm
- **Hair:** flowing, military, punk, braided, poofy, slick
- **Body:** big, compact, flabby, muscular, scarred, skinny, toned, voluptuous
- **Outfit:** military, ornate, formal, vintage, practical, casual, scavenged

HISTORY, TRAGEDY, AND OPENING

The War has affected everyone, with the lucky only having rationing in their lives, but many more have experienced some form of tragedy. The pilots are not solely tragic figures though; they have a history before The War stole from them, and they find ways to live before they join the squad where the story opens on them.

When choosing your pilot's History, Tragedy, and Opening, there's no need to have it fully fleshed out. Having just a single detail for each is enough because developing the character through play and discovering who they are is part of the game. It also leaves room to learn that other players' characters are part of your past. If you DO have a lot of backstory ideas that you are very happy with, keep them; just keep an open mind about including new details as the game progresses.

HISTORY

A pilot's History is who they were before their Tragedy. Generally, this is a fairly mundane existence where The War is not something that fills their thoughts. Sure there's rationing, the neighbour's kid got conscripted, and your second cousin is moving back in with their parents after the space station they lived on got destroyed, but you can go most days without thinking about things like that. So don't worry about the tragedy looming in your future because for now life is... normal.

EXAMPLE HISTORIES

- **Academic:** A university professor or student a researcher, a doctor, a journalist, or some other person who furthers knowledge.

- **Art:** An architect, a sculptor, a writer, a composer, or some other person creating art.

- **Criminal:** A burglar, a con artist, a gang member, a drug pusher, or some other person who preys on vulnerabilities.

- **Entertainment:** An actor, a pop idol, a sex worker, an athlete, a livestreamer, a podcaster, or other some person who entertains.

- **Family:** A stay at home parent, a teen, a legal guardian, a PTA member, or some other person invested in caring for the young.

- **Labor:** A farmer, a factory worker, a transport driver, a seamster, a miner, or some other person living by the sweat of their brow.

- **Law:** A cop, a lawyer, a social worker, a court clerk, or some other person involved with legal proceedings.

- **Military:** A cadet, a quiet posting, a quartermaster, a deckhand, a guerilla, or some other job involved in The War.

- **Political:** A local council person, a volunteer, a propagandist, an activist, or some other person pushing political goals.

- **Spiritual:** a choir member, a yogi, a priest, a psychologist, or some other person invested in spiritual well being.
- **Trade:** a stock trader, a cashier, a banker, an arms dealer, or some other person who handles money.

TRAGEDY

A pilot's Tragedy is the event that propels them into their involvement in The War. It might be the loss of loved ones, being targeted by accusations (regardless of the truth), or witnessing an atrocity. It might not put them immediately into a squad, but it does put them on a course where every day they get closer to the controls of a war machine.

EXAMPLE TRAGEDIES

- Hid in a mass grave.
- Lone survivor of a militia
- Friends started disappearing.
- Family killed as collateral damage.
- Orbital station home used as a kinetic weapon.
- Unwillingly experimented on by unethical researchers.
- Exiled from homeland.
- Falsely charged with a major crime.
- Shown the lie of their own life.
- Participated in a failed coup or mutiny.

OPENING

A pilot's Opening is what they were doing with their life before they joined the Squad. It is what they did with themselves between their tragedy and the opening of the game. Some will be in a deep depression, possibly at the bottom of a bottle. Others will be training hard to get

their revenge. A few will try to continue with their lives, pretending that their fate is not irrevocably changed and pulling them towards The War. All will be forced into a new life at the start of the game.

EXAMPLE OPENINGS

- Building a custom vehicle from spare parts.
- Avoiding people with long voyage transport jobs.
- Studying military strategy in preparation for war.
- Catching deserters as a bounty hunter.
- Stuck in prison for petty crimes.
- Driving a taxi in areas autocars can't navigate.
- Commanding a gang of rabble and scum.
- Tending to the needs of an admiral as their valet.
- Getting by as a sex worker.
- Fighting in the vehicle arena.
- Shuffling papers in a cubicle farm.
- Serving drinks in a run down bar.

CONNECTIONS

The ties between pilots in a squad are as diverse as those between family. Sometimes they are intense, heated, and asymmetrical, while other times they are cool, cordial, and mutual. These Connections determine how Stressful it is and competent you are when you need to assist your fellows.

On each pilot's character sheet, there will be a 4-Tick Clock representing how well you know each pilot in the squad. For each Tick in that Clock make a Belief about the pilot the Clock is tied to. When the Clock fills, ask the target pilot for a truth about one of the Beliefs tied to

them, then reset it to 0 Ticks as you see them in a new light. It'll take time and effort to understand them again and relearn their rhythms, so the pilot erases all the Beliefs they have for that pilot. After they've revealed a truth about themselves, you both take 1 XP which can be put into any attribute or into the pilot playbook.

BELIEFS

Pilots in Beam Saber are survivors, and part of their ability to survive is correctly judging the people around them. They quickly form opinions about who they can trust, who they should fear, and who they can use. This makes them rather opinionated about their fellow pilots, and of course they aren't always correct. These opinions are a pilot's **Beliefs**.

Each Belief a pilot has is a statement that they feel is true about another pilot. They are simple, quick, and influential in the rapport between the two; however, the players need to remember that they are not necessarily true.

Each playbook has some example Beliefs that can be used, but feel free to write your own.

A good Belief is:

- Something that a pilot might say about their squadmate to a confidante.
- Easily summarized so that it can be quickly remembered when relevant.
- Potentially true.
- Suitable for the game's setting and tone.
- Something the player is interested in exploring.

If a character struggles because of the Beliefs that they have about their fellow pilots then they can mark 1 XP at the end of session, or 2 XP if it came up more than once.

Each time a Pilot Cuts Loose during downtime they will add a tick to their connection clock and get a new Belief with the Pilot they spent time with.

RIVALS

Pilots have very intense lives, which leads to very intense encounters with other people, and sometimes these interactions lead to an antagonistic connection. There's a person out there that they just can't stand, and the feeling is mutual. This is a pilot's Rival who exists to present a challenge whenever they are on screen.

When a Rival becomes part of a mission, they will always be an obstacle for the pilots and overcoming them is represented by an 8 Tick progress Clock. Rivals, no matter

how friendly, are never to be taken lightly. If the fiction demands it, they may even have more than one Clock to represent multiple obstacles to be removed before the Rival can be tackled directly.

In addition to being persistent opponents, Rivals are very dangerous both during missions and between them. A number of times per mission equal to the number of Pilots on the mission, a Rival can inflict a consequence at any time (before a pilot acts, on a result of 6, after a Fortune Roll, at ANY time). The severity of the consequence is the same as the affected Pilot's current position, and must be appropriate to the fiction.

Between sessions when the GM is making Fortune Rolls to determine the progress of squad goal Clocks, a Rival will either support their squad's goal or pursue their own interests. If they are supporting their squad, the squad gets +1d on its Fortune Roll. If the Rival is working on their own plans they ignore their squad's Tier and instead roll 1d.

If the pilot who has this person as their Rival adds at least 1 Tick to the Rival's progress Clock and the progress Clock is filled before the end of the mission, then that pilot can mark 1 XP in the playbook XP track. If filling this Clock also means that the Rival is permanently removed as a threat to the squad, the pilot can mark an additional 1 XP. "Permanently removed as a threat" is pointedly broad, as they might be persuaded to leave The War, be put into a coma, or join the squad. If the Rival is removed as a threat, XP can no longer be gained from them.

The pilot can acquire a new Rival by naming an NPC they've had a negative interaction with in the past. This lowers the squad status of the new Rival's squad by 1, which may put them in Vendetta with the players' squad. Picking fights can ruin associations.

Rivals should have agency, power, and the ability to mess with the PCs' plans. They should use abhorrent means to admirable goals, or gain admirable effects from horrible goals. Put them at odds with the pilots' goals and/or ethics, and then turn the screws.

ALLIES

Friends come in all different forms. There are those who are childhood friends, current (or former) lovers, tied together by blood, and many others. A pilot's Ally is not defined by the nature of their connection, but by the fact that the pilot can rely on them.

If a pilot wants to accomplish something and they don't know how, they should consider whether or not their Ally would be able to help them. Allies are emotionally invested in aiding the pilot, but can't always be present or doing things for them. This means that sometimes taking advantage of what your Ally provides requires an Action or Fortune Roll. Allies exist to provide an avenue for the pilots to accomplish their goals, not to do it for them.

Unlike Rivals, a pilot can have any number of Allies; however, it takes a lot more work to make friends than it does to make enemies. If a pilot wants to add an NPC as an Ally, make sure that it fits the fiction. A brand new acquaintance won't be an Ally, but if the pilot works to build a bond (possibly through a long term project), then they will probably become one.

VEHICLES

Beam Saber is about Pilots AND their massive war machines. These vehicles are not just a means of engaging in war, they are representative of the pilot within. It will be as tied to the pilot's reputation as their face and actions. Not only is it part of the pilot's public identity, it also reflects who they are. Pilots that favour misdirection out of the cockpit will have vehicles that use similar methods. The vehicles piloted by those that consider themselves just pawns in the conflict will be basic workhorse models, and those who think they are grand will put capes and gold on their vehicle. Keep this in mind as you make and use vehicles, whether you're the GM or a player.

VEHICLE CREATION

The directions that follow are useful for creating your vehicle step by step, however if you want to randomly generate your vehicle in part or in whole jump to Appendix A for methods to do that.

1. Choose the look of your vehicle, and name its model and manufacturer.
2. Choose your vehicle's Load, but you don't detail what gear it has at this time.
3. Assign 3 points by dividing them among the vehicle actions. A vehicle action cannot exceed 2 points at character creation.
4. Create 4 Quirks for your vehicle.

VEHICLE LOOKS

Note that a vehicle in Beam Saber can be anything from a mech to a dump truck to a fighter jet to a tank. The rules and looks can work for any machine that is piloted by a person. Here are some suggestions for how to describe your vehicle's look.

- **Mobility:** bipedal, quadrupedal, flight, hover, wheeled, treads, anti-grav, rotor
- **Arms:** none, humanoid, tentacle, industrial, hardpoint, wings, ornate

- **Hand:** none, industrial, human, tentacle, weaponized, ornate

- **Core:** armored, armed, light, bulky, practical, massive, ornate

- **Head:** none, armored, armed, hi-tech, ornate, practical

- **Cockpit:** sealed, open, armored, spacious, cramped, homey, customized

- **Shell:** organic, hard light, ceramic, alloy, plastic, crystal.

- **Style:** ornate, practical, improvised, custom, fashionable, sleek, powerful, artistic

VEHICLE STATS

The abilities of a vehicle are as important to the outcome of an action as the skill of the pilot. When a pilot needs to roll an action that uses their vehicle they roll the relevant vehicle action rating. If a pilot tries to remotely pilot a vehicle or a vehicle that is not theirs they have reduced Effect.

All vehicle action ratings max out at 4 points, but during pilot creation they can't have more than 2 points in an action. The mastery squad upgrade is required to unlock the fourth point. Vehicles have access to the following actions:

EXPERTISE ACTIONS

Battle: for attacking at short range.

Destroy: for razing with unsubtle methods.

Maneuver: for moving swiftly and precisely.

ACUITY ACTIONS

Bombard: for blasting with long range fire.

Manipulate: for deftly handling objects.

Scan: for quickly assessing a situation.

All vehicle actions belong to the Expertise or Acuity attributes. These attributes are used to

resist consequences. They gain a point of XP when a Desperate vehicle action is performed with them, or a point of general XP is assigned to them. When the Vehicle Upgrade track is filled through the Upgrade Downtime Activity an additional point can be added to any Vehicle Action.

QUIRKS

Quirks are the unique qualities a vehicle possesses that a pilot familiar with it can use to their advantage. However these Quirks aren't wholly positive and if all of them are applied without maintenance the vehicle will suffer a Breakdown.

CREATING QUIRKS

Every vehicle starts with 4 Quirks that the pilot is already familiar with. These first 4 Quirks are likely common to that model of vehicle. Up to 4 additional Quirks (for a total of 8) can be gained by filling the Upgrade track with the Upgrade downtime activity, and these ones are unique to this specific vehicle.

Each Quirk has 2 descriptors that determine when the Quirk can be used. These descriptors show how the pilot can push their vehicle in *just* the right way to get more out of it than designed for. For example a vehicle might have "Roaring Fast" and can be pushed for more speed or noise. When selecting your descriptors make sure that at least one of them can be interpreted as a disadvantage because struggling due to your Quirks provides XP at the end of the session.

If a player discovers that a Quirk isn't a good fit for their vehicle they should speak with their GM about changing it. If the Quirk is bad because it's rarely used and the player feels that a new one would be more useful, just change it and consider it no different than its previous version. If the narrative has changed the vehicle's nature making the Quirk no longer applicable, then describe what changed, how it changed, and just change the Quirk.

EXAMPLE QUIRKS

• Ominous Appearance	• Splintering Carapace
• Flexible Structure	• Mighty Clumsy
• Slow and Heavy	• Light Footed
• Military Workhorse	• Common Parts
• Fixed Hardpoints	• Redundant Systems

- Blinding Boosters

- *Aggressive Targeters*

SQUADS & FACTIONS

In Beam Saber there are three levels of actors: the Pilot, the Squad, and the Faction.

- The **Pilot** is the individual role filled by the players and NPCs. Not all pilots control vehicles, it's just the common parlance for those active in The War. Generally speaking their influence doesn't extend much further than those they can personally interact with. Sometimes the right person in the right place at the right time can change the fate of worlds, but the vast majority of the time the best a pilot can do in The War is survive and keep those close to them safe.
- The **Squad** is comprised of multiple pilots and their support staff. Some squads number fewer than 10, while the largest can be hundreds of people in the same command structure. However a squad is still people. People can be persuaded, betrayed, killed, seduced, deceived, and generally acted upon directly. In short squads can be overcome.
- The **Faction** is an organizational entity on a scale so large it has become more of an idea than anything physical. It's made up of countless squads and an unimaginable amount of people. It has transcended beyond the material and cannot be touched. Which is also its weakness. Factions are slow to act in The War and must do so through their squads. While a faction can never be destroyed its squads can be removed which eliminates its ability to act.

SQUAD CREATION

The directions that follow are useful for creating your squad step by step, however if you want to randomly generate your squad in part or in whole jump to Appendix A for methods to do that.

1. Choose your squad's patron faction. The faction will determine what bonus supplies you get for completing missions (see Reward section), and guide what goal your faction is working on (see Faction Goals section). The possible options are:

- **Autocracy**
- **Corporatocracy**
- **Democracy**
- **Independent**
- **Oligarchy**
- **Theocracy**

Note that while the squad's patron faction does not necessarily own the squad, it does expect them to follow its orders and work towards its interests. Additionally the Independent faction is purposefully more challenging than other patron factions. This is to represent the challenge of working against the established systems, the structures that support them, and acting *without* those same supports.

2. Set your Relationship with each faction to 0. They don't know or care the squad is until they've performed some missions for or against them. Set your Trust with each faction to 0 for the same reason.

3. Create a NPC who is the direct superior of the squad. This is someone that the GM can often use to assign the squad missions, and who the squad will have a connection to whether for good or ill. See Direct Superior for suggestions.

4. Choose a goal for your patron faction. Things to consider in this decision are the amount of politics, combat, and brutality everyone wants, as well as themes they might want to explore. Independent squads skip this step. See the Faction Goals section for more details. The possible options are:

- Assault the Foe
- Divided They Fall
- Golden Streets
- Hearts and Minds
- Hostile Takeover
- Intelligence Coup
- Manufacture Heroes
- Secure the Borders

5. Choose a squad playbook. This will determine the nature of most of your missions and some common training everyone in the squad has.

6. Choose an initial reputation and Forward Operating Base (FOB). When you

reinforce your reputation on a mission the squad marks 1xp. Your starting FOB will be small and unimpressive. See Squad Reputation for suggestions.

7. Create your immediate Region or choose one from the Regions listed in the Izya setting. This is the area surrounding your FOB. All it needs is a rating of 0-4 for Wealth, Might, Technology, and Crime (0 being essentially none, 4 being LOTS). Write the ratings on the squad's Claim Map.

8. Choose a squad ability. This is a special trick everyone in the squad can call upon.

9. Choose two upgrades. These are tools, personnel, and facilities the squad can use. Each squad playbook has two pre-selected upgrades (for example Profiteers always have Resolve Training and Secure FOB) and the squad also gets to choose two more from the squad playbook or the general squad upgrades. A squad helped you get the upgrades; take +1 Status with them. Another squad was denied those upgrades because you have them; take -1 Status with them. Each of these squads can be from the same faction as the players' squad and/or from a different faction.

10. Choose a contact for the squad. One squad is friendly with the contact so take +1 Status with them and describe the connection. Another squad dislikes the contact; take -1 Status with them and describe the issue.

11. Tally the Status modifiers from each pilot and the squad for all NPC squads. Write one word per point of Status that describes how that squad views your squad. If any are at -3 you have a Vendetta with them.

12. Name your squad. This might be your official designation or it might be a group call sign. Other squads and factions will know you by this name.

DIRECT SUPERIOR

The squad's **Direct Superior** is the NPC that they will probably be interacting with the most. This person will be higher rank than the pilots, give them orders, and assign them missions. They should have a title suitable to the faction they belong to, and a brief description of their appearance and personality. If the PCs lack a patron faction and are Independent their

superior might be from another squad, a mysterious source, or someone else with unofficial authority over the pilots.

Ultimately the purpose of the direct superior is not to boss around the pilots. They are there as a direct representative of the squad's patron faction, to embody the link between the patron and the squad, and as a way for the GM to provide missions to the players. They should rarely be the focus of the narrative but almost always be a narrative tool for the GM.

EXAMPLE DIRECT SUPERIORS

- Carberry, a shady and cruel fixer.
- Scratch, a cheerful and energetic Proxy.
- Project Lead Walker, an ambitious and hard working manager.
- Executive Assistant McEvoy, a Stressed and organized worker.
- Captain Martinez, a weary and grumpy officer.
- Quartermaster Hawkins, a sentimental and thoughtful trooper.
- Bishop Acampora, a patient and caring member of the clergy.
- Confessor Tebbel, an inquisitive and meticulous theologian.
- Councillor Swan, a hard hearted and calculating bureaucrat.
- Alderperson Drake, a fiery and passionate politician.
- Virtue de Quidt, an experienced and crafty noble.
- Margrave Takeyuki, a paranoid and meek leader.

SQUAD REPUTATION

The squad's reputation is the idea that immediately springs to mind when a potential employer thinks about them. It should be a word or phrase that the squad either already embodies or strives for, but does not directly speak to their competence. "Skilled" is a bad reputation, try "Daring" instead. By living up to their reputation the squad gets to mark XP at the end of the session.

EXAMPLE SQUAD REPUTATIONS

• Ambitious	• Honorable
• Amoral	• Professional
• Menacing	• Savvy
• Daring	• Subtle
• Destructive	• Strange

SQUAD ADVANCEMENT

At the end of a session look at the squad's XP triggers and take 1 squad XP for each trigger that happened this session. For each item that happened multiple times or in a dramatic fashion, take 2 XP instead. The squad XP triggers are:

- **Your squad playbook's XP trigger.** Every squad playbook gets XP for doing missions that suit their specialty.
- **Face off against challenges above your pay grade.** If you were opposed by obstacles or foes of a higher tier take XP.
- **Reinforce your squad's reputation or gain a new one.** Did the squad's actions promote what they're known for, or did they become known for something new?
- **Express the goals, drives, inner conflict, or instincts of the squad.** This one is all about playing to what makes your squad unique and interesting. Don't be too picky about awarding XP for this.

When the squad reaches 8 XP reset the XP to zero and then take either two squad upgrades or one squad ability.

MISSION COMPLETED

When the squad completes a mission follow this process:

1. Resolve the squad's REWARD. They'll get Supply Points, Cash, and Rep.
2. Update the squad's TRUST. They'll be more and less liked by other squads and their Factions.
3. Determine the ENTANGLEMENTS that affect the squad. Life is unfair and harsh.
4. Play through the DOWNTIME ACTIVITIES. The squad has some time to tend to their needs.

REWARD

To resolve the squad's Reward follow this procedure.

1. Take a Supply Roll from the Employer Faction, unless the mission was Independent. Roll dice equal to the Target's tier + Employer Faction Status, to a minimum of zero (roll 2d and take the lowest). Gain Supply Points equal to the highest die. If a crit is rolled take 9 Supply Points.
2. Take your Employer Faction's supply roll bonus.
 - Autocracy: +1 Materiel, +1 Cash
 - Corporatocracy: +2 Cash
 - Democracy: +1 Personnel, +1 Materiel
 - Independent: +2 Materiel
 - Oligarchy: +1 Cash, +1 Personnel
 - Theocracy: +2 Personnel
3. Assign the Supply Points as Cash, Materiel, or Personnel. Any Supply Points beyond the squad's maximum storage capacity must be used by the end of the next downtime phase or they are wasted.
4. Every pilot takes +1 Cash as salaried pay, unless they are Independent.
5. Every pilot takes a free Upkeep Downtime Activity.
6. If the mission supports the Patron Faction's goal add a Tick to the goal's Clock. If the Clock is filled, all squads patronized by the Faction gain a benefit, then choose a new goal for the Faction.

7. The squad earns 2 rep. If the target of the mission was higher tier than the squad, take +1 Rep per tier higher. If the target squad was lower tier, take -1 Rep per tier lower (minimum zero). If the mission was completely hidden, take zero Rep instead of the above.

TRUST

To update the squad's Trust and Statuses follow this procedure.

1. If a squad benefited from the mission consider giving +1 to that squad's Status.
2. If a squad was harmed by the mission consider giving -1 or -2 to that squad's Status depending on how bad the damage was.
3. For every Squad Status point above or below zero, add a descriptor that expresses how that squad views the players' squad.
4. Adjust the trust of the faction targeted by the mission.
 - Important infrastructure damaged. -2 Trust
 - A VIP was killed. -2 Trust
 - Civilians died. -1 Trust
 - Their corruption was exposed to their citizens. -2 Trust
 - At least one of their squads took casualties. -1 Trust
 - The mission's target was high profile or well connected. -1 Trust
 - The Faction was attacked in a region they control. -1 Trust
 - You have Vendetta with one of their squads at the start of the mission. That squad does not have to be involved in the mission. -1 Trust
5. Adjust the trust of the faction that employed the squad for the mission.
 - Civilians died. -1 Trust
 - The ROE was broken. -2 Trust
 - Important infrastructure damaged that was not the mission's target. -2 Trust
 - A squad that was not the mission's Target and belongs to the Employer was harmed. -2 Trust
 - The mission was successful. +Trust equal to double the Target's tier, minimum 1.
 - At least one secondary objective was completed. +2 Trust

- You have Vendetta with one of their squads at the start of the mission. That squad does not have to be involved in the mission. -1 Trust

6. Adjust the trust of the squad's patron faction.

- Another Faction was aided. -1 Trust
- The Patron's interests were harmed. -2 Trust

7. Adjust Faction statuses.

- When Trust reaches 9, that Faction's Status gets +1, Trust rolls over to 1, and any remaining Trust is then added.
- When Trust reaches zero, that Faction's Status gets -1, Trust rolls over to 8, and any remaining Trust is then subtracted.

STATUS

The players' squad has a status rating with every other squad and every faction that indicates how much they like or hate them. Status can range from -3 (Hated) to +3 (Loved), with zero (neutral) being the default rating. If the rating is something other than a zero it is tracked on the Faction and Squad Sheet.

STATUS LEVELS

- **+3: Allies.** Groups with this rating will help the squad even if it goes against their best interests, and they expect the same in return.
- **+2: Friendly.** Groups with this rating will help the squad if it doesn't create serious problems for them, and they expect the same in return.
- **+1: Helpful.** Groups with this rating will help the squad if it doesn't cost them anything, and they expect the same in return.
- **0: Neutral.**
- **-1: Interfering.** Groups with this rating will look for opportunities to cause the squad trouble (or profit from its misfortune) as long as it doesn't cost them anything, and they expect the same behaviour in return.
- **-2: Hostile.** Groups with this rating actively seek chances to harm the squad so long as it doesn't create major problems for them. They expect similar retaliation and take precautions against the squad.

- **-3: Vendetta.** Groups with this rating work to harm the squad even if it is against their best interests. They expect the squad to do likewise and will take precautions against them. When the squad has a vendetta with any number of groups, they will suffer additional Trust losses, temporarily lose 1 hold (possibly lowering their tier by 1 until the vendetta ends), and pilots can only take one Downtime Activity rather than two. If the players have multiple Vendettas, only apply the penalty from one at a time. The vendetta will end if the enemy is destroyed or a mutual agreement to establish a new status level is negotiated.

ENTANGLEMENTS

Entanglements exist because the world is unfair, the brass do things that seem random and incompetent, and your friends are vulnerable simply because they know you.

After Reward and Trust are determined, the GM generates an Entanglement for the squad using the charts below. Look at the Faction that the squad has targeted during the mission to determine the Entanglements table that will be used. If the last mission targeted an Independent squad, use that squad's status. If the Relationship is -3 roll on table A. If it's -2 or -1 roll on table B. If it's 0 or higher roll on table C. Then roll a number of dice equal to 3 minus the squad's Relationship level with their Patron Faction, or the Faction with the highest Relationship if they lack a patron, and take the highest result. If the total is 0 or higher roll 2d and take the lower result.

TABLE A

1. **Flipped OR roll on Table B:** A Rival squad arranges for one of your contacts, sponsors, clients, or a group of your customers to switch allegiances due to the attention on you. They're loyal to another faction now.
2. **Missing Supplies:** Your supplier didn't give you the supplies you were supposed to get, citing rerouted logistics. Lose 3 Supply points of any type, or try to browbeat logistics into giving you what you deserve and make a Fortune roll (1-3: -2 Trust with the Faction that last gave the squad a Supply Roll, 4/5: -1 Trust instead, 6: no Trust lost) to see if they squeal.
3. **Toxic Gear:** Scuttlebutt is that some of the gear you've been issued is unhealthy to

be around. Choose to spend 1 Personnel for +1d or don't, but either way make a Fortune Roll using the squad's tier (1-3: Everyone takes Level 1 Harm which can be resisted as normal, 4/5: Everyone spend 1 Materiel point to trade it away or take 2 Stress, 6: It's not toxic).

4. **Desperate Refugees:** A group of civilians mob the Squad demanding supplies. Give them 4 Supply Points, or make a Fortune Roll (1-3: Everyone takes two Level 1 Harms, 4/5: lose 2 Supply points) to see how bad things get.

5. **SCRAMBLE!:** A Squad you have a negative Status with makes a move against you (or a friend, contact, or other ally). The attack comes suddenly and with little warning; prepare to fight OR scatter and return after the attackers have done their damage.

If you prepare to fight, immediately start a mission where the Squad's FOB is under attack. Take into consideration the Hidden and Secure FOB upgrades for the Engagement Roll. This mission cancels the previous mission's downtime phase, and upon completion follows the normal mission completed process, including Entanglements.

If you scatter, lose 2 squad upgrades as the attackers destroy large sections of your FOB.

6. **Show of Force:** A Faction with whom you have a negative status has decided you need to be dealt with. Give them 1 Claim or gain Vendetta (drop to -3 status) with 2 of their Squads that you currently do not have Vendetta with. If you have no claims, lose 1 Hold instead.

TABLE B

1. **AI Attention OR roll on Table C:** An AI takes notice of your squad's actions and offers to cut a sinister deal with the squad. Accept the bargain, hide until it loses interest (forfeit 3 Rep), or deal with it another way.

2. **Fire Team Trouble:** One of your fire teams (or other cohorts) causes trouble due to their flaw(s). You can lose face (forfeit Rep equal to your Tier+1), make an example of one of the fire team, or face reprisals from the wronged party.

3. **Lowest Bidder:** Turns out your Squad's gear was manufactured by the lowest

bidder. All vehicles immediately suffer a level 2 Damage “Busted” and level 1 Damage “Low On Ammo” (each of which can be resisted separately), or each pilot can pay 1 Cash to get the good stuff through back channels.

4. **Rivals:** A squad with Status zero throws their weight around. They threaten you, a friend, a contact, or other ally. Forfeit (1 Rep or 1 Cash) per Tier of the Rival, or stand up to them and lose 1 Status with them.

5. **Debriefing:** One of your Squad is questioned by your superiors. One of the pilots or a cohort is taken in to be grilled. Make a Fortune Roll to see how well they resist the pressure (1-3: level 2 Harm, which can be resisted by pilots as normal, 4/5: -2 Trust) or bribe the grunts grabbing the person with 1 Cash.

6. **Requisition:** a cohort, squad upgrade, or acquired asset is requisitioned by another squad. Give up the item (take +2 Trust with that squad's patron Faction), bribe the caller with Cash equal to your tier +3, try to hide the object or fight back and lose 1 Status with that Squad AND their Faction. If you don't have any cohorts, upgrades, or assets you must select an option other than giving up the item as the caller doesn't believe you don't have it.

TABLE C

1. **New Recruit:** Someone the squad wants safe at home is assigned to them as a new recruit. Describe who this person is and the details of their bond with the squad. Gain a Specialist with Loyal and Eager. Their Quality is equal to the squad's Tier -1 (minimum 0).

2. **Civil Unrest:** spend Supply Points equal to the number of Regions in which you control a Claim (including your FOB), make a Fortune Roll to put it down (1-3: all pilots take level 1 Harm “Roughed Up”; 4/5: cohorts and personnel points can't be used in the next mission), or let it run its course (each Region loses 1 Wealth to a minimum of 0).

3. **Cooperation:** a Squad with +3 Status asks for a favour. Agree to do it, or forfeit 1 Rep per tier of the friendly squad, or lose 1 Status with them. This favour must be completed by the end of the next mission, and may take the form of a long term project, mission objective, or secondary objective. If you don't have a +3 squad

status, you avoid entanglements right now.

4. **Embedded Favourite:** The Squad is burdened with an NPC that a superior is fond of and believes needs first hand field experience. The NPC must accompany you on your next mission and get out intact. If you refuse to take the NPC along take -2 trust with the Faction pressuring you to break them in. If the NPC dies take -3 Trust, and if they are injured take -1 Trust. The NPC is a temporary Specialist Cohort with Quality equal to the squad's Tier -1.
5. **Letter from home:** One of the squad's pilots receives a personal message with bad news. They must use a Downtime Activity to Cut Loose or suffer 3 Stress.
6. **Brass-holes:** Your superiors issue mission objectives that don't make sense to the squad. The squad takes -1d on their next engagement roll. Additionally roll 1d to determine the tactic for the next mission (1: assault, 2: deception, 3: social, 4: transport, 5: science, 6: stealth). If the squad decides not to use that tactic, take -1 Status with the faction that assigned the mission, unless the mission is independent.

DOWNTIME ACTIVITIES

During the time between missions pilots can have freeplay scenes (where pilots talk with each other and NPCs) and perform two Downtime Activities. If a pilot or cohort assists with a Downtime Activity (except for Cut Loose), describe how they help, and take +1d. This costs no Stress and no Downtime Activities for the pilot or cohort assisting. Allies and Contacts do not provide +1d when helping with Downtime Activities but likely provide access to resources that would otherwise be unavailable.

The Downtime Activities available to them are as follows:

- **Acquire Asset:** Gain temporary use of an asset: One special item or a set of common items (enough for a Squad of your Tier scale), A cohort (a specialist or fire team), A vehicle, A service (transport from a logistics team, use of a warehouse for temporary storage, legal representation, etc). "Temporary use" is a period of time that is reasonable for the asset, usually the duration of the next mission. An asset may also be put on standby for future use. You might get a fire team to guard your FOB and they'll stay until after the first serious battle, or until a

week goes by and they get reassigned. To acquire the asset, roll the Squad's Tier. The result indicates the quality of the asset you get, using the Squad's Tier as the base. 1-3: Tier-1, 4/5: Tier, 6: Tier+1, Crit: Tier+2. You can spend Cash to raise the result of this roll beyond Crit by spending 2 Cash per additional Tier level added. The GM may set a minimum quality level required to get that particular asset. For example, if you want an intact enemy mech and credentials, you'd need to acquire a Tier IV asset. Anything less isn't enough. If you re-acquire an asset you get +1d to your roll. If you continue to get the same asset over and over again you can essentially rent it forever. Chemicals, poisons, and dangerous gadgets are going to raise some eyebrows. When you acquire one of these items (rather than making it yourself), you take -2 trust with your Patron Faction. If you want to permanently add an asset to the Squad you can either get it as a Squad upgrade, make owning it a long-term project, or spend materiel points equal to the new vehicle's Load AND 1 materiel +1 materiel per level of the squad's tier.

Acquiring an asset during downtime is generally used to further a pilot's or squad's goals separate from the needs of a mission. This may include getting a doctor, renting out a restaurant to impress someone, getting a transport vehicle for an "unsupervised" trip, etc. The asset acquired may be useful for an upcoming mission, but if an asset is needed during a mission a flashback is likely required. You can spend 1 Cash for +1d to the Acquire Asset roll, or to increase the result by 1 level. If the Squad has full control of a Region, you can take a number of bonus dice equal to the Region's Might (if acquiring a Cohort) or Tech (if acquiring Pilot or Vehicle Gear).

- **Collect:** Roll dice equal to the sum of the Wealth ratings of the Region's that the squad has at least one Claim in (including the Squad's FOB). Choose a number of dice equal to the number of Regions where the squad controls all the Claims. If no Regions have all the Claims controlled, choose the lowest die result. Gain an amount of Supply Points equal to the sum of the dice results.

However those supplies are meant to keep moving up the chain of command. Lose trust with your patron faction equal to half of the supplies you keep for yourself and your squad (minimum 1). Independent squads don't lose any trust. This can be supplemented by spending Cash at a rate of 1 Cash spent to gain 1 Supply Point representing forcibly setting market prices on locals, and does not affect faction trust.

- **Fix:** When you use technological know how and materials to fix a vehicle roll Engineer. If you lack a Workshop Squad Upgrade it costs 2 Stress to repair your vehicle as you lack the proper equipment to do proper repairs. The damaged vehicle marks segments on its mend Clock according to the Engineer result. 1-3: one segment, 4/5: two segments, 6: three segments, Crit: five segments. When the mend Clock is full reduce each detail of Damage the vehicle has by one level, then clear the Clock. Any remaining segments roll over to the now empty Clock. Whenever the vehicle suffers any new Damage clear any Ticks on its mend Clock. You can spend 1 Materiel point for +1d to the Fix roll, or to increase the result by 1 level.

- **Long-Term Project:** When you work on a Project (whether it's new or partially completed), describe how your pilot advances the Project, and roll an appropriate action. Mark segments of the Project Clock according to your result: 1-3: one segment, 4/5: two segments, 6: three segments, Crit: five segments. A long-term project can cover any kind of endeavour that takes a great deal of time. Researching a new beam weapon, finding a missing person, building a romance, finding a personal sponsor, and many more possibilities. The GM will determine how many segments the Project Clock has depending on what the goal is. To work on a Project you actually need the tools, skills, resources, etc to fulfill it, and that might be a necessary preliminary project. For example, you might want to make deals with a group of guerrillas but you don't have any way to contact them. As prep for that you could build a good rapport with the civilians who live in the area the guerrillas operate and once you have their trust then you could work on contacting the soldiers. You can spend 1 Personnel point for +1d to the Long-Term Project roll, or to increase the result by 1 level.

- **Recover:** When you get treatment to heal your pilot's Harm you use the Recover Downtime Activity. To do this you need to get medical care from a medic, veterinarian, autodoc, or someone else with a good amount of anatomical knowledge. If none of the PCs can fill that need, and you don't have a contact who can either, an Acquire Asset action can get you access to the professional or machine that you need which can then provide for the whole Squad. Recovery is a long-term project. Your healer rolls (Engineer for a PC with the Doctor ability or the quality level of an NPC) and the patient marks segments on their healing Clock. 1-3: one segment, 4/5: two segments, 6: three segments, Crit: five segments.

When the healing Clock fills up reduce each instance of Harm the patient has by one level, then clear the Clock. Any remaining segments roll over to the now empty Clock. If you attempt to heal yourself and have the Doctor ability you take 2 Stress after you roll. If you want to just wait to spend your Recover activity convalescing to heal naturally take 1 Stress and roll 0d. Note that the pilot being healed is the one who takes the Recover activity. Healing a patient doesn't cost any Downtime activities for the healer. Whenever you suffer new Harm, clear any Ticks on your healing Clock. You can spend 1 Personnel point for +1d to the Recover roll, or to increase the result by 1 level.

- **Upkeep:** Clear exhausted Quirk boxes on vehicles. Spend at least one Materiel and roll that many dice. Your vehicle refreshes a number of Quirks equal to the highest result. If the result is higher than the number of Quirk boxes filled the remainder is wasted. Additional exhausted Quirks can be removed by spending 1 Materiel point per Quirk. Each pilot gets a free Upkeep action as part of their Reward.
- **Salvage:** When you take apart a damaged vehicle for its valuables roll Engineer and gain Supply points according to the result. 1-3: 1 Supply Point, 4/5: 2 Supply Points, 6: 3 Supply Points, Critical: 5 Supply Points. If the vehicle is intact consider a mission or long term project to sell it instead of salvaging. Salvaging a vehicle destroys it regardless of how many Supply Points are pulled from the machine.
- **Schmooze:** Say what your pilot does to improve relations with a Faction and make a Fortune Roll using an appropriate Action. Increase Trust according to the result: 1-3: one, 4/5: two, 6: three, Crit: five. You can spend 1 Cash for +1d to the Schmooze roll, or to increase the result by 1 level.
- **Train:** When you spend time bettering yourself mark one attribute XP or one playbook XP. If you have the right Squad Training upgrade mark two XP instead. You can only train each XP track once per downtime.
- **Upgrade:** When you spend time to improve your vehicle spend 1 materiel point to add 1 mark to the Vehicle Upgrade track. If you have the Testing Facility squad upgrade mark 2 instead.
- **Cut Loose:** When your pilot cuts loose you'll remove some Stress from your Stress track. Pick another pilot and describe how the two of you spend time

dealing with the pressure you're under. This can only be done as a downtime action because to really dump some anxiety takes a fair bit of time. However, you can decide that your pilot skips the next mission (perhaps going AWOL) so they can cut loose, and you'll play a different member of the squad for that mission. This might be a new squaddie, a friend, or an already familiar NPC, any of which will help further flesh out the squad's cast.

To see how much Stress you relieve, roll dice equal to the number of Ticks in your Connection Clock with the pilot joining you, heal Stress equal to the highest die result, then add another Tick to the Connection Clock. The accompanying pilot does not increase their Connection as they are often asymmetrical, they also do not add dice to the Cut Loose roll for participating. Cohorts cannot be the accompanying "pilot." Cohorts or other pilots can be present in the scene but they do not provide additional dice, and the scene should focus on the two required pilots. You can spend 1 Personnel point for +1d to the Cut Loose roll, or increase the result by 1.

If the Connection Clock fills, ask the target pilot for a truth about one of the Beliefs tied to them then reset it to 0 Ticks as you see them in a new light. It'll take time and effort to understand them again and relearn their rhythms, so the pilot erases all the Beliefs they have for that pilot. After they've revealed a truth about themselves you both take 1 XP which can be put into any attribute or into the pilot playbook.

If you cut loose and roll to heal more Stress than you have then you've overindulged. Sometimes people get lost in the thing that makes them feel better; everything in moderation after all. When you overindulge you've behaved poorly and made choices you'll likely come to regret. This could express itself in a variety of ways, so choose one way you overindulged from the following: Attract Trouble (roll an additional entanglement), Brag (take -2 Trust with your patron faction), AWOL (Your pilot vanishes for a few weeks. Play a different pilot until this one returns from their "vacation." When your pilot returns they've also healed all their harm), or Impropriety (Reset your Connection with the pilot that joined you to 0 as you make an ass of yourself. If your Connection is already 0 take the Level 1 Harm "alone.").

At the end of your downtime actions if you have Scars you will suffer 1 Stress per Scar unless you have cut loose at least once during the downtime phase.

- **Manufacture:** Available in the full version of Beam Saber.

GAME MASTER DIRECTIONS

Beam Saber is about pilots and their massive war machines. There will be times when it is appropriate to focus on the pilots; their relationships, moral beliefs, and their mental and physical wounds. Other times the spotlight should be on their vehicles; metal giants crossing blades, transport trucks laden with stolen cargo speeding away from pursuers, and jets twisting around one another, trying to get the upper hand in a dance of angels. As the GM an important part of your job is moving the spotlight between these aspects and the players as a film director would. Chase the narrative alongside the players.

PREPARING A MISSION

There is one rule for designing a mission you must keep in mind: **Make a situation, do NOT make a story.** The flexibility that pilots have access to (through their vehicles, abilities, flashbacks, and everything else) means that your plans need to be similarly flexible. So try to avoid extensive paragraphs and events that WILL happen, and instead make notes that detail narrative resources and possibilities. These are my guidelines on how to prep missions for Beam Saber. They work for me, and hopefully they'll work for you too.

There are eight categories that I prepare for a mission: Briefing, Employer, Target, Objective, ROE, Complications, Characters and Challenges. The GM can pull from each section for obstacles the pilots must overcome. Some of those obstacles will be represented by Clocks, while others may be sources of Consequences in the fiction.

The contents of each section should flow from the outcome of previous missions as well as step 3 in the End of Session section (see ??). The End of Session questions will give you an idea of the type of objective, environment, and opponent the players want to face in their next mission; it's your job to tie those desires into the narrative created from earlier missions. Of course if this is your first session you won't have these questions to rely upon, but that's why there's the Starting Situation section (see page ??)!

BRIEFING

This is the basic information that the Pilots are given when they are planning the mission. It summarizes the situation in your notes so that you can tell what the mission is about at a glance. The Employer, Target, Objective, and maybe the ROE will be mentioned here. If you want to provide the players with false information, this is the place it should be since they will

have had to work for any other information they have (which should not be taken away from them).

EXAMPLE

BRIEFING: Lady Elreth fought a dragon near Wander causing a great deal of damage (Don't tell the players that she won and has left the area). The 3rd Public Connections Corp wants to help the populace repair to build stronger ties. The Wrights of the Ascent want to use this as an opportunity to rebuild the town in the image of the Celestial Myriad.

EMPLOYER

This is the squad that is hiring the pilots to complete the mission. The representative of that squad should also be listed here. This should detail the representative (when appropriate), and the Tier and faction of the Squad so that when going through the Mission Completed process (see page ??) the required information is at hand. The Employer's goal for the mission will be listed in the Objective, so save this space for information about the Employer and their liaison.

EXAMPLE

EMPLOYER: 3rd Public Connections Corp (Tier 2S) of the Democratic Federated Systems represented by Laura Neirnick. They are a well funded squad of attractive pilots and the military documentarian crew that follows them. GOAL: To look good for the public. Laura Neirnick has dark skin, broad facial features, blonde dreads with white/pink/pale blue beads, small, slight build, mid 30s, she/her, wears a very fashionable business suit.

TARGET

This is the squad that the pilots are going to most obviously harm by completing their objective. These notes should detail information about the target such as their tier (to adjust effect, engagement rolls, etc) and faction (to provide descriptive details, adjust trust during Mission Completed process, etc). Further, what the target is doing when the mission begins and *their* objective during it should be listed; the former to help describe the situation when the target appears on screen, and the latter to provide direction to their actions.

EXAMPLE

TARGET: The Wrights of the Ascent (Tier 1W) of the Church of the Celestial Myriad. They've been constructing a cathedral of the Celestial Myriad in Wander the last year or so, and it has sustained structural damage during the recent battle. It can still be salvaged and so the

Wrights are prioritizing its repair over everything else, including neutralizing the dangers to the town left from the battle.

OBJECTIVE

This is the reason that the pilots are undertaking the mission and braving its challenges. Fulfilling the requirements of the Objective will require the pilots to fill at least one Clock because if the mission could be completed with a single roll there'd be no reason to hire the pilots. Some missions may have more than one objective, or multiple stages for the objective, and each will likely be represented during the mission by a Clock. Once the objective is completed the GM should decide based on the fiction if the mission immediately ends or if it continues for some reason (such as needing to fill a clock to escape).

EXAMPLE

OBJECTIVE: Undermine the locals' opinion of the Wrights of the Ascent and make the Democratic Federated Systems look good.

ROE

This section details the ROE that the pilots will have to abide by during the mission. It can sometimes be tricky to come up with ROE on the spot, so writing down some ideas before a session is a good plan. Having the mission's ROE quickly accessible will also be helpful during the Mission Completed process when adjusting Trust. Most missions will have 2 ROE as a deterrent from uncivil behaviour. Missions with fewer ROE give the pilots freedom of action, while more ROE will become a challenge in and of themselves. If you are having trouble there is a list of ROE Suggestions on page ??.

EXAMPLE

ROE: Threatening, or employing force against civilians. Firing upon or presenting as a clearly marked medical transport or facility. Initiating combat with the Wrights of the Ascent.

COMPLICATIONS

This section details the majority of the obstacles between the pilots and their objective. Information about these are not provided to the pilots unless they work for it. What complications are revealed to the pilots when they Gather Information will depend on the methods they use. You should come up with about 6 different complications per mission so that you will have a variety of dangers to employ against the pilots.

EXAMPLE

COMPLICATION:

- The dying dragon's body is in the middle of the town and one of its two ignition glands has ruptured spreading flammable caustic fluid.
- The locals are suspicious of outsiders.
- A secret Burden cell looking to use the locals' suspicion to gain political power is present.
- The Town council is resistant to receiving aid from outsiders because they've already made a deal with the Wrights of the Ascent.
- Wander is in the mountains which are rough terrain and make communication with the outside difficult.
- Should the dragon's mate come looking for it?

CHARACTERS

This section lists the important NPCs that might appear on screen and provides details about their appearance. You don't need many characters listed as there's always the chance they won't come up. You only need to detail those who will be giving a face to the groups that can provide meaningful opposition or support to the pilots. One character for each group of NPCs that will appear in the mission should be plenty.

EXAMPLE

CHARACTERS:

- Hannah Copeland, Burden cell leader/populist politician. Lithe build, late 30s, pale brown skin, curly purple hair. Knew one of the pilots when she was a kid, wears coveralls with the top tied around her waist and a tank top. She/her.
- Grout DeVinter, Wander's mayor. Former contact of another pilot's gang. 50s, wears a head scarf and beautiful robe, soft build, east Asian ethnicity. They/them.
- Senior Kin Arrow Slide, the local leader of the Wrights. Frail build, sickly, 40s, bald, pale white skin, wears the same rough hooded robe that all Wrights wear. He/him.

CHALLENGES

This section summarizes all of the potential obstacles and dangers that are explicitly stated in the other sections or can be inferred from their details. It is very likely that as you think more about what problems the pilots will run into the challenges list will grow quite a bit. Remember that you don't have to use all of them! The list exists to give you quick ideas about threats, consequences, and obstacles to throw at the pilots.

EXAMPLE

CHALLENGES:

• The cathedral's stability	• Hannah Copeland's Burden cell
• Make the Wrights look bad	• The deal between the town council and the Wrights
• Make the DFS look good	• Mountainous terrain
• The dying dragon	• Wireless communication is difficult because of the mountains
• The caustic ignition fluid splattered all over	• A second dragon
• Suspicious locals	

ROE SUGGESTIONS

It can be difficult to come up with new rules of engagement with every mission, so here are some suggestions for actions that a faction may put restrictions on.

- Looting, requisitioning, stealing, and/or destroying civilian, commercial, and/or governmental property. Provocative interaction with non-military property may be restricted to certain groups or certain methods.
- Threatening, or employing force against civilians. The squad may not be allowed to use force or its threat on civilians, or only use it under certain circumstances.
- Preemptive use of force against hostile or potentially hostile targets. The squad

should only attack if they have already been attacked, and not initiate violence themselves.

- Use of disproportionate force. If the squad are attacked with fists and feet, they should not respond with gunfire.
- Escalation of force. The squad should never be the ones who increase the deadliness of a conflict.
- How to handle detained civilians, deserters, hostages, partisans, spies, POWs, and wounded enemy soldiers. The squad may be required to provide or refuse support to any of these groups, and the level of that support may vary.
- Deployment of chemical, biological, explosive, and/or poisonous weapons. These types of weapons are often seen as needlessly cruel due to their lasting effects and broad collateral damage, so factions often have restrictions on if and how they are used.
- Use of “enhanced interrogation.” Commonly known as torture, many factions have restrictions on if and how it is employed.
- Firing upon or presenting as a clearly marked medical transport or facility. Medical facilities and transports are generally filled with civilians and wounded, so attacking them is often seen as criminal. Likewise using such a facility as a hiding place or disguise may make the enemy more likely to attack non-threatening versions of such facilities.
- Permission to attack only specific group(s). Sometimes there are multiple non-ally squads operating in the same area, but not all of them are hostile or mission targets.

STARTING SITUATION: THE FORT JOVANOL INCIDENT

This section presents a starting scenario for those who want to quickly get into things or need some inspiration for how to start their campaign. Give this to the players before creating pilots and their squad.

The Fort Jovanol Incident

Your squad has been dragged into a flare up of The War between the Jovangellian Empire's Wolf Pack squad, and the Celestial Myriad's Cult of Earth Found.

A week ago a series of explosions ripped through Fort Jovanol, the new home of the recently transferred Wolf Pack. The squad, on leave from the frontlines, has been devastated, and are taking the attack very personally. Rumor has it that the investigation into the attack ties it to The Cult of Earth Found, who have set up in the small town of Hulinton a couple hours drive South of Fort Jovanol.

Hot heads on both sides of the rumors have begun slinging vitriol over the radio. Yesterday that switched to missiles when a barrage rained down on Hulinton from North of the town. The Cult's defensive systems protected the sections of the town under their control, but the North edge of town is burning. Both sides are now gearing up for major offensive action.

Fort Jovanol and Hulinton are not too far West of Journey City, the home of the last Independent space elevator known as The Tower. All the factions and the Independent squads are looking to take advantage of this situation as it unfolds. Your squad will be tasked with missions in the area, which will initially be determined by the faction you work for.

The squads attached to each faction below are the ones most tied to that faction's goal, though each faction likely has 1 or 2 more squads in the area (such as the players' squad). However, it is recommended that the listed squads are given preference over other squads, or creating your own, when creating Rivals, Allies, Targets, and Employers because this will keep the game focused. Introduce new squads as old ones are removed from the area of conflict.

The missions provided below are intentionally vague. They leave out the Briefing, Complications, Characters, and Challenges that the Preparing A Mission section (page ??) directs the GM to create so that the missions can be different each time they are used, and so that the GM can get some practice partially constructing a mission. If the GM is really stuck about how to develop the starting missions, don't be afraid to ask the players for suggestions as these are the opening of the campaign and chances are everyone is learning the game.

AUTOCRACY: THE JOVANGELLIAN EMPIRE

The Empire seeks to conquer Journey City through force of arms, but it's happy to let the Wolf Pack vent their rage by conquering the area West of the city. With that region locked down they can use it as a staging ground for an offensive Eastward.

Faction Goal

Assault The Foe: Soften up a specific enemy held region in preparation for capture. This can be done by brazenly attacking that region, cutting that area off from reinforcements, gaining intel about the district's weak points, etc.

Active Squad

The Wolf Pack (tier II-S Autocracy) is a vanguard unit that was recently devastated while on leave from the front. The evidence they have points to the Cult of Earth Found as the culprits, and they're ready to avenge their fallen. **GOAL:** to wipe out the Cult of Earth Found.

Players' Direct Superior

Captain Martinez is a weary and grumpy officer. They transferred to Fort Jovanol away from the front alongside The Wolf Pack. It was supposed to be quiet; a moment to recover. Now they and their people have been denied that breather and there's Hell to pay.

Opening Mission

Employer: Captain Martinez for The Jovangellian Empire **OR** The Wolf Pack if the squad's patron faction is not The Jovangellian Empire.

Target: The Rubble Runts

Objective: Remove guerillas from the planned assault route.

Rules of Engagement: No threatening, or employing force against civilians; No firing upon or presenting as a clearly marked medical transport or facility; Prisoners must be taken alive and remain unharmed.

CORPORATOCRACY: EXODUS REPUBLIC INCORPORATED

ER Inc's current interests are primarily to gather more information about The Jovangellian Empire's capabilities in the area. To that end Calazar Strategic Deployment has been contracted to assist the depleted Wolf Pack.

Faction Goal

Intelligence Coup: Steal valuable information from the enemy. This can be done by acquiring VIPs, retrieving actionable intel, stealing technological advances, etc.

Active Squad

Calazar Strategic Deployment (tier II-W Corporatocracy) are a military company of offworlders from Calazar looking to head home. Currently contracted to The Wolf Pack.
GOAL: to make enough cash to get home.

Players' Direct Superior

Project Lead Walker is an ambitious and hard working manager. The Incident is an opportunity for promotion, but it'll take some savvy. Contract the Calazarans to The Empire, while using other assets to find where the Jovangellians are weak. Then make the deal.

Opening Mission

Employer: Project Lead Walker for Exodus Republic Inc **OR** Calazar Strategic Development if the squad's patron faction is not Exodus Republic Incorporated.

Target: The Wolf Pack

Objective: Acquire information about the Wolf Pack's supply lines.

Rules of Engagement: Only use force in self defence; No killing Wolf Pack personnel.

DEMOCRACY: THE DEMOCRATIC FEDERATED SYSTEMS

The Democratic Federated Systems currently have a non-violent stance in the area. Officially. The Fort Jovanol Incident was caused by their Dark Room squad, and they continue to create turbulence that favours them.

Faction Goal

Divided They Fall: Manipulate the enemy's plans. This can be done by planting false orders and intelligence, disrupting communications, pitting enemies against each other, etc.

Active Squad

The Dark Room (tier II-S Democracy) are a black ops deniable asset deployed from a stealth orbital platform. **GOAL:** to eliminate enemy VIPs.

Players' Direct Superior

Councillor Swan is a hard hearted and calculating bureaucrat. Before the Incident many would think things were “quiet” in Izya, but Swan had the reports of the building forces, and repeat skirmishes. With the Incident he gave all that a release valve to buy some time.

Opening Mission

Employer: Councillor Swan for The Democratic Federated Systems **OR** The Dark Room if the squad's patron faction is not The Democratic Federated Systems.

Target: The Cult of Earth Found

Objective: Destroy the cult's communications facility.

Rules of Engagement: Only use force against the Cult of Earth Found; No firing on medical facilities or transports; Only present as Jovangellian military.

INDEPENDENT

This “faction” are a scattering of unaligned squads each pursuing their own goals. Generally they are Earthers, though there are some Offworlder Independents. If the players choose to be Independent they WILL be at a disadvantage because they'll lack the support network that a patron faction provides.

Active Squads

Doctors Beyond Stars (tier II-S Independent) is a group of humanitarians who try to ensure the well being of the civilians that end up as collateral damage in The War, regardless of their allegiance. **GOAL:** to gain access to all civilian populations.

The Burden (tier II-S Independent) are an anti-offworlder group with no unified post offworlder plan of government. **GOAL:** to remove all the offworld factions.

The Rubble Runts (tier II-W Independent) are a militia originally formed by war orphans looking to grow in the vacuum left by the local government. **GOAL:** to become the most powerful gang.

Players' Direct Superior

Scratch is a cheerful and energetic Proxy. They aren't the squad's superior in the giving orders sense, but they are excellent at connecting the pilots to the clients who can make use of their skills and equipment.

Opening Mission

Employer: Scratch for Doctors Beyond Stars

Target: The Cult of Earth Found

Objective: Get a group of Doctors Beyond Stars personnel into North Hulinton so they can assess and treat the damage to the civilian populace.

Rules of Engagement: Only use force in self defence; no looting, requisitioning, stealing, and/or destroying civilian, commercial, and/or governmental property; no threatening, or employing force against civilians.

OLIGARCHY: THE ADAMANT COUNCIL OF NOR

The Virtue of The Adamant Council of Nor senses something fishy going on with the Fort Jovanol Incident. She's tasked the squads under her command with doing what they can to investigate the situation, so that if it is a matter of skullduggery she can use it to the Council's benefit.

Faction Goal

Hearts And Minds: Change the popular opinion of a faction in a manner that benefits your patron faction. This can be done by protecting the populace from marauders in your patron's name, publicizing the corruption of an enemy faction, shifting musical tastes in support of your patron, etc.

Active Squad

The Knives of Nor (tier II-S Oligarchy) are the diplomats and spies for Nor in Izya. GOAL: to turn Izya into a Norrish puppet.

Players' Direct Superior

Virtue de Quidt is an experienced and crafty noble. She's suspicious of the recent conflict as reports indicated that Celestial Myriad in Hulinton didn't have the supplies or personnel to perform such a strike, never mind The Cult of Earth Found.

Opening Mission

Employer: Virtue de Quidt for The Adamant Council of Nor **OR** The Knives of Nor if the squad's patron faction is not The Adamant Council.

Target: The Wolf Pack

Objective: Gain access to the investigation into the Fort Jovanol Incident.

Rules of Engagement: No deployment of chemical, biological, explosive, and/or poisonous weapons; no looting, requisitioning, stealing, and/or destroying civilian, commercial, and/or governmental property;

THEOCRACY: THE CHURCH OF THE CELESTIAL MYRIAD

The Church of the Celestial Myriad is in the area South West of Journey City to work on converting some of the smaller communities starting with Hulinton. Unfortunately the Fort Jovanol Incident has thrown that plan into chaos and they've had to turn their logistics towards the growing conflict.

Faction Goal

Secure The Borders: Take proactive measures to protect the patron faction. This can be done by removing enemy agents acting within the patron faction, weakening neighbouring regions, constructing defenses, etc.

Active Squad

The Cult of Earth Found (tier II-S Theocracy) is a group that believes that humanity's holy birthplace is only for the faithful. GOAL: To remove the non-faithful from Earth.

Players' Direct Superior

Bishop Acampora is a patient and caring member of the clergy. She's been sent to Hulinton by the Archbishop in Blessed Harbor to convert the locals, but is concerned about rumors of armed guerilla resistance in the populace.

Opening Mission

Employer: Bishop Acampora for The Church of the Celestial Myriad **OR** The Cult of Earth Found if the squad's patron faction is not The Church of the Celestial Myriad.

Target: The Burden

Objective: Root out the Burden cell in Hulinton

Rules of Engagement: No torture; no deployment of chemical, biological, explosive, and/or poisonous weapons; no use of disproportionate force; detained persons are to be unharmed.

END OF SESSION

After a couple of hours of play you'll probably reach a good spot in the narrative to stop and most people will decide that they've had enough for one day. Other groups will do marathon sessions that can last 8 or more hours! Whenever you decide to stop the current session

follow these directions regardless of how the session ends.

1. Check the squad's XP goals and mark 1 XP for each item that occurred (or 2 XP if that item happened multiple times).
2. Check the pilots' XP goals and mark 1 XP for each item that occurred (or 2 XP if that item happened multiple times).
3. If a mission was completed this session ask the pilots the following questions to direct what the next mission will be:
 - Are you following up on a previous mission's outcome?
 - Is your aim to seize a claim, hurt the target, aid yourselves, or aid another squad?
 - Is there a specific area you want to target?
 - Is there a specific resource you want to acquire?
 - Are you targeting a squad weaker, stronger, or about the same as you?
 - Are you targeting a specific squad or faction?

These questions can be answered in character and/or out of character, whatever works best.

WANT MORE?

These rules are the bare essentials for playing Beam Saber. There's a lot more that you can dig into with the game; deeper lore, controlling regions, crafting, extensive GM advice, and more!

You can find all that at <https://austin-ramsay.itch.io/beamsaber>