

STARFINDER

Yoonki's Ultimate Guide to Soldiers



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Guide Information

This guide is made by Yoonki ([/u/Craios125](#), Yoonki on Discord).

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Starfinder is a very big game, and I want this guide to focus specifically on the Soldier chassis. I'll highlight some pieces of gear and race options, but I'll let you round out the specific details of your individual character.

I shall be using and analyzing the features and options showcased in the *Core Rulebook*, *Armory*, *Pact Worlds*, *Character Operations Manual*, *Starship Operations Manual*, *Galaxy Exploration Manual*, *Tech Revolution*, *Galactic Magic*, *Drift Crisis*, *Interstellar Species*, *Ports of Call*, *Alien Archives* and most *Adventure Paths* books in this guide.

For readability and paying respect to online guide traditions, I'll be using color-coding for options in the guide:

- **Blue** - awesome, strong options for the majority of scenarios that might come up in the game
- **Green** - solid options that are definitely playable and usable, but perhaps not as powerful or versatile as the blue ones.
- **Orange** - decent options for specific builds and/or specific types of campaigns, but might be kind of niche.
- **Red** - options that are either so niche that they might never come up, or are just straight up underpowered. *Keep in mind that Starfinder is a game you and your friends play for fun*, so feel free to talk to your GM about changing some of them, or making sure there will be opportunities to use them.
- **Varied Colors** - features that are better/worse at different periods of the game, different types of campaigns, or with different party compositions. In other words, tricky to rate objectively across many different campaigns.

Guide History

Version	Date	Changes
1.0	2023-07-13	Initial version
1.1	2023-07-14	Minor grammar changes, added Evolutionist multiclass rating, improved the Qi Adept and Ascetic Warrior descriptions.
2.0	2024-08-04	Added all the features and archetypes from all the released adventures and Starfinder Enhanced.
2.1	2024-08-06	Added the Psychic Charlatan and Psychic Detective Archetype

Soldier Overview

Soldier is the ultimate martial class, focusing almost entirely on optimizing your combat performance. While they may lack some of the tricks and tools to use out of combat that some other classes can offer, Soldiers can crack skulls and stay in the fight like almost no one else. They're wickedly powerful, fairly durable and shockingly customizable. Quite satisfyingly, **Soldiers get to make some cool character choices every single level up** (either a new *fighting style*, new *feat*, new *combat feat* or new *gear boost*), which is very fun. They also offer an extremely wide amount of roleplaying options, as their fighting styles and gear options allow one to play out nearly any martial fantasy one can imagine: from devastating melee warriors, cleaving enemies in half with oversized weapons, to lead-spitting bullet rain mobile firing platforms, to gun-fu pistol-whipping gunslingers, to sneaky archers, to explosive heavy ordinance specialists.

In addition to having unique gear boosts to get some extra oomph out of their tools of destruction, Soldiers also have access to extremely powerful *feat boosts* "alt", which modify existing feats to elevate them to unbelievable levels.

One of the Soldiers' main strengths lie within their ludicrous number of feats, allowing one to easily cap out the "necessary" combat feats very early on, which in turn allows the Soldier to specialize in a bunch of more "niche" feats that may not have been taken so early on by other classes. Most notable among those feats are the creature companion line, which the soldier can sacrifice the feat slots for like no other class.

The Soldiers are also the only class in the game that gets access to all armor, shield and weapon types right off the bat, allowing them the widest selection of gear possible at the start to customize their loadout to suit their needs. Most notably among them are heavy weapons, as no other class starts with innate proficiency in heavy weapons. And they sure are notable, as heavy weapons can deliver awesome amounts of ranged damage with the right build.

The main flaw in the Soldiers' class kit is their disappointing performance out of combat. They are one of the very few classes that gets no free scaling insight bonus to certain skills. While their multiple feats allow them to grab *skill focus* relatively early on without any stress to get a good boost to their skill checks early on, it does mean that by the time the other classes start getting way higher insight bonuses - the Soldier will inevitably be left behind. Thankfully, the



special ops training “alt” option allow them to select at least a single skill that will easily keep up with the competition. Although it does replace a potential gear or feat boost “alt”, it will only ever become necessary at a level when you already probably can afford to waste one (after you pick up all of your “core” boosts).

Finally, being martial, they’re very easy to play and don’t feature super confusing or complex mechanics, which makes them a great choice for players new to Starfinder who don’t want to mess with the more involved gameplay of Vanguard or Solarian. Somewhat deceptively, high level soldiers can actually turn out surprisingly hard to play well, as the sheer amount of class features, regular feats and additional combat feats can get a bit hard to keep track of. This does, however, mean that virtually no two soldiers are alike, as the sheer amount of options they get at every single level makes them quite unique.

Party Roles

Keep in mind, you’re playing a roleplaying game. Every single class in the game can be built to fit most roles in the game. Every character will have a lot of roles. However, naturally, some classes shine more in certain roles:

- **Damage-dealer** - Soldiers are full BAB (Base Attack Bonus) combatants that specialize in all manners of combat encounters. They get to perform an additional strike during a full attack thanks to their *soldier’s onslaught* feature, and lv20 Soldiers can enjoy the, frankly, insane *kill shot* feature to instantly obliterate their enemies. Soldiers are easily some of the absolute best damage-dealers in Starfinder and should dominate the damage charts of almost any party they are in (depending on the build).
- **Tank** - Soldiers are pretty beefy and they do get a fistful of protection abilities that mostly focus on defending themselves. They do need to actually pick them up, however. And while they don’t have that many direct damage-mitigation options for their buddies like Vanguards, Soldiers can actually get some pretty strong area-denial builds going on to protect the backline.
- **Support** - certain Soldier *fighting styles* can provide absolutely nutty support to certain parties. However, this support is almost always limited to combat, as there’s just not that many ways they can augment others out of combat. And if you do not pick the support-oriented *fighting styles*, Soldiers are pretty pathetic at this.
- **Debuffer** - soldiers can provide some fairly valuable debuffs through their choice of feats, *feat boosts* “alt” and *gear boosts*. If they pick the options for them. They can also get really good at some combat maneuvers, most notably *bull rush*.
- **Socialite** - personally, I never liked “party face” defined as a “role”, as it implies that only one specific character is supposed to be interacting with NPCs. Feel free (and encouraged) to do so even if your social scores aren’t the highest. Aiding is a thing in the game, too. However, if we do analyze the “social interaction” options, Soldiers can’t really offer much. They have Intimidation as a class skill, but will need to pick up the *spec ops training* later on to keep up with the DC progression if they want to intimidate creatures at high levels.

- **Utility** - they can get high insight bonuses to skill checks through *spec ops training*, but likely only just a single skill. They also don't have much to offer outside of combat, which makes them disappointing in this aspect. That being said, gear choices can offer the Soldier a lot of ways to add to the party's tool list outside of combat. You also only get 4+INT skill ranks per level, which isn't inspiring much confidence in your skill variety, either, especially as a race with a penalty to INT.

Ability Scores

The value of different ability scores depends heavily on your build and playstyle.

- **Strength** - how much Strength you'll need depends largely on your build:
 - Melee/Thrown (non-operative) - on average, the highest damage-dealing Soldier builds. You want to pump Strength all day, every day. Start with at least 16. 18 is good, too, but may be overkill, since you already have high BAB and don't need to succeed on additional skill checks in combat (like Operative's *trick attack*, for example).
 - Melee (operative) - the idea here is using weapons with the operative property, allowing you to add DEX instead of STR to attack rolls (not damage rolls). Strength can still be very useful to you in order to increase your weapon damage, so you don't want to dump it entirely. That being said, it's only +1 to your damage rolls per 2 points of Strength, so it's not particularly impressive. By the end of the game they will be adding up, though, so it's always good to increase your Strength at levels 5, 10, 15 and (possibly) 20. Unfortunately, you can't add DEX instead of STR when attacking with thrown weapons, even if they're Operative. Yes, even shurikens.
 - Ranged (heavy) - Heavy ranged weapon builds also technically need 12 (or 14 for lv11+) STR to wield those heavy weapons without penalties. That being said, the gunner harness item effectively removes that requirement. Still, the heavy harness combined with a heavy weapon and all the rest of your gear might actually make you encumbered due to carrying too much bulk, so, in practice, it's still useful to have 12 Strength, especially if you want to use heavy weapons from the very first level. Otherwise, leave this at whatever and then pick up a gunner harness.
 - Ranged (non-heavy) - there's virtually no reason to get any Strength. Both 10 and 8 are okay.
- **Dexterity** - Increases your AC, initiative, a bunch of skills, Reflex saves (important, since they're our weak save) and can be used for your attack rolls and combat maneuvers. The only reason you'd let this be low is if you choose to specialize in Strength, instead, but even STR builds want quite a bit of Dexterity, since heavy armor gains a pretty big bonus to AC when the character's Dexterity meets the max DEX bonus. Although it is very min-max-y, you could also top out your Strength by buying Powered Armor. Almost everyone will want to get 12 here at the beginning, while ranged builds and operative weapon builds want to start at 16.

Note: If you want to roleplay a gun-fu character who's both great with ranged weapons and melee weapons - Dexterity is *the* way to go, as you'll be able to use all ranged weapons effectively and deliver great damage in melee with *operative* weapons. The *finesse striker gear boost* is near mandatory in that case.

- **Constitution** - while a very useful ability score that increases your survivability and Fortitude saves, you don't have to go overboard with this one. The Stamina Point system means you'll be healing up to 50%+ of your overall durability between nearly every fight, so pumping CON like mad isn't super important. Ranged builds can safely leave this at 10, while melee ones can make do with ~14.
- **Intelligence** - you're probably not winning any Nobel prizes. You have barely any INT skills, and you likely won't be beating others at them. That being said, if you're very dedicated and plan to pick up *spec ops training* (or just a skill focus at lower level games) in one of those skills - you can actually end up pretty decent at one of them. Regardless, those are niche builds and combat should probably be your focus if you've picked this class.
- **Wisdom** - Soldiers get pretty decent WIS save bonuses, so adding a bit extra here just to make sure you stay safe is nice. You can start at 10, but preferably have at least 12, especially if you plan to go hard into some WIS skills. Improve it over time through ability score improvements, too.
- **Charisma** - Starfinder does have a lot of nice feats that allow "tanking" (through "taunting" feats) and feinting, and you could theoretically be decent at it. It, once again, largely depends on your build. If you're not using unwieldy weapons, then once you get lv11's *soldier's onslaught* you probably won't be wanting to waste your move action on demoralizing or feinting (though feats like *grab attention* will stay viable). However, those that do use those unwieldy weapons, or just focus on using the *cleave* feat, may actually get some use out of having a high Charisma.

Starship Combat

Starship combat is featured in most adventure paths, and it's a staple of sci-fi adventuring. One extremely important thing to consider here are the [TIMs](#) added in the Starship Operations Manual. The ones applicable to you are the *primary fighting style (gunner & pilot)*. The gunner version is pretty decent at getting a little more damage (and it will be a little, especially if they plan to pass you the joystick controlling a capital weapon). The pilot one, however, is almost like getting a whole extra action, especially when used against smaller, weaker ships (though risky, since you don't want to get shot yourself).

- **Captain** - you likely do not have the Charisma to handle this, nor the skills.
- **Chief Mate** - you're probably one of the best characters to handle this role. Though, once again, at high levels the lack of a high insight bonus will start to feel really bad when attempting tasks with extremely high DCs, unless you get *special ops training*.
- **Engineer** - you likely do not have the Intelligence to handle this, nor the necessary class skills. Stay away from the big red button.

- **Gunner** - you're a full BAB class that may focus on Dexterity. STR builds can actually be decent, too, but not nearly as good.
- **Magic Officer** - not by default. Skills too low.
- **Pilot** - Piloting is a class skill for us, and our TIM for piloting is arguably the best one for the role. Builds with exceptionally low DEX want to stay away, but you can shore up a few extra points here through your theme and racial bonuses.
- **Science Officer** - same as Engineer.

Races

Starfinder has a very wide variety of races. A lot of them don't change the way you play in a major way and simply provide a nice benefit or bonus (in addition to roleplaying flavor). As such, there isn't really a need to explore every single race. Instead, I'll break down core races and highlight a few races that are especially nice or interesting.

As a Soldier, you will want to pick races that provide a bonus to your preferred build. That'll probably be Strength, Dexterity and/or Constitution. Any race that provides a bonus to two of them is **great**. Any race that provides a bonus to one of them is **good**. Those that provide a penalty to your necessary ability score are **bad**. The rest are **decent**. A notable exception are races that provide racial bonuses to combat maneuvers. They're mentioned in the Combat Maneuvers section of the guide.

- **Android (Companion, Laborer)** - nanite integration is awesome and an extra upgrade slot is always nice if you'll go for light armor.
- **Human (Featherlight or Gravity Dweller)** - as usual, they're great as literally any class in the game and you can not go wrong with them. More feats are great. *Dusk sight* is nice to have for a better Perception bonus.
- **Kasatha (Akitonian Settler, Nomad or Kasath Native)** - notable for having extra arms, allowing you to have a shield out together with 2 handed weapons. Racial bonus to piloting is great if you plan to pilot a spaceship and want to get a little edge on those checks beyond an insight bonus.
- **Lashunta (Korasha (Hunter Legacy, Mind Forward), Damaya (Hunter Legacy, Mind Forward))** - pretty fun set of psychic abilities. The racial bonuses to skills are also pretty nice, but nothing too special.



Psychically resistant is cool to further boost your Will save.

- **Shirren (Courtier, Scout or Worker)** - some nice teamwork bonuses (once per day), but nothing too special. *Individual obsession* is the more interesting option, as selecting a new skill as a class skill with a racial bonus to it makes it pretty appealing for a soldier who wants to focus on something like a feint build.
- **Vesk (Low Gravity, Venomthought, Warblood, Cave, Lambent)** - no surprises here, Vesk are amazing Soldiers, both for melee and range builds. *Observant* provides a huge bonus to an often used skill, while *Armor Savant* is excellent for protection. *Prehensile tail* lets you wield a shield in addition to a two-handed weapon. The default vesk *natural weapons* is also notable for certain unwieldy weapon builds, such as ones with the *powerhouse style*, as it lets you have an unwieldy weapon and also threaten squares around you (and thanks to the Soldier chassis you have more than enough feats to pick up *improved unarmed strike*). You really can't go wrong with this.
- **Ysoki (Anthropomorphic, Nograv, Survivor)** - naturally amazing for many builds, with a lot of cool racial options. *Moxie* is great for a more acrobatic character, allowing to routinely get the huge AC bonus against ranged attacks from being prone, as well as making it way easier to tumble through threatened squares to avoid being in a sticky spot. One thing that makes the Ysoki particularly interesting is the *swarmer* ability. Removing the need to stand on opposite sides of the enemy to flank them (for your buddies, too!) is amazing in that it makes pretty much all of the "bodyguard"-type builds that are usually too restrictive position-wise to be significantly better.
- **Orc** - one of the best melee races, and one of the best picks for Soldiers, as well. *Conditioned focus* and *fierce survivalist* allow us to focus on *Intimidation* (despite the -2 to Charisma) for *feats* like *antagonize* and *grab attention*, plus gives us something to do out of combat. +4 STR helps us get precious ability scores, while *Orc Ferocity* allows us to stay in the fight longer. Same as all races with light sensitivity, don't forget your fashionable [lightvision shades](#).
Note: remember that the FAQ removed the "*receives an adjustment of +1 to the ability score associated with the chosen skill*" line from *conditioned focus*.
- **Half-orc** - diet Orcs. Almost all the same benefits, just without the penalty to Charisma and no light sensitivity.
- **Goblin** - whopping +4 bonus to DEX, darkvision, fast, small (easier to take cover). What's not to love for a ranged combatant?
- **Hobgoblin (Hardworlder, Warhob)** - with the *armor training* alternate racial trait, these are practically reskinned vesks, for the purposes of the Soldier chassis.
- **Kobold** - naturally good armor, DEX bonus, racial bonuses to three skills. Small size helps gain cover more easily. Good ranged Soldiers.
- **Bear, Uplifted** - solid ability score adjustment, improved charges are always great on melee characters (and makes it easier to pick something other than *Blitz* for your *fighting style*) and the improved movement speed is welcome for any heavy armor-wearing character. Large size also technically makes you threaten more areas, especially with reach.
- **Bolida** - great pick for Strength-based Soldiers. Great ability score adjustment, innate blindsense and darkvision, racial bonus to AC, stacking resistance to the most common

damage type, and the ability to charge without penalties, as well as a whopping +4 to reposition and bull rush attack rolls (albeit you have to use a move action to prepare in advance). If all else fails, burrow speed lets you hide away from a Total Party Kill (TPK). Same as all races with light sensitivity, don't forget your fashionable [lightvision shades](#). The only disadvantage of this race is looking for character art to use.

- **Dragonkin** - solid soldiers, with a decent ability score adjustment for heavy armor users, a breath weapon that's going to become useless against all but swarms by level 7, darkvision and, of course, flight. *Partner bond* really helps out your initiative if you bond with the party's Operative. Plus, of course, they have 10-foot reach.
- **Skittermander (Assimilated, Bookish)** - very good for grapple builds. Six arms means they have enough arms for at least one shield. *Hyper* is sure going to come in clutch at some point during your adventuring day, so don't forget to use it.
- **Shobhad** - flawless ability score distribution, large size and natural 10ft reach, stackable cold resistance and 40 feet of movement speed. Excellent choice for a melee Soldier.
- **Strix** - a DEX bonus and flight speed make these naturally good airborne ranged soldiers. Unfortunately, their skill bonuses to Perception only work in low light conditions.
- **Sylph** - extremely competent airborne ranged combatants. They boost all flight maneuverability one step, meaning that even with a standard jetpack you'll have perfect maneuverability, which makes aerobatics much easier (on top of the racial bonus to acrobatics). They have a naturally good ability score distribution. Darkvision means saving money and augment/upgrade slots on other sources of it. Since gaining flight isn't particularly difficult in Starfinder through gear options, it's recommended to take the *phantasm* alt ability, for a whopping +4 racial bonus to Stealth checks, probably making even the party's Operative green with envy.
- **Trox** - near perfect distribution for a heavy armor character, with darkvision, burrowing speed, intimidation bonus (hello, antagonize builds), racial bonus to grappling (hello, grappling builds) and native 40 feet of movement speed. Let's not forget the innate 10-foot reach. Finally, as cherry on top, *frenzy* is great to potentially turn the tide of combat, as boosting our already amazing attack rolls even further can put enemies into a world of hurt. Soldiers also probably have enough SP and HP to tank a few hits.

Themes

Themes are a core part of your character's customization. Most characters won't suffer too much even if they don't pick a theme that matches their most important ability score. Just remember that a +1 does make you eligible for different feats. For example, you may have 12 DEX, then take the Ace Pilot theme to get a total of 13 DEX, making you eligible for the Mobility feat.

As such, I won't be making any ratings on the Themes, because they really should just be something you choose for the narrative bonus. However, for optimization purposes, it is best to pick themes that make you eligible to a feat that you really want, such as pushing your STR to 13 for Powered Armor Proficiency.

Skills

Skill options are very subjective and personal. One very important skill to point out, however, is Intimidation, as it is directly tied to *grab attention* feat and everything related to intimidating tactics and feats. As for the other skills, you probably want to grab some ranks into Perception and then spend the rest of the skill ranks based on your party role and preferred Starship combat role. Simply pick the skills you have the highest ability scores in, or wish to be good in.

Gear

There's a giant plethora of items and gear options in Starfinder, to the point that they can easily fill their own guide. For those who are new to Starfinder in general, allow me to write down the items that literally every Soldier (and pretty much every other class) needs from lv1 onwards:

1) Armor. You want a set of armor that fits your ability scores and proficiencies. You want it to stay at worst around 2 levels below your current level, but you usually want to keep it up with your level or one less. If you have high Dexterity - you want to use light armor. If you have low Dexterity - you want Heavy armor. If you spec into powered armor - then that's your pick.

2) Weapon. Soldiers are defined by their weapons. The weapons you want to play with will largely decide all of your other Soldier class options. Soldier is dealing tremendous damage both in melee and at range, but most of them do need to buy and upgrade their weapons whenever their weapon damage dice starts lagging behind. Don't forget - dealing with enemies is the main duty of the Soldier, so prioritize this. Melee Soldiers can be interested in the properties that weapons grant them, specifically the properties that give a +2 to maneuver checks. This guide's "Combat Maneuvers" entry features most of those weapons. You can also hop on TheHiddenTruth's [melee](#) weapon list and just CTRL+F "grapple" or "reposition" etc. to find the relevant ones. The Combat Maneuvers breakdown below outlines every (as of 2022/08/07) weapon that has the relevant properties.

One good thing to note is that there is no functional difference between a level 1 weapon with a combat maneuver property and a level 20 one, **except** for grappling *throttle* weapons, as they deal damage that is based on weapon level. So you could just have the cheapest taclash in one hand, trip the enemy, then strike them with a higher level weapon in another hand.

Unarmed combat is something that is available to the Soldier as well, but you can read more about it in the Weapons section of the guide below.



3) Basic adventuring gear. This really depends on the kind of games you play, but, in a nutshell: a backpack, some rations and a lightsource/infrared sensors (if you can't see in the dark).

That's about it. Those are the only things that you REALLY want. Literally everything else you buy is entirely up to you and what sort of character you want to play. Even if you are only going to be buying weapons and armors - you'll still be generally fine. Maybe grab a *ring of resistance* to shore up one of your saves.

Weapons

Weapons are the Soldier's main tools of trade. There are a lot of them in Starfinder, and most of them have unique weapon properties that make them slightly different. All weapon types are viable for Soldiers and it ultimately boils down to what *fighting style* you want to use. Below are some ideas on how to get the most out of a weapon type, what fighting styles and class options support them the best, as well as some general thoughts on them. The recommended options are not the only viable options, merely the most common/popular choices.

Basic Melee

These are the weapons that are usually used by less proficient classes who don't have access to advanced melee. Their damage isn't bad at all and may sometimes even beat advanced melee (though very rarely). There's also a very notable lack of EAC-targeting energy weapons here. Most melee soldiers might as well skip over this part and just look at the list of advanced melee weapons.

The one very notable exception to that rule of thumb are unarmed strikes.

Unarmed Combat

(tl;dr at the bottom) Soldiers get a lot of combat feats, which allows them to pick up *improved unarmed strike* (as early as level 1), turning their whole body into a free scaling weapon. This has a lot of benefits: you do not need to spend money on weapons, can have all hands free and benefit greatly from the powerful *battleflower* archetype or enhance the unarmed strikes further with the *runescrawled reaver* archetype (find more on them in the Archetypes segment of the guide). If your unarmed strikes deal slashing damage (you can get one from a natural weapons graft augmentation, or just get it from a racial feature of the Pahtra (Natural Weapons alt), Barathu (Mineral Exoskeleton alt), Reptoids and Alkainan. Raxilites can get them through the *pincer'd LFAN* feat.) you can also use the *rending slash* and *brutal slash* feats. If you do not want high STR, you need the *scoundrel's finesse* feat and will deal less damage.

Note: they're also useful when all of your arms are filled with unwieldy/ranged weapons so you can still perform attack of opportunity and threaten squares around you.

At levels 1-2 unarmed combat falls behind advanced melee purely on the basis of it being a 1d3+STR damage roll (vs a longsword's 1d8+STR). Once you get Weapon Specialization (and forget about running unarmed without adding 1.5x level to damage, either through your race, *ascetic warrior* ^{alt} or otherwise) the damage does start to catch up a little, staying roughly within ~1 point of damage (either behind or ahead advanced melee weapons). Starting at lv8, it

actually becomes better than advanced melee of the same level (leading by around ~3 points) thanks to the 1.5x level scaling. At lv12 it returns to being within 1 point of damage.

However, at lv16 onwards, the weapon damage absolutely explodes, scaling the damage dice into double digits and unarmed strikes start falling back hard by ~13 points of damage.

Finally, by lv20 Unarmed Strikes are a good ~30 points of damage behind advanced melee weapons.

However, a separate word must be said for two other cases:

- **Solar Shield:** you can take a single multiclass level into Solarian to get the *solar shield* ability. Not only does it let you benefit from +1 AC shield bonus, but also allows you to make unarmed strikes with the shield. Most importantly, it lets you insert solarian weapon crystals into the shield in order to add their damage to your unarmed strikes. This makes unarmed builds stay competitive pretty much all the way to level 20 (the damage is practically within ~1-2 points of advanced melee KAC weapons up to and including lv19, and only falls behind by ~9 points at level 20). Considering the player who picks this option will not only fall behind 1 level in their Soldier progression, but also have to spent money on those weapon crystals - it's a lot more balanced than the other option.
- **Ring of fangs:** This item allows you to add a whopping 2x level to the damage of your unarmed weapons. This makes unarmed combat by far the strongest option in combat at low levels, easily outpacing advanced melee weapons. This is pretty bad and unfair, in my opinion and, as it comes from an AP, I'd suggest most GMs simply ban this item, as there's no good reason to make unarmed combat *that* good. But, the option is still there, I guess. If you do end up using it, it manages to keep up with melee weapons until level 16, at which point they begin to overtake the unarmed strikes.

Tl;dr: Unarmed builds are viable in lv1-15 games. You fall behind in lv16-20 games, unless you buy the campaign-specific *ring of fangs* with the GM's blessing, or multiclass 1 level into Solarian for *solar shield* and use it with solarian weapon crystals.

Advanced Melee

These weapons generally offer slightly superior damage to basic melee ones (though not by a huge margin most of the time, they even trail behind rarely), but, most importantly, come with some nifty features: namely more exotic weapon properties and, most importantly, weapons that target the enemy's EAC. While these weapons usually deal less damage than their kinetic counterparts, the more consistent hits almost always make up for it. Energy weapons also allow you to avoid DR (but can be stopped by energy resistance). If you're a melee soldier, there's practically no reason not to use advanced melee weapons.

Small Arms

Not much to be said about them, really. Small arms are weak weapons that are basically only useful for builds that specifically buff them, such as *pistol dancer fighting style*, or *multi-weapon strike* builds with *harmony of bullets feat*. Even ones that seem to naturally want you to wield a small arm, like *hit-and-run fighting style* work better with other weapons, if they can find a way to wield them. Pretty much every other soldier who's at all interested in ranged combat will instead look towards the bigger and heavier options. I guess they're easier to conceal, if that matters.

Longarms

This is the good stuff. Longarms are lighter and oftentimes less gimmicky than heavy weapons. You can also dump Strength entirely when using them. Their damage is not that far behind heavy weapons, they have rails for attachments and are overall cool. The only major weapon property you're missing here is the explosive one, which does hurt somewhat, but it is what it is.

Heavy Weapons

Big, loud, perfect if you want to make a statement. They deal the highest damage of all the ranged weapons. Make no mistake, however, the best way to squeeze everything out of the heavy weapons is to use their funky properties to deal Area of Effect damage. Explode, Flexible Line and Wide Line properties are available exclusively to the Heavy weapons, and they can lead to dramatic damage multiplication, with no penalty to attack rolls through full attacks. They are somewhat hurt by the fact that you need 12 STR for lv1-10 heavy weapons and 14 STR for lv11-20 heavy weapons. These requirements can be lifted by using a *gunner harness light/heavy*, however characters with low STR will have severe trouble lifting the bulk of their armor, their heavy weapon and their gunner harness, so you may need to even further invest into spinal struts cybernetic augmentation. Alternatively, skip the problem altogether by utilizing powered armor (which is going to be unavailable to most Soldiers until level 5-ish).



Sniper Weapons

Although appealing in theory, in practice it's hard to find yourself in a situation where a sniper rifle is preferable to a longarm. Paizo have failed to create the mood of true anti-personnel rifles. The damage is good, but more comparable to longarms', with the drawback of being unwieldy.

Heavy weapons deal more damage and often come with nifty weapon properties. The feature support for snipers isn't the most amazing, either, with *sharpshoot fighting style* Soldiers with longarms or heavy weapons often leaving *ambusher* and *farshot fighting style* Soldier behind. They're not *unusable* on the soldier, and there are some scenarios where you might be glad you have the proficiency to use them (such as vehicle chases, or genuinely getting the drop on an enemy that is hundreds of feet away), but they're not super meta. You're better off going Operative if you want to use snipers as your main tools of trade.

Grenades

Love grenades. Respect grenades. The main takeaway is that grenades aren't just used for raw damage, but instead can inflict useful debuffs or give you a tactical advantage. As a matter of fact, using the damage-dealing grenades may be far from optimal, depending on what level of grenades you have access to. They can also help deal with scary uncommon enemy types, like *swarms* and *troops*. You will also benefit greatly from *grenade mastery* and *cook grenade* feats. Using them with a grenade launcher (heavy) can greatly increase their range.

I'll provide a rough rating of the grenades, from the perspective of when you get them at their lowest tier (keep in mind that you want to use the grenades with the highest DC possible, usually. Smoke grenade is a big exception): **smoke**, **concussion**, **defoliant**, **dye**, **frag**, **holo**, **shock**, **stickybomb**, **thasphalt**, **antigravity**, **decoupler**, **flash**, **gravity**, **holy water**, **incendiary**, **mindspike**, **riot**, **barbed shrapnel**, **diminisher**, **foam**, **solar flare**, **summoning**, **thasteron**, **web**, **taserweb**, **pheromone**, **screamer**, **necro**, **pulse**, **cryo**, **microbot**, **disruption**, **junkbot**, **wonder**, **containment**, **antimagical**, **degeneration**, **mutation bomb**.

Special Weapons

Gimmicks. No better way to put it. Shuriken are a meme you can spec into if you have absolutely no other feats to pick up (melee builds may as well just put a *returning* and *thrown* fusion on their main weapon). Another issue with them beyond their underwhelming performance is that not only do you need to take a feat to get proficiency in them, but another feat to get specialization on them, as your Soldier weapon specialization lv3 feature does not apply to them (unless you get the proficiency as a part of the class, such as the *archer fighting style*). Nyfiber nets are irrelevant when you can use heavy weapons with the *entangle* property. Bows are useless unless you pick up the *archer fighting style* and even then they're not the most amazing.

Combat Maneuvers

Soldiers are amazingly well-equipped to really mess up the enemies' day with the help of combat maneuvers. They get good support for them, depending on the *fighting style*. They're the second best class when it comes to combat maneuvers, just after Vanguard (and theoretically the best at bull rush).

Below you'll find a breakdown and rating on the various Combat Maneuvers provided in Starfinder:

- Bull Rush** - on the surface it may seem that Bull Rush ain't all that, since you can only push the target back, and only a very short distance, unless you crush your roll. However, the true hidden power of this maneuver lies within the Attack of Opportunity rules, specifically the fact that forced movement triggers AoO in Starfinder (even from you). This can be a neat little bonus if you're the only melee person in the party, but it becomes *much* stronger if you have other melee party members. If you have 2 other buddies surrounding the enemy and you perform a successful Bull Rush combat maneuver to move an enemy out of their space, all three of you would be able to perform Attacks of Opportunity. This could be enough damage to rip even bosses apart in a couple of rounds, just based purely on action economy. In addition to all that, if you push them far enough, the enemy may also need to move back into range to attack you, thus wasting their move action.

Fun fact: bull rush has the highest theoretical attack roll bonus, with +4 from *improved combat maneuver*, +4 from Bolidia's *rolling charge*, +2 from juggernaut boosters, +2 from thruster heels, +2 from a shield, +4 from *armor storm's smash through* and +2 from boomknuckles' thruster property. When using it all together, this can add up to a near automatic success on most enemies.

 - Features that improve Bull Rush: *improved combat maneuver (bull rush)*, *tripping rush*, *add leverage*, *knock heads*, *tandem maneuver*. *Massive momentum* gear boost.
 - Fighting styles that improve bull rush:
 - Armor Storm* fighting style's lv9 feature *smash through* not only gives an extra attack on a good shove, but also provides ludicrous bonuses to attack rolls when performing a bull rush.
 - Blitz* fighting style's lv5 feature *charge attack* allows you to perform a bull rush instead of an attack at the end of a charge. Good as a secondary style.
 - Powerhouse Style* fighting style's lv13 feature *forceful attack* allows you to bull rush in addition to a normal hit, using the attack roll's result for the maneuver roll. Requires a full action.
 - Races that improve Bull Rush: *Bolidia*.
 - Gear that improves Bull Rush: *Juggernaut Boosters*, *Psychokinetic Sleeve*, *Defensive Ball Graft* + *Rolling Charge Graft*, *Thruster Heels*, *Dousing Shield*, *Riot Shield*, *Knight Shield*.
 - Weapons: boomknuckles
- Dirty Trick** - the most varied of combat maneuvers, provides a flexible list of different debuffs: *blinded*, *deafened*, *entangled*, *off-target*, *shaken*, or *sickened*. Entangled, shaken and sickened also give penalties to some saving throws, which is nice for your mage party members (check the initiative to make sure they act before the enemy, though). That being said, this one is really what it says on the tin and doesn't have any additional damage options and as such it's hard to justify using it over some others, especially because even if you do succeed - the enemy can just remove the effect with a move action. However, the *obnoxious trickster* feat completely transforms Dirty Trick and

makes it *really* nice. Not only does it allow you to attempt one right after attacking in a full attack, but it also increases the time to get rid of the effects to a standard action. With that feat dirty trick definitely has a place and is quite notable for the ability to blind enemy spellcasters and thus prevent them from casting targeted spells.

- Features that improve Dirty Trick: *improved combat maneuver (dirty trick)*, *obnoxious trickster*, *underhanded snare*, *tandem maneuver*.
 - Fighting styles that improve dirty trick:
 - *Gloom Gunner* fighting style's lv13 feature *shadow secrets* allows you to perform dirty trick as a swift action after a successful hit. Doesn't work with full attacks, but nice regardless.
 - Races that improve Dirty Trick: none.
 - Gear that improves Dirty Trick: *hindering* weapon fusion.
- **Disarm** - the (in)famous combat maneuver that can end encounters outright. Starfinder has quite a lot of humanoid enemies that use weapons, so the effectiveness of this maneuver will depend a lot on what you're fighting. If you fight armed enemies - this is going to be great. If you don't - then it's useless. As such, it might be good to not make this the only trick you specialize in, just in case. That being said, there's not much else to add. You disarm the enemy, and then they're limited to just their natural attacks and/or alternate (probably) inferior weapon options.
 - Features that improve Disarm: *improved combat maneuver (disarm)*, *divine blessing (Besmara)*, *pull the pin* (it's great when it works, but, realistically, it will not come up very often), *tandem maneuver*. *Disarming critical* gear boost. *Sliding disarm* feat boost "alt". Doshko Specialist archetype's *lv6 feature* (don't bother, just get a weapon with the *disarm* property).
 - Fighting styles that improve disarm: none.
 - Races that improve Disarm: none.
 - Gear that improves Disarm: *inubrix weapon material*, *attractor field*, *snarl barbs*, *psychokinetic sleeve*, *slimelashes*, *clinging hands*, *telekinetic gloves*, *grasping tentacle*, *gravity shield*.
Weapon fusions: *hindering* (the circumstance bonus *hindering* fusion provides stacks with the untyped bonus provided by a weapon property), *ratjaw* and *numbing*.
 - Weapons: neutriad flail, shadow chains, doshakari, electroflail, polylash, burning chains, xenolash, monowhip, taclash, quantum entangler.
 - **Grapple** - grapple is quite good in this game on its own. The grappled condition is really strong: reduces enemy AC and Reflex saves, as well as attack rolls. It removes their ability to deliver attacks of opportunity. Notably it also prevents a creature from using two-handed actions, even if they have more limbs, among some other things. Plus, you have a chance to Pin the target, which is really excellent. Overall - solid, strong maneuver. However, it gets truly elevated if you use weapons with the *throttle* property (like the vibrogarrote), which allow you to both grapple and damage the enemy at the same time. This turns this from a nice situational maneuver to basically turning you into a

faux-operative with a better debilitation, as early as level 1. Rending Talons biotech augments allow you to damage targets you grappled as a swift action.

Soldier is somewhat special, as our *grabbing strike feat boost* ^{“alt”} really improves natural weapon/unarmed combat builds even beyond the heights they’re already at. The only disadvantage is that you can only pick it up at level 11, which is close to the point where standard weapons outscale unarmed combat.

Note #1: so, this may seem funky, but you can technically Grapple any creature, regardless of the size. So you could be playing a tiny raxilite and grapple a gigantic towering kaiju. There is no narrative explanation for it, and it’s something you’ll have to come up with yourself. In some scenarios it’s not too wild to assume that your medium-sized character jumps up on some beast’s back or head to hold it down or something, but in others it can be nearly impossible to explain. Work with your GM.

Note #2: grappling lasts only until the end of your next turn, which means you need to keep continuously succeeding at your checks to keep the enemy grappled. However, if you renew the grapple, you can instead end the condition immediately and take one item from the creature’s body. The fact that it says “body” and not “hand”, and mentions that the item must be “easily accessible” makes me think that it probably doesn’t cover held weapons, but it’s ultimately up to your GM’s decision. That’d make the already excellent grappling maneuver even better.

Note #3: it’s a bit unclear if flying creatures fall down if they’re grappled, since hovering in the air without moving requires a check that the enemy definitely gets a penalty on when grappling. This is mostly relevant for the grappler item. Ask your GM how they’d run it.

- Features that improve Grapple: *improved combat maneuver (grapple)*, *grappler pull* (might have narrow situational usage, but should be available to everyone anyway, as it’s such a basic action), *bear hug*, *ground fighting*, *underhanded snare*, *tandem maneuver*. *Crushing steel gear boost*. *Chokehold*, *grabbing strike* and *grapple equipment* feat boosts ^{“alt”}.
 - Fighting styles that improve grapple: none.
 - Races that improve Grapple: *Ramiyel*, *Wrikreechee*, *Endiffian*, *Skittermander*, *Trox*.
 - Gear that improves Grapple: *clinging hands*, *snag graft* (depends on your size), *magnegloves*, *psychokinetic sleeve*, *grappler*, *grasping tentacle*. *Rending talons* allow you to attack grappled targets as a swift action.
Weapon fusions: *binding*.
 - Weapons: *garrote*, *vibrogarrote*, capture pole, quantum entangler, searing grip.
- **Reposition** - second worst combat maneuver in the game. The only advantage is triggering forced movement rules, same as bull rush, but with fewer bonuses and the enemy doesn’t have to walk back to you. Pretty niche, only use it if you have some way to knock the enemy into lava or out the window, or something.

- Features that improve Reposition: *improved combat maneuver (reposition)*, *add leverage*, *grappler pull*, *fouling reposition*, *tandem maneuver*. *Massive momentum* gear boost.
 - Fighting styles that improve reposition: none.
 - Races that improve Reposition: *Bolida*.
 - Gear that improves Reposition: *Defensive Ball Graft* + *Rolling Charge Graft*.
Weapon fusions: *binding*.
 - Weapons: skitterstaff.
- **Sunder** - the actual worst combat maneuver in the game. Sunder is nearly completely worthless, outside of edge-cases (like sundering a low durability detonator out of someone's hand with a strong weapon). The point is that even if you do end up succeeding on your attack, objects are really difficult to destroy without extremely specialized equipment of a much higher level. *Spectacular smash* feat ignores a bit of hardness, but it just isn't enough to nullify it, so you'd need to succeed at this (very high DC) check several times in a row to break something. [This thread points out a lot of issues](#). You're almost always better off just attacking the target normally than sundering their gear. Not to mention that you can't even sunder armor to reduce enemy defenses, since you can only target items one could quickly interact with.
One notable exception to Sundering is having a weapon made of the *adamantine* weapon material, which will allow you to sunder equipment under level 12 effectively. With it, you can actually sunder somewhat decently, but it's still better to just strike at the enemy, since you'll be paying an absolute premium on both weapons and materials. The other very notable exception is the *technology smasher gear boost*. It allows you to completely ignore the hardness of technological objects, which actually makes Sunder very viable. The downside is obvious - you're expecting to win most of your fights, so breaking and destroying your future loot sucks.
 - Features that improve Sunder: *improved combat maneuver (sunder)*, *weak point*, *spectacular smash*, *operatic shatter*, *antigrenadier* & *improved antigrenadier*, *technology smasher gear boost*, *technological disruption gear boost*, *tandem maneuver*. Doshko Specialist archetype's *lv6 feature* (don't bother, just get a weapon with the *sunder* property).
 - Fighting styles that improve sunder: none.
 - Races that improve Sunder: none.
 - Gear that improves Sunder: *adamantine* weapon material.
 - Weapons: frostmaul, snap whip.
- **Trip** - knocks the target prone (or off-kilter in space), likely wasting its move action to stand up. Its use largely depends on how many ranged weapon party members you have (since melee will only benefit from it, and mages can likely switch to saving throw spells for a while). If not too many - then it's neat. If a lot - then it's not so neat, as being prone gives you a +4 AC against ranged attacks.
 - Features that improve Trip: *improved combat maneuver (trip)*, *drag down*, *tripping rush*, *add leverage*, *improved dive bomb*, *tandem maneuver*. Doshko

Specialist archetype's **lv6 feature** (just use a weapon with the *trip* property).
Forceful trip gear boost. **Beatdown** feat boost "alt".

- Fighting styles that improve trip: none.
- Races that improve Trip: **Dwarf** (counter-trip as a reaction). Also, while not exactly a race, the **Beastblood** theme also gives you a larger bonus for tripping when flanking.
- Gear that improves Trip: **ferocious charge graft**, **grasping tentacle**, **psychokinetic sleeve**, **telekinetic gloves**.

Weapon fusions: **hindering** (the circumstance bonus *hindering* fusion provides stacks with the untyped bonus provided by a weapon property) , **apprehending**.

Weapons: hook sword, shadow chains, polylash, burning chains, xenolash, monowhip, taclash, plasma lash, scythe.

Class Ability Overview

Class Features

- **7 Hit Points / Stamina Points per level** - as good as it gets, though standard for martials.
- **Key Ability Score (Strength/Dexterity)** - both ability scores are more than viable. STR builds deal more damage, DEX builds have better Reflex saves and (usually) higher Initiative bonus. Dexterity builds are also notable, because a DEX Soldier is arguably the only way to do a hybrid melee/ranged character who's equally deadly at both distances. Although it is very power-gamey, you could also max out your Strength by just picking up powered armor. That being said, even if you go straight Strength - you'll be more than satisfied.
- **Class Skills** - although on first glance you only get 4+INT skills and very few skills as class skills, the offered skills do provide a lot of coverage: you've got Intimidation for social stuff & in-combat demoralization builds, piloting for all the vehicle and starship stuff and even Engineering so you could help out your main engineers with Aid tasks. It could be worse than this and is a far cry from Pathfinder 1e Fighters.
- **Proficiencies** - doesn't get better than this. The only thing you're missing on this list is Powered Armor.



- **Primary Fighting Style** - your main fighting style that you're gonna get all 5 *techniques* of. Broken down in detail in the *Fighting Styles* part of the guide.
- **Combat Feat** - you get a ludicrous amount of feats, easily enough to get everything you want and more. You get so many, in fact, that you can pick up all of the most important "core" feats you need in combat really early on, allowing you to even pick up more out-of-combat feats.
- **Gear Boost** - make no mistake - this is a defining feature of the Soldier chassis for a lot of characters. Some *gear boosts* and - more importantly - some *feat boosts* ^{"alt"} can boost your Soldier to unbelievable levels. They're all covered in the *Gear Boosts* and *Feat Boosts* segment of the guide.
- **Weapon Specialization** - this is the best *weapon specialization* feat in the game, as it gives you full spec in EVERYTHING.
- **Secondary Fighting Style** - yes, really, you get a second fighting style! That being said, you count as a -8 level Soldier for the purposes of its feats, making some *fighting style* choices way worse. You can just look at the first three features of the *fighting style* and mostly ignore any that scale with Soldier level. This leaves quite few to be actually particularly viable.
- **Soldier's Onslaught** - allows you to make 3 attacks as a part of a full attack, albeit at a -6 to the attack rolls. Make no mistake, this is a giant boost to your overall damage output and (mathematically) you should choose to use it pretty much always. The easier it is to hit your opponent - the more damage this feature will provide. Abilities that improve your attack rolls and reduce enemy AC are going to become even more valuable to your group. This feature has a flipside, however: unfortunately, it does make unwieldy weapons noticeably less appealing, as they don't get any boost to their effectiveness (such as allowing you to make 2 attacks at -6).
- **Kill Shot** - this is the good stuff. The best capstone in the game. Hope you enjoy killing the final boss of the campaign in a single hit. It's really as good as it says on the tin. And with how beefy enemy hit points get in the CR20+ tiers, even using this on non-big bad enemies becomes super valuable. You might as well spam it every fight, if you have the RP for it. It's also good to note that the DC here is stated in the key ability score description: "10 + half your class level + your key ability score modifier". That means that the theoretical highest DC you could get would be with the use of the Powered Armor Jockey archetype that boosts Strength to nutty numbers. By lv20 You'd have a score of 36 (+13), for a total DC of 33, which is roughly a ~50% chance of instagibbing a CR20 creature. With a more realistic DC28 (with a STR/DEX 26). You're looking at chances hovering around ~25% success chance, which isn't really that high, especially against higher CR enemies. As such, if you're fighting CR25 bosses, you're quite unlikely to actually instantly kill them. With certain grafts you'd actually have as little as a 5% chance. Not a big deal for unwieldy weapon builds who'd be doing single attacks anyway, but others would lose out on the ability to full attack until they land a kill shot and force a save to see if they can instantly finish off the enemy.

Alternate Class Features

Soldiers have received alternate class features that replace and/or modify their existing ones. “alt” means alternative class feature.

- **Ascetic Warrior** “alt” - when you just can't let the medieval fantasy monks stay in the past. The feature isn't bad, and makes unarmed builds viable even if you don't want to play a race with natural weapons. Those that do add 1.5x level to damage get some weapon properties (block being by far the most commonly used one). Paizo did goof a bit, as it doesn't give unarmed strikes the operative property, meaning you still need to use Strength for both attack rolls and damage or learn *scoundrel's finesse* feat. And this alt feature removes your proficiency in heavy armor (among other things), which you'll need if you didn't learn *scoundrel's finesse*, because otherwise you'd become multiple attribute dependent (needing both STR for attacking, DEX for defense and CON for toughness). So, as an ascetic warrior, you should pick up either *heavy armor proficiency* or *scoundrel's finesse* at lv1. I highly recommend you read the “Gear” segment of this guide for a note about unarmed combat.

Replaces heavy armor and heavy weapon proficiencies.

- **Feat Boosts** “alt” - potentially very powerful boosts to some of your combat feats, some of which can be quite build-defining. Described more in the Feat Boosts segment.

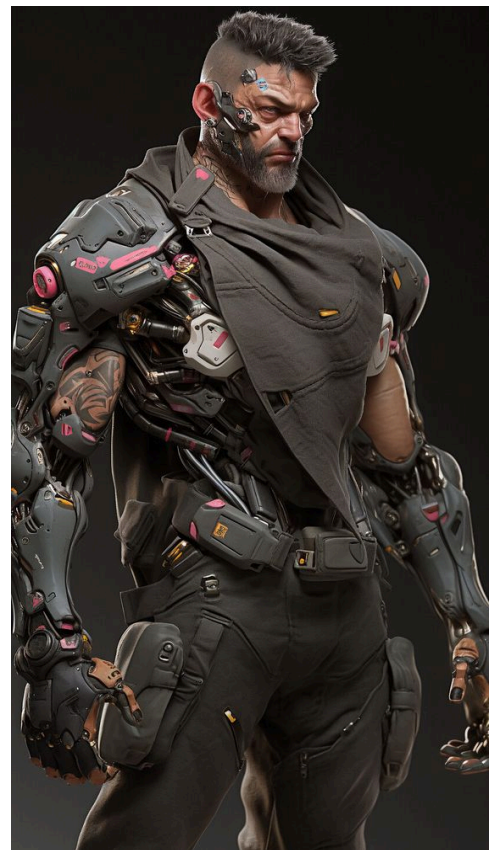
Replaces 1 gear boost.

- **Special Ops Training** “alt” - abilities that make you better at certain skills. This replaces a very important and very valuable gear/feat boost, that can be a build-defining feature, so usually it is not worth to take more than 1 of these.

Replaces 1 gear boost.

- **Advanced Operations Specialist** - this is the one that allows the soldier to have a scaling insight bonus to a skill check (up to +6), which lets them to specialize in a skill just as effectively as any other class in the game, and more reliably hit those important high level check DCs. Solarians' *sidereal influence* is better at the early game, but fails to scale as well into the high levels, while Vanguard's don't get any scaling bonuses at all. Evolutionists and Nanocytes are full BAB classes that get this kind of scaling by default, but neither is quite as dangerous on the battlefield as a Soldier.

All that being said, you still need to have a good long think about how much you need this bonus. At levels 1-11 a basic *skill focus* feat will give you an equivalent



insight bonus and sacrificing a single feat is a lot easier than sacrificing a gear boost. Starting from lv12 the *advanced operations specialist* bonus will be larger than *skill focus*, but, mathematically, this just increases your odds of succeeding on the skill check by ~5% per point (so up to +~15% by lv18).

This all boils down to the fact that, mathematically speaking, the higher your level - the more worthwhile this alt feature is to take. Especially considering that by higher levels you will probably already get your most important gear/feat boosts. This does make *skill focus* taken earlier useless. As such, you either just pick this when your game starts at a higher level (such as Devastation Ark AP) or if your GM allows you to retrain the *skill focus* feat.

- *Operations Specialist* - gives you the skill as a class skill (so +3 to checks) and an untyped +1 bonus to it (so it stacks with everything). Considering that you can get 75% of this feature through half of the *skill synergy feat*, I'd suggest taking that instead. This isn't worth a gear boost.

Also, lol, what is Piloting doing here? It's already a class skill.

Fighting Styles

Soldier's Fighting Styles are basically soft "subclasses". A lot of them provide powerful abilities as soon as you take them and are very fun to both mechanically play in combat and roleplay. As a rule of thumb, fighting styles are either boosting your ranged or melee capabilities exclusively, but some styles can be good for both builds.

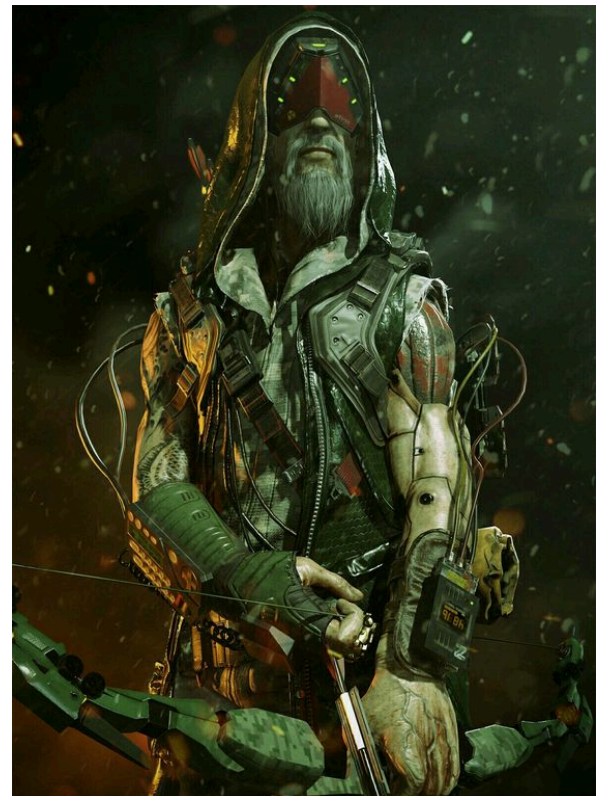
It is hard to gauge the *fighting styles'* worth as a *secondary style*, since it all depends on what you picked as your first style. If you're picking a secondary fighting style, just look at the ratings of the first three abilities in each style to get a gist if they're worth investing into. As a rule of thumb - the better the 1st and 5th level features are (assuming they don't scale with your soldier level) - the better the pick that style is as a secondary fighting style.

- **Ambusher** - largely a ranged *fighting style* that makes you better at dealing damage in the first round of combat and hiding during combat. There's a distinct sniper-y (or weapons with the *boost* property) flavor here, as a lot of abilities here don't interact with full attacking and instead further boost the damage of a single attack, though mathematically you're probably still better off full attacking. Issue is, Soldiers don't get Stealth as a class skill, so it's a good idea to pick up a Theme that does so, or pick up Skill Synergy (and maybe even Focus) in Stealth.
 - **Vigilance** (1st) - *improved initiative* is a Combat feat, and we get a lot of those already. With a high Dexterity and the initiative bonus there's a good chance you'll be going ahead of at least one enemy every fight, so you'll benefit from the +1 to an attack roll often. Works with full attacks. Ask your GM if you can double-dip this benefit during the surprise round, as "a surprise round takes place before normal combat rounds begin".
 - **Cheap Shot** (5th) - it's not a ton of extra damage. Using a *boost* weapon property to amplify your damage will both deal more damage and not use your full action. You can combine it with a *boost* weapon to maximize the damage of a single roll,

which may be useful to crack the armor on tough boss-tier enemies, but it's not a combination you'll be able to do often. Unfortunately, it being a full action severely limits how often you'll be able to use it. I'm not sure why the total cover clause exists, but maybe I just lack the imagination to think of a scenario where you'd have total cover from an enemy, but they wouldn't have total cover against you. I'm pretty certain they meant total concealment, and this is just another Paizo oopsie. The action economy effectively makes it meh and you might as well just use normal full attacks if you can. *Okay* for unwieldy weapons like most snipers.

- **Deadly Reflexes** (9th) - sounds good on paper, but becomes worse and worse the more you think about it. This only triggers before you act in combat, which - between your *improved initiative* and high Dexterity - will absolutely not be happening often. Secondly, it means you must be getting shot at, while it does trigger from a melee attack, you probably don't want to take that reaction, as that'll trigger an AoO from an enemy. And finally, you're probably the stealthiest party member, so it's unlikely you'd be getting shot at first all that often. It's nice when you have a GM that knows you have this feature and deliberately tries to trigger it every single time they get an opportunity to, but most GMs will not bother.
- **Exploit Cover** (13th) - this is the one feature that makes stealth sniping truly viable, as - as bad as a -10 to the check is, between all the bonuses you can get (especially racial bonuses) - you can actually end up killing it quite often. Make no mistake, this is a huge boost to your survivability, as you'll be spending a lot of the fights hidden from your opponent. You might be outta luck if the encounter has nothing to hide behind, in which case it's useful to think of how to create your own barriers, such as *barricade* feat and *cover seed* item.
- **Ambusher's Edge** (17th) - doesn't even stack with *cheap shot* or *boost* weapon property (the latter would work if the target is flat-footed). Lasts only until the end of the target's turn (might be relevant for AoOs). It's not bad on its own if you're using an unwieldy weapon, but shines a bit brighter with an *operative* in the party who can make the target constantly flat-footed, so you could *boost* your attack through a weapon property.
- **Arcane Assailant** - spell knight, without the spells. Works for both melee and ranged builds. Limited in what it does, and pretty boring to play for most low level games, but gets some nifty abilities at higher levels.
 - **Rune of the Eldritch Knight** (1st) - basically half the benefit of a *ghost killer* weapon fusion, but somehow even worse, as it doesn't even allow you to critically hit incorporeal enemies. I always look very skeptically at class features you could just "buy" with credits and this is no exception. It's an important benefit to have at high levels, when enemies with DR become more common, but it's pretty useless at level 1 and, again, anyone can just buy a fusion. Paizo really missed the mark by not letting you choose your own fusions, but it is what it is.

- **Secret of the Magi** (5th) - lets you add a *flaming*, *frost*, *ghost killer*, *merciful*, or *shock* fusion to your weapon. While those fusions are nothing special on their own, if you do know what you'll be fighting, this provides you a very flexible set of damage types to avoid resistances/make use of vulnerabilities. If the enemies even have them in the first place, which is quite campaign-dependent. Notably makes your weapon eligible for the *overload fusion* gear boost.
 - **Power of Legend** (9th) - that's a lot of very varied conditions, many of which are very annoying and might be spending the actions and resources of your party members to help you. And this doesn't simply give you a reroll, it straight up removes or downgrades the condition, making this feature pretty damn nice to have in your arsenal.
 - **Secret of the Archmagi** (13th) - lets you imbue an additional weapon (your buddies like you more now), allows you to have several fusions at the same time and expands your fusion list with *bane*, *corrosive*, *ghost killer*, *holy*, *thundering*, or *unholy* fusions. It's neat, but more niche than the lv5 fusions. Does help your party save some money on fusions.
 - **Arcane Attack** (17th) - more useful than you'd think at the level that you get it, as enemies get a lot of funky abilities to avoid your strikes. Notably ignores "all cover", meaning it ignores total cover, meaning you can slash at people and things behind solid walls.
- **Archer** - the ranged bow style. Always thought it's quite interesting how common bows are in sci-fi media. This one's (in theory) all about maximizing their potential. One thing that should be noted is that there's largely only three bow types in the game right now: a basic lv1 "bow", the archaic battlebow line (the *raw lethality* gear boost is a mandatory tax if you plan to use it) and the EAC-targeting apocalypse bow line, which are actually pretty nice weapons, but are annoyingly high-ish level. The way they scale into the highest levels (18-20) is bad, as the best you can do is using a lv1 bow with molecular rift arrows (can you even recover those? You probably should, as they're very expensive. Ask your GM). This makes you lag almost a full ~20 points of damage (average!) behind lv20 KAC-targeting weapons. They work quite well in lower level games, however, and stay vaguely in the ballpark of longarm damage. It's a bit unclear if the diamond edge and molecular rift arrows increase the damage of the basic bow or replace it, but they definitely do not improve the damage of the battlebow and apocalypse bow.



- **Snapshot** (1st) - basically gives you proficiency and specialization in bows. In addition, you can draw bows and arrows as a swift action or as a part of an attack or full attack, which massively helps with switching from melee to ranged combat and vice versa.
 - **Close-Combat Arrows** (5th) - so this Archery fighting style grants your Dexterity bow-shooting build a non-operative melee weapon..? Um... thanks, Paizo..? This makes no sense, doesn't improve your archery in nearly any way and doesn't even help you with a cheeky AoO, unless you go Powered Armor for that Strength boost, since you'll be too busy boosting your Dexterity and will probably dump your STR. I just don't get it. The +4 AC against AoOs is okay, I guess, but you should be able to guarded step away from most problems.
 - **Pinpoint Targeting** (9th) - good for cracking boss-tier enemies with high AC and finishing off low HP targets, but you're better off full attacking against most enemies.
 - **Fistful of Arrows** (13th) - nice, you can now kill swarms with bows. It's a nice feature. Not one you'll be using all the time, but will help you get the most out of a fortunate situation.
 - **Saving Shot** (17th) - ranged combatants don't usually get that many reactions in combat, and this is easily one of the better ones. The DCs are nothing to scoff at. At the level you get it enemies will have a ~+27 to attack rolls, while you'll probably be around +26. The one issue with this feature is that you have to trigger this reaction when the enemy attacks, not when the enemy hits, meaning that there will absolutely be times when you reroll a miss into a hit, which can be super lame. Some GMs will rule that you can trigger it after you know the enemy hits, which will vastly improve the power of this ability.
- **Armor Storm** - make no mistake, this is a premier melee unarmed combat fighting style (though it works even for non-unarmed builds). Although it's a little bit weird, the *ascetic warrior* "alt" combines extremely well with this style, as the 1.5x specialization fully applies to powered armor unarmed damage (but not the battleglove damage). Just don't forget to pick up *heavy armor proficiency*, as you feats require you to have all the prerequisites in order to benefit from them and *powered armor proficiency* is no exception. You have virtually no reason not to specialize in bull rush if you decide to pick this *fighting style*, as it elevates the maneuver to whole new levels. Amazing combo with the *massive momentum* gear boost to get the most out of the lv9 feature.
 - **Hammer Fist** (1st) - the ability has some really funky writing and conditions, but it's a good one.

Note #1: the official FAQ clarified that the Hammer Fist ability is optional, meaning you can still choose to use the damage of your *improved unarmed strike* or powered armor if it's higher than the battleglove damage would be at your level.

Basically you have two "unarmed modes":

 - Using battleglove damage: you use the applicable battleglove damage that you have access to (only increases in damage at lv10) instead of

normal unarmed strike damage, get a free *melee striker* gear boost and if you pick up the boost you get another +2 damage on top. However, you don't apply any other bonuses to *unarmed strike* damage. Even if you have the *ascetic warrior* "alt", you still only apply 1x level to weapon specialization damage.

- Using unarmed strike damage: you use your *improved unarmed strike* or powered armor damage, don't get a free *melee striker* gear boost, nor the extra +2 damage on top. However, the 1.5x level weapon specialization would apply.

This ultimately means that you'll be switching between using battleglove and unarmed damage, depending on your build, level, armor and current situation. Keep in mind that it's totally viable to just go battleglove, but that lv5-9 period where its damage doesn't increase definitely impacts your damage.

Note #2: if you want to maximize your damage per level and/or to make use of powered armor unarmed damage - you definitely want to pick up the *improved unarmed strike* feat, as your unarmed strikes will count as archaic (unless using powered armor unarmed strikes) and will not trigger attacks of opportunity.

- **Enhanced Tank** (5th) - free *powered armor proficiency* (just remember, you still need to know the prerequisite, in case you picked up *ascetic warrior* "alt") and a discount on an upgrade. Nice. Will definitely be noticeable when the upgrade costs begin to spike.
- **Smash Through** (9th) - this should be what you picked the *fighting style* for and it's kind of a shame that you only get it at lv9. Just to remind you - forced movement triggers AoOs in Starfinder, including from you! I strongly recommend reading the bull rush entry in the Combat Maneuvers section of this guide to learn more about how to optimize the numbers for it (you don't need all the possible bonuses to be a true munchkin min/maxer, but even the armor upgrades and augments go a long way). You absolutely want to pick up *improved combat maneuver (bull rush)* at level 9 if you haven't already. *Massive momentum* gear boost basically guarantees a free attack for you any time you use bull rush and you don't even need free hands to perform unarmed attacks.

When everything is set in place you can bull rush, hit, the enemy is pushed 10 feet back, triggering your Attack of Opportunity for a creature moving out of your threatened square and then a second free unarmed strike when you move it 10 feet. It's satisfying and a whole lot of damage.

Starting from lv11 when you get *soldier's onslaught* the bull rush tactic is still excellent for you, but works best if you have other melee party members in the right place to all trigger AoOs with you.

- **Mobile Army** (13th) - free damage that stacks with both unarmed and battleglove damage with virtually no strings attached. Nothing but smiles.
- **On the Bounce** (17th) - huge boost to your mobility, as there definitely will be times when you'd prefer to full attack with your metal fists, rather than bull rush.

- **Battlemaster** - a protective mostly melee style that provides some solid defensive options and some subpar offensive options. The offensive options are so mediocre, in fact, that it works just fine for ranged builds that want to prioritize defense over offense, for whatever reason.
 - **Bolster Resilience** (1st) - saves you some money on a *dermal plating* augment, which effectively catches up by lv9. Though this feature's DR does increase by 1 if you get it or some other source of DR. That being said, DR is very nice to have and - while not super flashy - definitely adds up over the course of the adventuring day.
 - **Instinctive Strike** (5th) - 5% extra chance to hit as a move action, usable only once per enemy. You're always better off full-attacking, mathematically. This is only cool if you're using unwieldy weapons.
 - **Reactive Resistance** (9th) - while there are plenty of ways to get adaptive resistance to damage (notably *adaptive serums*, *adaptive energy shield* armor upgrade and *adaptive defense* armor upgrades), there are no ways to actually reduce the initial triggering damage, so this not only saves you a good deal of money, but also provides a powerful damage mitigation ability. Don't forget that this works against spells and other effects that deal energy damage, too.
 - **Anticipate Ambush** (13th) - some GMs are very ambush-happy, some aren't. You'll probably get to use this at least once in a campaign. But how much? Keep in mind that during the surprise round you can take either a move action or a standard action. The *fighting style* softly nudges you towards the melee side (judging by the lv5 feature), so you might be able to, at best, position yourself a bit better.
 - **Empower Defenses** (17th) - uses a move action to dramatically increase your defenses, to the point that some enemies will probably just pick a different target to attack. Works meh with builds that use full attacks a lot, but it's pretty great if you can use *cleave* as a standard action, or if you're using an unwieldy weapon, anyway.
- **Blitz** - also known as the "Soldier Fighting Style" and the "One That Everyone Picks". There's good reasons for that, as it is arguably the single most powerful fighting style in the game. Each feature simply makes you better as a melee combatant, to the point where you start to wonder why a good half of these weren't a part of the core Soldier class, as playing a Soldier without them just doesn't feel right. As a primary style it's heavily melee oriented, but ranged builds may consider it as a secondary in lower level games for the *rapid response*.
 - **Rapid Response** (1st) - what is there to say, really? You get a +4 to initiative checks that stacks with *improved initiative* to nearly guarantee that you'll be going first in combat to perfectly position yourself against the enemies. And the increased movement speed makes it amazing for Strength builds that are weighed down by heavy armor and even non-heavy builds that just want more mobility.

- **Charge Attack** (5th) - charge without penalties to AC and attack rolls would have been great already. But they even let you make a full attack at the end of it. Why wasn't this a part of the core soldier class?
 - **Keep Fighting** (9th) - effectively nullifies the damage of one hit from an opponent. It's very nice to have in your pocket and will definitely make you feel a lot more confident in combat. The fact that you can use it nearly every fight instead of just once per day is just the cherry on top.
 - **Perfect Opportunity** (13th) - yeaah, so this *fighting style* that makes you fast as hell and tough as hell? It's also one of the best frontliners in the game, which effectively disables enemy spellcasters by just standing near them. Did you know that stopping enemies from moving away from you is actually a separate Solarian revelation that requires a move action and a saving throw? Really, look it up, it's called *gravitational lock*. Yeah, you can just do it for free as a part of an AoO that you can trigger even against guarded steps. Triggering AoOs against guarded steps heavily impacts the overall game balance, as some enemies just straight up don't get to do much against you. Oh and stopping a moving enemy in its tracks? That's the *clothesline* vanguard discipline. But, you know, get that as a part of a single feature, too. Why not?
P.S. Have fun explaining how a falling enemy just stops moving mid-air after you smack it with an AoO during its fall.
 - **Against the Odds** (17th) - even when fighting a single opponent, getting a +2 to damage rolls is already equivalent to a big part of a feature of the *armor storm* fighting style. You just get that for free, effectively any time you're in combat. At worst. At best of times you might be getting like +8 to your damage rolls. It doesn't seem like a ton of damage, but it definitely stacks up, especially on lucky crits, where this damage gets multiplied as well.
- **Bombard** - perfect option for people who like big guns and things going "boom". Technically ranged builds benefit the most from this, but melee builds are surprisingly viable, too, as a lot of abilities here scale with Strength, making this build kind of Multiple Attribute Dependent (MAD). For conventional ranged *bombards* the core principle is simple: your main damage will come from including as many enemies as possible in your explosion AoE, so anything that increases your AoE will also increase your damage dealt. Sure, your singular damage may not be as impressive as something the melee builds can show off, but when you actually add up all the damage you deal to multiple enemies - don't be surprised to find yourself the queen of the damage table. Selective explosion gear boost and selective weapon fusion are near mandatory to pick up for a Bombard. *Powerful explosive* gear boost can be useful to increase your damage output by targeting more creatures, while *forceful throw* gear boost is very nice for melee builds.
This fighting style definitely improves as you level, since the areas of explosions at high levels increase quite noticeably and you'll start covering entire rooms with fire. *Selective explosion* gear boost is just so important to this style that if your game ends prior to that - the style suffers somewhat. It also suffers if you're the only ranged combatant in the

party. Avoiding friendly fire with such large explosions may be extremely difficult. In that case you might seriously consider multiclassing into Operative for 1 level to get *stunt & strike* for *selective explosions*. Depending on the party, you might get away with just *selective explosion* gear boost and *selective* weapon fusion.

Bad to multiclass (a lot of levels) and/or pick up as a *secondary* fighting style, since the grenades you create scale only with your soldier level. It's highly recommended to have a weapon with a *bombarding* fusion on hand with this *fighting style*. A *grenade launcher* heavy weapon is also pretty useful, though *thrower arms* armor upgrade are pretty good, too.

Note: keep in mind that weapons with the explode property take a penalty to their DCs equal to the penalty on attack rolls the weapon suffered. So throwing a grenade as a part of a full attack applies that -4 to not only the attack roll, but the save DC. Same goes for shooting an explosive weapon beyond its first range increment (-2 to attack & DCs).

- **Grenade Expert** (1st) - increasing the range increment for grenades is great, as it makes you take penalties to save DCs due to range increments less often. The real benefit is that you can make a free grenade that scales with your level with 10 minutes of work. Use it every fight. You will also benefit greatly from *grenade mastery* and *cook grenade* feats.

You absolutely should open up the [grenade weapon list](#) and try to learn all the options available to you. The better you adapt to a situation - the more benefit you'll get out of this feature. Read the Grenade entry in the Weapons segment of this guide.

- **Heavy Fire** (5th) - great bonus to damage you can add to both grenades and explodey weapons. It doesn't seem like that much on its own, but when you consider that you multiply it per every creature included in your explosion - it starts to add up quick. It's even better when you consider that all of the heavy weapons with the *explode* property are also unwieldy, so you might not even have a great use for your move action, anyway, so this is just a straight up improvement to your damage output. You probably won't use it too often with automatic weapons and they benefit much less than explosive weapons (that still deal half damage even on a successful save by the enemy).

The question is how to increase your Strength. You could pump some up with your ability score improvements and at character creation, but remember that explosion DCs are still keyed off your Dexterity (grenades can be switched to Strength with the *forceful throw* gear boost). The easiest way is to pick up the *powered armor proficiency* at level 5 and turn yourself into a walking tank in powered armor with a plasma launcher on your side and bandolier full of grenades.

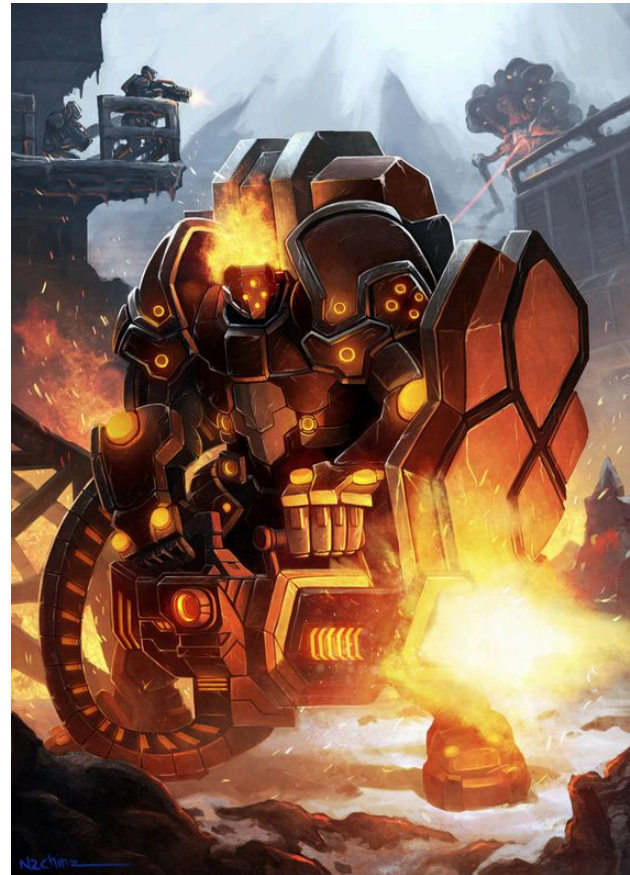
So why isn't this rated blue? Well, Paizo decided to create the *steady* fusion for GalMag, which means anyone can just "buy" this feature for creds. I guess it does help you save some money.

- **Debilitating Attack** (9th) - just a great little bonus on top of what you'd already be doing and a cool way to aggressively utilize your RP. If you go first and can get the enemies in a real good position, the speed reduction may prevent them from

making contact with the party early, giving your party a free round to pepper them with ranged attacks. But normally you'll be using the flat-footed debuff to kill the enemies faster. Off-target is also viable if you see that your party won't be able to capitalize on the opening to strike the enemy this round.

Also works with blast weapons (read: shotguns), but you're probably more interested in explosive weapons.

- **Explosives Acumen** (13th) - increasing the DC of your explosions is fantastic, both for damage with heavy exploding weapons and for debuffs that grenades can provide. The explosive damage resistance is a joke. It's very low even against grenades, and doesn't even help you against other Reflex-save forcing abilities, such as spells.
- **Impactful Attack** (17th) - can be situationally useful to help your melee party members trigger attacks of opportunity, as forced movement does trigger them. Heavily held back by the fact that it's a full action, which you'll probably be using for *heavy fire*. Also works for blast weapons, but that's probably not your weapon of choice.
- **Bullet Rain** - become the Heavy Weapons Guy. This is decidedly a ranged *fighting style*. Keep in mind that the main reason you'd pick heavy weapons is to benefit from attacking multiple creatures, such as with explode, line, flexible line or automatic properties, so try to make use of those whenever possible to see your damage go up. Practically speaking, you should prioritize Line weapons, as those deal considerable damage, don't take penalties to attack rolls and can damage several creatures simultaneously. As such, picking up some mobility bonuses where you can be very useful to put yourself in the right position to multiply your damage. Automatic weapons become more viable starting from lv9. Explode weapons are very nice, too.
Selective, steady, quantum and *continuous* fusions can vastly improve the damage output of line heavy weapons. Automatic builds benefit from *selective* fusion a lot, too.
Note: fantastic as a *secondary fighting style* for *bombard* soldiers.
 - **Spray Targets** (1st) - blast and explode weapons already ignore concealment, so the first part is primarily for Line and Automatic weapons. Ignoring all cover is super nice, too, since it doesn't just work for removing conventional cover, but for soft cover provided by your allies,



as well as removing the Reflex save bonuses against explode weapons. You will definitely benefit from this every now and again, depending on the campaign.

- **Focus Fire** (5th) - largely depends on your party. If you have a couple of melee party members - this is excellent, as the enemy will likely always choose to take extra damage over being smashed to pieces by your melee party members. If you're in a ranged-only party, then this is pretty bad. You'll want to find ways to ignore friendlies when firing in AoE (stuff like *selective explosion gear boost*, *selective fusion*, or use AbadarCorp as a weapon manufacturer).
 - **Furious Reload** (9th) - the temporary HP is kind of a joke, but the instant reload is excellent and a key component to make automatic weapons much more viable, though Line weapons absolutely benefit from it, too. You could pick up *automatic expert* gear boost at lv7 to help you save an RP on reloading, but it does put automatic weapons in kind of a weird spot where you're softly double-dipping into the same thing.

The interesting thing is that you don't need the weapon to be empty to reload and get a +1 to attack rolls. As a matter of fact, you can just be doing this every turn, to effectively get +1 to attack rolls in exchange for 1 RP. It might look a bit funny on non-automatic weapons, as you just keep reloading a nearly full magazine.
 - **One-Handed Gunner** (13th) - have fun thinking of in-universe explanation how you flip your heavy minigun with one hand to reload it without a second hand. Freeing up a hand is pretty useful: you could strap a shield to it for extra AC, or pick up a melee weapon to help ward off would-be attackers. Could even pick up a second heavy weapon so you could have more damage types (bad idea, tbh). Ultimately, you'll probably prefer to just continue using your weapon with two hands for the second benefit. Covering fire is nice and it's just a free bonus you get in addition to normally dealing damage, and we like those.

Powered armor proficiency is recommended to get a boost to Strength in order to benefit from this feature.
 - **Overwhelming Firepower** (17th) - this is fantastic and makes using automatic weapons even better than line weapons at times, as you could just be covering entire rooms with a barrage of bullets. You hit - you deal damage. You miss - you still deal damage. Sometimes it may even get to the point where you deal more damage than all other party members, despite missing all of your attacks.
- **Chaldiralist** - borderline overpowered melee fighting style that gives you huge damage bonuses (compared to all other classes) and also turns you into a great protector for your buddies.
 - **Bully Battler** (1st) - so, this is somewhat **busted**. It's a somewhat common way to add a decent amount of extra damage when your buddy gets hit, which would be great already. However, Paizo probably forgot that **you count as your own ally**, unless the feature explicitly states you don't. And this doesn't. Meaning that even when enemies hit YOU - you still can deal the extra damage to them. At levels 1 and 2 this will be an insane boost to your DPS, almost equal to a whole extra attack. It scales poorly, but it does scale! And this isn't an insignificant amount of

extra damage. What makes it even better is that it doesn't have a cooldown, so you can get the damage bonus when you get hit, then on your turn you can trigger an AoO from the enemy to get the damage bonus to a second attack (if you're hasted which allows moving between full attacks) and then a third time if the enemy triggers an AoO from you after dealing damage to an ally or you). Won't be happening all the time, but will definitely be happening at least a few times.

Like, for some context, free straight up extra damage is VERY rare in *fighting styles*, because such things can be tough to balance due to critical hits doubling all of your damage and the fact that almost no class gets features like this. Even at level 1 it is already equal to the very specific and weapon-limited *armor storm fighting style* feature *hammer fist* only gives you a +2 damage with a single very specific type of attack. The *pistol dancer fighting style* has a max level feature (lv17!) *choreography of death* that gives +2 damage per shot with a puny small arm. Meanwhile this feature gives you an average of +2 damage at level 1 with ANY melee weapon! And this scales up to +12 damage (average) by lv20.

- [Laugh off Tyranny](#) (5th) - fantastic way to delay multiple very unpleasant condition. No action cost, only 1 RP required, no cooldown period or limited usage. You can just use it all the time, every round that the effect ends, until the fight is over, allowing you to functionally ignore certain conditions. The DC for untyped DC effects is really low, too.
- [Anything for a Friend](#) (9th) - allows you to defend friends with *bodyguard* feat line even when 10 feet away, meaning you can do so while flanking Medium sized enemies and smaller together with a buddy, which is insanely good. It even further boosts your damage bonus, which is amazing! Make sure you have at least the *bodyguard* feat by the time you get this feature. Also, absolutely take the *bodyguard vigilance feat boost* ^{“alt”} if you take this *fighting style*, because this lets you get this benefit while not wasting an action, letting you even trigger AoOs!
- [Lethal Gambit](#) (13th) - sure, let 'em crit on a 19, so you can critfish that insane damage boost even better. The extra danger of being critically hit can be somewhat offset by this high level with the help of fortification items (force field or fortified plates armor upgrades, *star knight* archetype, fortification cloak item, force matrix cybernetic augmentation). The fact it also boosts your damage and gives a circumstance bonus to all attack rolls is even funnier. Not only do you hit harder than most characters in the game, you also are the most accurate of them all while doing so.
- [The Bigger They Are](#) (17th) - pretty neat way to further boost unwieldy builds, making your one big attack hit REALLY hard, while also knocking the enemy prone. Fun combo with a side non-unwieldy weapon (maybe in a cybernetic arm) to trigger AoOs with the *beatdown feat boost* ^{“alt”}. Full attacking at this level is still probably more worth it than making one big attack, but this is very solid against single strong enemies, especially if buffed.

- **Commander** - a bizarre fighting style focused on making you a tiny bit better at using a simple combat feat that any soldier can take. A lot of the features of this archetype center around *coordinated shot*, which requires you to be melee. But then the lv5 feature also allows you to be at range. It's kinda bizarre and doesn't smoothly work for any build. It's *okay* if you want to make a ranged supportive soldier build for a game that starts at level 17. It's weird in more ways than one, as it's a Soldier fighting style that allows you to switch out Gear/Feat Boosts ^{"alt"} (which are amazing power multipliers) for Envoy Talents, which usually aren't, thus making you directly worse at your main task of taking down enemies, while not really granting you that many fantastic ways of leading the party. If you want to be a support class - just pick the *squad* fighting style or play mainclass envoy. All the tiny +1 bonuses make you wonder if this style was written by the Pathfinder 2e team.
 - **Tactful Tactician** (1st) - essentially a soft envoy multiclass, as it allows you to pick up envoy talents instead of precious gear boosts. A half measure to make you better out of combat, perhaps? You can also choose Charisma instead of STR/DEX as your key ability score (don't). Coordinated Shot is a pretty nice feat, but it's a combat feat and we get a whole lot of those. Consider reading [Jimble's guide to Envoys](#) if you're interested in envoy talents. It is very outdated as of v1.0 of this guide.
 - **Lead by Example** (5th) - requires you to both use your move action (so no full attacks) *and* hit an enemy just to remove cover you'd provide them only until your next turn. All of this for just +1 to ranged attack rolls. Why? Do you fight in tunnels often? I don't see where it wouldn't be better for the ranged party member to instead shift their position slightly to benefit from the +1 to attacks. This might have been cool to ranged Soldiers, as you count your own ally, but you literally won't even be able to benefit from this, unless you use the *multi-weapon strike* feat boost ^{"alt"}. It does let ranged soldiers provide the benefit of *coordinated shot*, but, again, it's just a +1 to ranged attack rolls. It's quite pathetic.
 - **Coordinated Defense** (9th) - it's pretty good, actually. For melee party members, this essentially means +1 AC to most of your party every round. Insight bonuses to AC stack with racial bonuses (like Vesk, for example), too. The *lead by example* bonus is whatever, more likely than not to be useless most fights.
 - **Rallying Cry** (13th) - emotion effects aren't super rare, but it sucks that you need to make a skill check to do this, and only against one ally (emotion effects, like fear, are usually area effects). The DC isn't crazy if you've pumped your social skills. The latter half of this ability is basically saving you 1 RP from *coordinated defense*. Meh.
 - **Legendary Example** (17th) - not bad for a ranged soldier, essentially turning them into another free +1 attack bonus for the party, but should have been available earlier to make this a viable option for those builds. For melee builds, this is... literally nothing, because that's how *coordinated shot* works already. As a feat. Without a fighting style.

- **Exosuit** - a gimmicky mech-only fighting style that doesn't provide a mech, meaning this will be heavily campaign-dependent. The ratings below are provided with the idea that you have access to the mech for the vast majority of the fights in your game. Only really worth it if your game will spend a lot of time at levels 13 and higher. If your game won't have mechs in the vast majority of fights - consider all ratings as one tier worse.
 - **The Only Mech for Me** (1st) - it gives you a scaling (up to a full +6) insight bonus to Piloting checks and also allows you to apply this insight bonus to the mech's skills through the Maneuver power point ability, but seemingly only when they're performed by you? The other bonuses are just ribbon abilities with barely any practical use. This is slightly better if you're also the party's dedicated Starship Pilot.
 - **Intuitive Commands** (5th) - very tiny bonuses. I'm not sure why this has a cooldown. A simple +1 to AC isn't going to be a big gamechanger, neither is saving a single PP.
 - **Unstoppable Together** (9th) - halving the penalties means reducing most of them by 1, which is barely perceptible. The ability to reduce the PP cost of ignoring malfunctions is also not gonna save you. The ability to share the damage between yourself and the mech is the big one here and will be very useful in most fights.
 - **Titan's Onslaught** (13th) - excellent way to further boost a mech's damage output. The ability to perform triple attacks is exceptionally good and combining it with higher accuracy through Aim makes them even better! Kill shots are fun, too.
 - **Alpha Strike** (17th) - it's really great, effectively doubling your mech's damage output... But why only once per day...? Especially when *kill shot* is something you can attempt against nearly every enemy?
- **Farshot** - a ranged fighting style focused on sniping. Clarifies that an "aimed shot" is whenever you aim a sniper weapon to make use of the *sniper* property.
 - **Steady Shot** (1st) - Stealth as a class skill is pretty useful for snipers who want to hide. Also allows you to reroll 1 on the sniper damage dice, but only when making an aimed shot. While this feature isn't particularly exciting at low levels, it's not too bad as the sniper damage dice begin to scale up into the mid and high levels. And at high levels this can actually be an impressive boost to your damage output.
 - **Patient Precision** (5th) - lets you prepare as a full action, doing absolutely nothing for an entire turn. Then, on the next turn, even a non-aimed shot counts as an aimed shot (unimpressive, especially since you get faster ways of aiming at higher levels) and if you roll a natural 20 and score a critical hit - your attack deals 3x damage instead of 2x damage. While that can be some truly impressive damage, it's not reliable in the slightest, nor is it something you can easily manipulate, unless you're also a level 14 Precog with the *offensive rewrite temporal anomaly*. And you're just mathematically better off shooting every turn instead of skipping an entire turn in favor of aiming.

- **Lethal Near and Far** (9th) - increasing sniper property ranges even further is just comedic. Firing at a target 1500 feet away is already something that happens extremely rarely, so boosting that distance even more is just overkill. Also, what's up with Paizo giving ranged fighting styles a feature for participating in melee combat (poorly)? You'd think that you'd take the sniper style to snipe better, not to bonk people over the head. In practice this is only ever useful if you have no way of stepping away from an enemy to avoid an AoO you can't risk making and for allowing melee party members to flank the enemy near you.
- **Instant Aim** (13th) - aiming as a swift action is actually kinda hype, allowing you to guarded step, aim then fire, benefitting from *steady shot*. Downgrading that *patient precision* to a standard action is still not good enough to make it worth the action economy you'd spend on it.
- **One Shot, One Kill** (17th) - makes a lot of this *fighting style's* abilities come together, but, in my opinion, a bit too late. The biggest advantage here is making the *patient precision* 3x crit work with any aimed shot, which is awesome! It also allows your "special aim" to expand your critical range to 18-20. Now this kind of turns this into a high risk - high reward scenario. There may actually, theoretically, be a reason for you to consider this option, and that's only in a very niche situation where your party members can somehow improve your damage output or lower the enemy's resistance and/or give them a vulnerability to your damage type (likely some combination of mage / mechanic / biohacker shenanigans).
- **Fourfold Tactician** - a very poorly designed fighting style, the *techniques* of which don't gel together at all and in fact seem to overwrite each other oftentimes. It's just a giant bag of mostly unconnected features. It also requires you to have 4 arms, despite the fact that every feature is usable with just 2 hands (sometimes with some gear support, like the capstone and tactical scaffold armor upgrade). It's not awful for the very low level games, if only for the slightly easier feinting (as a part of a standard action, instead of a move action) for both melee and ranged builds, or if you pick it up for a game that starts at level 17+ for optimizing the *overkill* feature with a ranged build.
 - **Double Draw** (1st) - the bare essential for using two weapons in combat. It's a decent feat, but it's just a feat. We got a lot of those. The only time the lv9 feature might be at all relevant is for the purposes of the *fusillade* feat, which is a bad feat and one that isn't improved in any way by the Soldier features.
 - **Feint and Strike** (5th) - the DC for feinting is quite steep, so you want to stack as many modifiers as possible to improve your odds (bluff as a class skill through theme, improvisation adornment, blur grip, mirage dagger weapon, *skill focus* in bluff, racial bonus to bluff. Slim pickings, honestly). Also makes you eligible for feats like *spell feint*, *greater feint* and *tandem feint*. Funnily enough, feinting has no specified range anywhere, so you can event feint at range. Having four arms helps here, as you can just have a mirage dagger to get the bonus to feint, even at range, which is kinda funny, but most GMs will just rule that you can only use the mirage dagger's benefit in melee, since that is its reach and that's the weapon you need to use to feint with the bonus. Both at range and in melee you

benefit more from having your second weapon be something big and strong, so a heavy weapon or an unwieldy weapon would be the most beneficial.

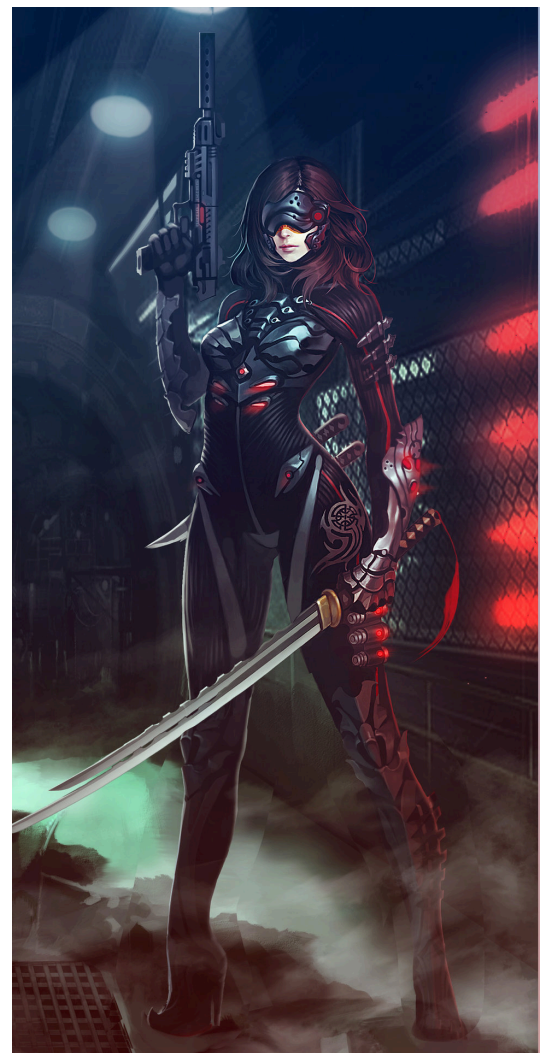
- **Instant Reload** (9th) - did they forget that *double draw* that you get for free at lv1 lets you reload two weapons? This is completely useless, unless you're using the *fusillade* feat, which is already not a good idea. And this feature completely forgets that this fighting style technically works with melee weapons, too, which don't get any benefit at all. Garbage.
- **Run and Gun** (13th) - just buy a haste circuit. Not as versatile as *armor storm's* version of this feature. But still kind of useful.
- **Overkill** (17th) - it's actually pretty sick, especially combined with *bullet rain* as a *secondary fighting style*. But that means that you take this entire *fighting style* exclusively for its final feature, as nearly every other feature of this style is completely useless if your plan is to just shoot a million bullets every round. Consider picking up the *automatic expert* gear boost.
- **Gloom Gunner** - despite having "gunner" in the name, this style is usable by both melee and ranged builds. Unfortunately, its lower level features are quite disappointing, but the high level stuff is appealing, making it a good choice for games that start at a higher level.
 - **Gloom Weapons** (1st) - there are very few low level enemies that'd have DR/magic or are incorporeal. However, an *ominous* fusion on a lv1 weapon costs 120 credits. *Any* fusion on a weapon gives you the exact copy of this "class feature", and you probably want to have a fusion on most weapons, so this is largely a total waste, especially when you consider the next feature.
 - **Shadow Fusion** (5th) - this just doubles down how useless the lv1 feature is, because this feature grants you the exact same benefits and a free fusion on top. The ominous fusion is pretty good, but you can just buy the ominous fusion on any weapon. This does save you a fitsful of credits, I guess. The ability to apply it several times is barely ever going to come out, as I doubt you'll be critting the same enemy consecutively very often.
 - **Ominous Power** (9th) - applying the ominous fusion on top of another crit effect is actually pretty sick, as it's a really nice effect. But you make it from "nice" to "amazing" by turning that shaken into a frightened for 1 RP. Frightened is a very powerful condition. The downside is that you can't do it very often. Or can you? The way the feature is edited, it seems like the frighten only relates to the *ominous* effect, but it's technically not stated that it works only from that fusion, but *any* shaken effect. Act your GM for clarification, but if it lets you upgrade all shaken conditions to Frightened, you really should brush off your demoralize builds and *mighty vocal cords* augmentation. Rerolling a save against a mind-affection condition will probably save you at some point. It's not too flashy, but will likely be relevant.
 - **Shadow Secrets** (13th) - the *ghost killer* is cool, I guess, but the real meat and potatoes is the added benefit. Paizo did an oopsie and didn't specify what action must be taken to activate them, so I'm just assuming that they're active whenever

you're wielding a weapon on your turn and get disabled until you begin your next turn. Ranged builds only get the meh range increase or ignoring a bit of hardness (remember, not DR). Melee builds got some much more interesting options. Dirty trick builds will want to pick the third option (keep in mind that you can only use it within your reach). The rest will want to pick up reach, so they can use their powerful close range weapons at a 10-foot reach (very nice for *spinning cleave* builds).

- **Shadow Attack** (17th) - the equivalent of an *arcane assailant* fighting style capstone. Still useful, as a lot of enemies will get ways of avoiding or taking cover from your attacks by this level. Same as the *arcane attack technique*, this one also ignores "all cover", meaning you can hit enemies on the other sides of solid walls.
- **Guard** - the one that everyone picks as a secondary fighting style in lower level games. Quite front loaded, as its best feature is the first one. You get most out of it as a melee build.
 - **Armor Training** (1st) - increasing your armor's DEX bonus by 1 is pretty good and allows people to minmax more AC. Issue is, STR builds probably don't want to sacrifice that many points into Dexterity, while DEX builds won't be able to meet the light armor's existing DEX cap. If you chose this *fighting style* as your primary one, you probably want a good bit of CON to tank for your friends, which may mean you might have issues meeting the new raised cap yourself.
 - **Guard's Protection** (5th) - gives you a free *powered armor proficiency* and also a weaker, but more flexible version of the *in harm's way* feat. Unfortunately it is limited by the whole "adjacent" part. Usually melee combatants like to flank enemies, not be adjacent to each other, so it works better if you or your buddy are an ysoki with the *swarmer* alternate feature, in which case it's a pretty useful ability.
 - **Rapid Recovery** (9th) - you can ignore some pretty bad conditions with this one. Useful, especially starting from the level that you get it.
 - **Kinetic Resistance** (13th) - shh, don't tell the *battlemaster fighting style* that *guard* has its main feature. Granted, you get it pretty late. Still, the benefits are the same: DR is nice to have and will add up over the course of the adventuring day.
 - **Impenetrable Defense** (17th) - lets you select only one adjacent ally, making it functionally similar to the *in harm's way*. Issue is, *bodyguard* + *in harm's way* let you already give an ally +2 AC and take all of the damage they would take, except it takes just a reaction, allowing you to still attack the enemy as a standard action. This does not and you effectively just drop all of your funky soldier stuff in order to protect. Weird and only very rarely good. Almost every time you're better off just attacking the enemy.
- **Hit-and-Run** - a highly mobile fighting style that was built around mixing melee and ranged combat, utilizing ranged combat in close quarters or just combining thrown and melee combat, while avoiding AoOs and enemy strikes.
Volleying bombardment feat boost ^{"alt"} makes this fighting style a lot more reliable,

because you're able to just keep re-applying that bonus. *Multi-weapon strike feat boost* "alt" makes it a lot easier to manage, too, as you can be a lot more mobile thanks to it.

- **Opening Volley** (1st) - *opening volley* is a funky feat. You should read its description below in the Feats section. If you're picking up this *fighting style* because you're interested in using shotgun-style blast weapons or automatic weapons in close range, you might not even benefit from this ability at all. That being said, if you managed to potentially benefit from this feat with your build (whether through your weapon options or getting higher level features of this style), getting the lv9 upgrade becomes genuinely very nice and will increase your overall damage in combat. And don't forget about using grenades or explosive heavy weapons (maybe ones you mount on your powered armor?) to nearly guarantee you trigger the *opening volley*.
- **Nimble Fusillade** (5th) - it's an amazing ability when you get it. There's just one issue, the *haste circuit* lv8 armor upgrade already lets you do all that + doubles your movement speeds and lets you move your whole speed. Granted, not during the first round of combat, as you'll need to activate it as a swift action, meaning no full actions. It's still good if you plan on using powered armor, as that doesn't let you install *haste circuit*. The circuit also only covers 10 combat rounds, but that's probably the lion's share of combat you'll have in a day. The armor upgrade's existence makes this feature a lot less appealing fairly quickly to certain builds.
- **Duck and Weave** (9th) - this is the real draw of this fighting style. Ranged builds are pretty much impossible to tie down, and this allows you to just weave in and out of combat as you want. Keep in mind that unlike many other similar abilities, this lets you completely ignore AoOs from all enemies. It's not quite as great as the Operative's *improved uncanny mobility*, but this is probably the second best option available.
- **Elusive Target** (13th) - there's absolutely no good reason not to take at least a guarded step every turn with this and effectively becomes a free +1 AC. Funnily enough, this is probably even better than the *guard fighting style*'s offering, as this doesn't even require you to have super high Dexterity and will work even if you picked up this style for the thrown-melee weapon combo.
- **Harrying Shot** (17th) - turns you into another layer of amplifying party's damage, similar to the Operative and Biohacker. Fantastic combination with the *automatic*,



line, blast, and other properties that let you get a lot out of a single attack. It does prevent you from full attacking normally with two/three shots, however, so this isn't great for thrown-melee builds who picked up this *fighting style*.

- **Hunter** - a style that uses the stereotypical "marked target" mechanic that's so common in d20 RPGs. Synergizes with both ranged and melee builds. It has a crucial, fatal issue: most of the features all rely on the "Hunt Foe" mechanic, that requires a hefty DC check to work. And failing this check even once effectively makes you lose almost all of the benefits of this fighting style for 24 hours. A brutal penalty for a pathetic benefit.
 - **Hunter's Expertise** (1st) - Perception is a very common skill check and getting it as a class skill is pretty useful. The free skill rank isn't a huge deal, but does let you dump your INT to 8 with a clear conscience. That being said, this won't really help you in combat super often.
 - **Hunt Foe** (5th) - you need to spend a move action to attempt a fairly high DC skill check to get a tiny +1 bonus to damage, weapon/soldier DCs and some skills against one marked target. If you ever fail **even one** check - you straight up lose access to this feature for 24 hours. Not even until you rest, but actual 24 hours, meaning you might be unable to use it even after you rest and continue something like a dungeon exploration. It's a brutal penalty for a class that doesn't even get any innate bonuses to Survival, especially for such a tiny benefit. Still, if you want to make use of it, you'll need to squeeze absolutely every bonus to Survival checks you can get. I don't recommend dumping your main attacking stat for Wisdom as you are, still, a Soldier. Racial bonuses, Maze Mind Graft, skill focus feat - try to use every bonus possible just to fail as little as possible. So when can this be useful? Frankly, the +1 to damage is so utterly anemic (especially at levels above like level 2) that using it with most weapons is pointless. The +1 to weapon DCs is probably the most interesting part, which may be cool for explosive builds or if you're using a weapon with the ignite property. As such, this is probably only of any interest to *bombard* soldiers looking for a *secondary fighting style*.
 - **Fast Hunting** (9th) - very niche benefit. It's likely you won't ever get to use this in a campaign, unless your GM deliberately creates a challenge just to suit your playstyle.
 - **Hunting Party** (13th) - lets you Hunt a target as a swift action, and allows you to target 2 creatures. Issue is, it still does nothing to deal with the biggest issue - the fact that if you fail even one of those Survival checks - you're hella out of luck. Sharing the benefits with your party as a standard action is a miniscule increase in damage; can't recommend it. The +1 to DCs doesn't extend to spells, btw.
 - **Peerless Hunter** (17th) - explosive builds may be kinda happy about being able to mark 3 targets, but, again, failing even 1 check makes you unable to hunt anyone at all for an entire day. The 2nd benefit is extremely niche and realistically won't be useful in most games.

- **Mine Menace** - a pretty unique and interesting fighting style that allows you to create and set landmines. Works for ranged builds, but melee builds can make use of it a bit more easily.
 - **Set Charge** (1st) - Stealth as a class skill is kind of minor, but it does help you a lot, since it lets you stealthily deploy your mines. There are a few important notes about your mines:
 - The enemy must step into the actual square the mine is in, which can be very problematic, as predicting the enemy's exact movement is not easy. Some GMs will be benevolent and have enemies stepping into them when they can, others will be dickish and avoid them.
 - If you aren't hidden - your mines will be instantly detected (you should be able to contact your party members to indicate that you're deploying a mine, though).
 - The enemies get an *automatic* Perception check to detect the mine. Against mindless enemies it doesn't matter that much, but intelligent enemies can just warn their allies about your mine's location, making it a lot more difficult to have them trigger it.
 - Friendlies can trigger the mine, too.
 - Considering that they take a full action to deploy, they're difficult to trigger and you only get one per 10 minute rest by default - their damage and speed reduction is anemic. It also can't reduce the speed lower than half, meaning it interacts poorly with most other sources of speed reduction.
 - The penalties to movement speed last only 1d4 rounds.

All in all, the mines are kinda mid and work best when the enemies are coming to you, not the other way around.
 - **Explosive Maneuver** (5th) - the main reason you might want to be a melee character with this *fighting style*. Getting up to a +5 to your attack roll may add up to a huge bonus to the maneuver check. Check the *combat maneuvers* chapter of the guide to learn more. Bull rushing is already good, but bull rushing into a mined space is even better. The issue is that this works exclusively when shoving an enemy into a space that has a mine, which will be a rare occurrence. And it has to be *your* mine specifically, you wouldn't get the same bonus if another player picked this *fighting style*.
 - **Cunning Strike** (9th) - very good boost to damage, the question is how reliable will that boost be. If the party has a biohacker with a *hampering inhibitor*, or any other character who reduces the speed a bit more reliably, this is actually really damn nice. But if you have nobody else in the party who can slow down enemies, you will not be able to benefit from this ability very often. You can get an *entangling* weapon fusion to help you out a bit once a day, or just throw stickybomb grenades, but these aren't something you'll be able to constantly use. Annoyingly, doesn't work on prone targets.
 - **Minelfield** (13th) - potentially increases the amount of mines you'll have access to. For whatever reason they made this into a game of chance, so you may potentially still have just 1 mine per short rest. No idea why they did it that way.

It's also a little unclear if this mechanically allows you to deploy all three mines as a single full action, so ask your GM. If so, you could potentially cover several spaces around a target to have more chances for it to trigger at least one mine. But this does nothing to make the actual mines worth the headache of setting them up in combat. That being said, if you get an opportunity to pre-set the mines before hostilities begin, this is actually kind of cool.

- **Masterful Mayhem** (17th) - it's alright, but still requires a creature to enter the actual mine's space first and doesn't make them easier to trigger. That being said, if you can deploy three mines and trigger them to affect several enemies, in addition to also benefiting from bull rushing the enemies into them (and thus triggering you and your friendlies' AoOs) this can be a pretty fun combo to try once per short rest. But it's all kinda gimmicky and tough to juggle in real play.
- **Pistol Dancer** - a fighting style based on using small arms in more diverse ways, mixing ranged shots with a melee pistol whip strike for the purposes of attacks of opportunity and flanking. Kind of mediocre early on, with a very powerful final feature. While at lower levels the soldier's damage suffers noticeably with such a build thanks to the addition of poorly balanced weapon attachments (namely bipod and its ilk), it is regardless a pretty cool option if you're playing in a more covert campaign, where hiding weapons on your body might be relevant often. It does feel very sad that there are gear options that massively reduce the full attack penalty for longarms, heavy and sniper weapons, but not small arms, which should probably have the smallest penalty to make up for their mediocre damage. It is what it is. While not necessary, it is highly recommended to be using two small arms combined with *multi-weapon fighting* feat and the *multi-weapon strike feat boost* ^{“alt”} when using this fighting style. Feats like *double draw* help a lot, too, if you can't afford a quickdraw hideaway limb cybernetic augmentation.
 - **Small Arm Tango** (1st) - Sleight of Hand is not a skill that will be used in most conventional campaigns, but it's sure to be useful in a more covert game, as you can actually attempt to hide small arms using the skill. Reloading as a swift action is not a big bonus, but still rather useful. The battleglove part of the feature is weird: on one hand it does allow you to threaten adjacent squares and help your buddies flank, but on the other hand it doesn't let you ignore AoOs for shooting in melee and the battleglove is not an operative weapon, meaning you'll be using your likely poor Strength for attack rolls.
 - **Staccato Strut** (5th) - simple, but nice benefit. While normally it is recommended to be aiming at one target at a time to burst it down, damaging a few targets can be useful, too. With multi-weapon fighting feat the penalty would be reduced to just -2 per shot. RAW doesn't work with your lv1 feature's melee attacks. RAW also doesn't work with *multi-weapon strike feat boost* ^{“alt”}, for some god-forsaken reason. I think a lot of GMs might allow it, though.
 - **Ricochet Waltz** (9th) - It's not bad when it's relevant and I'd probably even suggest you consider taking a more aggressive, forward role when fighting creatures with small arms and longarms, while utilizing the fight defensively

option. But between normal cover and not every enemy using one of those two weapon types, it's a somewhat campaign-specific feature.

- **Pistol Pirouette** (13th) - useful ability for taking down crowds, but the area is actually a burst around you and the range is tiny. A lot of the short range weapons begin to become much less appealing, though, thankfully, level 13 is basically when weapon ranges begin to noticeably expand. There's no way to avoid friendly fire here, too. And unlike an automatic weapon you'd need to buy two fusions to avoid shooting your friends. Ask your GM if you can use the selective explosion gear boost to ignore friendly targets. Otherwise you're limited to the selective weapon fusions and using AbadarCorp as a manufacturer. Most of the time you can just use your normal full attack and reduce the penalty by 2 if firing at up to 3 different creatures, anyway.
- **Choreography of Death** (17th) - an excellent ability that absolutely should have been one of the first abilities you get, not one of the last. It fundamentally rewards you for spamming as many attacks as possible. Consider that even just landing 3 shots with your full attack already gives you a massive +6 to damage rolls, which is equivalent to a d12 damage dice average. Combined with your high BAB, using an EAC targeting weapon, *weapon focus* (small arms), *laser accuracy gear boost*, and any benefit your party can provide (flat-footing the enemy, reducing their AC or boosting your to-hit), you'll likely be landing shots most of the time. Starting from round 3 or 4 you'll likely be dealing more damage per shot than any other party member. Funnily enough, using the lv13 *pistol pirouette* to target your party members may actually be a great way to give yourself a massive boost to damage right off the bat. And you'll almost never lose the combo you've built up, since you can just reload both of your small arms as a swift+move action (or just pick up *double draw* at some point to reload both as a swift) and then just keep hammering the enemy with *multi-weapon strike feat boost*.
- **Powerhouse Style** - the premier two-handed unwieldy melee weapon fighting style. It works super well early on, but suffers in comparison to other builds when Soldier gets access to *soldier's onslaught* at level 11, as you gain basically no benefit, while non-unwieldy builds get a massive damage boost. Consider getting some ways to increase your AC and HP/SP (racial features, toughness feat, good CON), as you'll be a prime target for enemies with your low AC. A giant disadvantage on unwieldy melee weapons is the inability to make an attack of opportunity with them, so you'll have to do something about it. It is highly recommended to either play a multi-armed race (or get additional cybernetic arms if at high level) to wield an additional non-unwieldy weapon,



or to get access to unarmed attacks with 1.5x level weapon specialization (such as natural weapons from race, like vesk, or the *ascetic warrior* ^{“alt”}) combined with the *improved unarmed strike* feat.

- **Unwieldy Cleave** (1st) - *cleave* is a good feat and necessary for its improvements, but still quite limited early on, as enemies probably won't be so tightly packed super often. The real cream here is allowing you to cleave using unwieldy weapons, which deal a heck of a lot of damage this early on. Doshkos are your friend. Damoritosh would be pleased.
Picking up the *greater cleave* feat and - most importantly - *spinning cleave feat boost* ^{“alt”} becomes mandatory with this fighting style as that's what will help you deal truly nutty damage per round. *Lunge* is very important, too, in order to increase your affected area (that -4 to AC will hurt a lot, though, unless you pick up feat boosts to deal with that. Alternatively, play a hobgoblin and pick up the *defensive striker* feat to save two gear boosts).
- **Weapon Blocking** (5th) - you don't have a lot of uses for your move action after you place yourself well-enough to cleave. There are probably better uses for it (such as improved demoralize or improved feint), but this ain't bad, either. Too bad the later features actively discourage you from using this technique.
- **Unwieldy Opportunist** (9th) - very good feature that should've been a base part of the *soldier's onslaught* feature, but what can you do. This will increase your damage a lot throughout the day, and also give you a very aggressive way to spend your RP. Between this and *great cleave* you'll be burning through RP real fast, so picking up the *extra resolve* feat might be a good idea.
- **Forceful Attack** (13th) - fantastic feature that essentially becomes your go-to option against singular strong enemies. The main question is if you can add the bonuses to the maneuver, such as *improved combat maneuver* (bull rush), or bonuses gained from items. I believe so, as it seems that the maneuver's attack roll is still counted as its own "thing". But you should probably still ask your GM about it. It's decent even if they don't allow you to do it, but if they do allow you to apply bonuses, then this becomes so much better, as you can strike an enemy, then smack them with AoOs as they move away (forced movement triggers AoOs). Combining it with the *add leverage* feat is very funny and epic.
- **Unwieldy Power** (17th) - straightforward and powerful. It's a lot of extra damage and goes a long way to balance your DPS out compared to non-unwieldy weapons performing full attacks.
- **Qi Adept** - the Dragon Ball-inspired mystical fighting style that gives you some nice mobility options and/or a mediocre ranged unarmed attack. Works with both melee and ranged builds, but doesn't improve either. While the flavor of this style is cool, the actual mechanical benefit is just disappointing.
 - **Qi Strike** (1st) - pretty weak, as any weapon fusion grants you the same benefits. It does work on any weapon you hold, which is nice, I guess.
 - **Gather Qi** (5th) - kind of weird how this wasn't a 1st level feature, but whatever, I guess. Lets you spend 1 RP to get one of three buffs. They're good, just maybe

not quite fighting style-good.

Extreme Speed is just a tiny boost to your speed. Not bad if you're using a melee weapon and need to get into range. More speed is always nice. Keep in mind that you can get the same benefit with speed suspension augmentation, and they do not stack, which makes this ability less appealing.

Plasma Blast is probably the one most people want to pick. The damage is okay, but nothing special. Notably this uses your Dexterity for the attack roll, as opposed to your normal unarmed strikes, and you don't add STR or DEX to the damage roll, making it noticeably weaker than making a conventional unarmed attack with 1.5x level weapon spec. The stun crit effect is pretty nice. Overall, it can be situationally useful to have access to a ranged attack, but the damage is too low to be a reliable damage option for the central damage-dealer of the party.

Qi Flight is cool and all, but you can actually just get a jetpack at lv5, anyway. Boosting flight speed is cool, since you want a lot of it due to the flying rules.

- **Bountiful Qi** (9th) - lets you pick to either get 1 benefit of lv5 for free, two benefits of lv5 for 1 RP, or 1 benefit of lv9 for 1 RP.

Extreme Speed is yet another bonus. And again it is matched by lv8 speed suspension augmentation. And again it doesn't stack. And so it's still cool, but not amazing.

Plasma Blast now lets you make area attacks with it, but the explosion, for whatever reason, scales with Constitution, and not Dexterity, meaning you now need good STR for melee unarmed strikes (if you don't have *scoundrel's finesse*), good DEX for plasma blasts and good CON for plasma explosions. Weird. Line attacks could definitely be useful to get some more out of your attacks. Combos well with the *area of one gear boost*.

Qi Flight now gives you double your movement speed in flight, but you still have to land at the end of your turn, which sucks. Note that as-written this doesn't boost existing fly speed, only the superjumps that Qi flight grants you.

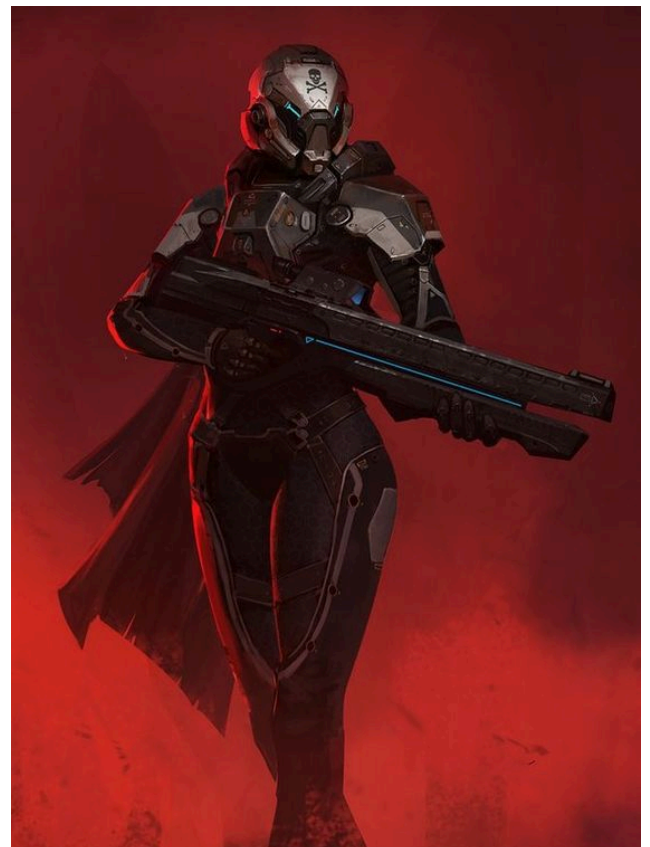
- **Qi Overflow** (13th) - it's okay. Only really useful in edge cases. The way to benefit from it all the time is by using explosive weapons. If your CON is baller you can use plasma blast for that, otherwise your mystical warrior will actually be really good at using heavy weapons with the explode property. But then why not play bombard fighting style, instead?
- **Abundant Qi** (17th) - lets you pick up 1 benefit of lv5&9 for free, 2 benefits of lv5&9 for 1 RP or to get all 3 of the gather & bountiful qi bonuses by spending 2 RP. But do you really want to? If you're using flight speed (probably through gear options), you likely don't plan to spend all that much time on the ground to benefit from that movement speed. It's not bad, but not amazing, either, as you can get all of the benefits through gear options.

- **Rover** - an interesting mix of skill and mobility bonuses focused on movement and surviving in hostile environments. Works for both melee and ranged builds.

- **Survivalist** (1st) - a free scaling insight bonus is a rare boon for a Soldier, and will let your Survival checks scale well even into the very high levels. Using Survival

instead of Life Science for a short list of cases is nice for surviving tasks, but not good enough to cover every possible living creature. One thing to note is the *nimble moves* feat. Very sadly, but Paizo forgot to include a clause that you keep the benefit of the feat even if you don't meet the prerequisites (such as the *powerhouse style's* first feature, which did include it). That means that if you have less than 15 DEX (which may be relevant, if you're not playing a ranged/DEX build) - you actually can't benefit from the feat, according to Starfinder rules.

- **All-Terrain Movement** (5th) - good added speeds that probably won't be useful super often, as this also gives you a boost to flight speed (hello, jetpack) that stacks with everything. Nice. Boosting Athletics is nothing special, really. Very edge cases where it can be relevant.
 - **Astounding Fortitude** (9th) - good feat that will definitely be useful at some point. Helping your companions reroll saves is nice, but the range of 10 feet is anemic and it'll be very hard to use if you're making use of that boost to flight speed. Besides, it's a Fortitude save, which are pretty rare. You could get the most benefit from it by fighting in melee and aiding your other melee buddies to resist stuff like poison and whatnot. Don't forget you count as your own ally in Starfinder.
 - **Deft Movement** (13th) - lets you ignore AoOs from moving, period. In a way it's even better than the *hit-and-go fighting style's* 9th level feature, since it uses no RP, but doesn't let you shoot in melee without triggering AoOs. If you're flying it's probably not super useful all the time, but still very nice. Lets you avoid getting damaged enemies with big reaches if they close in on you. Especially in environments where open air for flying isn't available.
 - **Environmental Tolerance** (17th) - amazing feature. Both damage types are very common. The resistance is already very strong, but they even let you stack it further. It's very very nice.
- **Sharpshoot** - the premier ranged fighting style. If you want to deal damage with ranged weapons - this is the style for you. The elephant in the room are two item types: bipods and gunner harnesses. The bipod especially makes no sense, but whatever. Those items massively reduce the penalties to full attacks by those heavier ranged weapons, thus giving you a massive damage boost. It's unfair that small arms don't get this benefit, and those benefits are way too strong for how much input they need from you, but it is what it is. Paizo added them to the game, so that's the meta. There's no good reason not to buy those items the moment they become available.



- **Sniper's Aim** (1st) - doesn't let you fully negate cover, which means you may still want to have scopes on your weapon. Still, this lets you reduce cover bonuses all the time, even when making normal full attacks, without taking a move action to aim through an attached scope. It's pretty nifty and will be useful often.
 - **Focus Fire** (5th) - fantastic boost to your overall damage output by reducing your attack penalties. This stacks with bipods and gunner harnesses, thus allowing you to make two heavy weapon attacks with a full attack with only a -1 to each attack roll. Lol. Lmao, even.
 - **Intense Focus** (9th) - fantastic feature that will absolutely let you hammer an enemy with super accurate shots. Ignoring cover is good, but downgrading concealment is the real winner here.
 - **Focused Damage** (13th) - the main disadvantage of ranged combat is that you can't add your ability modifier to the damage roll. Well an extra 2d6 is an average of 7 damage, which is equivalent to a melee attack with 24 STR, in terms of damage. This makes you deal damage equivalent to melee damage at range, plus ignoring cover/downgrading concealment and making three attacks at a -3 penalty (as opposed to -6).
Is it overpowered? Yes. Is it still the rules? Yes. Go wild.
 - **Prepared Shot** (17th) - this is what you may consider using during the Surprise round (since you can't full attack). Otherwise, full attack, all the time. Even against bosses.
- **Shock and Awe** - mostly melee fighting style that grants some benefits to ranged builds and focuses on being loud, bright and inconveniencing enemies by doing that. Unfortunately, the benefits are too small or rare to rely on them or to make this style particularly notable.
 - **Loud and Proud** (1st) - bit of extra light on the battlefield and a small bonus against fairly niche effects. Getting blinded sucks, however, so it's not terrible. But then again, you probably won't use this often.
 - **Awesome Cacophony** (5th) - better stock up on those Intimidation skill boosts. It's okay. Rewards you for using strong unwieldy weapons, being a full action and whatnot. Good on weapons that damage an area. Cleave works well, too.
 - **Explosive Entrance** (9th) - fairly useless for ranged builds, but a nice little debuff for melee (Strength) builds to use, who can walk in, activate this, then attack a flat-footed enemy. Be careful of friendly fire.
 - **Oppressive Cadence** (13th) - you have a 5% chance of triggering the crit. And then the target must fail a saving throw. And then they take the extra damage. It's not bad, but when you compare it to sharpshoot adding 2d6 extra damage to every shot of a full attack, it pales.
 - **Crank It to Eleven** (17th) - neat benefit, but again, pretty useless for ranged builds with low STR. Making an enemy reliably suffer from those conditions is also pretty damn tough, but can be good if you figure it out.

- **Silent Slayer** - a stealth-flavored melee-oriented fighting style that lets you trade full attacking for sneaking around and making single stabs at a flat-footed target...
...why aren't you playing an Operative, again? Because that's what Operatives do. Much better than Soldiers, too. The fantasy of a predator-like Soldier with a deadly knife is great, but this *fighting style* is just poorly mechanically designed.
 - **Claws of the Shadow** (1st) - pretty straightforward: you hide (in concealment or cover), then sneak as a part of the hide action at half speed, then stab. Fun fact: while it does need to be a hit from a melee weapon, it doesn't say anything about throwing it. So a ranged attack with a melee weapon would still help trigger the off-target condition. It has to be with an operative melee weapon, meaning pathetic damage. And you actually gotta be hidden, too. And unlike Operatives that can perform trick attacks with multiple different skills, you're forced to use Stealth and the cumbersome hiding rules, meaning you won't have too many ability score points left over to boost your Strength for that good melee damage.
 - **Darting Shadow** (5th) - okay feat that's a prerequisite for better feats. Thankfully lets you pick up that better feat right off the bat. But we already get a lot of combat feats, so, meh.
 - **Fading Shadow** (9th) - this is something you probably want to do all the time - hide in plain sight. Which probably should have been this style's main feature. But it's not, and this uses RP. It's nice, but late and still is worse than just full attacking with a "normal" weapon. It's a nice upgrade for a sub-optimal playstyle. The 15th level upgrade basically lets you jump up to a creature with reach without triggering AoOs to inflict an attack. But with an operative melee weapon, the damage won't be all that. The teleportation doesn't trigger AoOs, as it's a Supernatural effect, not a spell-like.
 - **Severing Shadow** (13th) - it's okay. You can already add it through a vorpal fusion, anyway.
 - **Weeping Shadow** (17th) - frightened and panicked are very strong conditions, but how do you plan to apply them? A creature must be completely unaware of your presence. The only way to achieve that is if you ambush it during the surprise round (extremely difficult as you can only take either a standard or a move action during it. So when do you begin a surprise round while adjacent to an enemy? I guess attacking it in a crowd..?) or if you just don't engage in combat in the first round and just skulk into position and then attack after the rest of your party has already moved in. And this trick will almost definitely just work on a single enemy during the fight. Unlike the 1st feature, throwing the weapon won't work here. That sucks. Plus it may potentially only work for 1 round. And the enemy gets a save every turn to remove it. That really sucks.
- **Spellbrawler** - supposedly a style that lets you harness arcane power to enhance your attacks (both melee and ranged) and defense. In practice, this should have been called "Spellbane", because what this is is a dedicated anti-mage fighting style. As such, it's near useless when you're not fighting mages.

- **Arcane Arsenal** (1st) - Mysticism as a class skill is fine if you want it. The rest of this feature is a real head-scratcher. So once every 10-minute rest (which usually happens after every fight, but not always) for 1 minute you can create a low level weapon. You'd think this exists for targeting weaknesses, but no, the weapon must be an analogue one, meaning no energy weapons and a tiny pool to pick from. How exactly does this "enhance your attacks"?
- **Spell Siphon** (5th) - while pretty useless against most enemies, against mages - it is powerful... Probably (can you guess what's the highest saving throw for almost all spellcaster creatures? Yeah). Sure, it absolutely tears through your RP, but removing, say, all of a mage's highest level spells before they even get to act (if you win initiative) is damn nice. You could also do this as a full attack, triggering both the extra damage and another spell siphon on the 2nd and potentially a 3rd hit. Then again, there are very few mages in low level play, so it'll be an unusable feature most of the time. Definitely gets better as you level up and enemy spellcasters become way more common.
- **Dispelling Weapon** (9th) - an upgraded version of the *dispelling strike* feat. It's nice to have, as at this point enemies definitely might have annoying defensive spells on them already. Unfortunately, unlike *dispelling strike*, you can't use this on buddies without wounding them.
- **Arcane Armor** (13th) - the damage reduction is decent, but again, only viable when fighting mages.
- **Siphoned Storm** (17th) - once again, decent bit of extra damage, but only available when fighting mages.
- **Squad** - a melee team-oriented fighting style that has abilities to tactically help out allies. This is basically a superior version of the *commander fighting style*.
 - **Coordinated Aim** (1st) - a simple, but good feat. The ranged party members will still want to move around to shoot at the enemies without cover (-4 AC > +1 to hit).
 - **Quick Backup** (5th) - depending on the battlemat, this can actually be pretty useful. Note that this is different from something like a Charge, because this movement doesn't need to be in a straight line, can cross difficult terrain and squares occupied by allies and the attack doesn't give you penalties to AC. It can be useful to position yourself to grant an ally the benefit of the bodyguard feat, or get in position to flank with an ally. Unwieldy weapons work best, since it's just a single attack, but not necessary, since you can only do it once per short rest.
 - **Mystic Swap** (9th) - your mages' and ranged party members' favorite feature. Lets you yank them out of range of an enemy with reach, for example. And since it's a move action, you can technically position yourself anywhere within 60 feet of them to teleport them further away, though it does hurt your damage per round somewhat. In practice, it can actually be tricky to use, since you might want to be standing near enemies with a melee weapon in the first place. But a well-oiled party can make it work super well (for example, the Operative wins initiative and uses trick attack to move 50 feet into the enemy's melee range, but then you on

the next turn use the switch to both move the Operative away and to get yourself in position to attack the enemy).

- **Precise Flanker** (13th) - amazing feature that works both as an amazing power multiplier for melee party members and to absolutely lock down enemies. If you and a buddy flank a mage - they're basically done for (cast - AoO, guarded step - AoO). Fantastic combination with ysoki's swarmer alternate racial feature.
- **Share Training** (17th) - poopy. You have to be adjacent to a party member (meaning will only work okay if you're an ysoki with swarmer, or if you win initiative), they get the benefit for just a single round (???) and it uses your reaction (so no AoOs or bodyguard or any other useful reaction). Also technically doesn't allow you to pick the combat feats you may pick up at level 18, 19 and 20. And by a level this high, your party members have all the combat feats they could possibly need.
- **Tunnel Striker** - a primarily ranged explosive/automatic fighting style, though those features only kick in at level 5 (and the good-ish ones at level 13). Some features are also usable by melee characters in a hybrid way. Strong contender for being the worst *fighting style* in the game. Slightly saved if your game starts at a very high level where you can get some benefits out of this.
 - **Kick in the Door** (1st) - way too niche to be a core *fighting style* ability. It's probably going to be useful like once or twice in your campaign, but probably not very often. You can also demolish things really well with the help of explosive charges with no need to sacrifice an entire *fighting style* for it. Also, the very same book added the *breach and clear* feat, which basically does the same. It's even a combat feat lol.
 - **Flush Them Out** (5th) - how does this flush anyone out? The *shaken* condition is not as bad as the *flat-footed* condition, so a lot of enemies will prefer having a penalty to attacks rather than lower AC and no reactions. The penalty to saving throws is a bigger one, but you can already get access to that through *improved demoralize* feat. And you must also hit your enemies/have them fail the save. And it only lasts a round. And you can only affect them once an hour. And it's a fear effect, so a large amount of enemies will be immune to it. If you're a grenadier, you'll pick the *bombard fighting style* and if you wanna use automatic weapons - you'll pick the *bullet rain fighting style*. This is very underwhelming, but not necessarily awful or unusable.
 - **Claustrophobic Comfort** (9th) - *tight fit* feat exists. It's also going to only be usable in extremely niche circumstances. Even in spaceships you can't expect to always be this close to three walls.
 - **Rebounding Blast** (13th) - really solid bonus to automatic/explosive attacks. I'm not sure if Paizo intended this or it's an oopsie, but you can just... target the ground as an "obstacle". If you place an explosive blast on the ground, half of the sphere will be blocked by the ground. Meaning the only times this won't be applied is when you target flying enemies that are not close to a wall.

- **Secure the Area** (17th) - a standard action ability for a Soldier that doesn't deal damage is painful, but readying an attack makes it a lot more tolerable. You only need to set it up once or twice per fight. You can also just spam this ability with unwieldy weapons to juice some extra damage out of them. The extra AoO is real nice to free up reactions for your buddies, but only relevant if your buddies do have multiple reactions to spend or multiple enemies triggering AoOs.
- **Wrathful Warrior** - the classic "berserker" melee fighting style that ranges from "pretty great" to "wildly overpowered". Expect to draw a lot of fire due to your danger on the field and lower AC, so all ways of boosting AC and HP/SP (such as toughness, high CON and racial bonuses) are welcome.
 - **Frenzied Fighting** (1st) - the penalty to AC sucks, but the damage bonus is more than welcome, especially at low levels. And it scales, too. Especially nice combo with full attacks (and triple attacks with soldier's onslaught). Swift action to activate means no full attacks on the first turn, so this is something you'll want to activate at the beginning of combat, while you get in position.
 - **Ignore Pain** (5th) - every bit of survivability counts. It's nothing special, really. Barely half of a single attack. There aren't many pain effects, but try to keep that feature in mind for when it might matter.
 - **Close Enough to Kill** (9th) - arguably the single most overpowered feature in Starfinder as a whole. Yes, it burns through RP, so grabbing the extra resolve feat is a good idea. However, if you optimize your raw damage modifiers and use a high damage dice weapon - this can deal amazing damage. High Strength modifier and melee striker gear boost alone already guarantee that even on a miss you'll be dealing basically the same damage as some other characters do on a hit. It can genuinely trivialize the game, especially if you saved up your RP and just dump it all into the final boss. Just don't forget you have to be frenzied.
 - **Shrug Off the Pain** (13th) - after a godlike offensive feature, here's a great defensive feature. Kinetic is the way to go here, since it's superior to any DR source you can get through gear. Works even when you aren't frenzied.
 - **Adaptive Damage Reduction** (17th) - kinda niche use, because, again, kinetic is the way to go. But idk, could potentially be useful. At this point you should probably have some adaptive resistances through gear.

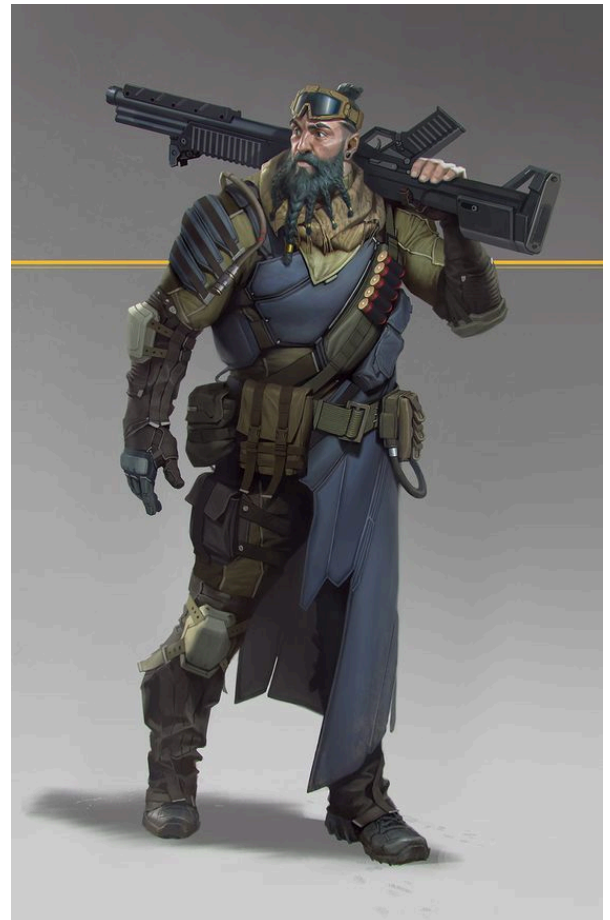
Gear Boosts

The "class feats" of the Soldier class. You don't get a lot of them, but they are usually great ways to improve and define your playstyle, as well as give you new functionality. Soldiers get a new gear boost at level 3 and every 4 levels thereafter.

Third Level Gear Boosts

- **Armored Advantage** - simple and straightforward. Roughly equates to 5% less chance to hit by physical attacks. Not the most exciting option, but is likely to be useful.
- **Armored and Ready** - this will almost certainly never ever come up in your game. And even if it does, it's still pretty useless for all heavier armors until the highest levels.
- **Armor-Piercing Stab** - EAC is, on average, around ~1.5 lower than KAC, so this is actually really good, especially when you get to perform three attacks as a part of a full attack. Better yet, it works until the beginning of your next turn, which means it also works on AoO. Works on weapons that are half-piercing damage, such as piercing & cold.
- **Blazing Strike** - essentially means the enemy gets a -1 to attack rolls, making you into a baby biohacker. Requires you to keep hitting the enemy round after round to keep up and limits you to Bright weapons, which are both pretty annoying limitations.
Note: The *illuminating* weapon fusion lets you make any weapon into a Bright weapon.
- **Bright Flames** - like, buy a flashlight? Or an illumination fusion?
- **Brutal Blast** - the damage is really nice at low levels (making your shotguns almost equivalent to a melee Strength build in damage against a single target, except you can target even more creatures beyond it) and the scaling is nice, but definitely falls off by high levels when the damage dice become *real* big. The big issue is, without a doubt, the 10-foot range limit. A lot of enemies in Starfinder have reach, which means that shooting them within 10 feet of them will be triggering AoOs. You might have the AC and HP/SP to deal with it every now and again, but it can be a bit annoying. Regardless, it's an absolute must-pick for shotgun builds and the added damage will make your character shine, especially in the early game. If you don't plan to exclusively use blast weapons, then the extra damage probably won't be your first pick.
- **Bullet Barrage** - the main advantage of projectile weapons over energy weapons is that they usually deal more damage, at the cost of targeting a usually higher AC (KAC usually is higher than EAC by just over 1 point). This just makes projectile weapons even better at what they already do and makes them more impactful.

Note: unfortunately, despite shooting projectiles, bows aren't in the "projectile" category per-se, so RAW this wouldn't work on them, but maybe your GM will allow it.



- **Caustic Burns** - Corrode is functionally identical to Burn and it is a solid condition. Increasing the damage it deals thus also increases the saving throw DC to get rid of it. The only issue is that the only way to inflict corrosion is with a critical hit, which obviously happens rarely. This probably won't be the first gear boost you'll consider, but it isn't awful.
- **Close at Hand** - quite niche, but can be useful in a lot of social encounters, depending on the campaign. If your game is all about the social aspect, being able to react to any developing scenario can be quite useful, and the bonus to Disguise and Sleight of Hand stacks with every other bonus.
- **Crushing Steel** - solid and straightforward upgrade to grappling builds. A bit underwhelming unless you play a Large race.
- **Damoritosh's Grip** - the flavor is amazing, allowing you to go full badass mode and wield jet hammers and mech-cleaving devastation greatswords in a single hand. In practice, however, it's very disappointing. What it ultimately does is free up a hand when using two-handed weapons, while imparting heavy penalties and not really unlocking any new build types. The main, most critical issue with this *gear boost* is that when you one-hand those weapons they become unwieldy, meaning you can't full attack with them, nor can you make attacks of opportunity with them, nor can you use them for cool *feat boosts* ^{“alt”} like *multi-weapon strike*.
At best this can be combined with the *powerhouse style fighting style*, which frees up a hand for you to wield a non-unwieldy single handed weapon to trigger AoOs with or wield a shield. But even then, races with more than 2 arms just don't have that problem, and the rest can avoid this issue as early as they can get their hands on the *cybernetic arm* augment, which does come in at a high level. But if you are a *powerhouse style* soldier with 2 arms and your game starts and ends at a fairly low to mid level - this can be a pretty neat pick.
- **Deflecting Smash** - not quite as streamlined as *armored advantage*, but a melee soldier can be triggering this all the time. Requiring a powered weapon isn't a big deal, either, as there are tons of them.
- **Devastating Throw** - this one was fixed in an errata. It's pretty good if you throw weapons often. Having a line attack with a melee weapon also helps deal with uncommon scary enemy types like swarms and troops. Either keep a melee weapon with the *throwing* and *returning* fusions on it, or just take weapon proficiency and focus into special weapons for shuriken.
- **Discreet Armor** - niche even for social campaigns. Feels like something that should just be available through a normal Disguise check. Like, some armors, like second skin, are literally described as being very difficult to detect.
- **Distracting Dose** - this ultimately allows you to hide on the same turn by using a standard action to shoot and inject an enemy with a poison, swift action for diversion and then a move action to sneak into hiding. The issue is that benefitting from this feature hinges on four successful checks: you hitting the target AND the target failing its save (poisons have a ridiculously poorly scaling DC, making them super easy to resist by higher level enemies) AND you succeeding the diversion skill check AND you succeeding on the stealth check to hide. Very very bad.

- **Double Shot** - this affects shuriken and - more importantly - bows. It's a weird and awkward ability that limits you to just a single shot. I guess the idea here is that you'd be using this to take down single targets with strong armor. However, mathematically speaking, you will always be better off making a full attack.
- **Draining Finisher** - the twin sister of the *overload fusion gear boost*, but in many ways even better. The damage isn't insignificant on its own, so finishing off targets with it will be pretty easy. And you don't even need to pay for a fusion, just a battery to reload. It's awesome. Shocking that they didn't add a "once per day" clause to this, so you can happily crit burst away.
Pro tip: since you only have to decide to apply it after you hit, just choose to apply it on a critical hit. This is an easy way to get a beefy boost to your critical hit.
- **Finesse Striker** - amazing ability that allows full DEX builds to actually deal very respectable damage in melee. Sure, they lose out on some STR bonus to damage, but it's not a big deal, especially as the damage dice increase. Great way to build sword & gun style builds.
- **Forceful Throw** - enables the *bombard fighting style* to be playable with a Strength build. Not only that, but some of that *fighting style's* best abilities also scale with Strength natively. Every other soldier should probably look away, as grenades are too expensive and niche to be used conventionally for melee strikers.
- **Integrated Follow-Through** - cool visual, but integrated/augmentation weapons usually deal shitty damage and are just inferior to normally carried versions. Also, a bipod is 700 credits, while a heavy gunner harness is 5600 credits. Furthermore, the bonus is only reduced when your second attack in a full attack is with an integrated/augment weapon and you can only use it once per turn (meaning you can't make attacks 2 and 3 of *soldier's onslaught* with this weapon to benefit from this *gear boost*). The funniest part is that you don't even need to have the weapon integrated, you can just hold it in your hands.
- **Laser Accuracy** - you'll be hooked on laser weapons. They're already good and strong. Being able to hit more often with them is even better. My only disappointment is that it's not a *feat boost* "alt" for *weapon focus* that'd apply to an entire category of guns, as it does limit the weapons you'd want to use. Previously if a boss dropped a cool new disintegration gun you'd be totally happy, but now you'll be sad it's not a laser weapon.
- **Massive Momentum** - not super relevant usually, but it does mean that those big bad enemies will not be able to use guarded step to get in range of your more fragile party members. Or, if your GM is a big fan of environmental dangers, it means it'll be much easier to trigger some extra free damage or conditions. The limitation to unwieldy weapons sucks, though. This might shine if you have more than 2 arms and just use a pair to hold a random unwieldy weapon (even if it is of a lower level).
- **Melee Striker** - more damage. Not incredibly amazing at low levels, as you'd functionally only be getting an extra +1 or 2 to damage. But at high levels, especially with powered armor and *powered armor jockey* archetype, this could mean a titanic increase in damage.
- **Meteoric Speed** - build-enabling feature. On its own it just lets melee builds become a little bit more flexible, but also allows you to make really solid throwing weapon builds. At

early levels you may actually be okay with just a single thrown attack per round, but when you get *soldier's onslaught* you will want to put the *returning* fusion on every new weapon. *Shooting star gear boost* is a good option to get after taking this gear boost.

- **Nimble Juggernaut** - better athletics & acrobatics checks are great, but the removal of speed reduction is especially delicious. Good pick for heavy armor soldiers. Light armor soldiers should look away.
- **Overload Fusion** - the fusion rules state: "Once it is attached to a weapon, a weapon fusion uses the weapon's item level for any of the weapon fusion's level-based effects". That is actually pretty lit. The damage isn't crazy or anything, but it is still pretty damn nice. And since you have to decide whether or not to use this ability on a hit, you know it won't wiff and get rid of your fusion on a miss. Great way to finish off targets who you feel might survive otherwise. Sure, it costs some money to apply a fusion, but this ability makes it well worth it.

Pro tip: since you only have to decide to apply it after you hit, just choose to apply it on a critical hit. This is an easy way to get a gigantic boost to your one critical hit per day.

- **Raw Lethality** - basically exists to make battlebows usable. However, the existence of apocalypse bows made this functionally much weaker to the point of irrelevancy. Note that it doesn't make Improved Unarmed Strike or natural weapons add the bleed crit effect, as those remove the archaic property from unarmed strikes.
- **Rebounding Bludgeon** - excellent ability, but requires at least two enemies on the field, and close enough to each other for you to attack both. And bludgeoning weapons don't really have that many Reach options, so using the *lunge* feat and large races will definitely make this much better. Unfortunately, doesn't work with *cleave*.
- **Serum Super-User** - kind of redundant, as serums with a really short duration likely won't last for 2 fights even when doubled in duration, while those with a long duration will already last long enough. Besides, they're either too expensive to use freely at low levels, or too cheap to care about saving money on them at high levels.
- **Shooting Star** - up to +6 to damage rolls for thrown weapons. It's a viable build strategy and pretty much a free damage increase across the board to those kinds of builds. Not a huge damage improvement, but every bit stacks up in the end, especially with multiple attacks. It is highly recommended to take this after *meteoric speed gear boost*.

Note: while grenades are thrown weapons, they technically do not have the thrown property, so, by RAW, this *gear boost* wouldn't give them more damage.

- **Swarm Shooter** - swarms are quite scary and if your GM likes to use them, this is a great ability to have just in case you don't have an area damage master. That being said, it's not that essential if you have anyone who's capable of dealing at least half damage to them.
- **Twinned Threat** - important gear boost for optimizing dual wielding builds, but the *feat boosts* ^{"alt"} that improve multi-weapon fighting have a higher priority. This is absolutely not worth it without those *feat boosts* ^{"alt"}.
- **Unarmed Mauler** - if you are a dedicated unarmed build, this is one of the very few ways for you to get a critical hit effect. And wound is actually a really damn cool one. Severe wound is even cooler, but probably will be one of the later gear boosts, after you've taken everything else you're interested in.

- **Unburdened Shield** - redundant. Just pick shields that don't limit you too bad, as there are options. You're probably wielding a shield for that flat +1 AC bonus anyway, which you can get with a field tactical shield that has no penalties to max DEX or ACP.
- **Unyielding Bulwark** - very few enemies will choose to do combat maneuvers against you. It's way more common for enemies to just have those effects happen automatically in addition to their normal attack, which this *gear boost* doesn't help against at all.

Seventh Level Gear Boosts

- **Alkali Conversion** - not an insignificant amount of enemies have resistances and immunities to acid, but, as usual with these features, it might be a good idea to ask the GM ahead of time if you won't just be wasting a gear boost on something that'll never come up.
- **Anchoring Arcana** - if you have melee party members, this is nothing special (could still be used on some lower CR enemies to split the enemies a bit). Specifically if your party is entirely ranged and there's nobody the enemy could attack within its melee reach - this could be very, very good. If you luck out and use this successfully on a boss, you can just give it a firing squad treatment. Better yet, the best enemies this is to use on are bulky beefy combatant type enemies, which usually have a weak Will save.
- **Area of One** - VERY badass *gear boost* that allows you to just shove a shotgun barrel down something's mouth and blast away. Works with all blasts and line attacks, including ones by the *qi adept fighting style*. What sucks is that you need to both succeed on the combat maneuver AND the attack roll. And there isn't even a feat or item that gives you a boost to this one, so you'll just have to succeed through your natural ability. Funnily enough, this actually combos really well with the *spring attack* feat. Normally it only works with melee attacks, but can rules-as-written be used to run up into the melee with your target before blasting them point-blank as this is a special combat maneuver that performs the shot as a part of it. Also consider the *slippery shooter* feat to avoid getting hit if you fail that maneuver. Alternatively, the *fend off* feat allows you to use small arms with line/blast properties with absolutely no danger of getting hit with an attack of opportunity, but the damage is much lower than the larger weapons with those properties. Great pick to get more oomph out of your line/blast weapons if there's no way to target multiple enemies and/or finishing a single enemy and you don't mind getting hit for it.
- **Automatic Expert** - a must-have to make automatic weapon builds more viable in a conventional way. If you have a way of ignoring friendly targets and the range of the weapon isn't bad - automatic fire can actually be pretty cool.
- **Bleeding Injection** - damage is pretty low and we're not Biohackers. But if you do take 1 level of Biohacker (and you may very well want to), this actually becomes a straight up improvement to something you'd be doing anyway. Injection weapons actually have very good damage dice, so why not?
- **Deflecting Armor** - it's a neat way to add a reaction to your ranged builds that normally don't trigger AoOs or for melee builds that have already stuck into melee with other opponents that aren't likely to move away. Those damage types are pretty common, so this will almost definitely be useful in combat. You'll need a high Dexterity modifier to

increase your odds of hitting this ranged attack. In real play, I found that using this is tricky due to the 15 ft range as it's not a very comfortable distance for a ranged character to be in, mostly relevant for blast builds, or ones using *area of one gear boost*. The damage is not particularly huge most of the time, but not insignificant, either.

Upgraded by the *perfect mirror gear boost*.

- **Disarming Critical** - m'yeah, it ain't bad. This probably isn't the first gear boost you want to take, but if you are playing at a bit of a higher level and take some bonuses to boost your disarm (look at the Combat Maneuvers section), it can actually be pretty cool to have in your arsenal when fighting armed enemies.
- **Electric Arc** - double-edged sword. On one hand, it's actually not an insignificant bit of extra damage, that scales well with levels. On the other hand, you **must** deal this damage, meaning a lot of potential friendly fire. Ask your GM if they'd let you "turn off" this gear boost. If not, consider packing an extra weapon in the cases when you can't fire your shock weapon without friendly fire. A bit easier to use if a party member has a reach weapon, or has 15 feet of reach.
- **Flash Freeze** - kinda niche. For melee it's irrelevant, as the enemy will just attack you. For ranged you'd need for your party members to not approach your enemies instead. Okay pick in an all-ranged party (get *anchoring arcana gear boost*, first).
- **Forceful Trip** - not an insignificant bit of extra damage for a discerning trip build. Good combo with the *beatdown feat boost* ^{"alt"}.
- **Hampering Strike** - solid option for both ranged and melee builds to reduce enemy mobility. Shame the duration is so low. Good idea to time it well so your party can benefit the most from it.
- **One Bullet Left** - this will very rarely be useful. Automatic builds that run out of ammo routinely can just learn the automatic expert gear boost. The rest don't really run out of ammo so often that a single bullet would make the difference. And you can only do this once per short rest..? It can be useful to sniper builds, however, as snipers often have much smaller magazines.
- **Penetrating Fire** - *penetrating attack* feat is available at lv12 at the earliest, so at lv7-11 you're still almost definitely better off switching to a different weapon. And hell, even after that, limiting yourself to just one weapon type usually isn't the best choice. And it doesn't work with the ignite weapon property. Not great.
- **Plasma Immolation** - useful if you're an explosive build which uses Plasma/Starheart cannons routinely, as it just improves what you already do. Stacks with crit effects, too.
- **Powerful Explosive** - if you're a dedicated explosive build - your explosion area is your bread and butter. This is a must pick for those builds.
- **Selective Explosion** - amazing boost for a lot of heavy ranged builds. Stacks with the selective weapon fusion.
- **Siderear Arc** - the idea is that you're going to use this to attack enemies who are behind cover, which is fine, but kind of depends on the campaign you're running and if your GM likes to put enemies behind cover often.
- **Skilled Blocker** - only works on adjacent allies, which sucks. Nice for ysoki *swarmer* bodyguard-style builds.

- **Sonic Resonance** - excellent debuff and works on any hit, not just a crit like many other gear boosts. Good combo with a full attack (affects shots after the first successful one). Unfortunately, lasts for 1 round, so, unless made outside of your turn as a reaction, the enemy stops being flat-footed at the beginning of your turn. Very good pick for parties without an Operative.
If you do pick it up, consider also grabbing the *crescendo of violence* & *crescendo of victory feats*. Both are combat feats, which makes it easier for you.
- **Stunning Decision** - it lets you make a full attack on a round where you switch modes, I guess. But you're most likely just going to pre-emptively set the firing mode before the engagement.
- **Toxic Overload** - fun debuffs to apply with no action requirement. They're reasonably powerful and the fact that you can use them multiple times a day is nice. The only issue is that it requires the target to have environmental protections on, which is unlikely when fighting monsters, robots, undead and intelligent humanoids that are in safe, breathable atmospheres. So you're very unlikely to get to use this very often, depends a lot on the campaign you're in. Consider talking with your GM about how useful this will be.
- **Unstoppable Line** - it's a **very** rare circumstance where the enemy genuinely resists 100% of your damage and stops the line. Choosing who gets the crit is a tiny bit useful, but usually not.
- **Unstoppable Strike** - very bizarre language on this boost. RAW it means that you only reduce enemy ER if your attack failed to deal damage due to it, unlike the *penetrating attack feat*, which just reduces enemy ER. So, for example, at level 7 if you attack an enemy with Fire Resistance 15 with a weapon and roll 17 damage, instead of reducing enemy resistance by 5 and thus dealing 7 damage, you will instead only deal 2 damage, because your attack technically didn't fail to overcome the energy resistance. So this will only be useful if you rolled, say a 13 and would thus be able to deal 3 damage.
RAI... we've never received clarification from Paizo, so your guess is as good as any. Ask your GM. If they basically read this gear boost as "your attacks ignore 5-10 ER", then it's pretty sick and a good choice, especially considering that it works for both melee and ranged weapons.

Ninth Level Gear Boosts

- **Perfect Mirror** - So uhm... This *gear boost* was listed as a lv3 one in the book, but it's an upgrade to a lv7 *deflecting armor gear boost*. The Starfinder FAQ lists an errata that states that it's a lv9 *gear boost*. **The only** lv9 *gear boost*. A level at which you don't even get a *gear boost*... Paizo...
It's a neat option that boosts something you'd be doing anyway. The damage reduction isn't huge, but not entirely insignificant and allows you to vary up your energy resistances more through consumables and armor upgrades.

Eleventh Level Gear Boosts

- **Acid Bath** - doesn't require any additional actions and provides a decent lil' bit of persistent damage. Not great, not bad. Solid way to kill weaker mobs who don't have very high AC.
- **Double Grenade Toss** - this is the kind of boost that makes the Soldier class *fun* to play. *Quick draw* becomes a near-mandatory prerequisite if you want to use this, but you may try to get away with a quickdraw hideaway limb cybernetic augment, or extra arms. And this may all be worth the hassle, as this is pretty good. You might be wondering what's the point, considering you can already throw 3 grenades, but the main draw is no attack penalty (as attack penalties from e.g. full attack apply to grenade save DCs too), meaning the DCs will be quite good.
You can choose to use, say, two lv8 grenades, or use a lv11 grenade + a lv6 grenade, for example, depending on your key ability mod.
The uses are quite varied. Double the damage against swarms, or use debuffing grenades with double the chance of the enemy failing. Very attractive to a grenade build. Bloody expensive to use often, though.
- **Dual Augmentation** - niche benefit, but it's good if you took an augmentation to get a melee option to help flank and inflict AoOs.
- **Heavy Onslaught** - pretty good for kinetic heavy weapons. Annoyingly, doesn't apply to energy resistance nor hardness. Probably doesn't stack with *penetrating attack* feat, but even if it does, it's not really mandatory.
- **Impossible Redirection** - a laser scope is 4300 credits. This is only useful for ranged attacks that can't benefit from a scope, i.e. thrown weapons. Those obviously can't fire twice, meaning you'd need a physical sidearm with which you'd be shooting your flying weapon mid-air, which is a badass visual btw! For those builds it could be potentially decent if there's no other way for you to avoid enemy cover. Most of the time you can just reposition to deny the enemies cover.
- **Perfect Puncture** - makes you a much better vehicle destroyer. Not half bad, if you get to fight vehicles often. Also helps the one random sunder build that's somewhere out there, I guess.
- **Second Chance Boost** - boost is supposed to be a killer for tough single targets with high AC/hardness/DR. In practice, however, boost is usually very small numbers of extra damage and pales in comparison to full attacking. If you ever got yourself into a build that can use boost weapons and doesn't rely on full attacking, it's really good. But there are very few builds like that.
- **Steady Sniper** - heavy weapons deal comparable damage to sniper weapons, except with a heavy weapon you'd make three attacks at -6 without any extra features. Snipers are good only for a small minority of builds, but for those that do use them - this is pretty sick.
- **Stumbling Strike** - the penalty is okay, but you probably want the target dead. With an operative in the party - this is a hard no. With no operative, I guess it can be useful if an enemy with very long reach approaches you to try and lock down your party's ranged or spellcaster members? But I'd just AoO even then.

- **Technological Disruption** - would be cool if it allowed you to dirty trick against anyone at range. This is, unfortunately, just against robots. So meh. The sunder is a trap.
- **Intuitive Deconstruction** - I'll be shocked if you're the only trap guy in the party, but if you are, this is a pretty decent way to shore up your Intelligence and Wisdom scores with a bit of oomph when disabling devices.
- **Technology Smasher** - this extremely goofy gear boost is kind of a big deal, thanks to completely ignoring hardness. This makes sundering actually viable (as long as you don't mind ruining your loot). You can even use a rigid stick from the ground to cleave your way through starship bulkheads, given enough time. What is and isn't a technological object is extremely arbitrary and up to the GM. Funnily enough, doesn't ignore robots' DR.

Fifteenth Level Gear Boosts

- **Twinned Tornado** - the only level 15 *gear boost* and WOW is it good. It's effectively the Operative's *quad attack*, but with the Soldier chassis that has a lot more bonuses to standard attacks. The only major disappointment is that there's no real interaction with the *multi-weapon strike feat boost* ^{“alt”}, but you can just use it to get into position before unleashing a flurry of strikes. It doesn't have any limitation to operative weapons, though, allowing you to save two *feat boosts* ^{“alt”} (*multi-weapon strike* and *multi-weapon versatility*). It really boosts your damage output dramatically, to the point that it's easily the strongest Soldier build by pure damage numbers, though it will be quite expensive, since you need two high level weapons. That being said, you're a soldier and can just loot any one-handed weapon from your enemies.

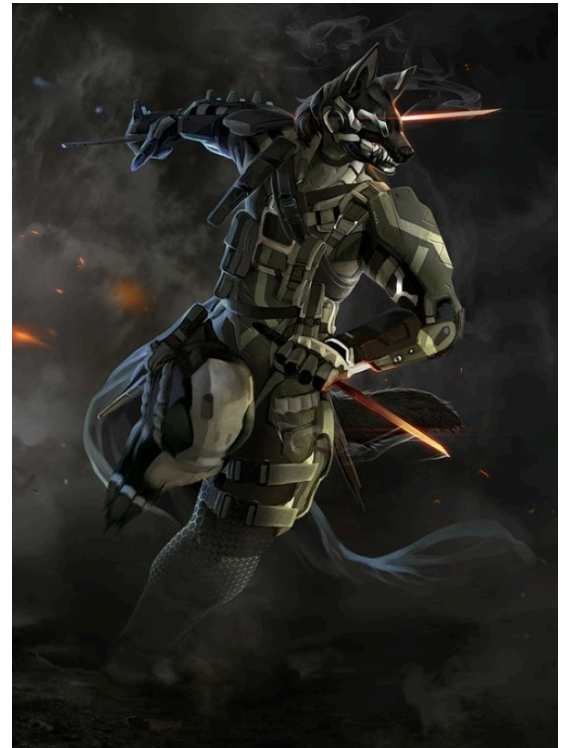
Feat Boosts

An alternate class feature for the Soldier, which you can pick up instead of a *gear boost* at any level that you get them. Some of these are extremely potent and build-defining, so do not ignore them! They're also almost all super flavorful and allow you to further define your style.

- **Advanced Coordination** - basically better than a *Commander fighting style* feature as a *feat boost* ^{“alt”}. It's not that big of a deal, as ranged party members usually can just walk around to avoid the cover. But sometimes they can't, or they want to full attack shoot. In which case this becomes actually pretty good. In practice, the more ranged party members you have - the better this is going to be.
- **Beatdown** - great feature for melee builds to have, as it's basically an AoO with a +4 to hit. It's also the only way to trigger an attack on a creature that's trying to stand up. Works best if you're not the one tripping enemies over to optimize your damage.
- **Bodyguard Vigilance** - use bodyguard on multiple buddies. Again, only really optimal with the ysoki swarmer feature, as most companions would prefer to finish the enemy off faster rather than getting a small boost to AC. But if you do have it - it's pretty neat, actually. The solarian glass cannons will thank you.

Also, absolutely a must-have on the *chaldiralist fighting style* by level 9, because it just further optimizes your action economy and allows you to use AoOs.

- **Chokehold** - very niche usage and you'd need to actually pin the target (KAC+13), not just grapple it, so have fun with that.
- **Defensive Cleave** - something cleave builds will very likely want to take, as the -2 to AC sucks. But it's not exactly build-defining.
- **Defensive Lunge** - something cleave and lunge builds will very likely want to take, as the -2 to AC sucks. Yes, I know I said cleave. Epic *spinning cleave* joke.
- **Grabbing Strike** - for unarmed builds, this is a straight up improvement for something you already do. Very good option, because being grappled sucks real bad in this game. Doesn't stack with most features that trigger on a grapple maneuver, such as grapple equipment
- **Grapple Equipment** - it's pretty fun, lets you grab a weapon or item the enemy has accessible, but isn't currently holding. Very rarely will it be an unarmed enemy who didn't get to draw their weapon, yet.
- **Lightning Kip-Up** - makes dropping prone to get extra AC from ranged attacks a lot more appealing.
- **Multi-Weapon Strike** - the holy grail of dual-wielding builds that make them viable and fun, so let's thank Paizo for even adding it to the game. Sure, it doesn't get improved with *soldier's onslaught*, which is a classic short-sighted Paizo Moment™, but even so, it is cool and viable. Makes you very mobile and aggressive. Works for both STR and DEX builds. Amazing synergy with the animal companion feats, allowing you to control your companion as a move action, while also hammering the enemy with full attacks.
- **Multi-Weapon Versatility** - lets you use the much stronger and beefier non-Operative weapons when dual wielding, such as longswords and whips. The obvious benefit is the ability to add your full level to the damage with your dual-wielded weapons.
- **Sliding Disarm** - and then let them pick it up after you've gone through the trouble of having them drop it in the first place? Not on my watch.
- **Soldier's Adaptability** - good way to pick up all the funky teamwork feats your party cooks up.
- **Spinning Cleave** - oh baby, this is a lot of damage. This is the stuff Soldier legends are made of. Build-defining feat boost "all", that a lot of characters will pick up as soon as possible. Combine this with reach weapons and/or the Lunge feat to get extra targets. *Great cleave* feat is near mandatory with this baby. Smack all 6 enemies in a single standard action with this.



- **Springing Onslaught** - basically a way for you to perform a full attack when using *spring attack*. Good.
- **Springing Shot** - basically a way to perform a full attack when using *shot on the run*. Good.
- **Volleying Bombardment** - if you've already committed to taking the *opening volley* feat and its associated *fighting style* (primarily *hit-and-run*) - this is nearly mandatory for you to take. It's not the strongest build in the game, but this *feat boost* ^{“alt”} makes it viable.

Feats

Feats make up a very important part of character generation. There are a lot of them, and some are extremely situational and will be either really good or really bad in different kinds of games, making them impossible to rate objectively. Another thing to remember is that feats aren't a unique part of the Soldier chassis, and are generally going to behave the same in the hands of every class. I'll just highlight the feats that may be usable in a lot of different games, ones I think are going to enhance the Soldier, deal with some of the class' shortcomings, create interesting builds or are just very useful. I'll also be covering *every single* Combat Feat in the game, since that's a core feature of ours. Combat feats are marked with an **asterisk (*)**.

Note: if you want to see just the combat feats, you can follow [this link](#).

- **Accelerated Recovery** - it's a neat little ability to pick up if you don't have a dedicated healer in the party and your GM tracks HP recovery rules very accurately. Normally it's 1 HP per level for an 8 hour rest or 2 HP per level of bed rest for 24 hours. Thus, if you took a beating in the last dungeon, you can recover a bit faster. That being said, most adventure paths give enough of free time to rest to full HP between adventures, which limits the feat's usage.
- **Adaptive Fighting*** & **Versatile Fighting*** - feats that let you temporarily pick up additional, flexible feats.
Adaptive Fighting isn't too great on a Soldier. You already get a bunch of combat feats, so the value of this one is slightly worse than for everyone else. The fact you can only do this once per day sucks. Additionally, this feat fits the [adaptive fighting TIM](#) for space combat engagements.
Versatile Fighting makes getting these feats even easier and allows them to be active in pretty much most fights during the day.
- **Add Leverage*** - very solid choice for bull rush builds, and merely nice for reposition and trip. 10 feet doesn't seem like a ton, but, in practice, this may very well help move an enemy past another melee party member to trigger an additional attack of opportunity. It's an open question on whether or not this works with unarmed builds.
- **Advanced Melee Weapon Proficiency*** & **Basic Melee Weapon Proficiency*** & **Longarm Proficiency*** & **Heavy Weapon Proficiency*** & **Sniper Weapon Proficiency*** & **Special Weapon Proficiency*** - you already got em all, baby. Well, except *special weapon proficiency*, of which the only ones that could potentially interest you are the bows. But even those are kinda eh.

- **Advance Warning*** - neat little ability that will probably be useful at some point during your adventures. Unclear how it works with conditions that make you flat-footed, such as cowering and blinded. Suppressed for one round? The flat-footed effect removed entirely? Unaffected? Ask your GM. If they rule that it works exclusively on the flat-footed condition and none other, then it's fine to have, though not going to be your first choice. If the GM allows you to ignore flat-footed effect of others conditions (even temporarily) - then it's *really* nice.
- **Aerial Evasion*** - the check is quite trivial to beat even at lower levels and the benefit is really good. The off-target condition is very unfortunate and is best combined when you want to use your standard action for something other than shooting, though with your BAB you are still likely going to be landing solid hits.
- **Akiton Battery Hack** - it's cute at level 1 or 2 where this spell deals very notable damage and you can buy a ton of batteries. The issue is that you need to hold two batteries, which means it'll take a long time to draw both and keep them in your hands. At any level higher than that - this is not worth it at all.
- **Antagonize & Quick Quip* & Goad* & Clever Retort*** - series of feats that allow one to use Intimidation or Diplomacy in combat:
 - Antagonize* can be a cool option for a tanky build, but you will need high Charisma and social skill bonuses to succeed at a fairly high Antagonize DC. At higher levels you can stack up quite a lot of bonuses to Intimidation, however, to make this work. Intimidation is a class skill for you, so it's definitely workable.
 - Quick Quip* is basically the Diplomacy version of Improved Demoralize and Improved Feint feats. It's pretty good and, since it lasts until the end of your next turn, gives you good chances of capitalizing on the penalty. Unfortunately, there's no way to share the debuffs with the party.
 - Goad* is a no-brainer if you've already taken *antagonize* or *quick quip*, as it's only a swift action to extend the rather delicious effects they grant.
 - Clever Retort* is useful if you're fighting several enemies and want to spread the penalties more widely, but since it happens in reaction to another enemy outside of your turn, it means that you'll only get 1 turn worth of actions against them, rather than a standard action + 1 extra turn you'd normally get by using it as a move action.
- **Antigrenadier* & Improved Antigrenadier*** - a duo of grenade-exploding feats.
 - Antigrenadier* is not good at all, as it requires an enemy to hold the grenade, one hanging on their body can't even detonate, despite you being able to sunder them by default. Besides, sundering requires a crazy amount of damage and specialized gear to even attempt. It's absolutely not worth it.
 - Improved Antigrenadier* makes it all a tiny bit better, but always having a weapon that can deal enough damage to sunder a grenade reliably in a single shot is not too easy. Becomes significantly better with the *technology smasher gear boost* that makes dealing enough damage to reliably detonate grenades much easier.
- **Ambuscade*** - you're going to have to put in a little work to be good at Stealth as a soldier (pick it up as a class skill somehow, plus get an insight bonus into it), but it's not impossible. For melee soldiers, it is very difficult to make use of this feature (since you

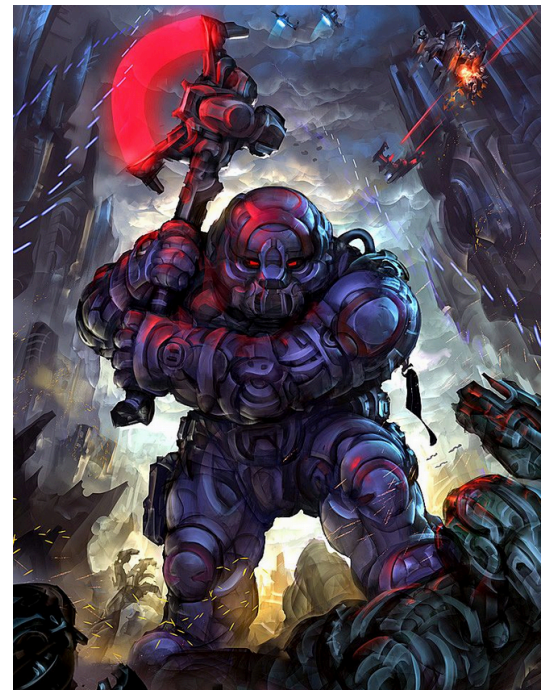
only get either a standard or a move action during a surprise round), so they may as well skip it. Ranged soldiers can definitely benefit, though.

- **Ambush Awareness*** - usefulness depends on how often your GM surprises you, but it's great to avoid being targeted during a surprise round.
- **Amplified Glitch*** - gives a very nice penalty to a decent number of targets. The DC is likely going to be too high for you, unless you really dedicate yourself to high Intelligence and Computers bonus, in which case it can be a very decent lil debuff. That being said, it's still a standard action, which you could have used to kill the enemy.
- **Avenger** - simple, but good. Likely not going to be used very often, but will come in clutch every now and again, especially when you and your team really needs it. Slightly better for ranged builds.
- **Backpedal*** - a standard action for +1 AC? Lol. Why? You can just use your move action to make a guarded step then use total defense as a standard action for +4 AC. One of the worst feats in the game.
- **Balanced Charger*** - the DC is very high and scales so well that you'll need high insight bonuses to succeed on this with any degree of reliability. I'm not sure why the DC is so high for such a weak effect, as it effectively can only reduce the penalty by 1. PF2e ahh feat. If you have very big boosts to acrobatics you may slightly benefit if you fight in melee. All other characters should look elsewhere.
- **Barricade*** - you destroy barricades, not build them. Leave hiding behind cover to the others - you're the star of the show!
- **Battle Thaumaturgy*** - Soldiers don't get spells. Even if we did, this is an awful use of them.
- **Bear Hug*** - not a ton of extra damage, since it doesn't apply any modifiers to the damage, but it's certainly useful if you picked up the *improved unarmed strike* feat.
- **Blind-Fight*** - it's nice to reroll concealment roll, as Starfinder has a lot of as sources of concealment. Additionally, when combined with effects that produce concealment, this can be a major defensive boost to your party. Not something you'll be able to use often without cooperating with the group.
- **Blood in Their Eyes*** - bleeding condition is very annoying to get rid of, and the dazzled penalty is so small that a lot of enemies will just choose to roll with it instead of wasting actions on removing it. And if you're using slashing weapons a lot - this is just something you'll be able to apply without any additional action input. So it's cool, albeit not very flashy or reliable.
- **Bodyguard* & In Harm's Way* & Shelter Ally*** - a trio of defensive support feats. They lose quite a lot of functionality if you don't have the *swarmer* ysoki racial ability or the *shelter ally* feat in combination with a Large size, as you are usually better off flanking enemies with your compatriots to end fights earlier. Alternatively, you can use the *chaldiralist fighting style* that gets even further boost from protecting allies by lv9. That being said, a bodyguard build is still possible even normally, and it's pretty good. *Bodyguard* can be nice to keep your other melee buddies alive on the frontlines. Works best if you have more melee party members, as it means more possible adjacent creatures.

In Harm's Way is pretty great if you've already felt the need to take *bodyguard*. With your Constitution you can easily tank several hits for your buddies.

Shelter Ally is a must-pick feat if you want to play a bodyguard build as a Large race, as this will (often) allow you to both flank enemies and protect your buddies. That being said, quite a lot of enemies will be larger than just Large, limiting this feat's power somewhat.

- **Breach and Clear*** - you're unlikely to benefit from this often, but it's likely going to come up every now and again. And it's neat to have when you do run into a closed door.
- **Breaking Blasts*** - poorly written ability due to the fact that the weapon becomes broken, but it doesn't actually say that the weapon's hit points get reduced. Because, as written, you can keep using this with a broken weapon and it doesn't become any more broken. In that case with your base attack bonus and using an unwieldy weapon you can actually deal a solid amount of extra damage, especially when combined with huge weapon dice weapons (like the d20 ones). If your GM deems that you can only use it once and can't reuse it with a broken weapon (or if it gets destroyed or whatever) - then it's useless.
- **Bullying Brute*** - there's probably a mistake in the text of this feat, as you need to beat KAC+8 to succeed a maneuver, not KAC+5. Assuming they meant that you need to effectively beat KAC+13 to apply this benefit, it'd only be useful if you are *amazing* at a combat maneuver, likely bull rush (has the most bonuses to it). If you aren't, I would not recommend taking it early, because it just won't be reliable.
- **Certain Strength*** - wouldn't be so bad if you would be able to use it more than once per day. Just... why? It's not a bad benefit, but niche. As is, it's just something you pick up when you run out of ideas for better feats.
- **Cleave* & Great Cleave*** - cleave is amazing when it works. Great cleave is just way too niche to be used reliably on its own. If you picked up *spinning cleave feat boost* "alt", both of these are must-have, since it is genuinely one of the strongest combos in the game. The reduced AC can be dangerous, so think well before using it, as it's a high-risk, high-reward gamble.
- **Climbing Master** - it's okay if you plan to climb a lot, but why bother when you can just buy a jetpack?
- **Close Combat*** - top shelf stuff for melee builds. You're pretty much always in melee and this just makes you much harder to kill in melee. **Note** that this benefit even applies to enemies with Reach who attack you while not being adjacent to you.
- **Combat Casting* & Focused Spellcaster*** - despite being combat feats, not something most Soldiers will use, unless you've multiclassed into some sort of a caster with the Spell Sergeant archetype. But then you're probably just using spells that don't trigger AoOs.



- **Combat-Trained Mount & Mounted Expert** - mounts are really cool, but are very hard to rate. They are a great way to enhance your mobility, add some damage, and get some unique movement options. However, they also can cost quite a lot of money, are usually quite big and uncomfortable to use in tight quarters, hard to keep stealthy and mobile, and are awkward to use in zero-G combat. As such, the quality of these feats can range from *absolute garbage*, to *fairly decent*, to *damn cool*, depending entirely on what kind of game you are playing.

You can find a [full guide on creature companions here](#).

Keep in mind that taking any damage while mounted makes you fall off the mount, unless you use a reaction (DC5 survival check) to stay mounted, unless your mount is also a creature companion.

Combat-trained Mount allows you to effortlessly use your mount in combat. Normally using them in combat requires a DC20 Survival check “for each action you attempt to take, or have your creature companion take”. DC20 survival check is pretty damn high for us, as we likely won’t be having the highest Wisdom and able to get such checks reliably only by level 13-ish, with feat/race/wisdom investments. That’s quite a lot, but some games (e.g. Devastation Ark) literally *start* at such a high level, at which point this feat can be useless if you invested into the skill, aside from as a prerequisite for the *mounted expert* feat.

Mounted Expert simply makes it so that you don’t fall off your mount because of damage, kind of freeing up your reactions a bit, which is nice for you.

- **Combined Strike*** - kinda mid, unless the enemy has huge resistances. You’re almost definitely better off full attacking if you can. Unwieldy builds can probably get some use out of it.
- **Connection Inkling** - very good feat, if you have the Wisdom for it. Spells to consider are *Wisp ally*, because it can be cool to use for the supportive fire benefits, *build trust*, *memory lapse* and *charm person* are excellent for social interactions to shore up our likely eh Charisma, *deflex hardiness* is a very potent buff to get for free (better yet - it scales with your overall character level, not mystic level!) and *detect thoughts*.
- **Constant Alert*** - winning initiative is nice, but a single reroll per day kinda sucks.
- **Coordinated Shot*** - if you have even one ranged character in the party, at least one melee character should take this. It might have to be you.
- **Cosmic Truth** - interesting and powerful feat, but you probably won’t have the Wisdom for it.
- **Counter Grapple*** - yeah it’s pretty sweet to have for a grappler build, even if you won’t be using it very often. If you don’t play a grappling build - skip.
- **Craven Ploy*** - pretty good for ranged builds. Melee ones with reach could also potentially benefit, in case you got a tankier friendo nearby.
- **Creature Companion Adept/Expert/Master/Virtuoso** - you can find the full guide on [Creature Companions here](#). They are a big feature introduced in Alien Archive 3. For some classes (read: Soldier) they are an extremely powerful ~~and probably overpowered~~ featline. They can add a lot: extra damage, flanking, unique abilities and a warm target for enemies to hit. And the system support for them actually ain’t half bad: the damage is respectable, the attack bonus is just fine (if you can afford keeping them up with your

level), and they heal very efficiently (recovers half its max HP any time you use Resolve to restore stamina during a 10-minute rest). The downside is that you need at least two feats to get them to become good.

If you're the only melee party member - you can benefit **greatly** from the free flanking the companions can provide. Ysoki with *swarmer* can also create a really strong bodyguarding build to protect their companions, while also flanking with them.

Finally, companions are an **extremely powerful roleplaying tool**. Give a good thought about how you flavor them up, your and your party's connection and relationship with them, what sort of things they do for the party to even remember they're there.

Adept feat is pretty much just a flanking tool.

Expert feat is just excellent, and really the minimum required investment if you are interested in companions, as it provides you an extra way of dealing damage as a move action. Don't forget they get a move action before any action you grant them, meaning if you use a move action to give them a standard action they have both a move and a standard action. 'Ery noice.

Master feat makes them pretty much independent from your character range-wise, and essentially gives them independent actions, meaning you can combine them with other move actions. Full attacking with them is usually a bad idea, due to the massive -6 penalty.

Virtuoso feat is alright. It's good if you have a very strong companion, but you can likely skip it in favor of some other feats, as a *master* companion is good enough the majority of the time.

- **Crescendo of Violence*** & **Crescendo of Victory*** - duo of feats for sonic weapons.

Crescendo of Violence is really quite good. And critical hits are obviously not super reliable. But when this triggers - this is a very solid boost to the entire party. Morale bonuses to attack rolls are rare and a +2 one especially. Can really turn the tide of a fight. If you're not going too deep into sonic weapons, its lack of reliability can be disappointing. Can't forget that this buff comes in addition to the normal critical effect on your weapon, which is even better. Consider this rating one step better if you've dedicated yourself to using sonic weapons (such as with a *sonic resonance gear boost*).

Crescendo of Victory is a much more flexible benefit, since it can be used when *any* ally crits, not just you. Keep in mind that you count as your own ally, so you can benefit from this as well. The amount restored is actually kinda beefy, especially when used in combination with profession (musician) skill. Useful even if you don't specialize in sonic weaponry.

Pro tip: nothing states your sonic weapon has to be super good. You can quite literally just be wielding a small low level sonic weapon in your off hand/attached to your armor and use that for the purposes of *crescendo of victory*, which makes it kinda nuts as far as benefit you can get from a single feat.

- **Crushing Follow-up*** - fantastic feat for characters that already use bludgeoning weapons. Staggered is a very unpleasant condition and you can just keep re-applying it as long as you have RP to spend. This can really lock down a nasty opponent.
- **Curveball*** - kinda funny feat, but likely irrelevant. The -2 penalty to attack rolls means a -2 penalty to the grenade DC too. Which means that you don't get any benefit for curving

the grenade around standard cover, only around improved and total cover. It's okay if you use grenades often, will likely open up an opportunity for you to use them slightly more often.

- **Deadly Aim*** - this feat is usually a trap option that reduces your overall damage output. [Check out this thread for more information.](#)
- **Deadly Boast** - high Charisma price and Bluff requirement. Underwhelming.
- **Death from Above*** - trade a tiny bit of damage to you for potentially a whole lot of damage to the enemy. This can get especially ridiculous if you have huge bonuses to Strength through powered armor or otherwise combined with two handed unwieldy weapons. Solid pick for *powerhouse style fighting style*.
- **Defensive Roll*** - if you got a good Dexterity score, this is actually really good, as it helps you survive both in melee and range. If your acrobatics suck, obviously skip this hard (keep armor check penalties in mind). However, take care when you use it, as it makes you Staggered next round.
- **Defensive Stance*** - solid benefit when you're surrounded by enemies that makes it worth fighting defensively in order to survive. Great combo with the defending weapon fusion.
- **Defensive Strike*** - it's solid on its own, letting you lock down some ranged enemies even better. When combined with the *step up and strike* feat it becomes absolutely amazing, massively inconveniencing ranged enemies.
- **Defensive Striker*** - hobgoblin-only feat. This is fantastic for *cleave* builds. This effectively lets you save two entire *feat boosts* "alt" for the price of a single feat! Avoiding the AC penalty on charging is also a good half of a *blitz fighting style* feature.
- **Deflect Projectiles* & Reflect Projectiles*** - this is a neat featline for a melee character, looking for more survivability options. The +5 bonus is "good enough" to succeed most of the time with your full BAB.
Deflect projectiles is pretty great, but you do need to have a matching melee weapon. **Note:** with *improved unarmed combat feat* or a natural weapon (such as a vesk) your unarmed strikes no longer count as archaic, meaning you can deflect projectiles with your bare fists. Funny. But RAW it works.
Reflect projectiles is a little gimmick-y, but can be very fun to use in-game. Hard skip this one if you are a Strength-oriented character with low dexterity, as this attack is just $1d20+BAB+DEX$. **Note** that it doesn't use your *weapon focus* bonus.
- **Deft Pursuit*** - I really don't understand what the logic is on the 30ft movement speed. Is the idea that you can do that if the enemy uses a standard action for a second guarded step? Replacing the attack with a maneuver is pretty cool, though and can be useful for combat maneuver characters. The rest can look elsewhere.
- **Deterring Threat*** - solid alternative to *improved demoralize*, freeing up your move action in exchange for a reaction. Hope you have the Charisma for it.
- **Diehard** - the situation must be really grim to use this, especially what with all of your survivability. Frankly, with how much survivability you have, you'll probably be going down last, anyway. I suggest only picking it up after you've already played the game for a bit and can see that your GM is just brutally cutting everyone down all the time and when you actually know you'll get to use this.

- **Diligent** - awesome benefit for class skills as you can use take 10 a lot more reliably, especially if you have an insight bonus to that skill.
- **Dire Straits*** - same as *diehard*.
- **Discordant Din*** - a standard action to remove a sense from creatures who fail a saving throw. No damage dealt, only a single round of duration, and doesn't prevent the creature from sensing you with other senses. Very difficult to make use of in a normal game.
- **Distance Hurler*** - pretty important feature for thrown builds, as ranges are a real problem to consider. Grenade builds may also consider this, if they don't want to be hauling around a grenade launcher. And hey, it's a combat feat, so why not?
- **Disease Adaptation & Disease Rejection** - you probably have the Fortitude to handle diseases. *Disease rejection* is nicer, but not worth picking up due to its prerequisite.
- **Dispelling Strike** - really awesome ability that helps deal with enemy mages. Don't forget that you do not apply any damage with this attack, which means that you can use this to dispel some nasty spells from your fellow party members.
If you're not extremely tight on money or augmentation slots, you can just buy a [dispelling hand](#) and not waste a feat on this, except it requires an attack roll.
- **Dive for Cover*** - reflex is our weak save and this can definitely help save our butts from a mean explosion. Much harder to use in melee, since you don't want to be eating those AoOs, nor fall prone.
- **Doorbuster*** - very niche. May be useful for some SWAT-like game, but feels more like an NPC ability.
- **Double Draw*** - important for dual-wielding builds, especially ones with the *double grenade toss gear boost*, *pistol dancer fighting style* and *multi-weapon strike feat boost*. Non-grenade builds can also just For the rest, it's probably not too important and you can feasibly afford drawing weapons on two different turns, especially since you can do that as a part of movement.
- **Double Tap*** - mandatory if you're a small arms soldier (for example with the *pistol dancer fighting style*). Ignore if you don't use small arms. Practically-speaking, all the best Soldier small arm builds (once that use *harmony of bullets* and *multi-weapon strike*) don't rely on it much, anyway. It'll still be useful when you spend your move action for something else.
- **Double Trouble** - really fun feat that rewards using the same type of weapon in your party. You can only use it once per day, but a guaranteed application of a critical effect can be VERY powerful. If you want a more reliable bang for your buck, pick crit effects that don't have saving throws and debilitating effects (such as bind, burn, bleed, embed, knockdown, push, stunned). Works with both ranged and melee weapons! Save it for the boss! With the right weapon it can make a difficult fight a LOT easier.
Note: weapon types are basic melee, advanced melee, small arms, longarms, heavy weapons, grenades and special weapons.
- **Draconic Shot** - although a breath weapon naturally deals very low damage, combining it with a shot is nice. Makes enhanced weapons unwieldy, so it works better with weapons that are already unwieldy, since you're better off just full attacking with normal weapons. Works beautifully with area weapons, as this damage is applied to all affected

targets! Paizo did an oopsie and didn't specify how close you have to be to a party member to boost their weapon, but it's not really worth it, anyway.

- **Drag Down*** - quite niche, since most enemies will just be trying to kill you, but can be useful in some encounters.
- **Driving Force*** - VERY solid damage increase for campaigns that have a lot of vehicle combat. You *are* in a campaign with a lot of vehicle combat, right?
- **Enhanced Resistance** - has been nerfed in the 3rd printing of the Core Rulebook (you now can't pick Kinetic as a damage type, but have to pick either slashing, piercing or bludgeoning), but still remains a very strong pick, especially considering that you have full BAB. Piercing damage is common in both ranged weapons, melee weapons and natural weapons. It and Fire damage types are the best, most common picks. But, obviously, if you do some adventuring in the winter tundra, or some specific elemental plane, there may be better options.
- **Epic Retort*** - pretty solid use for a reaction for ranged builds, easily combined with a lot of different features that give you a penalty to attack rolls, such as *aerial evasion* feat.
- **Fancy Footwork*** - super good feature for characters that do a lot of Tumbling to get into flanking position or escape an enemy. This allows you to be a LOT more daring with tumbling and thus succeed a lot more often. You should definitely combine this with *mobility*.
- **Far Shot*** - If you're using small arm weapons and you know your GM likes using big battlemaps - this can be cool. Otherwise, meh. Melee characters - stay away.
- **Fend Off*** - solid combo with the *hit-and-run* or *pistol dancer fighting style* and the *area of one gear boost* to avoid AoOs from shooting into melee. Otherwise, not really worth it as your melee attacks are more powerful and ranged builds should find ways of disengaging the enemy better.
- **Fighting Balance** - not that amazing for melee builds, but a pretty big gamechanger to ranged builds, giving them essentially a free +4 bonus AC against ranged attacks. If you have *kip up*, *improved kip up* or *moxie* this becomes *really* good, as it means you're not even limiting your mobility all that much by dropping prone. Worse for builds that use full attacks.
- **First Responder** - great way to boost your first aid skill use and immediately bring buddies back into the fight. Maybe the Soldier is better off spending their turn killing enemies, though. If you're a support build - then it's pretty lit.
- **Fleet*** - gotta go fast. Considering the tech ways of boosting your speed, this isn't super necessary, but you can probably spare a feat. Doesn't work with heavy armors, which would benefit the most from this one.



- **Fouling Reposition*** - if you're a repositioning build - there's no reason why you wouldn't want to take this, as this just lets you apply a debuff to two enemies. Good synergy with *add leverage*.
- **Frightening Injection** - fun ability made entirely irrelevant by *improved demoralize*. Only pick it if the other feat is banned. Then again, you really don't need to buy an injection weapon.
- **Frightfully Tough*** - awful on its own, slightly better with the *technology smasher gear boost* early on in the fight to break a tough opponent's weapon and reduce the damage they can dish out.
- **Fusillade*** - total meme. Four identical small arms? **What?** Even when you do have them, do you really want to unload all of them at the same time, without adding any extra damage? Big miss by Paizo here in terms of mechanical power.
- **Gag Gift*** - cute ability. There's several grenades with pretty good effects on a failed save, especially at higher levels, making this pretty solid if you can somewhat reliably do these checks.
- **Grab Attention*** - easy to gain and rewards melee builds for doing something they'd be doing anyway (punching faces in). The only disadvantage is that it lasts only for a single round.

Note that the DC is very high, so you definitely want to squeeze out any bonus to Intimidate that you can get.

- **Grappler Pull*** - too many stars need to align for this one. Can be moderately useful to pull enemies off ledges, I suppose, but at that point it'd be easier to get more mobility options and just rush the enemy.
- **Great Fortitude & Improved / Lightning Reflexes & Improved / Iron Will & Improved** - as a Soldier you get 1 weak save: Reflex. These feats are a great way to make your saves work a bit better. The Reflex one especially, since it's likely that those saves will be the lowest. There are ways of getting rerolls through other means (racial features, some pieces of gear, or other feats), but none are as reliable as the Improved version of these feats. That being said, they're very boring options, and don't allow you to do anything new, necessarily, so you probably will be okay if you just pick one-two of these for your lowest save, so you're not absolutely awful at them.
- **Grenade Proficiency & Grenade Mastery* & Cook Grenade* & Ricochet Grenade*** - grenades are weird. Some of them are really nice, most of them are pretty bad. The DC scales with Dexterity and item levels. They're pretty expensive (but have received significant cuts in price as of the most recent errata), but usually have cool effects. You can also *accelerate* their damage starting from level 10.

So with all that, are these feats worth it? The answer is... kinda, especially with the *bombard* fighting style and *double grenade toss gear boost*. With the new(er) additions to the game, there is feat support to increase their DCs significantly, making you get more bang (hah) for your credits. If you have a high Dexterity score, the utility and AoE damage the grenades can provide are notable.

Grenade Proficiency is irrelevant, because you already have it.

Grenade Mastery increases the DCs of all grenades, especially lower level ones. If you have already decided to use them, this is pretty great, as some of the nastier effects are

more likely to proc.

Cook Grenade is the thing you really want as a grenade user. Granted, it uses a full action, but the increased DC is a no-brainer, especially when combined with *grenade mastery*.

Ricochet grenade sounds like a really fun feat, but how often do you try to do that, anyway? Better yet, how will a GM make a ruling that you can't do that normally (except maybe requiring a harder check of some sort)? It's just weird.

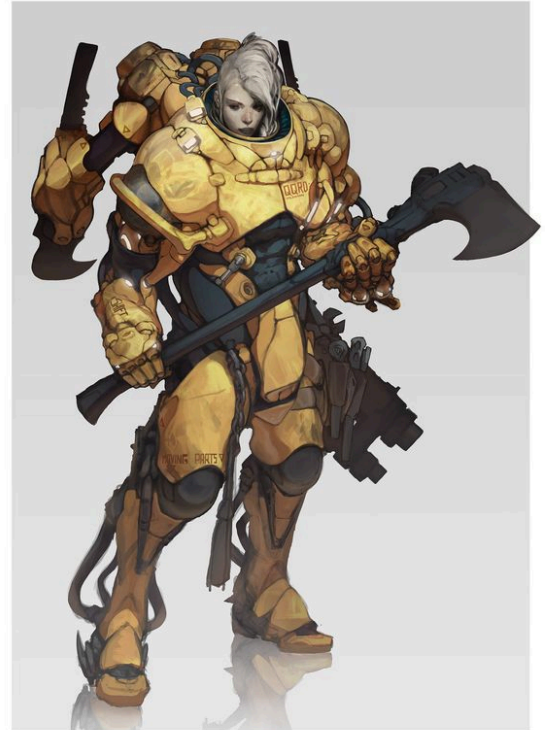
- **Grim Determination*** - you're not going to be using it very often, but when you do - you'll be thankful for these admittedly small benefits.
- **Ground Fighting*** - not bad, actually. You'll probably encounter some grappling enemies, especially some that grapple as a part of a normal attack. Avoiding the penalties - especially ones from being pinned - is really quite useful. But it's not something you'll be able to make use of constantly, unless you pick up the *living ladder* feat. Still, dropping prone in front of melee enemies can be dangerous.
- **Harmony of Bullets*** - extra damage is always nice, and this can be a good bit of extra damage. Works better for small arms than melee weapons, since the only melee weapon that deals sonic damage and is an Operative weapon is the shrieking knife line. The *thundering fusion* can make any weapon half sonic, so it'd make all weapons interact with this feat. If you can afford it - it's literally just free damage.
- **Heavy Armor Proficiency*** - most soldiers get it by default, but *ascetic warrior* ^{“alt”} does get rid of it. In which case it really pays to get this feat again, because having both high STR and DEX is hard. It's explained more in the actual description of the alt feature.
- **Hidden Strike*** - cute bonus to a single attack per fight. Not gonna be very useful or a game changer, but can be somewhat neat for builds that do use one-handed weapons, such as the *hit-and-run fighting style* Soldiers.
- **Hurl Ally** - funny meme feature. You're a Soldier, so your standard actions are better used making enemies deader. Additionally, the ally you throw does *not* avoid attacks of opportunities, so throwing them in the wrong direction may lead to them getting chopped up on the way to their destination. And finally, the distance isn't even that great. At best you'll be able to throw them over the frontline of the enemies to make them avoid AoOs, get closer to attack the enemy backline or maybe throw them into another elevation. Most of those benefits can be achieved through buying a jetpack or some other form of flying. It's a cute ability, and rarely even useful, but probably not for you.
- **Impressive Flex*** - fascinated is a powerful condition to apply to your enemies, effectively taking them out of the fight (as long as they're not disturbed). And you can do it in an AOE. It's really nice to have for Intimidation-heavy characters. Soldiers may want to deal damage more than do this, but if there are a lot of enemies - this can still be beneficial.
- **Improved Combat Maneuver*** - combat maneuvers have been broken down in their own section in this guide.
- **Improved Critical*** - critical hits happen too rarely to invest into them. And you can just try to pick crit effects that require no saving throws.

- **Improved Demoralize** - this alone makes investing into Intimidation worth it. Absolutely fantastic debuff, providing a wide range of debuffs and helping pretty much the entire party. Hope you have the Charisma for it.
- **Improved Feint* & Greater Feint*** - feint makes your opponent flat-footed for your next attack as a standard action. On its own it's not the best for Soldiers, but making a few investments into these feats isn't the worst option.

Improved Feint nice way to reduce the enemy's defenses for a solid hit. Better for unwieldy weapon Soldiers who may not have a use of their move action.

Greater Feint makes the enemy flat-footed fully, with no strings attached. That means your entire party will have an easier time hitting them, and the enemy has no AoOs. That being said, if you have an Envoy or Witchwarper (who probably want to take this feat more than you) or an Operative in the party - you probably want to completely skip this.
- **Improved Initiative*** - going first is always nice, as you can position yourself better to trigger AoOs and hold the enemy away from your companions.
- **Improved Supporting Fire*** - great feat for support characters. Soldiers are almost never support characters and are usually the ones being supported. But if you are one (maybe through the *Skyfire Centurion* archetype?) this is pretty amazing and a very viable playstyle.
- **Improved Unarmed Strike*** - unarmed combat is a very viable playstyle, more broadly expanded in the "Weapons" chapter of the guide. The main takeaway is: it's viable as a main weapon type if you have a special weapon specialization that adds 1.5x character level to damage (such as a racial ability, or the *ascetic warrior* "alt"), OR if you want to threaten areas around you without a suitable weapon equipped (such as if you're a ranged Soldier or if you wield an Unwieldy weapon). If you have a very low STR score (and no *scoundrel's finesse* feat) DEX builds will not really benefit from this one very much.
- **Instant Crater*** - pretty sweet if you use exploding weapons all the time. If you just throw the occasional grenade - hard skip, not worth it.
- **Jet Charge*** - lets you move 3x speed instead of 2x speed when charging (but limited to the jetpack/jump jet/etc speed). Don't forget this also works with stuff like force packs. Unfortunately, Paizo probably forgot that ascending consumes double movement and this feat expressly does not allow you to charge upwards towards flying creatures, which limits its usage to either the same elevation as you, or a target lower than you.
- **Jet Dash** - can be fun to have in low level games, but there are simply too many ways to get means of proper flight to benefit from increased jump distance. Running is also pretty niche, since most battlemaps won't even be that huge.
- **Jinx** - pretty simple, pretty reliable. You'll get a lot of use out of it. The best use is to use it in combination with a spellcaster party member to make sure their save-or-suck spell goes off successfully.
- **Kasathan Battle Dance*** - despite having "Kasatha" in its name, this feat isn't limited to Kasathas, or even four-armed creatures. That being said, why would you take this? You're supposed to run towards danger, not away from it.
- **Kip Up*** - kinda niche ability. May be useful sometimes, especially if you go prone to avoid enemy ranged fire often, but that's about it.

- **Knock Heads*** - pretty sweet little debuff. If you already use bull rush often - there's no reason not to pick this one up, even if it won't be your first pick.
- **Last Ditch Effort*** - gives high Intelligence characters a chance to prevent going unconscious. Unfortunately the DC is VERY brutally high. You'd need to have an extremely high Reflex bonus to somewhat reliably pass this save in addition to your high Intelligence. Like at level 8 the DC of a CR8 enemy would be 22, while a class with a strong Reflex save would have a +6 and a weak Reflex save would have a +2 so you'd need to scrape for every possible way of boosting your Reflex save.
- **Laugh at Danger*** - ironically enough, increasing the AC of your buddies is probably going to make even more enemies attack you. It also uses your reaction, which you probably will want to use to deal with all that damage you're taking. I'd suggest picking it if you have a healer in the party who'll be able to heal through your hit point damage. Otherwise, it might be a little too dangerous, even for you, unless you have a lot of EP banked to *mitigate* all the harm away.
- **Light Armor Proficiency*** - there's no way to lose your light armor proficiency in Starfinder, so I'm not sure why this is even a thing. Future-proofing, maybe?
- **Lightning Hands*** - when in a dangerous scenario you're likely going to have a weapon out already. If you're surprised you're likely still have to reposition to defend yourself or attack an enemy. This is only ever going to be useful if the enemy appears right next to you in combat right away.
- **Living Ladder*** - pretty epic replacement to the *trip* combat maneuver, because not only does this target a lower DC (instead of KAC+8), but you also deal damage with your attack. Works better if you're a Large creature. Basically just approach an enemy, drop prone in front of them, then attack. A natural combination with the *ground fighting* feat. Obviously works better if you're an unarmed build or at least have the *improved unarmed strike* feat, so the damage you deal is more noticeable.
- **Lock Eyes*** - a "tanking" feat for high Intimidation characters that lets you force the enemy to focus on you. It being a standard action and allowing the enemy to just take a normal shaken debuff makes this not so worth it.
- **Lock Them Down*** - if you play a dedicated support character you can use this to get your party more bonuses against the enemy. Even if you aren't a dedicated support character, you can use this early on in combat when a melee enemy is going to be moving to guarantee an attack of opportunity. Great combo with *improved supporting fire* feat.
- **Lung Puncture*** - lots of good Soldier weapons deal piercing damage and this is just a free upgrade to something you'd be doing anyway.



- **Lunge*** - getting more reach is always good. This is nearly mandatory for non-reach melee builds.
- **Positive Conduit** - is great for low level games, but becomes largely pointless as levels go along. When you have like 20 HP then restoring an extra 4 HP is quite a lot, as it's almost a quarter of your total. But when your HP is closer to 200, restoring like 6 extra HP is a drop in the ocean. The fact that you need a 10-minute rest to use it again is like a slap in the face at those higher levels.
- **Psychic Power featline** - it's mostly pretty mediocre divination spells, the effects of which you can usually achieve through technology.
- **Maestro's Flourish*** - free damage for sonic weapons, with barely any strings attached. I don't know why they buffed sonic weapons so much, but here we are, I guess. Especially good at low levels.
- **Many-Handed Master*** - enemies won't be using this very often against you in the first place, and even when they do, it's just a 10% smaller chance to succeed.
- **Massive Splash*** - holy mother of situational.
- **Master Crafter** - leave it to the brainiacs.
- **Medical Expert** - it only recovers HP equal to the target's level or CR (+ your INT score if you beat the DC by 5 or more) with a DC of 20 or 25. Pretty anemic (hah) and bad in the early game as your basic medkit sets the DC to 25, but can be cool to have in the later stages of the game for a little pick-me-up, as healing serums become more and more expensive, while medpatches keep costing only 50 credits a pop and you'll be beating the DC by 5 pretty much every time. Plus your Intelligence score will be poor. Not worth it.
- **Memorable Coercer** - if you did spec into Intimidation, this can be a very powerful tool in narrative games.
- **Melt Defenses*** - how come this isn't a gear boost? Huh. Anyway, really good! Targeting EAC is pretty awesome, because this applies not only to weapons, but spells, too! Most acid weapons have critical effects much worse than this one.
- **Memory Access** - cool way to get insight bonuses to a lot of skills.
- **Merciful Striker*** - I really have a huge pet peeve when a game's features make it so that nonlethal attacks deal more damage than lethal attacks for some reason. Really annoying. Either way, this is a straight up +2 to damage with barely any strings attached. Won't work against enemies that immune to nonlethal damage, but will still likely be very useful. Don't forget the merciful fusion turns all weapons it's attached to is nonlethal.
- **Midair Detonation*** - decent way to "boost" the DC of grenades. This likely won't be much easier than normally having the enemy fail their Reflex save, unless the enemy has a very strong Reflex save. The primary benefit is that you can use low level grenades (which have a lower save DC) much more effectively.
- **Mobility***, **Sidestep***, **Improved Sidestep***, **Shot on the Run***, **Parting Shot***, **Spring Attack***, **Wary Withdrawal***, **Indirect Retreat*** - putting the main "mobility feats" in one chunk, since they all do basically the same thing - allow you to be more mobile on the battlefield.
Mobility on its own is pretty good early on, as you can just walk into danger a little bit more safely. It's good to note that if you're the party's tank it could be a good idea to

trigger all the AoOs you can so your other party members can approach safely.

Sidestep is used mainly to get out of a flanked position, get into a flanking position and be able to full attack, escape one of the threatened areas if you're surrounded by two opponents, or to get into position for bull rush to get an enemy into a dangerous zone. It's a nice tool to have, since we don't want to stay flanked, like a Vanguard would.

Improved Sidestep makes it easier to get into a good position to flank the target on your turn. Basically improves your mobility even further. If you've taken the prerequisite, you may as well take this, too.

Shot on the Run is an amazing improvement to mobility for ranged builds and can massively increase your survivability in some combat environments, even though it is a net damage loss. It's just too useful not to have. Not useful for melee builds.

Parting Shot - basically an improved version of the classic "guarded step back & shoot" action order, as it allows you to run way farther away. Can be amazing to escape the enemies, even though it only doesn't trigger AoOs for leaving the initial square. Melee builds should stay away, as always.

Spring Attack is extremely useful for melee builds, since this is how they get into range of strong creatures with Reach. It's a mandatory feat that almost all melee builds should take. Nothing of interest to ranged builds here, except blast/line weapon users with the *area of one gear boost* to help them run into range to shoot point blank.

Wary Withdrawal is a very defensive feature to help you escape a super hairy situation. The bonus combines with the *mobility* AC bonus, so you're going to be pretty safe! Good ability to have, but probably shouldn't be one of your first choices.

Indirect Retreat allows you to use 4x your speed to move, no longer limited by corners or difficult terrain, nor making you flat-footed after it. This is a dramatic increase to your mobility, which can be very powerful to any slower character, or to cross extremely long distances on a battlefield.

- **Momentous Attack*** - good way for melee characters to position themselves better. Probably won't be your first pick, but getting something that just gets you free actions for doing what you already were doing is great. Note that it *doesn't* use a reaction!
- **Morphing Feint*** - essentially a way to use Disguise instead of Bluff for Feinting... Once. Not sure what the design logic here was, especially considering that characters who bother to be great at Disguise likely also try to be great at Bluff.
- **Multi-Weapon Fighting*** - enables the ability to use powerful *feat boosts* "alt", mainly *multi-weapon strike*. It's an entire playstyle-enabling feat. If you don't plan to pick up that additional boost to make it work - it's not really worth it, just get a bigger weapon.

Note for unarmed builds: ~~this one largely depends on your GM. The RAW justification is that unarmed strikes are listed in the weapons list as one-handed weapons, which means you always have several and can multi-weapon with them. While it kinda makes sense RAW it feels extremely exploit-y and probably not what was intended, but hey, your GM is the one who makes the final decision. If they greenlight it - hell yeah, free +1 to full attacks. If they don't - shame.~~

UPDATE: as of the release of the *runescrawled reaver* archetype we now have indirect "proof" that you CAN'T use *multi-weapon fighting* with unarmed strikes. You require the *enhanced fist* archetype feature of *runescrawled reaver* archetype.

- **Muscular Retort*** - super mega lame that you have to choose just one combat maneuver each time you pick this feat. If they were granted together - this'd be a really nice feat. As is, it's just so situational. Especially considering that most enemies just push/grapple/knock prone as a part of some other abilities, not those specific combat maneuvers.
- **Mystic Opportunist*** - we're not spellcasters. Lit spell for them, though.
- **Mystic Strike*** - pretty useful to pick up as one of your later combat feats, especially if you're not a fan of weapon fusions. If you are, then this is irrelevant.
- **Nimble Moves*** - neat ability and works for magical difficult terrain. Frankly, the ability to step in difficult terrain is probably the best benefit of this. Works a bit better if you have a party member who's creating such terrain often.
- **Opening Volley*** - you can only use it on the very first round of combat *and* only get the benefit for a single attack *and* you'd need to land the ranged attack. And even after going through all these loops, your melee attack could still miss. If you want to try to make it work, you have a few options. First and foremost, the *hit-and-run fighting style* and the *versatile volley feat boost* are the dedicated "build" for this feat. Secondly, keep in mind that even throwing a melee weapon would count as a ranged attack for the purposes of triggering *opening volley*, so putting the *throwing* and *returning* fusions (or just picking up a thrown weapon with a *returning fusion*) can be a fun way to benefit from this. Powered armor builds that can get both a good Strength and Dexterity score could make it work in a hybrid ranged/melee build. *Haste circuit* or some other item or feature that grants you an extra move action makes this significantly more viable.
Note: the absolute best way to guarantee you benefit from *opening volley* is to use *explode* weapons (grenades and heavy weapons), as they let you automatically trigger *opening volley* (as long as the enemy doesn't take 0 damage due to DR, resistance or evasion). Potentially of some interest to cleave builds is the fact that damaging several enemies would give you the benefit of *opening volley* against all of them, meaning you could get the bonus to attack rolls to all *cleave* attacks.
- **Operatic Shatter** - they keep trying to fool you into using Sunder. Don't do it.
- **Parrying Technique*** - really solid way to get a little more defense if you're using unarmed combat or operative melee weapons. Simple and just improves what you'd be doing anyway.
- **Penetrating Attack*** - enemies in the lategame get a lot of resistances and damage reductions, so having ways of reducing them is an excellent passive buff.
- **Pilot's Bravado** - there's a chance you might be the dedicated pilot and this is a fun way for you to use your Piloting to later on boost your social skill. The issue is that you likely won't be rolling Piloting checks super often outside of vehicle and starship combat. Talk it out with your GM.
- **Pinpoint Hurler*** - this is pretty much only relevant for grenades. Grenades target an AC5 and scale with DEX. As a Soldier at level 1 you probably will only fail on a Natural 1 on the d20 roll. The other way to miss is if you get a lot of penalties to your attack roll when you try to throw the grenade further than its first range increment, but all penalties to attack rolls also apply to the saving throw of the attack, so everyone and their grandma will save against your grenade if you do this. This is just pointless.

- **Plow Through*** - a lot of Soldiers just want to get stuck into the melee and stay there, but pushing through the enemies may actually be really beneficial to some builds, perhaps most notably Cleave builds. And not only do you benefit from moving through the enemy space, but even have the option of dealing a bit of extra damage. Nice!
- **Powered Armor Proficiency*** - the advantage is that it allows you to get monster Strength while not having it above 13 on your character personally, thus making a hybrid character who can have both very high Dexterity and then also a monster bonus to their STR. As minmaxy as it gets. If you are a Strength build, however, you don't benefit that much from Powered Armor and should probably just stay in heavy, unless you're in a high level game and want to trivialize it with the *powered armor jockey archetype*.
- **Pull the Pin*** - delayed fuse? Where did they find those? Anyway, very fun and thematic ability, but consider this: if an enemy has grenades on their person, they very likely also rely on weapons for their damage output. And if that's the case, then I have a *much* better use for your successful disarm attempt than wasting it on a grenade.
- **Quick Draw*** - Soldiers that deal with dual weapon builds or use a ton of thrown weapons can benefit this feat. For others, there's just nothing of particular interest here. Dual-wielders can also just buy a *quickdraw hideaway limb* to draw one weapon as a part of movement and another as a part of the attack. So, basically, near mandatory to some, completely useless to others.
- **Quicker Trickler** - you might have the speed to be the one responsible for pouring this down peoples' gullets. That being said, you're probably better off just buying and keeping a cheap injection small arm loaded up with healing serums. Has a chance to miss, though.
- **Rallying Roar** - any debuff you can stack upon your enemy to make sure your party member's save-or-suck spell goes off - the better. This is pretty small, but also only a move action, so not too bad, unless this severely reduces your damage output, since you can't use your full attack or *soldier's onslaught*.
- **Read Foe** - pretty interesting use for Sense Motive that can be repeated multiple times per fight. The issue is that the DC is very high so it requires every boost to the skill that you can get. Also you're likely better off full attacking if you're good with weapons.
- **Reality Glimmer** - get yourself some fun Witchwarper spells. *Churn fluid* and *grave words* are fun, *charming veneer* can help our social stuff, *detect thoughts* is good for skullduggery.
- **Rending Slash & Brutal Slash** - a duo of powerful feats that let you slash your enemies with your natural weapons. This requires your natural weapons to deal slashing damage. You can get them from a natural weapon graft augmentation or as a racial feature of the Pahtra (Natural Weapons alt), Barathu (Mineral Exoskeleton alt), Reptoids, Uplifted Bears and Alkainans.

Note: Bleeding can only be removed through a DC15 Medicine check as a standard action or through any ability that restores hit points. This is mega nasty, a lot nastier than burning or corrosion, as your enemies will either be wasting an action, a spell slot/consumable or just straight up unable to stop the bleeding you applied.

Rending Slash applies bleeding to an enemy on the 2nd successful hit of your unarmed slashing attack. Frankly, unarmed builds full attack all the time and Soldiers even get the

benefit of *soldier's onslaught*, so you have even more chances of hitting at least twice, so this is a free upgrade to something you'd be doing anyway and we like those. The damage scales with your level too, which is nice.

Brutal Slash is even better. Not only does it increase the damage dealt by the bleed to be actually pretty dangerous, it also effectively adds another +0.5x level mini-specialization to your 2nd successful hit on the target. Pretty much a must-have if your unarmed attack deals slashing damage!

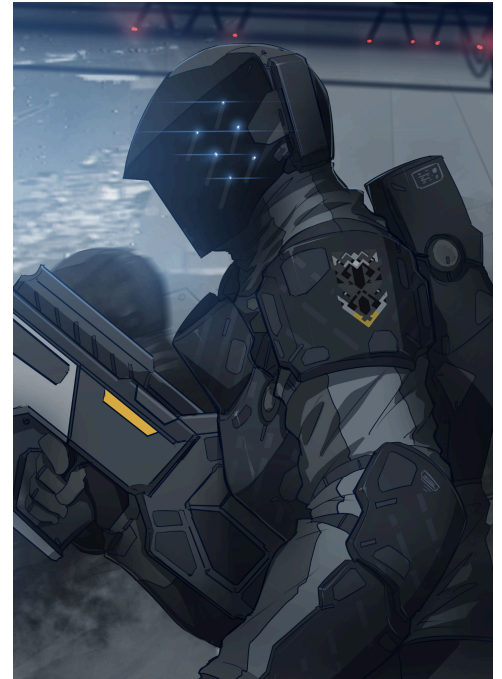
- **Restricting Fire*** - super solid way to save your backline buddies from getting locked down with melee enemies and avoiding AoOs.
- **Righteous Frenzy** - crazy powerful ability that lets you either absolutely nuke down an enemy (usually the best option) or restore an ally's Stamina Points. Dealing 1.5x level extra damage with one attack each round for an entire minute is kind of insane. Remember that you count as your own ally, so this works even if the enemy is ripping into you.
- **Runner Gunner*** - a simple way to get a small bonus to an attack roll. Good to use when you want to maximize your odds of hitting an enemy. You can game the feat by just moving half speed away from the enemy then the rest towards the enemy back to your previous location.
- **Sacred Strike*** - can be useful, depending on the campaign, especially if you fight a lot of outsiders with an opposing alignment. Most of the games will have no use for this.
- **Scoundrel's Finesse** - good way to use *improved unarmed strike* on a ranged character, so they can threaten squares around them and actually deal somewhat respectable damage. Making those lash weapons into *operative* ones is also a great way to get reach weapons for DEX-only builds (including dual-wielding ones)! Works flawlessly with the *finesse striker gear boost* so you still add that 0.5x character level to damage, effectively letting you catch up in terms of damage to non-operative weapons.



- **Scurry & Underfoot** - interesting positional abilities for small, dexterous characters. Ask your GM if and how the creatures give you cover when you're in their space. **Scurry** allows you to stand in your buddy's spot. Compression rule is: "*The creature can move through an area as small as one-quarter of its space without squeezing or one-eighth its space when squeezing*", which is fun, as it allows your ysoki to crawl into really small pipes. Probably smaller than the width of their own gear. Kinda useless for ranged builds, but melee ones can flank enemies with just three melee party members. **Underfoot** allows you to attempt a fairly difficult Acrobatics check to get into an enemy's space. Enemy AoEs will be impossible to place without also damaging the foes in who's space you are and the enemy has serious debuffs put on them. However, failing this check is really bad. The feat is nice for DEX builds. The issue is that the enemy can just take a Guarded Step out of your range and be completely fine and safe, meaning this is only really nice to use against enemy mages/ranged targets, as even if they take a guarded step - you're still there to shank them in their shins, giving you a lot of AoOs. Then again, any melee character can get the same benefit with *step up and strike*.
- **Shield Block*** - if you constantly buy new shields for aligning AC, or picked up the *entropic one* archetype for its scaling shield, you should definitely pick this up at some point, as well. If you didn't - don't bother.
- **Shield Proficiency*** - you're already proficient with shields.
- **Shield Wall*** - really cool visual, but practically speaking you're better off just using your actions to attack the enemy rather than slightly reducing the odds of hitting your companion (the enemy will probably just attack someone else anyway).
- **Shoulder Burden*** - meh. Super niche. You're likely never going to be able to benefit much from this. You can't even activate it on your own turn if you're carrying something very heavy.
- **Skill Focus** - get better at some skill. Frankly, not having any scaling *insight* bonuses, or big *insight* bonuses period, this is something you might want to look into, just so you can be great at least *something* out of combat. Don't forget that the insight bonuses don't stack.
- **Skill Synergy** - get two class feats, or improve existing skills. Pretty good for the same reasons as *skill focus*.
- **Sky Jockey** - like *fleet*, but after you get a jetpack.
- **Slam Down*** - there's a good amount of bludgeoning weapons and it even works with ranged weapons. Making an enemy prone may be the opposite of useful for you if you're ranged, however. The effect's usefulness depends on how many melee party members you have.
- **Slippery Shooter*** - very useful for those situations when there's no way to avoid an attack of opportunity for shooting and switching to a melee sidearm would severely impact your damage. If you're a ranged build - you may very well consider it! Can benefit melee builds with thrown weapons, too. Also nearly must-take on builds that use the *area of one gear boost*.
- **Solid Stance*** - being knocked prone at a bad time can be absolutely lethal, so avoiding that can be fantastic. It's not an ability you're going to make use of often, however.

- **Spectacular Smash*** - the one that lets you ignore a bit of item hardness is a total trap option for Sunder builds. Don't bother. Getting a bonus to Strength checks for bashing through objects is actually pretty sweet, especially if you stack it with stuff like size bonuses, juggernaut boosters etc. Lets you act as the party's loud lockpick sometimes.
- **Spellbane** - decent option, providing protection against a whole lotta nasty. Note that it doesn't work on Supernatural Abilities.
- **Spellguard** - only works on adjacent targets, and you're probably better off dispersing so as not to get shot by AoE spells, instead of grouping together.
- **Spell Penetration & Greater Spell Penetration** - we don't get spells.
- **Spry Cover*** - can help a party member tumble out of a really bad situation, but most of the time you're better off making the enemy dead.
- **Stand Still* & Improved Stand Still*** - duo of abilities that prevent enemies from leaving your reach. They both become a little bit better if you take the *stand strong* teamwork feat and work together with another party member, but it's still too much effort for little gain.
Stand Still is just too much effort for little payoff. You have to hit a KAC+8 with no supporting modifiers (aside from *improved stand still*) and the *Step Up & Strike* feat line is just better.
Improved Stand Still makes it easier to succeed, but it's still way harder than just normally attacking or using *step up & strike*.
- **Startled Scream** - funny, but gimmicky. The penalty condition isn't very nice, either.
- **Step Up* & Step Up and Strike*** - helps you stay on your opponents' toes
Step Up helps you keep an enemy in melee reach, but not much aside from that. Most of the times enemies will step away to shoot you, and you won't have the reaction to AoO them. It's okay to have, but really it's just a tax for the next feat.
Step up and Strike is the really nasty one. Basically this means ranged opponents and spellcasters hate you more than anyone else, as you can keep bonking them over the head any time they try to do anything. While you may not be using this feat more than once per fight, the fact that the enemy knows you *can* use it will give you a major tactical advantage, forcing the enemy to do unoptimized actions.
- **Strike Back*** - nifty if you fear AoOs. But too niche. Go for *spring attack*, instead.
- **Subsonic Hum** - very solid way to further extend your main debuff as someone who uses Demoralize. Natural combo with *improved demoralize*. Most of those characters will have a *voice amplifier*.
- **Superheated Spells*** - you're not a mage.
- **Suppressive Fire*** - something that should probably have been a default feature of automatic fire modes. It's a really good benefit in a party where a lot of the party members are more damage-oriented and you're playing a more support-oriented Soldier. But if you're not, it's probably better to just unleash that automatic attack into the enemies as normal.
- **Teamwork Feats** - I wanted to have them all here, all in one place, for ease of rating. Talk to your party before taking these, just to make sure you have at least one other person who takes it, in order for both of you to enjoy the full benefits of this choice:

- *Timely Coordination* - helps your buddies with unwieldy weapons a lot, though you only benefit by “ready”ing combat maneuvers (for example “when the enemy is flanked by my ally”).
- *Above and Below** - more damage and helps a lot with positioning if you have a buddy in melee.
- *Back to Back** - you should just stay away from being flanked. Plus it only works for KAC, not EAC, for whatever reason. Kinda mid, but can be useful.
- *Last-chance Grab* - too specific, you probably won't even get to use this in a game more than once.
- *Stand Strong** - *stand still* is already not that great, but, if you picked up *stand still*, this is likely worth to pick up as well, especially if you and a buddy are trying to form an impassable wall to protect your backline.
- *Tandem Feint** - useless if you have an Operative in the party, but if you don't - this is actually pretty useful if you've specced hard into bluff. May be better served for supporting your other party members with the teamwork bonus.
- *Tandem Maneuver** - absolutely evil feat that will both help you flank your targets and, if a buddy picks it up too - totally elevate your combat maneuver builds.
- *Target of Opportunity** - fantastic for ranged soldiers, as well as melee soldiers who want to support their mates.
- *Unbreakable Will** - likely overkill, but there's a lot of fear effects in the game, so being prepared against them can come in real clutch.
- *Trusted Companion* - not officially a Teamwork feat, but essentially works the same way. Great way to get a bonus to saving throws. The ability to reroll Will saves is kind of huge, since a lot of those Will-targeting effects are really debilitating.
- **Terrifying Presence* (COM)** - only good if you take *improved demoralize* and have the Intimidation to make it work. However, if you've picked the Star Knight archetype - this is mandatory.
The races that can pick this feat are (as of 2023-05-05) half-orcs and *xenometric* androids (half-orc).
- **Terrifying Presence (IS)** - yes, Paizo made a different racial feat with the same name. And it's also pretty baller. Although breath weapons don't deal much damage, this has a chance of making all enemies who can perceive (!!!) you frightened. Powerful condition, great scaling save DC AND it refreshes every 10-minute rest. Awesome!
Races that can pick this feat (as of 2023-01-18) are just dragonkin.
Note: there is a biotech augment called Dragon Gland which gives you a breath weapon, but it's not a breath weapon granted by a species trait, so by RAW it doesn't



work with this feat, unfortunately.

Note 2: by RAW it probably doesn't work with *draconic shot*, since it's still technically your weapon dealing the damage, not the breath weapon. Ask your GM, though.

- **Throat Punch*** - insanely good feat that can effectively shut down spellcasting enemies entirely. And keep in mind that spellcasters are likely going to have very weak Fort saves. Genuinely OP in some encounters. As soon as you see any spellcaster - just glue yourself to them.
- **Through the Lines*** - charging through an ally doesn't sound like a big deal, and most of the time it isn't, but it can be a noticeable quality of life improvement sometimes. Noticeably worse for blitz soldiers, but even they may find a use for a free move action while near an enemy. Gets better if you have a Large party member.
- **Tight Fit** - really depends on the campaign. Might be either completely useless, or pretty cool. If you are to do a lot of tight ruins or dense corridor exploration, grabbing this on a Large PC will pay off in the end. But if you play any published Adventure Path you can likely forget about it.
- **Time Touched*** - the Precog-flavored mage class feat. The lv0 spells are mostly irrelevant. Out of the lv1 spells, *dream of home* and *swap initiative* are the best options.
- **Toughness** - it's not a lot, but it will add up in the end. The other bonuses are nice, too, especially if you're in an effect of a smoke grenade.
- **Toxic Strike** - the combat applications are lame, as they take too long to be activate, many enemies will resist it and the end states are pretty weak. A bit special, since effects end 1 hour after cure, as opposed to normal poison rules. However, the Intelligence and Charisma tracks are *really* interesting options to use out of combat. Their onset is really fast, bringing a victim to the last state within a matter of seconds. The feblemind effect makes the target effectively unintelligent, which can have its uses. Making the target Pliable, however, is extremely powerful, as you automatically succeed on all social checks against them. Can be an amazing way to draw information or favors out of someone you don't mind stabbing with your piercing natural weapon, first. You can get a piercing natural weapons as a racial feature or through the natural weapons graft aug.
- **Trading Places** - one of the best features of the *squad fighting style* as a feat. Very versatile ability, useful both for squishy ranged characters that want to switch places with a strong melee party member, or vice versa.
- **Tripping Rush*** - requires *ICM (trip)*, but boosts bull rushes, which is a bit annoying. Still, excellent ability for bull rushing builds, especially when combined with the *beatdown feat boost* ^{"alt"}.
- **Tripping Tumble*** - fun way to both reposition yourself and knock an enemy prone for dedicated combat maneuver builds. Nothing gamechanging, but ought to be useful at some point. It becomes available way too late, though.
- **Uncanny Senses*** - you can only perform either a standard or a move action during the surprise round so it's likely not going to be *super* helpful, but it's nice to have when it does trigger.
- **Underwater Brawler*** - if you fight underwater a lot - it's great for melee builds. Do you though?

- **Unfriendly Fire*** - hilarious and powerful ability for melee builds that makes you an unattractive target for your enemies, if you have the Charisma and Bluff for it to work.
- **Unionist** - it's okay, but a Soldier probably doesn't want to perform harrying fire, and even when they do - this is only useful at very low levels, as eventually you'll be auto-hitting that AC15.
- **Unsinkable Caster*** - considering everyone and their mom has environmental protections, this will probably never be useful. Plus, you know, you're not a caster.
- **Versatile Specialization*** - ranged weapons aren't worth it.
- **Vile Rejection*** - not worth it for ranged builds, but melee characters can meme for a bit by vomiting all over enemies. The trigger isn't going to happen very often, so you won't be able to use it every session. Nevertheless, the condition this inflicts is pretty nice.
- **Weak Point*** - not too likely to be enough to break an item, unless it's significantly lower level than you. Sunder is just not a good maneuver. It's described more in the Combat Maneuvers part of this guide.
- **Weapon Focus* & Versatile Focus*** - the feats that enhance your attack bonus. *Weapon Focus* is pretty much mandatory, as it just straight up makes you better. It's a must have for most builds in the game. You're a soldier, so your primary task will be dealing with enemies, so you're going to need all the bonuses you can get. *Versatile Focus* is a little more build-dependent. A lot of ranged builds can feasibly work with both longarms and heavy weapons, so with this you can just pick up any weapon the boss dropped and benefit from it. This is sort of true for melee builds, too, but basic melee weapons are only rarely better than advanced melee weapons. Pretty nice for DEX builds that can utilize both melee and ranged weapons effectively.
- **Weapon Specialization*** - you already get 'em all.
- **Wind Shield** - an essential component of a potent lategame defensive flying build. Only great for Soldier builds that aren't using full attacks, but for those unwieldy weapons builds this could be almost akin to taking cover while in the air, which is a crazy buff for survivability for ranged builds (since they're already immune to melee attacks, unless enemies also fly). Melee builds won't really be able to make use of this all that often, due to having to spend move actions on approaching enemies.

Note: this feat requires a move action to activate. However, keep in mind that you need to spend a move action to attempt the Hover Acrobatics action just to stay in the air without moving. If you have flight speed with perfect maneuverability, however, not only do you automatically succeed on the Acrobatics check to stay aloft, but you can attempt to Hover as a swift action. Getting perfect maneuverability is easy: get any average maneuverability flight source (whether through gear, race or *advanced locomotive adaptation theorem*) and combine it with the *glider foil* armor upgrade.
- **Zero In*** - fantastic way to just further boost something you'll be doing every turn. With the help of a heavy bipod or a gunner's harness you can effectively lower the penalty to full attacks on a missed shot to a -1, or make hitting a single tough target easier.

Multiclassing

The issue with multiclassing is that it delays your entire main class' progression. Soldier isn't the worst class for multiclassing into and out of, especially after hitting levels when they pick up their most vital gear/feat boosts and fighting style abilities. That being said, a lot of fighting styles do only flourish at higher levels, which kind of punishes multiclassing. Plus, a lot of Soldier gear and feat boost options are really powerful and reward staying singleclassed for longer. And, of course, for the games that go all the way up to level 20, losing out on *kill shot* can hurt.

I am assuming that you still want to remain as a main class Soldier, primarily. Because of that I'll write specific breakdowns of 1-3 level multiclassing and give my general thoughts on getting 4 levels and more.

If you decide that you want to give multiclassing a spin, I suggest reading this [reddit thread](#), addressing many common multiclassing questions, in addition to the multiclassing chapter in the CRB.

These options can really majorly modify how your character plays, so **always think about flavor!** Descriptions and fluff are very important in roleplaying games, and highlighting what makes you different from the others is fun and enjoyable.

- **Biohacker** - a multiclass that gives you access to some powerful buffs and debuffs to share around. limits you to injection weapons, which does limit your options as a weaponmaster dramatically, but provides powerful support and/or crowd control abilities.

1 level: A single level of it gives you many benefits indeed. Great class skills. *MicroLab* lets you take nat20 on Life and Physical Science checks. *Scientific method* doesn't matter too much for you. The real draw here are the *biohacks* (which you get 1 + WIS/INT mod of), and they recharge on any 10-minute rest, so you'll pretty much be set for life. You get both the basic biohacks (including the excellent -2 to AC one), the minor inhibitors AND an entire Field of Study (they're all pretty decent, but *toxicology*, *pharmacology*, *neurochemistry*, *thaumapathy* and *immunology* are nice to induce penalties for your mages to make use of, or disable enemy mages). The *genetics* field of study was nerfed dramatically in an errata; your Biohacker level won't be high enough for you to benefit from *genetics'* inhibitor. Injector proficiencies are useless for you.

Note: Biohackers now have some very appealing alternate class features that make them far less reliant on injection weapons, and thus allow you to keep using your versatile Soldier weapon kit.

- *Auto-injector* ^{"alt"} feature lets you use pretty much any weapon you want and utilize Biohacks to deliver buffs to your party members. While this notably removes the entirety of the *minor biohacks*, it does mean that you don't need to have an injection weapon at all. You might still want to have one, just because of the -2 AC basic biohack.
- *Ley Line Hacker* ^{"alt"} is a meme, not worth it.
- *Resonating Biohack* ^{"alt"} synergizes wonderfully with the Soldier. It lets you treat all sonic weapons as injection weapons, and Soldiers have a lot of options to improve sonic weapons. Not to mention there are way more sonic weapons than

injection weapons, which gives you more options. This is pretty much a straight up improvement over the default biohacker, as long as there isn't a lv2 theorem you want a lot more.

2 levels: gives you +1 to hit with injection weapons, which effectively helps you catch up to full BAB. You also get a *theorem* (best ones are probably *hampering inhibitor* and *painful injection*).

If you have picked the *resonating biohack* "alt", you get the ability to apply biohacks as normal attacks within your *custom microlab* range, automatically hitting the target (meaning you can full attack up to three targets with *soldier's onslaught*). Awesome.

3 levels: *spark of ingenuity* is nice, but overall not really worth delaying so much for an ability you can use once per day.

4+ levels: biohackers get some fun theorems at lv8, but nothing that would exceptionally assist a Soldier's playstyle. Plus, they're not full BAB, so multiclassing becomes even more detrimental.

- **Envoy** - gets you some additional support abilities. A lot of them require a move action, which means this might be appealing to Soldiers with unwieldy weapons.

1 level: Ranged Soldiers with unwieldy weapons will want the *get 'em* improvisation to get +1 to your (and your party's) attack rolls, *frustrating target* and *a few more steps!* can be sorta useful, or *look alive* for better Initiative. *Clever feint* is kinda mid, but opens up *clever attack* at level 4. You also get a stupid amount of skill ranks and class skills. *Expertise* is really nice and helps with Soldier's lack of skills a good bit. Though it probably still won't be too useful for you, as you only ever want it if you roll 4+ (otherwise *skill focus* is the same or better).

- Unwieldy ranged weapon build Soldiers could drop *expertise* for *combat expertise* "alt", which is nice for boosting a single attack. Although it's not clear how it works with explosive weapons, nothing says it doesn't.
- *Psychic expertise* "alt" is a decent trade if you came here just for the *improvisation* and don't care much for skill bonuses. Will saves are abundant in Starfinder, and usually are the only thing standing between you and mega unpleasant conditions and effects. Best part is that if you're just making a 1 level dip - you're not even going to suffer not getting to pick a Talent at lv3.
- *Signature item* "alt" is very cool, but losing an *improvisation* at level 1 hurts a lot, since that's the reason a majority of soldiers will even consider putting levels into Envoy. You also lose the ability to use *sense motive* for *expertise*. *Signature clothing* just lets you roll *expertise* twice for the highest result a single time per day - not worth it at all. *Signature tool* lets you get a lv1 Biohacker's *custom microlab*, which means you can use Physical Science or Life Science for crafting serums and, more importantly, roll nat20s to identify creatures within 60 ft as a move action, which can give you some very powerful tactical advantages against some foes. The mechanic's *custom rig* is not worth it. *Signature weapon* is just spending a move action to get the BAB you'd normally have. *Signature Armor* is

cool at low levels, but becomes progressively worse and worse, to the point where it's borderline useless by level 8-ish.

- I'm not sure why *spell speaker* "alt" is even an alt-class feature, as it's just a forced in *improvisation*. Either way, it's not good, as it uses your standard action, which a Soldier should use for killing stuff.
- *Tech whisperer* "alt" is absolutely hilarious, but completely useless for us.
- *Magical expertise* "alt" is pathetic. Skip.
- *Motivation expertise* "alt" is bad even for most Envoys, let alone you.
- *Polymorphic disguise* "alt" is, again, just kind of bad.

2 levels: grab that one improvisation you really want, but couldn't take at lv1.

3 levels: gives you an *expertise talent*. Grabbing *maneuver expertise* to increase your odds of that sweaty disarm attempt is very cool if you picked up *combat expertise*. Some nice social stuff here. The rest doesn't really improve your soldier stuff that much.

4+ levels: at this level you unlock the next "tier" of improvisations. *Improved get 'em* and *clever attack* are the big highlights. The latter is actually a somewhat viable choice even for melee unwieldy weapon Soldiers, but those will probably be *powerhouse style* and will prefer to cleave a lot of times, too. At higher levels you get some progressions to those skills, but it'll come at a progressively larger costs to your soldier stuff. All that being said, unwieldy weapon soldiers will definitely benefit a lot from those improvisations and be able to support their party in addition to all the shooting they're doing.

- **Evolutionist** - yet another class that mostly scales with class level and is difficult to multiclass into or out of. It is, however, full BAB and uses STR/DEX as its key ability score, so it's easier to combine with the Soldier chassis than some.

1 level: the class skill list has some options that Soldiers do not have, including stuff like Perception and Stealth. *Adaptive strike* is useless for us. The *evolution* track is kind of a mixed bag, the speed increase is nice, as well as the bonus to AC (which you get 4 whole rounds into combat, if you don't want to waste RP). You can get the same bonus by just getting 1 level of Solorian for *solar armor*. *Flexible skill* gives you another class skill, which is cool. As for *niches*, it's slim pickings. They give you a free class skill, an *instinct*, as well as the 1st level ability plus, importantly, a drawback. *Eldritch* is really nice if you have a spellcaster party member (and useless if you don't). It grants you a spell resistance you can lower as a reaction (for beneficial spells, for example), but it scales with Evolutionist levels, so it's gonna be awful for you. The *spell bending* feature is actually baller, allowing you to affect even level 6 spells at level 1. The fact you have few Evolutionist levels actually helps mitigate the drawback in a big way. If you multiclass into Evolutionist - it's for this niche. *Mechanized*, *sepulchral* and *vital* are all awful for multiclassing.

2 levels: *augmented form* is borderline useless, saving you just a fistful of credits. *Fulcrum* is blegh even for Evolutionist, as it doesn't allow using Solorian Weapon Crystals and is definitely useless for you. As for *adaptations*, *ocular advantage* for unflankable is the only nice one.

3 levels: *skill boost* is pretty useless when multiclassing and we already have a much better *weapon specialization*.

4+ levels: Evolutionist is a very selfish class that is bad to multiclass into. You're a lot better off just Soldier for the better features.

- **Mechanic** - Mechanic lets you pick up some technological tools to compliment all the soldier weapon stuff you're doing.

1 level: *Exocortex* is worthless as you already have everything this offers you. Half of *bypass* is either meh or nifty. And the custom rig is just quality of life.

- *Experimental armor* "alt" is pretty bad, as you can get most of the things this grants you elsewhere.
- *Experimental weapon's* "alt" proficiency is useless.
- *Drone*, *experimental apparatus* "alt", *experimental vehicle* "alt" and *experimental explosives* "alt" scale with mechanic level, so they're worthless for you.
- *Robotic improvements* "alt" lets you attach drone mods to yourself, or pick up drone feats. As a Soldier you already have plenty of latter (and it doesn't let you ignore the prerequisites like a drone would). As for the former, there's basically nothing here that may interest you. *Speed* is alright. Don't ask me how *riding saddle* is supposed to work. *Constrictor* may interest grappling builds, but at that point, why not just use a throttle weapon..? Overall: nothing special.

2 levels: you get mechanic tricks. None of them are something you particularly need. Most of them are something you can replicate with gear, or something you can't really capitalize on as a multiclass.

3 levels: *overload* is cool, but your DC will be too low.

4+ levels: *remote hack* is either a good or fantastic feat (GM dependant). This lets you pick up some more technological tools, but overall won't be of interest to most characters.

- **Mystic** - you probably don't have great Wisdom and your caster level is gonna suck.

1 level: the class skill list is nothing special. Healing touch is useless with your Mystic levels. Connections, however, are very interesting. *Geneturge* can provide some interesting augmentations. *Empath* and *overlord* are good for some social flexibility. *Melophile* is kind of a worse Envoy. *Epiphanies* "alt" aren't a whole lot better: *wrecking fists* is really fun for an earlygame unarmed build, but doesn't scale; *overbearing stare* is



useful early on, but your DCs won't keep up.

Finally, you get some Mystic spells. There's a lot of decent social spells, such as *charm person*, *command*, *confusion*. *Polymorph* can grant you more flexibility in problem solving. They're probably the most reliable options you can pick.

2 levels: *mindlink* is absolutely not worth it

3 levels: some of the 3rd level connection abilities are pretty dope.

4+ levels: overall it doesn't add anything that a soldier really needs. Mystics benefit from dipping into Soldier more than the other way around. Higher level spells can give you more flexibility and options in and out of combat.

- **Nanocyte** - this class has great abilities, but most of them scale with nanocyte levels, making this class very unappealing to multiclass into (or out of, for that matter).

1 level: you get less HP and SP. You get Perception, Stealth and Intelligence skills as class skills. You also get access to the *nanite array*, which are fairly powerful and flexible abilities that scale very nicely with nanocyte levels, which makes them suck for multiclassing. Your *sheath array* will essentially just be a +1 to Reflex saves (that doesn't stack with the ring of resistance btw) and some skills; your *cloud array* is just a 10% miss chance that is likely to hurt an unprepared party as much as the enemies and a lot of Soldier builds may not have the CON to have good area coverage; and your *gear array* will just be creating stuff you almost definitely can afford to just buy yourself. *Eldritch nanites* ^{“alt”} is not that amazing, either. That being said, the *primary nanocyte faculty* is a nice bonus to have early on. Of them, *discorporation* and *redirection* are the best.

2 levels: gets you *defensive dispersal*, which is kind of okay at low levels if you have a decent CON score, but becomes much less useful without scaling nanocyte levels.

Knacks aren't all that amazing for you, the most appealing options are probably *instant ward* and *surgical host*. *Swarm strike* only gets better at lv7, otherwise you can get most of the benefits here yourself. Replacing attacks with CON is pretty interesting, but your damage will lag a lot.

3 levels: you get a useless *weapon specialization*, as well as *cyto-conversion*, which is neat, but can mostly be achieved with gear.

4+ levels: lets you further enhance the powers of your *nanite array* and get more *knacks*, but the latter suck, while the former don't really synergize with Soldier abilities.

- **Operative** - the entire shtick is focused around full actions, no matter if you use *trick attack* or *stunt and strike* ^{“alt”}. Both can be usable by Soldier, but it's important to consider that you're effectively throwing away the *soldier's onslaught*. This is a very tough pill to swallow for lighter weapon builds, but it's a very good trade-off for a lot of unwieldy weapon builds. Not to mention that making the enemy flat-footed condition helps offset the ¾ BAB. Very notable for *bombard fighting style* soldiers and others using unwieldy weapon that force saving throws, since those functionally don't care about attack rolls.

1 level: A ridiculous number of skill ranks and a decently expanded list of class skills.

Bonus to literally every skill and initiative is excellent. Specializations essentially give you two *skill focus* feats. Pick the specialization that you have a very high skill bonus to.

- Replacing *trick attack* with *stunt and strike* ^{“alt”} is almost always a good idea, because *trick attack*'s tiny damage bonus will not be useful in the long run. *Dirty trick* is good for free conditions (2nd printing of COM removed both Blinded and Entangled, but Sickened is still pretty awesome and Deafened can be situationally cool, too), *feinting stunt* is great if you don't have any other Operatives in the party, *knock down* is perfect for melee Soldiers, as is *pummel through*. *Set-up* is great if you have a lot of spellcasters in the party. One stunt that requires a separate mention is *selective explosions*. It has perfect synergy with the *bombard fighting style*, allowing you to blast your party with (nearly) reckless abandon, all while avoiding friendly fire. It does delay your grenade progression by a level, but since most of the good grenades provide a condition and not damage, it shouldn't be a bad tradeoff. You gotta get every Engineering bonus you can, however, since you must succeed on your stunt check.
- There are some other decent stunts, but those ones are definitely the highlights.
- Can't recommend using *marked for death* ^{“alt”}. It's hard to use even for full Operatives, and losing a move action and 2 AC for +1 to hit is just not worth it, especially with the nerf in 2nd printing of COM.
- *Heavyweight skirmisher* ^{“alt”} thematically should be awesome for a Soldier multiclass, but, unfortunately, requires a full action and prohibits the use of unwieldy weapons - so it's a hard pass.
- *Improvisor* ^{“alt”} isn't good for you, because it mostly scales with Operative class levels.
- *Magical assassin* ^{“alt”} is pretty cool at very low levels, since you can full attack with your infused weapon after activating it, but the damage simply does not scale and once you get weapon specialization at lv3 - you'll probably be dealing more damage anyway.
- *Sniper*'s ^{“alt”} bonus damage scales with Operative levels, so it's useless for us.
- *Spell thief* ^{“alt”} is already too campaign-specific and requires you to make debuffed trick attacks for damage. It's not good.

2 levels: *evasion* is actually really nice to have. You also get an operative exploit.

There's nothing that is instantly amazing for you, but *armor optimizer*, *combat trick*, *trap spotter* are decent.

3 levels: increased edge is nice, increased movement is nice, weapon spec is useless. *Bombard fighting style* soldiers would benefit the most, but it would be delaying their grenades by 3 levels, too. You really gotta think about this one.

- *Quick Zero-G Adaptation* ^{“alt”} becomes very irrelevant very quickly, thanks to gear which allows you to move in zero-G. *Quick cover* ^{“alt”} is actually really useful for ranged builds that don't rely on full attacking all that much, such as ones using unwieldy weapons. Nothing game-changing, but the extra AC and reflex bonuses will definitely save you some damage at some point.

Quick trick ^{“alt”} is a bit unfinished. If it only allows you to use it on trick attack - then it's pretty good for builds that picked it up, but very few actually will, because *stunt & strike* is just better. The issue is that we never got a clarification if *quick trick* can be used with *stunt & strike*. Ask your GM. If yes - then it's pretty excellent, giving you more variety of actions. If not - then just skip it. Note that the errata changed this one so that it only works if you do not move in the same round, thus not allowing you to move twice.

4+ levels: you get some more flexibility out of combat. But realistically, if you plan to take any more levels than 1, you'd benefit more from playing a full Operative. Triple attack is nothing new for us, while quadruple attack is quite awesome, but, again, would likely benefit more from dipping into Soldier than the other way around.

- **Precog** - you probably don't have great Intelligence and your caster level is gonna suck, but the class offers some abilities that a character with a high Dexterity score can benefit from. It also helps if you didn't pick a *fighting style* that benefits a lot from Soldier class levels (such as *bombard*).

1 level: a single level actually gives you quite a lot. Your class skill list expands quite dramatically, notably with social skills and stealth.

The spell list isn't half bad, but you just won't have the INT score needed for the debuffing spells. As for buffs, *communal bond* and *swap initiative*, as well as *keen senses* are actually pretty nice to have. You also get the *paradox*, which scales nicely with Dexterity and not actual Precog levels. And while your application will be very limited, it will still be very useful in your day to day adventuring. One benefit that is very easy to overlook is that becoming a Precog allows you to cast using spell gems. Normally this isn't too amazing, because using higher level gems requires you to make a caster level check, but *paradox* can be used to replace those as early as level 1, which means you have spell gems that are guaranteed to succeed (assuming you rolled *paradoxes* well).

There is no one best *anchor* to choose, but *fragmented past* is amazing for a skill monkey, *memory echoes* is nice for a more social Soldier, while *the gap* can be useful to shore up your Will save. Your Fortitude saves are probably going to be pretty good already, but you can shore them up further with *unmaking*. *The drift crisis* lets you use *paradox* for initiative checks early, which may be useful for a more combat-oriented Soldier who only wants to take a single level of Precog.

2 levels: you get a choice of a single *temporal anomaly*. Of them, *safeguard* and *tactical timing* are kinda okay, but not essential. *Something's not right here...* is pretty great if your GM is very trap-happy and may let you spot a trap before you're right on top of it.

3 levels: *Paradox* gets improved and allows you to use it on all trained skill and initiative checks, as well as Reflex saves, which is a huge buff to both your character both in and out of combat. You also get *chronomantic defense*, which is a very powerful support ability that scales flawlessly with just your Dexterity, irrespective of your Precog level, which is awesome. It also technically doesn't have any range requirements or even line

of sight. It's especially amazing for ranged builds who may not have a better use for their reaction.

4+ levels: frankly, all the best features come in the first 3 levels. You get more spells of higher levels. Of the lv2 options, the best ones are probably *dampen spell*, *dampening field*, *mirror image*, *rocket dash*, *social reset*. *Temporal aggression* is kinda niche, but may let you finish off an enemy who has a bit more health remaining than you would want them to. Level 5 is also very notable in that it allows you to use *paradox* in place of attack rolls, meaning you can have banked natural 20s to melt enemies, but at the cost of losing +2 BAB, making you less accurate in general. The lv5 *temporal anomalies* aren't very gamechanging, either.

- **Solarian** - pretty solid option for melee Soldiers, especially unarmed combat characters.

1 level: Full BAB class, yay to good attack rolls. Give you a ton of skills as class skills + any 2 that don't appear on the list by default. You also get two *stellar revelations* (*black hole* and *supernova* will have terrible damage and DCs when multiclassing) and a *solar manifestation*.

Talking about manifestations, there are only two viable options: *solar armor* gives you a freebie +1 to KAC and EAC (glowing armor is hella ballin', too). *Solar shield* is incredibly amazing for unarmed combat characters, because you can use your shield for unarmed combat and you can insert solarian weapon crystals into it, which makes unarmed combat scale a lot better. Better yet, it has perfect synergy with *ascetic warrior* ^{“alt”}, which gives you x1.5 your level weapon spec for unarmed. Very cool and meta. The *solar flare* and *solar weapon* are awful since they're not scaled for you.

- *Broken cycle* ^{“alt”} may be decent if you plan to stay in Solarian long enough to benefit from the 1.5x scaling, but most people will want to avoid it.
- *Electrical attunement* ^{“alt”} is pretty decent. Electrical attunement gives you a tiny speed bonus, which is quite nice for a Fighter. Aside from that, it's mostly just a flavor change.
- *Stellar sage* ^{“alt”} is a lovely idea with abhorrent execution. Skip.

2 levels: you can get some 2nd level *stellar revelations*, but most of them really aren't all that good for you, as, according to multiclassing rule, “almost all class features are based on the character's level in the class that grants that feature”. That means that you'll count as a level 2 Solarian for all of those cool features like *plasma sheath*. A lot of abilities require standard actions, too, which sucks, because you want to use your standard actions to attack. *Stellar rush* is mad good, as it basically gives you one of the best features of the *blitz fighting style*, so if you didn't pick it - this is a big upgrade to your melee Soldier. *Constructive interference* isn't half bad, either.

3 levels: *Sidereal influence* is a cool insight boost for more utility. Nothing else here benefits you.

4+ levels: a lot of Solarian abilities benefit from having a lot of Solarian levels, but at that point you may be better off playing a Solarian who just dips into Soldier for some fun stuff, than the other way around. *Flashing strikes* unfortunately doesn't synergize with

soldier's onslaught, so all 3 of your attacks would still be made at -6.

- **Technomancer** - most Soldiers won't have amazing Intelligence, but ones who do may potentially pick up some fun options here or there, but overall the Precog multiclass is probably a bit stronger.

1 level: New class skills are welcome. The proficiencies stink, as does the HP. The granted spells can definitely be of great use. Worse than the Mystic's 1 level dip, since you do not get any additional features like the Mystic's *connections* provide. A bit worse than the Precog 1 level dip, too, since paradoxes are nice. That being said, the added spell slot with the spell cache is great.

The spell list is vast and ever-useful. *Magic missile* can help you stack up some confirmed kills on dying targets, *grease* to mess up your opponents, *akashic tutor* to be great as skills, *patch tech* to solve tech challenges and *keen senses* to help improve your Perception.

- *Drone technomancy* ^{“alt”} is dead on arrival, since you won't be leveling up Technomancer enough to make it work.
- *Immortal tutor* ^{“alt”} exchanges the spell slot flexibility from *spell cache* for what could be an additional spell known (only for that cast); *Protean* is probably the only one with a lv6 effect useful for us, if you plan a multiclass that large.
- *Junk technomancy* ^{“alt”} is junk.
- *Cache augmentation* ^{“alt”} doesn't level up for us that much, so those low level augmentations will be mega cheap for us anyway.

2 levels: the vast majority of magic hacks affect spells, which is amazing for spellcasters and pretty useless for martials. That being said, unwieldy weapon users may benefit from *empowered weapon* to get more oomph with their weapons.

3 levels: *spell focus* is pleasant to get for free, *techlore* is probably too anemic to count and the specialization is useless. Overall not worth it.

4+ levels: magic can get you more options in and out of combat to support your party in a more magical sense, but your DCs are likely going to be lower than most full Technomancers. With an 8 level dip you could pick up Spellshot together with a *devastator's cache cache hack* ^{“alt”}, which could turn you into a pretty good blaster, but you'd be missing out on a dramatic amount of Soldier abilities. If you wanted to be a martial Technomancer - play a main class Technomancer with the *spell sergeant* archetype.

- **Vanguard** - Vanguard is an excellent class, but awful for multiclassing.

1 level: full BAB class with great HP and SP, so you won't be losing anything on that front. You get a lot of new class skills. You also get *entropic pool*, which increases the damage of *entropic strike* (which only scales with vanguard level) or gives you a tiny speed boost. No. The *vanguard aspects* are basically free feats, but it's not like Soldier is starving for them.

Entropic shot ^{“alt”} and *mutual destruction* ^{“alt”} don't really do anything to help matters out.

2 levels: grants you *mitigate* (which only scales with Vanguard levels, hence useless)

and a *vanguard discipline*. *Dampen* can be useful when fighting enemies with AoE attacks (dragons, mages etc.), *evasion* is cool. The rest are kinda blegh.

3 levels: *reactive* is okay, but works only once per day. The weapon spec is useless.

4+ levels: frankly, there's not much that would attract a Soldier.

- **Witchwarper** - Both Technomancer and Mystic get unique abilities that enhance their spellcasting chassis in some major ways (*spell cache* and its alternatives for Technomancer and *connections* for Mystic). The Witchwarper gets *infinite worlds*, which is... basically extra (bad) spells known, since you have to spend spell slots on those abilities. It sucks. Which is weird, because the [playtest version](#) of the ability was just something they could do a few times per day, which was fun and flavorful. No idea why Paizo nerfed it, since the feature wasn't even broken back in the playtest. But overall this makes it a pretty eh multiclass even on a good day, and martial classes don't really want anything here.

1 level: class skills are alright. *Infinite worlds* is trashy.

Spell-wise, *churn fluid* and *grave words* are fun, *charming veneer* can help our social stuff, *detect thoughts* is good for skullduggery. Don't forget that you can get all of this stuff with the *reality glimmer* feat and that it uses your Charisma for save DCs.

- *Infinite tech* ^{“alt”} is great for Witchwarpers themselves, but bad for multiclassing.
- *Infinity lash* ^{“alt”} is a hard pass, the only good thing about it is casting melee spells with reach, and you won't be much of a caster.
- *Plunderer of worlds* ^{“alt”} is not good, despite the great name and pretty fun mechanical gimmick. The effects are just too weak and their function too random.

2 levels: gets you a *paradigm shift*. A lot of the good ones require a very high Charisma score and Witchwarper levels, so you can pretty much ignore anything that requires a save. Worse yet, the durations are equal to your Witchwarper level, making even the best stuff here pretty bad use of actions. *Disrupt creature* is pretty good (shame it uses a standard action) as it has no save, but uses your very limited Witchwarper spell slots. *Thwart ability* is a very nice use of Resolve Points and reactions and lowkey the only real reason you may want to take such a multiclass.

3 levels: *weapon specialization* is useless, while *compound sight* is just too tiny of a bonus to only a single skill. *Projected* ^{“alt”} is almost interesting, until you read its duration.

4+ levels: Witchwarpers have a fairly good spell list that combines the versatility of Technomancer and Mystic. That being said, class features are kind of a letdown, so this probably isn't the strongest of choices.

Archetypes

Normally, archetypes are surprisingly overbearing. They aggressively replace a ton of class features. There's a common sentiment in the Starfinder community that it might be best to pick an Archetype that interests you first and then look for what class can fit it. That being said, Soldiers are without a doubt the best class to use archetypes with, because most of them only replace the bonus combat feats, which are very easy to sacrifice, since you already get a lot of

feats normally.

[AONSRD](#) shows what you'll be losing when picking up an archetype in each class' page..

So, the rules. For any level at which an archetype provides an alternate class feature, you sacrifice the following:

Multilevel 2nd, 4th, 6th, 12th, and 18th Levels: You don't gain a bonus *combat feat*. Not a big deal at all.

9th Level: Your *secondary fighting style* gets delayed by 1 level and you lose your 10th level *combat feat*. Not the end of the world, by any means. Slightly annoying, if anything. .

Breakdown (replaced levels in parentheses):

- **Android Abolitionist (4, 9, 18)** - not charmed. The bonuses are maybe nifty for a very specific type of campaign, but the benefits are not worth the cost. The Damage Reduction is nice, but using resolve points for it is a little blegh. Just do a normal bodyguard build.

Cost: three combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: Bluff and an extra one as class skills, some abilities to lay low, and a bit of damage reduction to an adjacent creature once every minute.

- **Anomaly Hunter (4, 9, 18)** - the first feature is kind of a flexible insight bonus to several different skills, of which only the profession is in our class skill list, so it's not gonna be very useful. The lv4 feature is really good to keep increasing the chances of you succeeding at the three main knowledge skills, which likely aren't going to be the Soldier's strongest suit. *Miracle worker* is a very flexible feature, allowing you to heal creatures, which makes it an arguably better medic archetype than the *medic* archetype, as you functionally get something akin to a baby version of the Mystic's *healing touch*. The lv12 feature is useless if you have any functional armor. Overall: really cool healing ability surrounded by a bunch of useless or barely usable features, so not really worth it for the vast majority of Soldiers, but some can find some interesting abilities here.

Cost: three combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: insight bonus to a lot of specific tasks of a good number of skills, flexible healing/repair ability and the ability to survive in a vacuum without environmental protections.

- **Arcanamirium Sage (2, 6, 9, 12, 18)** - the best benefit for you here is the ability to cast a spell from a spell gem once a day, but you can already do that with the *spellthrower* fusion. Not really worth it. Equipping extra items can be worthwhile in high level games, but the investment is too huge.

Cost: five combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: makes it easier to identify and buy magic items, lets you use spell gems as

spells known once per day, lets you attune to up to two extra hybrid or magic items, recharge a magic item once per day.

- **Armored Visionary (2, 6, 9, 12, 18)** - we're not mages, so can't even take this.

Cost: five combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: grants heavy armor and shield proficiency, ways of maintaining concentration on spells, darkvision, initiative bonuses, a choice between several spells depending on the flavor you choose, true seeing and a small bonus to AC of ships and mechs you control.

- **Aspis Mastermind (4, 6, 9, 12)** - very charisma-heavy archetype with some pretty great intimidation bonuses that'll benefit you a lot in a social campaign. The lv6 feature is great on paper, until you get to the fact that it uses your standard action. In most cases, you should probably leave this archetype to your more charismatic companions.

Cost: four combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: intimidation bonuses and some battlefield action support for your party.

- **Assassin (6, 12, 18)** - for most classes this is a pretty bad archetype, but considering the only thing you trade are three combat feats - it's not too bad, actually. Sure, it requires you to be able to prepare in advance (do not use lethal strike in combat), but those opportunities do show up every now and again, especially if you're sneaking around and get to ambush your enemies. It's sort of a more specialized *farshot fighting style*. The real disappointment is that all of its benefits can only be used once per day. I can see some sniper Soldiers picking it up, just so they have this potential one-shot opportunity in their back pocket, even if it won't be useful too often. Melee stealth Soldiers are a very weak character style, but I suppose they can get some benefit out of this one, too.

Cost: three combat feats.

Benefit: gives you a chance to become stealthy even when observed by many creatures, a chance to instagib an enemy.

- **Audocyte (2, 4, 12, optionally 6, 9, 18)** - the insight bonus provided by the first feature is anemic, but it can be increased by up to +5 which is very respectable. Unfortunately, this requires an absolutely huge investment that is only worth it for Soldiers who absolutely do not need the extra combat feats. The lv12 feature is hilariously bad, too.

Cost: three combat feats, optionally the whole package.

Benefit: grants a party-wide insight bonus to one skill, with an increasing insight bonus depending on how many optional features you take, as well as one mediocre debuff.

- **Augmented (2, 4, 6, 9)** - those combat feats can be pretty useful early on, so some particularly feat-heavy builds may not want to take this (which usually means most melee builds), but even they'll eventually catch up. If your build is not particularly feat-heavy, this can provide some really cool advantages and the good features come early, which is important in low level campaigns. Better yet, the higher level you are - the more worthwhile this archetype is. There are some powerful augmentations, and taking them is well-worth it. *Sustained by science's* benefit of removing damage over time effects can

actually save your life. *Overclocked systems* is especially powerful, providing solid benefits for the cost of just 1 RP. And you can do it as many times as you have RP. The best bonuses are from Constitution (provides what is essentially fast healing for Stamina Points. It doesn't seem like a lot, but it definitely adds up, especially considering you can do activate it practically every fight) and Charisma (especially for ranged characters who don't have a use for their reaction).

Cost: four combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: cheaper body augmentations, can install extra augmentations, use your body as a battery, cheaper stabilizations, ability to squeeze some extra utility out of personal upgrades.

- **Battle Leader (2, 12. Optionally 4, 6, 9, 18)** - it's going to be tough to have the Charisma for the best options, and this uses up your reactions. Ranged builds can actually really benefit from this one, as it's effectively just some nice uses for your reactions. Melee builds likely can't afford the reactions. It's cheap in terms of feature costs, too.

As for which ones to pick, *got 'em* is great if you have the Charisma for it (and you can apply them when someone scores a crit, meaning this damage is applied to and doubled for the crit in question), *regroup* is great even with minimal Charisma, and *tread carefully!* can help get party members out of enemies' reach.

Cost: two combat feats for sure, and up to four more + delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: awesome reaction-based party buffs.

- **Battleflower (Optionally 2, 6, 9, 12, 18)** - the obligatory "Monk" archetype. Notably has optional alternate class features, which lets you take the best options while leaving the others behind. With the errata to COM, *stunning strike* has been replaced with *staggering strike* and the paralyzation is replaced with a stun at lv20. Significant debuff, but necessary one, because it's still a pretty amazing archetype to an already amazing playstyle.

Make no mistake, this archetype is only worth it for unarmed builds. And boy do they get some good stuff here. The lv2 ability may as well be ignored, since we already get combat feats at that level. The lv6 ability is great, because our DEX is likely going to be higher than CHA (make sure your GM will actually allow you to use it, though, because some feel like it's too big of a stretch). The lv9 *staggering strike* is really awesome, as the condition is very difficult to play around for a lot of enemies. The 20th level benefit is, frankly, broken. Stunning enemies for up to 7 rounds can trivialize most encounters, even at that high a level. The lv12 ability to tumble around the battlefield is good fun and will be useful in dungeons, to make sure you can tumble behind an enemy blocking off a narrow corridor. The lv18 feature is awesome, too, as going first can be pretty important, to get some good positioning, or tie up enemy ranged combatants & mages early.

Cost: only what you're ready to give up

Benefit: use Dexterity instead of Charisma in some social situations, the capability to

stagger & eventually stun enemies when you attack, safer combat mobility, potentially always going first in combat.

- **Combat Controller (2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 18)** - pretty solid support archetype with benefits both in ground and space combat. The unfortunate thing is that it requires a rather huge investment. If you're ready to make it, you'll get fairly mediocre bonuses in the first few levels (the +1 insight bonus against flying enemies is not worth the standard action), but starting from level 6 *danger close* is going to be a huge boon to your AOE party mates. *Exfil* and *medevac* will almost definitely be useful to your party at some point, while *fire mission* provides a powerful "capstone" ability that can help you melt down bosses and tough targets. Usually it's best for a non-Soldier to take this archetype so they can kill their enemies better, but there's probably a build or two that will appreciate some of the features here.

Cost: the whole package

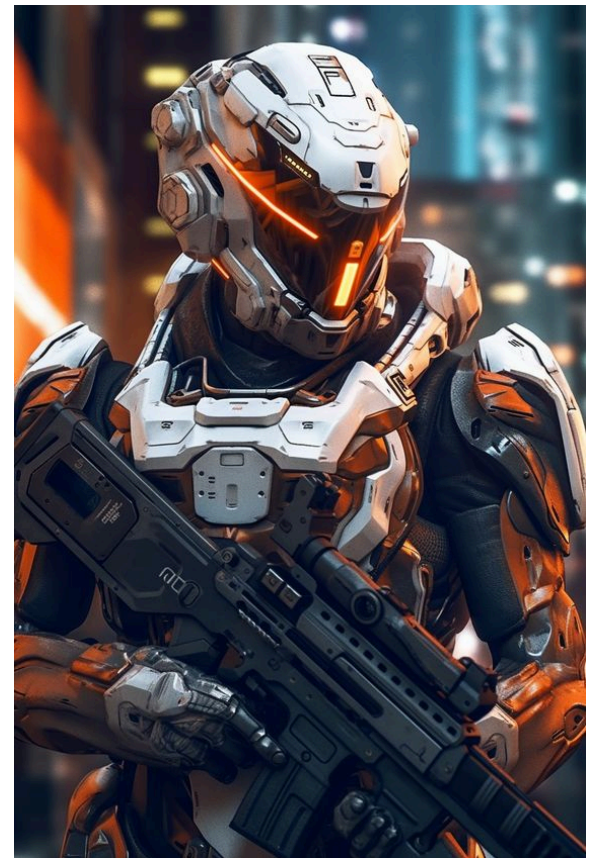
Benefit: once per day roll common skills with advantage, better encourage bonuses in starship combat, help party avoid friendly fire when placing AoEs, good party-wide mobility bonuses to get people out of sticky situations and a powerful ultimate endgame ability to deal a lot of damage to a single target.

- **Commando (4, 6, 12. Optionally 9, 18)** - the higher Stamina is greatly welcome for you, but most of the bonuses are very niche. That being said, the Soldier may actually sacrifice some combat feats for them. Of the *conditioning styles*, *Mental Fortress* and *Hardened Demeanor* help you save against some of the nastiest effects in the game. Other styles that affect energy damage may be preferable, depending on the campaign. *Exposure training* is nice, too.

Cost: three combat feats, optionally two more combat feats and delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: a bit higher Stamina pool, bonuses against specific save types.

- **Counselor (2, 9, optionally 4, 6)** - pretty solid support archetype, providing up to a +5 insight bonus to Will saving throws. Both of the lv4 features are pretty solid (just pick the RP one if your party members spend a lot of RP). The lv6 ones are also really nice, with *cognitive processing* being less involved as it doesn't use any actions, while *psychodynamic reinforcement* being potentially more life-saving. *Hold space* is a great capstone for the archetype, providing a way for you to save your party's heavy hitters and probably yourself, since you probably have a beastly bonus to Will saves. Extra awesome for Soldier builds that don't require a lot of feats to get going.



Cost: two combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style, optionally two more combat feats.

Benefit: scaling bonus to Will saving throws and protecting your party from many nasty conditions.

- **Cycle Scholar (6, 12, 18)** - we're not solarians and can't get revelations. The party buffs it has do not make it worth the investment.

Cost: three combat feats.

Benefit: fairly weak battlefield support for your party.

- **Deep Cultures Specialist (9, 12, 18)** - this is an AP archetype, and it really shows. The abilities are very niche, but fire resistance 20 is kinda hype. If you start your campaign at lv18 or above, this may very well be worth it for the fire resistance alone, but the free fusions are cool, too.

Cost: three combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: fire resistance 20, niche retrocognition spell usage and the ability to provide the flaming fusion to the entire party.

- **Deep Delver (2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 18)** - there are some useful features here and there, especially the lv2 one for Large Vanguards; the lv4 is one of the few forewarning for traps before you even trigger the; Lv6 is really powerful, allowing you to identify things really efficiently through just one skill + take nat20s on Perception checks. Lv9, 12 and 18 are mostly ribbon abilities, unfortunately. Overall: pretty noticeable boost when delving. May be an option for megadungeon campaigns, but it is ultimately wayyy too expensive for what it gives the vast majority of builds.

Cost: six combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: easy squeezing in tight corridors, powerful searching and identification abilities, some nice exploration abilities.

- **Directive 9 Field Agent (2, 4, 6, 9, 12)** - Directive 9 are basically the James Bonds of the Veskarium, so they get some neat tricks. This archetype does come pre-packed with some injected lore into the abilities, but you can try talking with your GM to lift those and make it a generic "field agent" archetype. Most Soldiers can safely ignore this archetype, but the more sneaky Soldiers may very well want to pay a bit of attention here. Rerolling Stealth and Perception can be very crucial to success. *Skirt blindsense* is exceptionally powerful if you have some means of permanently hiding from an enemy, which can ensure the enemy is pretty much constantly flat-footed to you and can't target you effectively. Normally blindsense and especially blindsight make this playstyle impossible, but with this you fear pretty much no one. *Tricky target* is ass, because you will be (un)lucky to fight even one enemy with the Operative graft in most campaigns. *Burrowed loyalty* is amazing, allowing you to effectively force through some of the nastiest spells and debuffs in the game. *Spy tool* provides insanely good flexibility, allowing you to just pull out a solution to a problem with a bit of work. You benefit from system knowledge greatly with this one.

Cost: five combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: perception & stealth as class skills or granting rerolls with them, avoiding enemy blindsense and blindsight, avoiding operative trick attacks, ignoring mental effects, creating a flexible tool or weapon in the field.

- **Disciple Of The Stillness (Optionally 2, 4, 9, 18)** - alignment-sensing is back, baby. Starfinder has, in general, avoided this mechanic (for good reason tbh) for years, but I guess the writer got the green light for this one. The lv2 feature lets you detect evil creatures within 60 feet. Sounds useful, but this would only make you aware of its presence, not location, in case it is hiding. You can also spend an entire full action to track it, but doing so when it's within 60 feet may not even be necessary? Good thing you can skip this. *Swiftness* improves your movement speeds by a tiny amount, which may or may not be better than *fleet* for you. *Silent prayer* is pretty amazing, and you may want to take this archetype for this ability alone, ignoring most other optional features. It's roughly similar to *blitz fighting style's keep fighting* ability (one of the best ones there), except this one is made as a reaction at pretty much any point, so is even better. And *blitz* Soldiers can even double-dip! *Perfect stillness* is turbo omega broken, which is why it's banned in Starfinder Society play. The reason it's so broken is because not only does it make you invisible, but that invisibility isn't even broken when you attack (because it doesn't act as the spell). Better yet, this invisibility is immune to divination effects (so stuff like *see invisibility* wouldn't help enemies detect you) and technological surveillance. Furthermore, you are immune to almost all of the worst conditions in the game (excluding paralysis), get a reroll against them. And - for some ungodly reason - you can do this as much as you want, because there's no "once per day" limitation anywhere in here, so you may as well stay permanently invisible and immune. How fun.

Cost: only what you're ready to give up.

Benefit: sense and track evil creatures, get a small speed increase, restore stamina & gain temporary hit points as a reaction, become invisible and immune to a lot of conditions for several minutes at a time as many times per day as you want.

- **Divine Champion (2, 4, 6, 12, 18)** - radical change of your class kit. Kind of blegh in the early game, but man, getting lv6 Mystic spells that use your key ability score for spellcasting (STR spellcaster back in town!) is insanely awesome and will doubtlessly make the party's mystic feel cheated by level 18. The "quality" of this archetype depends on the deity you've chosen (and more specifically the connection): *devastator*, *healer*, *melophile*, *mindbreaker*, *overlord*, *shadow* and *shaper* are the best ones, but some of the others are pretty good, too. An excellent archetype for Devastation Ark or a similar high level game, as this archetype definitely shines the brightest with its later features. **Note** that you can't use *spell focus* on these spells, as they're spell-like abilities, which means that you might be better off picking supporting spells. Make sure to check out the *exalted champion* archetype as well, as it's basically a continuation of this one.

Cost: five combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: the effect of a low level fusion, free ring of resistance, lv1-6 mystic spells (that use your own key ability score, not Wisdom!).

- **Doshko Specialist (2, 6, 12, 18)** - borderline broken archetype that provides bonuses that the traditional (unwieldy) doshko can't really utilize in any reasonable way. The level 6 feature does provide bonuses to combat maneuvers, but it's the same bonus that any weapon with the relevant maneuver property can grant you without a shitty archetype. The lv18 feature is pretty neat, but comes way too late.

Cost: four combat feats.

Benefit: more combat utility out of non-unwieldy doshkos, which sacrifices your damage output.

- **Entropic One (2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 18)** - gives you some pretty interesting magical entropic abilities, but has too many bad features. *Entropic thoughts* is meh, as telepathy has pretty limited usage. *Entropic shield* gives you a free scaling tactical shield, which is okay, but not very important, really. *Entropic grasp* is pretty powerful, but it requires you to pick up a lot of *third eye* feats to get more uses, which aren't that amazing. *Entropic flight* is pretty weak by that level. It's fast, but you can just get a forcepack at that same level, which is just better. *Discernment* is the real cream of this archetype and provides a whopping +2 to your attack rolls against a creature, which is absolutely huge, considering how tight Starfinder's math normally is, but you'll have a hard time reliably making that DC, since it's very high for a class that won't be specializing in Wisdom. *Entropic travel* is kind of a gimmick, since you probably don't want to leave your starship behind (and you probably have one).

Cost: six combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: some magic-like abilities, telepathy, a free scaling tactical shield and a way to use Mysticism to give yourself a big bonus to attack rolls against a specific enemy.

- **Esotericist (All optional at lv 2, 6, 9, 18)** - we're not mages. If you multiclassed into one, then the benefits the Esotericist provides are likely overkill.

Cost: only what you're ready to give up

Benefit: nothing, because we're not mages.

- **Espionage Specialist (4, 9, 12)** - a bit niche, but could be okay for a covert/social campaign, as "advantage" on as many skullduggery checks as you need per day is excellent. Do you have the Charisma and bonuses to those skills to make use of this, though?

Cost: three combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: more reliable covert actions, easier deceptions and a tiny damage buff.

- **Expedition Chronicler (2, 4, 6, 9, 12)** - a very flavorful "writer"-style archetype with bonuses to recalling knowledge, a tiny buff to social stuff, a weak preparation ability and a weak combat support ability. Overall: not really worth it, but it definitely oozes flavor. Only pick this if you really wanna play a bookish character and your build doesn't require a lot of combat feats.

Cost: four combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: bonuses to recalling knowledge, a tiny buff to social stuff, a weak preparation ability and a weak combat support ability.

- **Exalted Champion (9)** - quite a curious thing: a continuation of an earlier released archetype, specifically the *divine champion*. It's a solid option for Soldiers, as the cost is quite acceptable compared to what you get. Abadar, Desna, Iomedae, Lao Shu Po, Pharasma, Sarenrae, Talavet and Zon-Kuthon are absolute winners here. The rest are meh.

Cost: one combat feat, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: a single unique god-based effect.

- **Fixer (6, 9, 12, 18)** - do you really need an archetype for cleaning? It has excellent fluff, but you can likely get features this archetype gives you through theme features and general roleplaying.

Cost: four combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: easier to talk with criminals and conduct criminal activity on a large scale.

- **Free Trader (2)** - Works great for any open world/sandbox-y Starfinder game. Even in conventional games this archetype will probably help save you tons of cash. Do you have the Charisma and bonuses to those skills to make use of this, though?

Cost: one combat feat.

Benefit: a bunch of abilities that help you be a better trader.

- **Hacktivist (2, 4, 6, 9)** - effectively folds most of the Engineering uses into Computers, which is kinda cool for Soldiers. The spoof grenades are kinda cool and usable right from the get go, but don't impart any super good effects until level 6. Magic-less *remote operation* can also be quite useful, as the spell is very obvious when cast, while this allows you to do it more sneakily. The grenades are a little lame for a Soldier as it's our job to kill enemies, most of the time. May be an option for a very support oriented build.

Cost: four combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: use computers for most engineering tasks, create condition-imparting grenades or lower level standard grenades, get remote operation spell as a technological item.

- **Hand of the All-Code (2, 9, 18)** - some interesting technology-related abilities. Unfortunately, most of these checks require you to have a very high bonus to Computers checks, which isn't trivial for Soldier, but not impossible. The lv2 feature is mid, very situational. *Three-handed engineer* provides a wide array of benefits for hacking into computers and dealing with traps, as well as repair works (relevant for vehicles and gear, mostly). Especially interesting is getting the ability to re-hack a locked down computer. *Alluvion's wrath* is a powerful debuffing ability, but it uses a standard action and thus isn't amazing for Soldiers.

Cost: three combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: rest quicker, cast high level illusion spells, create a mental dueling arena.

- **Instinctive Metaphysicist (9, 12, 18)** - the ability to cast high level illusion spells is very nice. The fact that they scale with your key ability score makes them even better. The *mindscape challenge* is a wicked cool ability, and flawless for stealthy assassinations, but not too clear. Like what "traits" can you set? That it's all lava? That the enemy's side is pelted with meteorites? It's either stupidly good, or just a neat little debuff to make the enemy burn actions. It could also be pretty dangerous, if you drag a high CR creature in there and it just ravages you with full attacks. Talk to your GM. The fact that this archetype comes in at a high level is even better, since you will already have all of the feats you need for your build, so losing some combat feats is not a problem at all.

Cost: three combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: rest quicker, cast high level illusion spells, create a mental dueling arena.

- **Instructor (9, 12, 18)** - reducing the DC by 5 is crazy good, assuming some skill is used often, but the aiding bonus is a bit pointless when others will probably be the ones aiding you. By level 18 you pretty much turn one skill to automatic success, no matter what task it is. A powerful fantasy and easily worth the cost for the Soldier, considering you're likely to have all the needed *combat feats* by then. Most Soldiers won't super specialize in a skill due to the lack of a free scaling insight bonus - the ability to aid others *a lot* can be pretty amazing and help find you a niche out of combat by the time those high levels come and your actual checks start lagging behind.

Cost: three combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: extreme improvements to one class skill.

- **Junkomancer (2, 4, 18)** - we're not mages and nothing here is interesting for us..

Cost: three combat feats.

Benefit: More convenient casting of junk spells.

- **Kalistocrat (all optional 2, 4, 6)** - fairly powerful archetype for social campaigns. Of the lv2 features, *cultural studies* definitely stands out with its power in social encounters. Lv4 feature is great in a campaign where you would be moving a lot. The lv6 features can probably just be skipped.

Cost: only what you're ready to give up.

Benefit: Bluff and Diplomacy as class skills, some abilities to lay low, and a bit of damage reduction to an adjacent creature once every minute.

- **Lightsplayer (2, 4, 6)** - dope little archetype that gives you a lot of illusion magic, up to a 6th level *holographic image* as a technological effect. *Glitter bomb* is a convenient bomb that can make enemies blinded and scales with your key ability score, which is very useful and powerful. Even on a successful save the enemy is dazzled. You can do nothing but just spam this ability and you'll be a solid contribution to the party. The archetype also comes fully online early, which is certainly a big plus. That being said, the bombs still require a standard action to throw, which means no epic Soldier damage,

especially at higher levels.

Cost: three combat feats.

Benefit: a good bit of illusion spells and a powerful spamable bomb that applies debuffs.

- **Magic Academy Student (2, 4, 6)** - we're not mages.

Cost: three combat feats.

Benefit: nothing.

- **Major League Coach (2, 4, 18, optionally 6, 9, 12, 18)** - *huddle up* is a solid bonus that'll be useful for your party on a regular basis. It's a shame you can't choose to not apply this bonus to traps, because your other abilities are dependent on you still having the huddle up bonus. *Trick Play's* Power Play option is easily the best one there and a good chunk of extra damage, especially if you have multiple melee party members. The other options are fine, too. The capstone is exceptionally good and turns this good archetype into a great archetype. The only question is if the attack option also stop *stoppage time* as it ends the *cheat time* spell. Probably yes, because otherwise it'd be broken as hell. Even so, it's a wonderful way to give your team a big boost to the action economy, especially if you have someone who's good at combat maneuvers.

Cost: three combat feats, optionally the whole package.

Benefit: fairly decent team play benefits that improve the whole party, the ability to grant your party members an additional reaction and a powerful capstone that gives your party a lot of actions.

- **Mediator (2, 4, 9, 12)** - powerful social archetype, which works wonders with a GM who's open to peaceful solutions. You do need to have very high social skills to make this one work, you can't dump Charisma with this one. The cost is pretty high and comes in early on, before most Soldiers will be able to finish up their core combat feats, but some builds will be able to make the sacrifice. Obviously, if your GM is antagonistic to peaceful conflict resolutions, or if you're in a campaign where there's not much to socialize with - this becomes quite worthless.

Cost: four combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: powerful social abilities, strong capstone providing good bonuses to Will saving throws and flexible initiative.

- **Medic (2, 9, 18)** - despite having Medicine as a class skill, Soldiers don't make the best medics, since you're only ever going to be able to use this with consumables and *treat deadly wounds*, which you won't have a giant bonus to. Not a great pick.

Cost: three combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: abilities that have incredible synergy with healing abilities.

- **Menagerie Manager (2, 4, 6, 9, 12)** - finally, the beastmaster archetype. It took them a while to add one to the game, but better late than never. Right away, the lv2 *flock tender* sets you up with all the necessary things for a creature

companion and even the ability to switch them around as needed, allowing you to have a little zoo back on the starship. Paizo kinda cheaped up, they may as well have given you a level 2 creature. Oh well.

The lv4 *just a little push* is a small, but noticeable bonus to the companion's speed and it even comes with the next tier of companion feats as a bonus - great! You even get it at 4th level, which is 1 level earlier than anyone else could possibly get it!

Lv6 *social graces* is a wonderful way to involve the companion on a social level. *Cute and cuddly* is especially good if you get a lot of interactions with NPCs and will make persuading them even easier. Meanwhile *predatory smile* is a wonderful way for them to use their move action if they're not moving and nobody else is doing demoralize in your team. Paizo also added a super weird clause that changes demoralize DC from 15+1.5 enemy CR to 10+companion CR. Which means your level 1 companion can demoralize a CR25 kaiju by rolling 11 on its intimidation check. Like... what? Huh?? This must be some kind of an oopsie on their part, because this doesn't sound right.

Rescue pet is wonderful as it grants you *creature companion master* a whole TWO levels earlier than possible. The rest of the ability can be neat, or get in the way. Hard to gauge objectively.

Finally, *care package* gives you the final creature companion feat a level early and allows your companion to place an item in your hand. This is most likely going to be your weapon that you'll drop as you fall unconscious. Neat little bonus, I guess.

Overall: wonderful archetype that's going to increase your combat capabilities overall and progresses way faster than would otherwise be possible. The issue is that it does require a huge investment of features to get. For a Soldier, this is almost definitely worth it, as you only replace some extra combat feats, which is something you may have wanted to do to get creature companions.

Cost: five combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: the whole creature companion feat line with an earlier progression, as well as some smaller ribbon abilities like using your companion for Diplomacy or Demoralization, as well as dragging you to safety.

- **Phrenic Adept (2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 18)** - requires a huge investment, but you get a good list of faux-mage abilities. Notably it lets you use your key ability score for spells, which is pretty baller. You do lose a lot of combat feats to get these abilities, so it's not a great choice if your build is very feat-heavy. If it isn't, why not? Provides a good bonus to saves against a good list of debilitating spells. Gives you a wider list of "spells" than the Divine Champion archetype, but later. Pretty good choice for social games.

Note that you can't use *spell focus* on these spells, as they are spell-like abilities.

Cost: six combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: telepathy, mental defense, several spells and mental abilities.

- **Powered Armor Jockey (6, 9, 12, 18)** - this is pretty mediocre in lv1-13 games, but extremely attractive in the end game. Powered armor is really unbalanced in Starfinder, because it provides no bonus to characters with a high Strength modifier, but if you just leave your strength at 13 so you can grab the *powered armor proficiency* feat (or get it

through a *fighting style*), and max out Dexterity - by the time you get *boosted leverage* you'd have an extremely high strength score, extremely high dexterity score and enough points left over to shore up other ability scores. It feels like an exploit, and in large parts - it is. The lv6 and 9 features are nice, but probably aren't worth it on their own. However, if you play Devastation Ark or a similar high level game, the level 12 feature can eventually grant you what is essentially a +6 Strength over what the armor already grants you. That means you can eventually end up with an absolutely mind-boggling **36 strength** (an insane +13 Strength modifier!), which you add to your already huge attack roll. Finally, just to seal this already insane late game deal - the *ride-or-die rig* feature makes you really hard to kill, as crafted powered armor counts as 2 levels higher for hit points and hardness, and it already has crazy hardness by default, meaning the damage it takes will be severely reduced. Might need to stock up on *nanite patches*, though. So, overall: by level 20 you can become a tough as hell juggernaut with gigantic bonuses to attacks, damage rolls and reflex saves. Frankly: **broken at high levels.**



Cost: four combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: situational early game abilities, but extremely potent late game boost to melee builds' damage output.

- **Psychic Charlatan (2, 4, 6)** - there's some great deceptive abilities here if you have enough Charisma and bonuses to Bluff to be a fairly good Face character. This archetype makes you very good at lying to people and manipulating them. The quality of this archetype will certainly depend on the GM and how open minded they are to PCs manipulating their NPCs, as well as your personal creativity. Some players will be able to use this to noticeably change the flow of campaigns. I consider this to be the best and most interesting archetype option to all deceptive PCs.

Cost: three combat feats.

Benefit: powerful ability to learn imperceptible facts about some characters, manipulate people's perceptions and memories.

- **Psychic Detective (2, 4, 6, 12)** - this one offers some pretty useful features for a more social campaign, allowing you to quite literally read minds. If your campaign is based on mystery this can be an absolute game changer. Otherwise, these can offer you good ideas on how to manipulate NPCs in your favor. That being said, the lv2 feature is very

mediocre, while your lv12 feature is very situational, so it is a large investment to make. The fact that the targets don't even know you're reading their mind is scary good for some campaigns.

Cost: four combat feats.

Benefit: powerful ability to learn imperceptible facts about some characters, manipulate people's perceptions and memories.

- **Racer (2, 6, 9)** - pretty simple and straightforward piloting archetype. Great to pick up if you're the party's designated driver. If your campaign features Starship combat a lot - this is fantastic. If it's just the standard "one starship fight every two or so levels" then it's not as good, but still nice. Reducing a starship's turn by 1 is actually really hype and can be a massive boost to your combat maneuverability. The lv6 feature is pretty nice and simple: reducing stunt DCs is always nice. *Daring recovery's* reaction to avoid starship damage is absolutely massive, because your Piloting bonus is almost definitely going to be significantly higher than an enemy's gunnery check.

Cost: three combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: great anti-trap options.

- **Runescrawled Reaver (2, optionally 4, 6, 9, 12, 18)** - on par with *battleflower* as the best unarmed combat archetype, but non-unarmed builds get nothing of interest here. Although the ability to withstand shots from miniguns while dressed in a loincloth is fun, the AC bonus fails to properly keep up with armor you can wear and will usually be around ~15% worse than armor you could buy. It will let you save some money, but you probably wouldn't be spending credits on magitech augments every level either, so it's a so-so bonus on its own. As a matter of fact, you may as well ONLY have a low level magitech augmentation to keep the fusion prices low. Only have it as high as the fusion demands (your weapon level must be the same or higher as the fusion level in order to apply it).

The real cream of this archetype is adding weapon fusions to unarmed attacks, which is SUPER relevant for multiple Soldier builds. Most crucially, it allows you to access a bunch of features that require fusions, such as the *overload fusion gear boost*, or the *dispelling strike* feat.

Enhanced fist is a little whatever for most serious unarmed builds that almost definitely already benefit from 1.5x specialization to damage, but allowing you to apply *multi-weapon fighting* feat to unarmed strikes is pretty lit, even though it indirectly proves that you CAN'T use that feat for unarmed strikes normally. Only worth skipping if you don't heavily rely on full attacks.

Extension of form is ass. Completely unnecessary. You may as well just slap that fusion seal on your gun. Feel free to skip.

Full body fighting is fine. Allows you to avoid some enemy resistances against bludgeoning damage, which is very rare anyway. Can be a nice way to exploit the occasional weakness, if you have a way to add elemental damage. Feel free to skip.

Rune surge is occasionally okay, but heavily dependent on what sort of augment you have. It's likely not going to be worth it. Feel free to skip.

Cost: one combat feat, optionally the whole package.

Benefit: unarmed combat benefits and more uses for magitech augmentations.

- **Safety Inspector (2, 6, 12)** - Perception isn't a class skill for us, so you're going to need to find a way to get it to become one. The archetype offers pretty solid anti-trap options, if you're somehow the person with the highest Perception. I'd only recommend it in a dedicated megadungeon campaign, as it's just not going to be mega necessary in a lot of games. Keep in mind that in Starfinder you count as your own ally, unless an ability says otherwise.

Cost: three combat feats.

Benefit: great anti-trap options.

- **School Specialist (2, 4, 9, 12)** - you're not a mage.

Cost: four combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: up to two extra spell slots, up to four extra spells known and two unique abilities.

- **Skyfire Centurion (4, 6, 9, 12)** - so this is a pretty interesting option. As a Soldier, a lot of builds don't actually mind losing four combat feats, so you can both grab it in order to be a supporting character yourself, or designate the dedicated supporting character as your bonded companion, so you can benefit from their bonuses more. The classic combo would be a Skyfire Centurion Soldier bonding an Envoy player with *fire support envoy improvisation*. Envoys suffer a lot more from Archetypes, so this would just be nice of you. Sharing combat feats is also cool, as *teamwork feats* count as combat feats, so you can save them the trouble there, too. *Concentrated fire* is really great: if you or your buddy scored a nat20 - that's TWO crits on the enemy! That's absolutely brutal and even lets you offer a helping hand to a buddy of yours who has a lower STR/DEX score, to a degree. That strategy obviously works best if you have an unwieldy weapon, preferably ranged. The starship benefit is just cherry on top. So, in short, this archetype is only really worth a look if one of the other players plays a dedicated support character. **Important note:** the *concentrated fire* feature only works when you set the **same condition for the readied action!** I guess the balance act Paizo wanted to pull off here is that you'd only be able to use it with conditions like "The enemy enters through that doorway", but you can be pretty petty with this, setting triggers like "When the enemy does anything that isn't giving up", which essentially allows you to perform it every turn.

Cost: four combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: better bonuses to covering and harrying fire, sharing combat feats, using higher of the two attack rolls, easier stabilizing of one ally in combat.

- **Sleep Researcher (2, 4)** - some pretty powerful abilities for a very measly cost. *Sleep researcher* requires you to have a very high Intelligence score - the higher the better - which is not convenient to accomplish for a soldier. That being said, you can literally just make an entire city square filled with thousands of people fall asleep, which is a suspiciously powerful effect for a friggin level 2 feature (what were they thinking?). *Restorative slumber* is a lot less um... *intense*, acting as just a neat bonus to something

every single party is going to do - rest. The ability to counteract diseases and poisons shouldn't be ignored - they're scary in Starfinder, so having a tool against them is very nice. Don't forget you count as your own ally, so you can use it on yourself, too.

Note: while the "alternate class features" segment mentions these features are optional, it doesn't have the normal language that says you can choose to take your normal class feature at that level, instead, so I'm presuming you can not.

Cost: two combat feats.

Benefit: make everyone who can perceive you fall asleep, help one target restore more hit points and heal their poisons & diseases when long resting.

- **Spell Sergeant (2, 4, 6, 9, 12)** - you're not a mage.

Cost: four combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: none.

- **Star Knight (2, 4, 6, 12)** - pretty big archetype. *Armor mastery* is cool and useful, as 20% chance to ignore crits is great, especially considering that it stacks with force fields.. *Challenge* is really good if you have the intimidation for it (do not be fooled by the BAB bonus, as even at level 6, fighting only a CR6 enemy you could only succeed on a nat18. If you're fighting a stronger enemy at CR8 you'd only succeed on a nat 20. I don't know why this is even here, it's totally useless), as it's essentially like *antagonize*, but with no action requirement! *Guarded attack* sucks and should almost definitely be replaced (*summon*, *anchoring attack* and *create darkness* are highlights). The lv12 features are nice, too, with *willpower* and *shield other* being the best. Increasing the duration of the shaken condition transforms this archetype from "yeah pretty cool" to "wow this is great". Two easy options are the *subsonic hum* feat (real Resolve Point guzzler) and *terrifying presence* feat (absolutely amazing, but is locked to half-orcs and xenometric androids (half-orc) by default. Talk to your GM).

Cost: four combat feats.

Benefit: heavy armor benefits and order-specific bonuses.

- **Starfinder Data Jockey (2, 6, 9, 18)** - requires a very hefty combat feat investment to let you replace a bunch of skills with Computers. It's not *too* amazing, since you need to spend RP if you wanna add your full bonus to those checks, but can still be useful, and the lv18 feature does let you pretty much fully get 5 skills for the price of one. The reason this is at all interesting to us is because Soldiers get very few skill ranks, plus Mysticism is normally a Wisdom skill, so replacing it with Computers is pretty cool and lets you get more from your investment into Intelligence. *System guru* is kind of a gimmick, as cracking computers of that low level shouldn't be a problem for you in the first place. *Tactical analysis* is solid if



you're using a build that focuses on unwieldy weapons, otherwise full attacking is objectively better.

Cost: four combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: more flexible hacking and some minor tactical benefits.

- **Starfinder Forerunner (2, 4, 6)** - most of the good bonuses can only be used once per day. Nothing terribly special.

Cost: three combat feats.

Benefit: two class skills, some survival and deciphering abilities, as well as a weak repair/heal function.

- **Starsinger (2, 4, 9, 12, 18)** - very cool visual of a merry Soldier with a rocket launcher, singing a war song as he's turning his enemies into bloody gibs. *Gift of song* is (almost) literally Envoy's *get 'em*, but from an archetype, which is very, very cool. Ranged unwieldy weapon builds should seriously consider this one, as oftentimes there won't be a good use for their move actions. The unfortunate part, of course, is that it only becomes a move action at lv5, which means this totally sucks ass for us until then (you're a soldier, you need to kill!). *Destiny's device* lets you cast spells up to lv4 and gives you proficiency and *weapon focus* into starknives. While it's nice to have those options in combat, you can totally just use your unwieldy heavy ranged weapon and just cast those spells out of combat, for example. These spells are scaling with your key ability score, but are *spell-like abilities*, meaning you can't use *spell focus* feat with them. *Power ballad* is just a nice speed bonus, or provides some extra utility with your sacred weapon. *Magic moves* provides extra movement options and a speed boost, but neither are too novel at this level. *Shooting star* gives you a 6th level spell (as an archetype, lol), but also turns you into a Fey.

Note: while the "alternate class features" segment mentions these features are optional, it doesn't have the normal language that says you can choose to take your normal class feature at that level, instead, so I'm presuming you can not.

Cost: five combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: powerful party buffing powers, added movement speeds, spellcasting up to lv6, flexible damage types with a single weapon, eventually turns you into a fey.

- **Starwright (6, optionally 12 and 18)** - only has a single feature, the ability to weave starmetals into gear or vehicles. The real draw here are the armor upgrades: the one that provides spell resistance, specifically. Thing is, Spell Resistance doesn't discriminate between harmful and beneficial spells. You can lower spell resistance as a standard action until the beginning of your next turn, but it still takes actions.

Note: with COM's errata the inubrix armor upgrade added that you can walk through solid objects "(though not doors and walls)". So like... I guess you can walk through the space of a motorcycle...? An understandable nerf, but one that turns this nearly perfect pick to just a great pick. The new phasing through solid objects functionality is now also a bit more puzzling.

Overall, considering that this archetype's price is basically a single *discipline* - it can

definitely be worth it as it's a very versatile option that gives you a whole lot of benefits.

Cost: one to three combat feats.

Benefit: enhance technology with starmetals to gain unique abilities for 24 hours.

- **Steward Officer (2, 4, 9)** - Demoralizing using Diplomacy is kinda fun for demoralizing builds. *Military training* is pretty useless, I guess you may as well take *improved unarmed strike*? *Demand surrender* is very fun and narratively interesting, but requires crazy good party coordination and is gimmicky for you.

Cost: three combat feats, delayed secondary fighting style.

Benefit: some social skills, combat feats and a bonus for readying attacks and demoralizing enemies, while also allowing you to demoralize with Diplomacy.

- **Stewards Infiltrator (2, 4, 6, 12)** - definitely works much better if you have higher Charisma, but it's a pretty neat thing for a more niche social game, especially if the GM allows you to change the "Steward" part to something more fitting to the campaign. But as is, you're just not a super social class. And the price is pretty high..

Cost: four combat feats.

Benefit: pretty solid social interaction abilities, lots of good class skills and a lot of disguise abilities.

- **Stewards Stalwart (2, 4, 6, 12)** - provides some benefits for your social engagements and lets demoralize builds to use Diplomacy, which is cool, I suppose. Combat feats are pretty useless (if you're an unarmed build, you'd have this feat earlier, but this isn't a problem if you start the game at a higher level). *Stalwart tenacity* is super useful at delaying some really nasty conditions and potentially killing whoever put them on you. *Stalwart grit* is just good old fashioned damage mitigation, which is always welcome.

Cost: four combat feats.

Benefit: some social skills, combat feats.

- **Thaumaturgic Trigger (2, 4, 6)** - pretty fun archetype that gives you access to an upgraded spellthrower fusion that can use spell gems up to level 6 (normally only up to lv5) and increasing the spell level early. Changing the damage type can also be useful to exploit enemy weaknesses or avoid resistances. Essentially this gives you two casts of a damaging spell once per day at the highest possible level (one from the inserted spell gem and one from the *arcane magazine*). It doesn't even have to be a spell that deal damage. *Sonic scream*, *battle sonata*, *heat leech*, *arcing surge*, *fist of damoritosh*, *artificial geyser*, *time's edge*, *sudden collision*, *disintegrate*, *tripartite beam*, *crush skull* and *hurl forcedisk* are probably the best options. The archetype is really solid, and for the Soldier the cost is negligible. The fact that it comes online quite early certainly makes it more palatable. Gets better with levels.

Cost: three combat feats

Benefit: a free unique spellthrower fusion for your weapon that can accept stronger spell gems and has better spell progression and two free spell casts per day up to lv6 spells.

- **Union Organizer (2, 4, 6, 12, 18)** - teamwork benefits can be very powerful, but move actions are a premium for a martial combatant, as we need to get around enemies, align shields, perform full attacks and all that jazz. *Group negotiations* just sounds like it should be a part of normal roleplay, so will be useless most times, unless your GM is somehow exceptionally rules-strict to the detriment of normal logic. The capstone is friggin busted, though. It does require a very big investment, unfortunately, which holds it back, as you may as well just get the best teamwork feats with the party without anyone taking this archetype.

The current teamwork feats are *Timely Coordination*, *Above and Below*, *Back to Back*, *Last-chance Grab*, *Stand Strong*, *Tandem Feint*, *Tandem Maneuver*, *Target of Opportunity*, *Unbreakable Will*.

Cost: five combat feats.

Benefit: teamwork support for the party, social feats, eventually taking 20 on social interaction checks with Diplomacy and Intimidation.

Sample Builds

In order to highlight some reliable builds for Soldiers, I'll write down some example build progressions from lv1 to lv20. This should give you an idea of a good build you could aim for, or modify to your needs. I'll also provide some story blurbs to give you an idea of how you can write Soldier characters. These builds aren't the most min-maxed and optimized builds possible with the class, as the goal isn't to ruin the game for your table. They're just nice, fun and strong builds that won't do you dirty.

I definitely suggest you make your own character from scratch! Nothing will feel as good. However, I know that a lot of (especially new) players get intimidated by the wealth of choices, so, please, see these builds as more of an inspiration, than a "Hey you! Play this!"

Knight Errant

Name: Escadra Nuveilleur

Race: Human

Theme: Guard

Class: Soldier 1-20

Initial Ability Scores	Value
Strength	16
Dexterity	13
Constitution	12
Intelligence	10
Wisdom	10
Charisma	12



Backstory: Escadra was born and lived on Triaxus, in a smaller town within the Drakelands. One tragic day it got in the way of a local dragon ruler's path of expansion and was attacked in the process, orphaning Escadra and her younger sister. It would have been the end for her, had a roaming knight-errant of the Knights of Golarion not been in the area. She saved Escadra and her sister, bringing the girls to safety. With nowhere else to go, vengeance on her mind and a younger sister to take care of, Escadra begged for the Knights to accept her and thus began her long path to joining their valiant ranks as a squire. With nothing to her name, a younger sister to support and the martial skills provided to her by

the Knights' drill instructors, she temporarily joined a security corporation to make ends meet. During her travels she met trustworthy companions, valuable connections and practical combat skills. She plans to return back to the Knights of Golarion to complete her training, officially take her oaths and become a roaming knight-errant, similar to the woman who saved her. Secretly, however, she still plans to bring vengeance upon the dragon that took her old life away from her.

Skills: Escadra is a trained soldier, so she is well-proficient in Athletics and Acrobatics. She received some education as well and is proficient in Medicine, and Survival. Being an armored knight, she's also quite Intimidating.

Gear: The Knight Errant will be using heavy armor. Whenever available, she'll be buying personal upgrades (increasing her STR > CHA > CON). She'll also try to maximize her survivability by buying up any means of energy resistance and damage reduction that she can, such as *adaptive energy shield*, *force field*, *ablative insulation*, *resistant hide*, *weatherwear*, *dermal plating*, *force matrix*. She also always has a trusty shield at her side, upgrading it when convenient and using a one-handed advanced melee weapon. Additionally, she'll be getting gear that makes her more intimidating, such as *voice amplifier*, *vampire voice*, *improvisation adornment*, *ferocity blazon*.

Level 1: Escadra is a trained squire, taught to fight in organized groups, which is why she selects the *squad primary fighting style*.

She also learns the *weapon focus (advanced melee)* feat.

Level 2: Gains the *Star Knight archetype*, which gives her a chance to resist critical hits.

Level 3: Escadra becomes specialized in her weapons and learns the *skill focus (intimidation)* feat. She picks up *armored advantage* as her *gear boost*.

Level 4: Gains her *Star Knight challenge* feature, letting her draw enemy attention on the battlefield.

Level 5: She increases her ability scores (STR +2 to 18, DEX +2 to 15, CON +2 to 14; CHA +2 to 14). She also gains her second *primary fighting style technique*. Finally, she learns the *mobility* feat.

Level 6: Escadra learns the *holy attack* alternate *Star Knight archetype* feature.

Level 7: Learns the *nimble juggernaut gear boost* and *spring attack* feat.

Level 8: Escadra learns the *close combat* feat.

Level 9: She gains the third *primary fighting style technique*, *mystic swap*, allowing her to quickly exchange places with her allies to always stay in the thick of the action. She also picks up the *guard fighting style* to enhance her protective capabilities and to ward her allies when it matters. She also picks up the *coordinated shot* feat.

Level 10: She increases her ability scores (STR+1 to 19, DEX +2 to 17, CON +2 to 16; CHA +2 to 16) and learns the *grab attention* feat.

Level 11: Gains the *soldier's onslaught* feature, which improves her combat output and picks up the *iron will* feat. She chooses the *advanced operations specialist* ^{“alt”} feature (Intimidation) to reflect her training as a knight and drawing attention to herself. She retracts her *skill focus (intimidation)* into the *blind-fight* feat.

Level 12: Escadra gains the final *shield other* feature of her archetype, letting her take the damage instead of her friends..

Level 13: She learns the *toughness* feat, the powerful *precise flanker* feature of her *squad fighting style*, as well as the *secondary style technique* of the *guard fighting style*.

Level 14: Learns the *step up* feat..

Level 15: She increases her ability scores (STR +1 to 20; DEX +1 to 18; CON +2 to 18; CHA +2 to 18). She also gets the *improved iron will* feat and the *deflecting smash gear boost*.

Level 16: Escadra learns the *shield block* feat.

Level 17: She gains her final technique of her *primary fighting style* and the third one of her *secondary fighting style*. She also learns the *enhanced resistance* feat.

Level 18: She learns the *deflect projectiles* feat.

Level 19: Learns *lightning reflexes* feat and the *springing onslaught feat boost* "alt".

Level 20: Escadra increases her ability scores (INT +2 to 12; WIS +2 to 12; CHA +1 to 19). She also gains the powerful *kill shot* ability as well as the *reflect projectiles* feat.

Avenging Rover

Name: WARD-3N.

Race: SRO

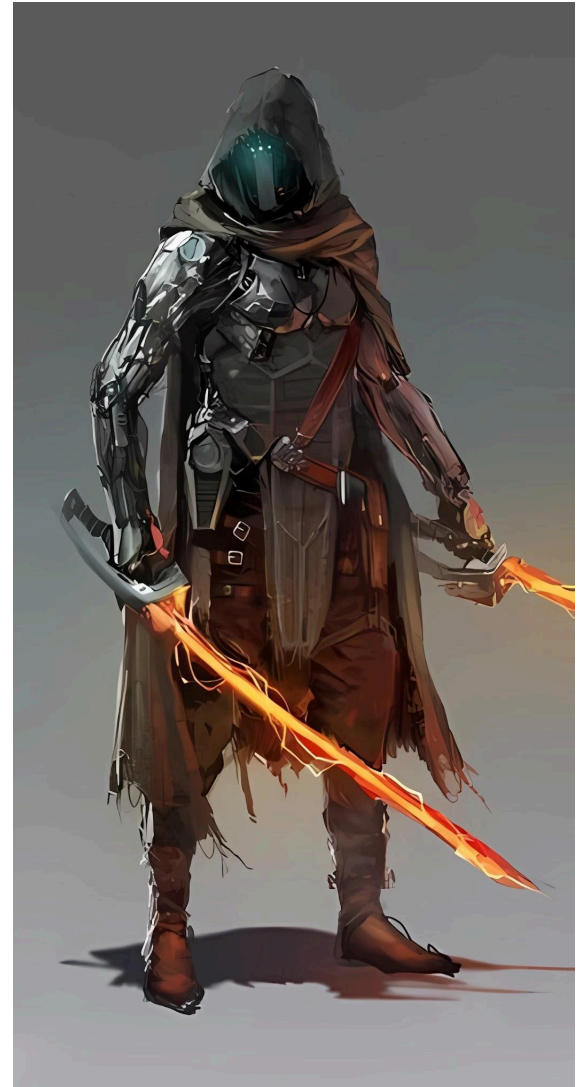
Theme: Wild Warden

Class: Soldier 1-20

Initial Ability Scores	Value
Strength	12
Dexterity	16
Constitution	10
Intelligence	10
Wisdom	14
Charisma	10

Backstory: WARD-3N is an experimental robot built by a clan of lashunta living deep in the jungles of Castrovel, hundreds of years ago. Originally constructed as a sleepless guard for the clan's hunters to assist them during their expeditions, its body has been slowly modified, tinkered with and improved by dozens of generations. Over time it became an extremely advanced machine capable of performing solo hunt expeditions against the planet's megafauna, tracking lost members through the jungle with ease, as well as defending the clan from its aggressive neighbors. The clan naturally loved it and they grew closer, as WARD-3N functionally became the clan's guardian across entire generations, bringing it great wealth. It all changed when a group of unknown attackers descended from the skies on starships and attacked the clan. Within that moment, when all it ever knew was turned into flames, WARD-3N gained a spark of consciousness, becoming truly sentient. There was little time to consider it, as, during the fighting, it was overwhelmed and disabled with a shot into its chest CPU. It has lain there, in the ruins of its home for years until, eventually, a young survivor from the attack returned to the ruins. She has taken some time to repair WARD-3N. Its memory was spotty and it has discovered that the spark of consciousness has disabled several internal memory banks related to its previous skills and knowledge. Together, they decided to take up arms, figure out why their home was attacked and bring the ones who did it to justice.

Skills: WARD-3N is an SRO built to survive in dangerous environments. It'll primarily be focusing on Acrobatics, Athletics, Engineering and Survival.



Gear: The Avenging Rover will be using light armor and operative melee weapons (with a back up ranged weapon). Starting from level 3 it'll be using dual weapons and try to get the *quickdraw hideaway limb* cybernetic augmentation to allow it to draw both of its weapons at the same time (one as a part of movement, another as a part of the attack). Additionally, it will be working with a creature companion, getting one at level 1 and progressively changing them over time, or perhaps sticking with one until the bitter end. Its companion of choice would be one that's going to help it fight in the melee, such as a tashtari, draserka, supenga pups, silicanids etc. You can find more in [my guide to creature companions](#). It'll be getting personal upgrades as soon as it can get its hands on them (increasing his DEX > STR > CON). Gear-wise, it'll be buying methods of increasing its mobility, such as a haste circuit, mobility enhancers, jetpack, as well as cybernetics like speed suspension.

Level 1: WARD-3N is a medium SRO. Its *integrated equipment* species feature lets it have a free scaling cybernetic augment. To reflect its new path for revenge, its *primary fighting style* is *wrathful warrior*, which causes it to go into an overclocked state. It also gains the *creature companion adept* feat and uses its companion almost exclusively for flanking in combat.

Level 2: It chooses the *weapon focus (advanced melee)* feat.

Level 3: WARD-3N gains *weapon specialization* with all weapons. Additionally, it gains the *multi-weapon fighting* feat and begins wielding two one-handed operative weapons in combat, switching to a ranged option when the enemy is far away. To facilitate such a style of combat, it also gains the *multi-weapon strike feat boost* ^{“alt”}.

Level 4: Gains the *mobility* feat.

Level 5: It increases its ability scores (STR +2 to 14, DEX +2 to 18, CON +2 to 12; WIS +2 to 16) and gains the second technique of its *primary fighting style*. Additionally, it learns the *creature companion expert* feat, allowing its companion to strike together with it when they get into the melee.

Level 6: WARD-3N gets the *spring attack* feat.

Level 7: Gains the *finesse striker gear boost* and the *momentous attack* feat.

Level 8: It acquires the *step up* feat.

Level 9: WARD-3N gains the third feature of its *wrathful warrior fighting style* and chooses the *rover fighting style* as its *secondary fighting style*, unlocking some of its hidden memories. It also learns the *enhanced resistance* feat.

Level 10: It increases its ability scores (STR +2 to 16, DEX +1 to 19, CON +1 to 14; WIS +2 to 18). Also gains the *step up & strike* feat.

Level 11: Gains the *twinned threat gear boost* and *creature companion master* feat. Also gains the *soldier's onslaught* feature.

Level 12: It learns the *penetrating attack* feat.

Level 13: WARD-3N learns the techniques of both its *primary* and *secondary fighting styles*. Additionally learns the *toughness* feat.

Level 14: It learns the *defensive roll* feat.

Level 15: WARD-3N increases its ability scores (STR +2 to 18; DEX +1 to 20; CON +2 to 16; WIS +1 to 19). It also gets the *melee striker gear boost* and the *spellbane* feat.

Level 16: Picks up the *versatile focus* feat to be able to use all types of weaponry more efficiently, including ranged ones.

Level 17: WARD-3N gains the final feature of its *primary fighting style* and the third feature of its *secondary fighting style*. It also learns the *lightning reflexes* feat.

Level 18: Learns the *fleet* feat.

Level 19: It learns the *improved lightning reflexes* feat. Also learns the *hampering strike gear boost*.

Level 20: Gains the powerful *kill shot* feature. Finally, picks up the *improved initiative* feat.

Armored Fist

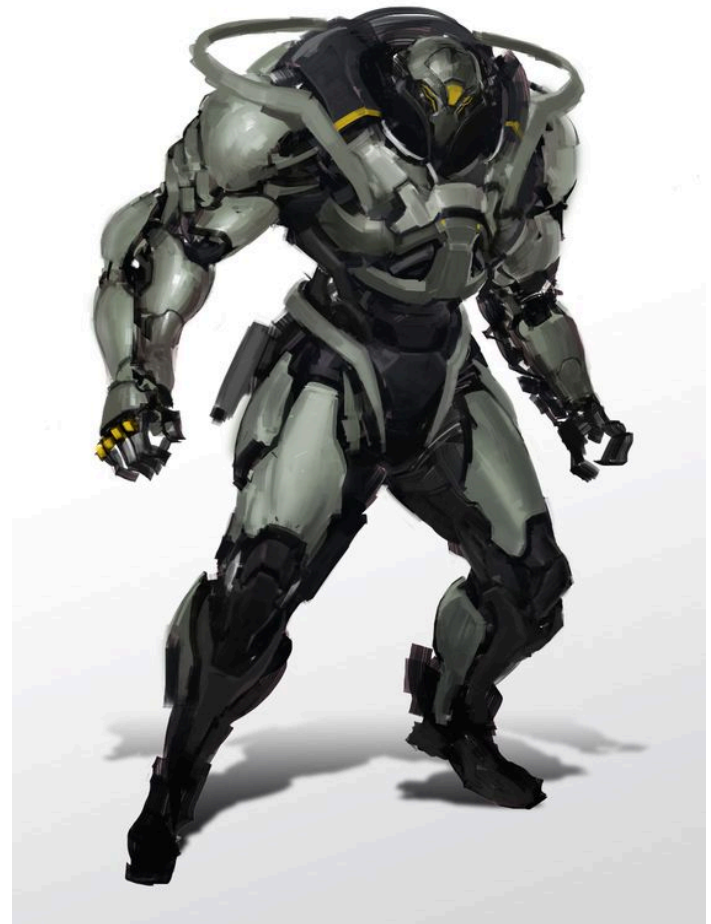
Name: Nimea Shess.

Race: Lashunta (Hunter Legacy Korasha)

Theme: Athlete

Class: Soldier 1-19, Solarian 1

Initial Ability Scores	Value
Strength	16
Dexterity	13
Constitution	12
Intelligence	8
Wisdom	10
Charisma	14



Backstory: Nimea grew up in one of the smaller cities within the Triaxan Allied Territories. She liked bullying other kids and often got into fights and brawls. Her parents, wishing to give her an outlet, signed her up for a martial arts school. She turned out to be a natural and rapidly advanced through the local professional fighting scene. Participating in non-augmented brawling matches all throughout Triaxus, she became a minor up and coming celebrity. At some point she became obsessed with the Battleflowers of Ning. However, she was deemed unworthy to join their ranks officially, seeing how her lifestyle was incompatible with the ancient order's ways. Even then, using her connections to get her hands on their secret manuals, she tried to replicate their style and practiced it by fighting against any Battleflowers she could. Her burgeoning career came to a screeching halt when, during an important exhibition match, she was accused of cheating, which sent her career spiraling down. With nowhere else to go and having no other skills, she eventually found herself joining a mercenary company. Although not the glamorous lifestyle she originally expected, her close & personal fighting style, brash personality and will to fight made her fit well into this dangerous life.

Skills: Nimea is a lashunta who lived to fight, win and entertain. She'll primarily be focusing on Acrobatics, Athletics, Intimidation and a few ranks into Profession (dancer) to emulate the Battleflowers' flowing fighting style.

Gear: The Armored Fist will be using unarmed combat in combination with heavy and powered armor. She does not require any weapons for most of the game, which gives her ample funds to

kit out her armor and purchase augmentations. At a high level, when unarmed damage begins to trail and she multiclasses into Solarian, she'll also be buying solarian weapon crystals to insert into her solarian shield and increase her unarmed damage. She'll be getting personal upgrades as well (increasing her STR/DEX (depending on whether or not she uses powered armor at the time > STR/DEX (whichever she didn't pick previously) > CON). She's also going to be performing the bull rush combat maneuver from time to time, so any gear that improves those will be beneficial to her (read more in the Combat Maneuvers part of the guide). Finally, any items that can improve her Intimidation would be beneficial, such as *voice amplifier*, *vampire voice*, *improvisation adornment*, *ferocity blazon*.

Level 1: Nimea is a korasha hunter legacy lashunta, using the *psychically resistant* alternative feature and applying her *student* bonus to Athletics and Intimidation. To reflect her proficiency with unarmed combat, she picks up the *ascetic warrior* ^{“alt”}. Due to her new life as a mercenary she requires decent protection, so her first feat will be used by restoring her *heavy armor proficiency*. Her *primary fighting style* further reflects her combat style as she chooses the *armor storm fighting style*.

Level 2: She picks up the *battleflower* archetype, delving deeper into the ancient texts to replicate their martial style, choosing the *close combat* feat.

Level 3: Nimea gets her special specialization with unarmed strikers from the *ascetic warrior* ^{“alt”}. Additionally, she gains the *weapon focus (basic melee)*. Her first *gear boost* is *melee striker*.

Level 4: She gains the *mobile* feat.

Level 5: She increases her ability scores (STR +2 to 18, DEX +2 to 15, CON +2 to 14; CHA +2 to 16) and gains the second technique of her *primary fighting style*, allowing her to wear powered armor. Additionally, she learns the *enhanced resistance* feat.

Level 6: Nimea gets the *spring attack* feat, skipping the 6th level *battleflower* feature, since she never officially joined their ranks and her fighting style doesn't have as much grace.

Level 7: Gains the *improved combat maneuver (grapple)* feat and *grabbing strike feat boost* ^{“alt”}.

Level 8: She acquires the *grab attention* feat.

Level 9: Nimea gains the *smash through* feature of her *primary fighting style*. To better facilitate using it, she also picks up the *improved combat maneuver (bull rush)* feat. Finally, she picks up the 9th level *battleflower* feature, allowing her to stagger her enemies with her punches. This delays her *secondary fighting style*.

Level 10: She increases her ability scores (STR +1 to 19, DEX +2 to 17, CON +2 to 16; CHA +2 to 18). She chooses the *blitz fighting style* as her *secondary fighting style*, as it was delayed.

Level 11: Gains the *unarmed mauler gear boost* and *add leverage* feat. Also gains the *soldier's onslaught* feature.

Level 12: She learns the *penetrating attack* feat and skips the 12th level *Battleflower* feature.

Level 13: Nimea learns the techniques of both her *primary* and *secondary fighting styles*. Additionally, she picks up the *spellbane* feat.

Level 14: She learns the *improved combat maneuver (trip)* feat.

Level 15: Nimea increases her ability scores (STR +1 to 20; DEX +1 to 18; CON +2 to 18; CHA +1 to 19). She also gets the *beatdown feat boost* ^{“alt”} and the *tripping rush* feat.

Level 16: She multiclasses 1 level into Solarian to pick up the *solar shield* feature. It allows her to complement her strikers with a solar shield bash, applying solarian weapon crystals to her

unarmed attacks and giving her a little bit more protection, while also using her shield of light to add extra visual impact to her flowing, but brutal fighting style. She chooses Bluff and Sleight of Hand for her *skill adept*. She also gains access to *stellar modes* and the two default *stellar zenith revelations*, which she won't be using too often.

Level 17: Nimea returns back to Soldier levels, gaining the *iron will* and *coordinated shot* feats.

Level 18: She gains the final feature of her *primary fighting style* and the third feature of her *secondary fighting style*.

Level 19: She learns the *improved iron will* and *defensive roll* feats.

Level 20: Finally, she increases her ability scores (STR+1 to 21; INT +2 to 10; WIS +2 to 12; CHA +1 to 20) and picks up the *advanced operations specialist* ^{“alt”} feature (Intimidation).

Desert Ranger

Name: Qikt

Race: Ysoki

Theme: Law Officer

Class: Soldier 1-20

Initial Ability Scores	Value
Strength	8
Dexterity	16
Constitution	10
Intelligence	14
Wisdom	13
Charisma	12



Backstory: Qikt was born and raised on Akiton, living in a large roaming ysoki caravan, moving from waterspot to waterspot. Life in the wasteland wasn't easy, an ysoki had to be crafty, industrious and dangerous to survive. Growing up in a large family certainly helped, as they shared knowledge with each other. Qikt learned how to fix thasteron engines, replace radiation filters, salvage ruined tech and more. He also learned how to ride animals: they never ran out of fuel, which was important in the wastelands. Naturally, he learned how to defend himself and had to apply those skills often, defending the caravan from mutated desert monsters, bandits looking for easy pickings and more. At some point, down on its luck, the caravan had to stop by the large city of Arl, where, due to a strong anti-crime policy enacted by the current thurok, law enforcement jobs were very well rewarded. Qikt and his siblings did a few jobs and, before long, their unique skill set turned them into an effective crime fighting unit. Eventually, the entire caravan was reformed into a new precinct and Qikt became a fully fledged wasteland sheriff, riding in on his mount to protect the innocent.

Skills: Qikt is a resourceful ysoki, so he's trained in Engineering to perform quick field repairs and disable locks and traps. He rides trained animals into combat, so he is trained in Survival. As a sheriff, he needs to know how to read the room and so puts ranks into Sense Motive. The rest of his skills are shared between Intimidation and Acrobatics.

Gear: The Desert Ranger will be using light armor and longarms, with the occasional heavy weapons. He's also going to be investing into a reliable mount such as shotalashu, yasakaja, draserka, thakasa, etc. You can find more in [my guide to creature companions](#). That mount will

also be useful before he gets his hands on a null space chamber, or to carry his heavier weapons, as his low strength may limit his carrying capacity. Might also be investing into a gunner harness to be able to wield those heavy weapons. Whenever available, he'll be buying personal upgrades (increasing his DEX > WIS > CHA).

Level 1: Qikt is an ysoki (default) who's well-trained in the art of shooting over long distances, which is why he chooses *sharpshoot primary fighting style*.

He also learns the *combat-trained mount* feat.

Level 2: Gains the *weapon focus (longarms)* feat.

Level 3: Qikt becomes specialized in his weapons and learns the *skill synergy (sense motive & intimidation)* feat. He picks up *bullet barrage* as his *gear boost*.

Level 4: Gains the *mobile* feat.

Level 5: He increases his ability scores (DEX +2 to 18, INT +2 to 16; WIS +2 to 15; CHA +2 to 14). He also gains his second *primary fighting style* technique. Finally, he learns the *shot on the run* feat.

Level 6: Learns the *versatile focus* feat.

Level 7: Learns the *springing shot feat boost* ^{“alt”} and *improved kip-up* feat.

Level 8: Qikt learns the *improved initiative* feat.

Level 9: He gains the third *primary fighting style technique*. He also picks up the *rover fighting style* to help him fight better in the wasteland. He also picks up the *steel nerves* feat.

Level 10: He increases his ability scores (DEX+1 to 19, INT +2 to 18, WIS +2 to 17; CHA +2 to 16) and learns the *fleet* feat.

Level 11: Gains the *soldier's onslaught* feature and picks up the *skill focus (engineering)* feat. He chooses the *advanced operations specialist* ^{“alt”} feature (sense motive) He retrains his *skill synergy* into *skill focus (intimidation)*.

Level 12: Learns the *defensive roll* feat.

Level 13: He learns the *toughness* feat, as well as the techniques of both his *primary* and *secondary fighting styles*.

Level 14: Learns the *indirect retreat* feat.

Level 15: He increases his ability scores (DEX +1 to 20; INT +1 to 19; WIS +1 to 18; CHA +2 to 18). He also gets the *great fortitude* feat and the *laser focus gear boost*.

Level 16: Qikt learns the *constant alert* feat.

Level 17: He gains the final technique of his *primary fighting style* and the third one of his *secondary fighting style*. He also learns the *enhanced resistance* feat.

Level 18: She learns the *improved critical* feat.

Level 19: Learns *improved great fortitude* feat and the *advanced operations specialist* ^{“alt”} feature (engineering). Retrains his *skill focus (engineering)* into *adaptive upgrade*.

Level 20: Qikt increases his ability scores (STR +2 to 10; CON +2 to 12; INT +1 to 20; CHA +1 to 19). She also gains the powerful *kill shot* ability as well as the *blind-fight* feat.

Raid Leader

Name: Mazdokh “Iconoclast” Zetra

Race: Half-Orc

Theme: Gladiator

Class: Soldier 1-20

Initial Ability Scores	Value
Strength	13
Dexterity	16
Constitution	10
Intelligence	10
Wisdom	8
Charisma	16



Backstory: Mazdokh was raised as a slave to the minor drow house Azazel, same as his parents, and their parents before. Working in the underways deep below Apostae’s crust, salvaging the ancient remains was a tough and dangerous job. Everything changed when, during a routine expedition, his mistake injured a distant relative of the drow house’s matriarch. For this, he was ripped away from his family, locked up in manacles and shipped off to Eox to serve as cannon fodder during one of the blood sports games. Joining a bunch of other confused and afraid newbies shipped off, they stood little chance. Luck was on his side and allowed him to survive, but he knew this luck would not last long if they did not work together. They were given access to all kinds of weaponry over there, and gladiator trainers put him through the hell of martial training to improve his odds of surviving and providing a good show. Working together, they formed a tightly knit group, tighter than, perhaps, was reasonable for people who’s days were numbered. And yet, they persevered time and time again. Mazdokh tried to not only contribute through martial prowess, but also inspiring his allies and making sure they can keep going, even when things got rough. This ragtag bunch would eventually impress a Diaspora smuggler kingpin who bought them their freedom and offered them a new lease on life as professional free gladiators. In truth, Mazdokh became a sworn enemy of the drow, pledging to free his family from their clutches and bring house Azazel to justice for generations of abuse. But, still quite inexperienced and lacking funds and knowledge of the outside world, him and his companions agreed to play along, for now.

Skills: Mazdokh is an imposing figure who’s entire life has turned into one of fighting, so he’s trained in Acrobatics, Athletics, Medicine and Intimidation.

Gear: The Raid Leader will be using any type of armor he can get his hands on, but perfectly getting his hands on powered armor. He'll be using longarms & heavy weapons that perform area attacks, such as ones with the *line*, *flexible line* and *explode* properties (there's a lack of choice at lv1, but he could start with a flame rifle), preferably ones with the *unwieldy* property, since he'll be using his move action to provide support or demoralize enemies. Don't forget the *selective* weapon fusion and AbadarCorp weapons are your friends! If powered armor is not available, he will also be investing into a gunner harness to be able to wield those heavy weapons. Whenever available, he'll be buying personal upgrades (increasing his DEX > CHA > CON). Additionally, he'll be getting gear that makes him more intimidating, such as *voice amplifier*, *vampire voice*, *improvisation adornment*, *ferocity blazon*.

Level 1: Mazdokh is a half-orc (default) who's primarily focused on making things go boom or carving deadly lines with area weapons, thus picking *bombard* as his *primary fighting style*. He also learns the *improved demoralize* feat.

Level 2: He picks up the *battle leader* archetype, providing him the powerful and flexible *victory cry* ability. His first choice is *got 'em!*

Level 3: Mazdokh becomes specialized in his weapons and learns the *skill focus (intimidation)* feat. He picks up *advanced operations specialist* ^{"alt"} feature (intimidation).

Level 4: Selects the *got 'em! victory cry* from the *battle leader* archetype, thus getting its upgraded version.

Level 5: He increases his ability scores (STR +2 to 15; DEX +2 to 18, WIS +2 to 10; CHA +2 to 18). He also gains his second *primary fighting style* technique. Finally, he learns the *powered armor proficiency* feat.

Level 6: Learns the *grenade mastery* feat.

Level 7: Learns the *selective explosion gear boost* and *subsonic hum* feat.

Level 8: Mazdokh learns the *weapon focus (heavy)* feat.

Level 9: He gains the third *primary fighting style technique*. He also picks up the *improved unarmed strike* feat. Additionally, he picks up the *regroup! victory cry* of the *battle leader* archetype, thus delaying his *secondary fighting style*. Finally, he retrains his *skill focus (intimidation)* to *advance warning*.

Level 10: He increases his ability scores (STR+2 to 17, DEX +1 to 19; WIS +2 to 12; CHA +1 to 19). He also picks up the *bullet rain fighting style* to further increase his benefits for using area weapons.

Level 11: Gains the *soldier's onslaught* feature (which is likely not super useful for him) and picks up the *iron will* feat. He chooses the *powerful explosive gear boost*.

Level 12: Learns the *glorious shout* feature of the *battle leader* fighting style, choosing *regroup!* a second time to get the upgraded version.

Level 13: He learns the *improved iron will* feat, as well as the techniques of both his *primary* and *secondary fighting styles*.

Level 14: Learns the *versatile focus* feat.

Level 15: He increases his ability scores (STR +1 to 18; DEX +1 to 20; WIS +2 to 14; CHA +1 to 20). He also gets the *quick draw* feat and the *double grenade toss gear boost*.

Level 16: Mazdokh learns the *cook grenade* feat.

Level 17: He gains the final technique of his *primary fighting style* and the third one of his *secondary fighting style*. He also learns the *enhanced resistance* feat.

Level 18: He learns the *take a breather!* feature of the *battle leader* fighting style

Level 19: Learns *great fortitude* feat and the *heavy onslaught gear boost*.

Level 20: Mazdokh increases his ability scores (CON +2 to 12; INT +2 to 12; WIS +2 to 16; CHA +1 to 21). He also gains the powerful *kill shot* ability as well as the *blind-fight* feat.

Cleaving Bulwark

Name: Naelkon

Race: Trox

Theme: Dream Prophet

Class: Soldier 1-20

Initial Ability Scores	Value
Strength	16
Dexterity	11
Constitution	12
Intelligence	10
Wisdom	14
Charisma	10



Backstory: Naelkon is an old retired soldier, who was born on Nchak. Many decades were spent fighting the detestable Swarm. Many battle brother lost. Many horrors seen. He remembers his last fight well, when he got himself surrounded and pierces through by a long claw. As he lay dying on a blood-soaked field, he could swear he saw Pharasma's Boneyard begin appearing *beyond*. However, a timely reinforcement managed to pull him to safety. Rewarded with a medal for his service to the Pact Worlds government and the respect of the Nchakian citizens, he was discharged from the military to rest. Decades passed, his children grew up and, during his retirement, Naelkon began to detest violence. Indeed, he felt a newfound spiritual connection to Hylax, who's teachings felt right to his bruised heart. The years weren't the most kind to him: his reflexes dulled, his muscles softened, his chitin brittle. The old warrior knew that it wouldn't be long before Pharasma reclaimed him. Perfectly content with this peaceful end, it was all shattered when one night, as Liavara's moons were aligned in a special way, he saw a prophetic dream. Hylax herself seemed to draw him away, on a spiritual journey. An important event was bound to happen, a sacred artifact to be unearthed and protected. Although he had a happy family and a calm spiritual existence, he could not take these prophecies lightly, as indicated to him by Hylaxian priests. He has long since sold off his battle equipment, all but his old maul. Grabbing its well-worn haft, he bid his goodbye to his family and went towards his destined final fight.

Skills: Naelkon is an old and wizened soldier, who's very spiritually in tune with the divine and arcane. He's trained in Athletics, Sense Motive, Mysticism and Perception.

Gear: The Cleaving Bulwark will be using heavy armor. He'll be using heavy unwieldy advanced

weapons. Whenever available, he'll be buying personal upgrades (increasing his STR > CON > WIS). Starting from level 13 he'll be using his style's *forceful attack* feature, so any gear that improves bull rush will be beneficial to him (read more in the Combat Maneuvers part of the guide).

Level 1: Naelkon is a trox (default) who's used to fighting large groups of enemies and dealing with huge weapons, thus choosing *powerhouse style* as his *primary fighting style*.

He also learns the *skill synergy (Sense Motive & Perception)* feat.

Level 2: He learns the *improved unarmed strike* feat.

Level 3: Naelkon becomes specialized in his weapons and learns the *weapon focus (advanced melee)*. He picks up the *spinning cleave feat boost* "alt".

Level 4: He learns the *great cleave* feat.

Level 5: He increases his ability scores (STR +2 to 18; DEX +2 to 13, CON +2 to 14. WIS +2 to 16). He also gains his second *primary fighting style* technique. Finally, he learns the *connection inkling* feat (taking the *defrefx hardiness* lv1 spell and *token magic & starwalk* lv0 spells).

Level 6: Learns the *mobility* feat.

Level 7: Naelkon learns the *defensive cleave feat boost* "alt" and *righteous frenzy* feat.

Level 8: He learns the *plow through* feat.

Level 9: He gains the third *primary fighting style technique*. He also picks up the *armor storm secondary fighting style* to further improve his unarmed attacks when triggering attacks of opportunity and eventually get powerful bonuses to bull rush. Finally, he learns the *enhanced resistance* feat.

Level 10: He increases his ability scores (STR +1 to 19, DEX +2 to 15; CON +2 to 16; WIS +2 to 18). He also learns the *spring attack* feat.

Level 11: Gains the *soldier's onslaught* feature (which is likely not super useful for him) and picks up the *dispelling strike* feat. He chooses the *melee striker gear boost*.

Level 12: Learns the *improved combat maneuver (bull rush)* feat.

Level 13: He learns the *skill focus (mysticism)* feat, as well as the techniques of both his *primary* and *secondary fighting styles*.

Level 14: Learns the *penetrating attack* feat.

Level 15: He increases his ability scores (STR +1 to 20; DEX +2 to 17; CON +2 to 18; WIS +1 to 19). He also gets the *toughness* feat and the *draining finisher gear boost*.

Level 16: Naelkon learns the *add leverage* feat.

Level 17: He gains the final technique of his *primary fighting style* and the third one of his *secondary fighting style*. He also learns the *lightning reflexes* feat.

Level 18: He learns the *knock heads* feat.

Level 19: Learns the *improved lightning reflexes* feat and the *armored advantage gear boost*.

Level 20: Naelkon increases his ability scores (STR +1 to 21; DEX +1 to 18; INT +2 to 12; WIS +1 to 20). He also gains the powerful *kill shot* ability as well as the *laugh at danger* feat.

Shilling

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