3:16

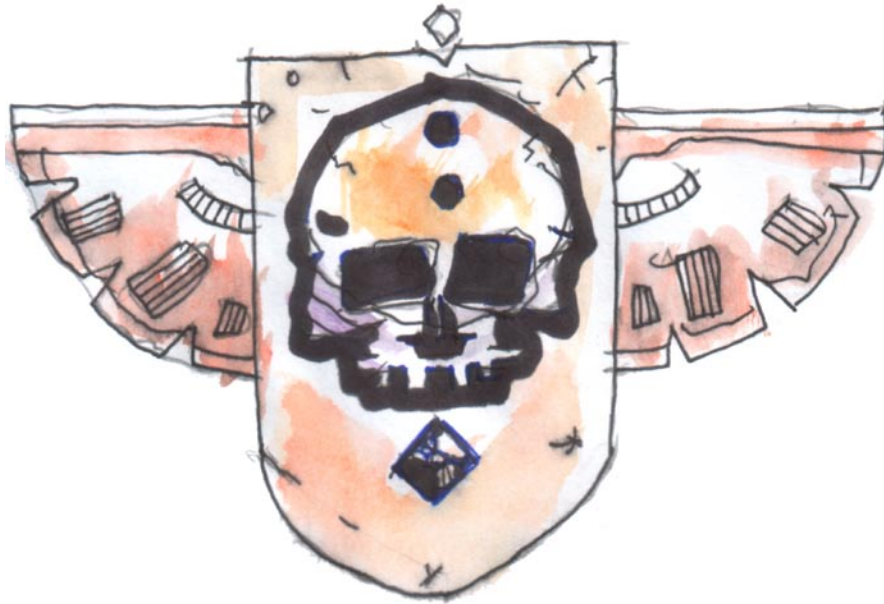## CARNAGE AMONGST THE STARS

BY GREGOR HUTTON

A ROLE-PLAYING GAME FOR THE OCTOBER "RONNIES"
USING THE TERMS 'COSMOS' AND 'FIGHT'

Little Green Men

Vrakkkk-kkkk-kkkkk. Corporal Tollman's Energy Cannon converted the group of huddling creatures into a cloud of swirling space dust. Vrakkkk-kkkk-kkkkk. Another group, and another, and another. The cannon's gunnery computer was beeping into Tollman's earphones at a rapid tempo. These little green bastards were getting murdered. The Kill Counter on top of the cannon increased by the millisecond. Impassively counting the carnage. The rhythmic beeping was trance-like and hypnotic.

Vra-wheeeeeeee. The energy beam sheared off, missing the target and detonating a pile of rocks instead. Suddenly, from all around little green men started to race closer and closer.

Tollman's mind flashed back to a time long before...

She was maybe 10 and they'd been playing The Game. In The Game you went into this really dark cave. All the other kids were already in there and they had sticks and stones. They poked, prodded, bashed and frightened you while you tried to make it to the back of the cave. You had to get there, overcoming your fear and panic, and grab some moss, slick and wet to touch, from the very furthermost cave wall. Then you had to run over the wet floor of the cave avoiding the tripping feet and thrown rocks to break out free into the light.

If you did that then they let you join their gang. It had taken Tollman five or six attempts to get to the back of that cave. But when she did she had learned not to panic or be frightened even when the unexpected happened. She was cool under pressure and had learnt to keep it simple. It was something that had served her well in the Force too.

Never panic, it'll get you dead.

Back to the present Tollman lowered the cannon and swept a series of ravening beams of energy through the fast-approaching hordes. They fell into clouds of dust. Motes drifting intricately through the alien atmosphere of this hell-hole of a planet.

Vrakkkk-kkkk-kkkkk. The last little green bastard evaporated into a cloud of constituent atoms. The Kill Counter stopped at 97. The tip of the cannon was glowing white hot and the whine of the cooling fans was the only sound left.

Sergeant Brand looked over the top of the trench, "Corporal, status?"

"All Clear, Sergeant. A series of trenches ahead and then we're done here. After that," she paused, "it's not so clear."

Brand nodded at the Lieutenant next to him in the trench. The first hurdle had been cleared.

On a cosmic beach, I'll see you there.

– Advert for the 3:16th Expeditionary Force

The World of Tomorrow

3:16 is a role-playing game set in the far future. It's an SF setting where everyone plays members of the elite 3:16th Expeditionary Force. This force left Terra over 10,000 strong many years ago with an explicit mission.

Their whole mission was to fight, and defeat, everything in the Universe that they could find. Alien civilizations, intelligences and life of any kind were to be wiped out to protect the future safety of the people home on Terra.

Terra is a prosperous place. No one works any more and there is no disease, no hate and no crime or trouble. People are sterile and have to seek the permission of the Terran Council to have children. Successful applicants have medical modifications made that allow for procreation and the children themselves are sterilised at the onset of puberty. They leave childish things behind them and become a citizen of Terra.

Life expectancy is now essentially a meaningless statistic. How long do you want to live for? You only leave this life when you want to, and who would want to? Paradise is reality.

When the Council formed the Expeditionary Forces they found it easy to recruit. After all they offered a life of excitement and adventure. See the cosmos, travel and live life to the full. Don't drop yourself in a suicide booth, serve your fellow Terrans by joining the Force. Child permits were raised as necessary to meet the demand, and everyone rejoiced in the plan.

Later adverts featured wholesome troopers drinking cocktails on a cosmic beach on the edge of known space – an ideal that many wanted to live. Terra, for some, was too safe and too familiar. So they sought adventure in the Force.

For years they have recruited Terrans for the Expeditionary Forces and sent troopers out into space. The players all play characters that joined the elite 3:16th unit.

The player characters will experience a series of scenarios strung across the vastness of the cosmos. And perhaps one day they will return to Terra.

I was so happy when the Council gifted me permission for a child. Now that he is joining the 3:16th I couldn't be a prouder parent.

– Arabella Vegrant, Terran citizen and mother to a Trooper

About Role-Playing

A role-playing game is a group experience where you portray characters in an imaginary setting. In 3:16 you are describing soldiers fighting their way across the cosmos.

Here are a few general role-playing game terms that you should know.

d10 A ten-sided die, it generates a number from 1 to 10.

2d10 Two ten-sided dice rolled and added together, e.g. a roll of "5" on one die and "7" on the other gives a result of 12.

d100 Two ten-sided dice rolled together and the result is read as a percentage. One ten-sided die gives the "tens" and the other the "units", e.g. a roll of "5" on the tens die and "7" on the units die gives a result of 57.

A roll of "10" on the tens die counts as "0", so "10" on the tens die and "4" on the units die is read as "04" or just plain old 4 to you and me. A roll of "10" on both dice gives the score "00" meaning 100.

GM (GameMaster) A participant in the game who describes the Universe and all the creatures and non-player characters.

NPC (Non-Player Character) A character that is not played by a player, but by the GM instead.

PC (Player Character) A character that is played by a player.

Player A participant in the game that plays a character.

Character Creation

Your going to need to create a character to play 3:16 so here are the basic things you need to know.

Name

Write in your character's name here. Be inventive. No, I'm not giving you a list this time. Take a look at the sample characters given in this document if you need to see what I came up with.

Reputation

Write in your reputation. What do you see your character as? Are they hot headed? Cool under fire? Crazy? Smart? Honourable? Sleazy? Trustworthy? Loyal to a fault? A Pig?

Abilities

There are two abilities that characters in 3:16 possess: **Fighting Ability** and **Non-Fighting Ability**.

Both abilities are rated between 1 and 10 for player characters: 1 is very bad, while 10 is the best of the best.

Ideally players should start play with their abilities between 2 and 8 in value. This allows the characters some room for development over several scenarios.

Note that sometimes aliens will have ratings above 10, but you needn't worry about that.

Fighting Ability (FA)

This governs anything that involves fighting. So firing a rifle or a heavy weapon, throwing a knife, or beheading someone with your bare hands are all examples of FA. Fighting in other words.

## Non-Fighting Ability (NFA)

This covers anything, and I mean anything, that isn't fighting. Catching things, understanding strange alien glyphs, climbing, piloting ships, survival knowledge, spotting clues, combat engineering, tactics, being sociable or just plain digging a trench are all examples of using NFA. Not fighting in other words.

Allocate Points to FA and NFA

I recommend that you start with 10 points ("Level 10") to distribute between FA and NFA. The default is FA 5 and NFA 5, but you could choose to have 8 and 2 if you so wished.

Strength and Weakness Slots

You will see that you have spaces (called "Slots") to write in Strengths and Weaknesses on your character sheet. Don't write in any just now, you only fill these in when you use one in game.
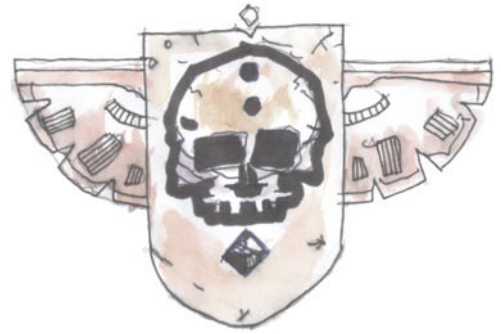
Levels, FA, NFA and Slots

Although a character has the potential for 10 Strengths and 10 Weaknesses, you normally start with only 5 slots available in each of Strenths and Weaknesses.

See the table below relating "Level", which is your total of FA and NFA, and slots.

Level (=FA+NFA)	Strengths	Weaknesses
1	1	0
2	1	1
3	2	1
4	2	2
5	3	2
6	3	3
7	4	3
8	4	4
9	5	4
10	**5**	**5**
11	6	5
12	6	6
13	7	6
14	7	7
15	8	7
16	8	8
17	9	8
18	9	9
19	10	9
20	10	10*

*The 10th Weakness for a member of 3:16 is always "Hatred for Home".

This is a realisation that the trooper has reached the end of their mission – there is nothing left to kill but Terra.

It compells them to head homeward to seek bloody revenge.

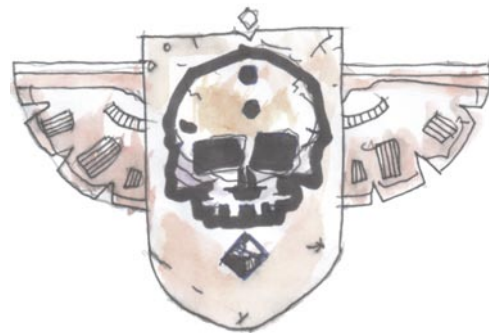## Rank

As you are all playing characters in a military unit then you have to decide who is playing what role in the group. Every group has a number of Troopers. In addition there is a Lieutenant, a Sergeant and a Corporal, although the GM may feel that the Lieutenant should be an NPC.

Each rank gets different equipment and training. Note that the higher ranks give orders to the lower ranks. This isn't just an influence or discipline issue. The characters have had their DNA altered to reinforce the loyalty that all Troopers feel to their superior officers.

Rank	Weapons	Other Equipment	Close Combat Training
Lieutenant	Sidearm, ElectroSword, PK Bomb	Medical Kit, Computer	Martial Arts Training
Sergeant	Sidearm, Rifle, Knife, Grenades	Medical Kit, Binoculars	Martial Arts Training
Corporal	Energy Cannon, Knife, Grenades	Entrenching tools	Hand-To-Hand Training
Troopers	Energy Rifle, Knife, Grenades	Entrenching tools	Hand-To-Hand Training

Write in your Rank when you have decided on it, and list the equipment, weapons and training on the character sheet.

Kills

"Kills" is the number of creatures you have killed in your career. Roll a d10 for every point of FA your character has. So if you have 5 points in FA then you roll 5d10 and total that up. You should get something about 25ish if you have an FA of 5.

You've killed that many critters before the game has started. Use this box to keep a track of how many you kill in your career. Award yourself medals when you reach significant milestones in murder.

Double this initial number of Kills if you start the game with the Energy Cannon (i.e. you are the Corporal).

Example Characters

Name	*Lieutenant Drake*	*Sergeant Brand*	*Corporal Tollman*	*Trooper Vegrant*	*Trooper Collins*
Rep	Cold, calculating	Hard, uncompromising	Dedicated, honest	Soft, lazy	Stupid, crazy
FA	4	5	7	5	8
NFA	6	5	3	5	2
Kills	16	30	92	32	52

All have 5 slots available for Strengths and 5 slots available for Weaknesses.
They have the Weapons, Equipment and Close Combat Training listed above.

Mistakes

"Heh, Casey. I'm going to join 3:16."

Those were the words that had broken his heart. Tollman and Casey had been lovers for three years at the end of school. She didn't think it was going to last anyway, being realistic. After all, everyone expected Casey to go to the Terran Council. She hadn't known that he'd ripped up his application to stay with her.

"Oh…" his voice had wavered as the meaning of what she'd said hit home.

Tollman recalled that his voice had trailed off, and the fire in his eyes dimmed noticeably, though he tried to hide it. An off-ness appeared from nowhere, an awkwardness that was almost tangible. Looking back she realised that Casey looked at her like you would look at someone who was dead, he knew what 3:16 was all about. Tollman hadn't understood that then. But she did now.

In 3:16 you fought until you died, and you didn't come back. Ever. They told you in the adverts that you returned a hero, all worldly wise and full of stories of far flung galaxies and nebulae, but when you thought about it no one ever did. Those were the rules. Leave, kill and die.

It was her biggest mistake.

She had been in 3:16 for so long that she'd almost forgotten Terra, but every now and then she'd do something stupid and it would always remind her of the last days she spent there. Miserable while she waited to go to 3:16. Wanting to be free of damned Terra.

She now saw that she'd been pretty happy and thrown it all away to take some cosmic holiday with guns. But the truth about 3:16 is that it's really an extended funeral, and if you're lucky you got to see all your brothers killed first.

No use regretting past mistakes, or present ones…

Tollman snapped back to the present and apologised to the Lieutenant. Soon she was starting to dig the trenches for the squad. Hard work, for sure. She would never speak out of turn again. After all, Tollman knew in her heart that this was the kind of shit that you had to put up with when you were in 3:16. And it wasn't the Lieutenant's fault that she was here.

The Lieutenant would have been justified in stripping her of her rank, and beating seven shades of shit out of her right there in front of the squad. But that wasn't necessary, everyone makes mistakes and if you're smart you learn from them.
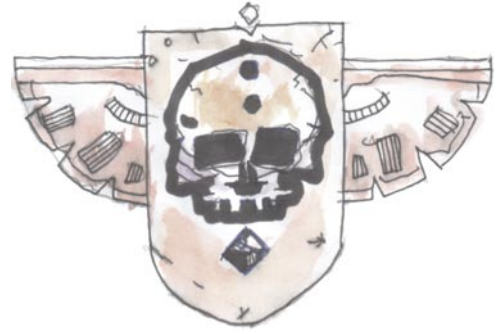
Playing The Game

Now that you have created a character you will need to know the rules for playing the game.

Most of the game is narration. The GM describes the game world around the player characters, and acts out the parts of NPCs. The players all narrate what their characters are doing and saying, and the narrative goes on like this.

Sometimes there are conflicts. And in a game about fighting creatures all across the Universe, where would we be without conflict?

Conflicts

In a conflict both sides say what they'd like to do.

So in a brawl it might be that both sides say they are attempting to kick the living crap out of each other, with varying degrees of anatomical description.

Other types of conflict could be governed by NFA, such as running after, or fleeing from, hordes of alien creatures, or arguing a point of reasoning with a planetary intelligence.

The character with the highest Ability score in a conflict is the "Acting Character" (AC). Other characters in a conflict are called "Reacting Characters" (RCs).

The AC tries to roll equal to or under their Ability score to narrate a turn.

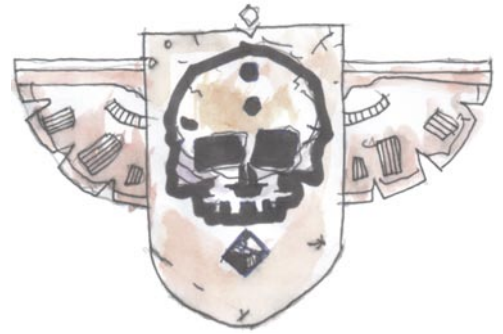*A roll of 10 always fails. A roll of 1 always succeeds.*

If successful the player then narrates the turn, and rolls for outcome if necessary (how many creatures you kill for example).

The RCs don't get narrative control until the AC fails. If the AC keeps succeeding then they keep the narrative going until they choose to stop or they fail.

When the AC fails then the character with the next highest Ability score becomes the AC. The previous AC moves to acting after the lowest RC in the conflict.

Example: *Tollman has an FA of 7 and the Green Bastards have an FA of only 5. Therefore, Tollman is the AC. If her player rolls 7 or lower then Tollman is successful. The roll is 5 – success.*

The player then rolls for the outcome. Tollman has an Energy Cannon which causes d100 Kills. The dice are rolled – 98. Tollman's player narrates the outcome describing the slaughter of 98 Green Bastards with ravening beams of death spouting from her Energy Cannon–the high tempo beeping ringing in her ears.

"I swing my boot at the creature's head and try and cave its skull in."

"The creature looks like it's trying to dodge your boot and bring its clawed hand raking across your body"

– Example declarations of intent.

How long is a Turn?

A turn is a variable length of action. Roughly it is 5 to 30 seconds of game time.

So in combat it could be describing the outcome of some fire combat or a bar brawl.

Failure?

Had Tollman's player failed, by rolling an 8, say, then the Green Bastards would have become the AC and attempted to roll 5 or under on a d10. If successful they would have caused Tollman one wound. The description of the injury could be quite gruesome too. These Green Bastards are damn angry at all their fellows being killed.

3:16

CARNAGE AMONGST THE STARS

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Scenes

There are two different types of scenes in 3:16. They are present scenes and flashback scenes.

Present Scenes

This is what is happening in the current scenario. The game begins with your characters in the middle of their tour with 3:16. So all the present scenes describe what is happening in the game world at the present time. For example, everyone is on an alien planet fighting a large number of Green Bastards.

Almost all of the narrative will be in Present Scenes.

Flashback Scenes

These are scenes are specific to one character and allow the player to flesh out their character. More importantly they allow the player to dictate the narrative on returning to the present scene. For example, Tollman's player narrates her character's cave experience to regain the narrative in the fight with the Little Green Men.

She had failed on her roll as AC and rather than give the narrative to the Little Green Men she chose to use a Strength slot to narrate a Flashback scene.

Flashback scenes are from before the present, i.e. they are either pre-3:16 or in the earlier days of the character's cosmic exploration. Each flashback should accentuate a different Strength or Weakness.

You must narrate a Flashback if you want to use a Strength or Weakness in the game. Once you have narrated the flashback you write in the Strength or Weakness on your character sheet. That slot is then permanently used up.

Flashbacks featuring Strengths mean you win in the present.

Flashbacks featuring weaknesses mean you lose in the present, however you get to narrate how you lose.

You can use either a Strength or a Weakness slot to grab the narrative at any point. As you only have a limited number of Strength slots you will want to sometimes use a Weakness slot.

One example could be that you are killed by a large alien monster. Rather than use a Strength slot to gain the narrative and kill the creature, you elect to use a Weakness and narrate a loss, but on your terms.

So in Flashback you describe an episode of fear in your past, returning to the present you drop your weapon and cower away from the creature. You describe it poisoning you and rendering you unconscious before taking you off, alive, to its lair.

Trooper Vegrant lifted the skull from the floor. It looked almost human.

Below it a collection of bones lay in an untidy pile. And a helmet. On the helmet it said "2:39."

Vegrant dropped the helmet in shock. The 2:39th had been here? And killed? Behind him acid dripped from a creature's maw...

3:16

CARNAGE AMONGST THE STARS

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Weapons

When fighting your way in the harsh worlds of 3:16 you will need weapons. These are described in the following way:

| *Weapon Name*	*Effect*	*Range*
Description		

ElectroSword — d10 kills — Close Combat
This is a long diamond layered slashing, stabbing and cutting weapon that vibrates with a powerful energy. It can be used in close combat and can easily slice through thick metal.

Energy Rifle — 2d10 kills — Medium Range
The standard issue of the 3:16th. These guns have effectively limitless ammunition and can carve down hordes of alien life forms given the opportunity.

Energy Cannon — d100 kills — Medium Range
Every squad has a cannon in its arsenal. These heavy duty death dealers are the sort of thing bad, bad people dream about at night. They do tend to make the operator a prime target for enemy attacks though. Heavy and hard to run with.
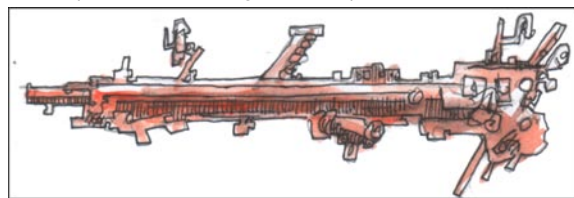
Energy Cannon

Knife — 1 kill — Close Combat
This is a carbon−steel or diamond layered slashing, stabbing and cutting weapon. It can be used in close combat or thrown 10 metres or so. Good for cutting ropes, vines and feelers.

Grenades — d10 kills — Close Range
A trooper's best friend when trying to clear narrow spaces and buildings. The disadvantage is that in really cramped spaces the troopers themselves may fall victim to their own grenades.

**PK Bomb** — Kills All — Planetary
Planet Killer, one use only. Kills everything in a planetary system. If this weapon is deployed it's time to fold up the character sheets and start back at the beginning. Deadly.

Rifle — d10 kills — Long Range
A slug-throwing rifle that has a tremendous range and great stopping power. Less deadly than an Energy Rifle but with a greater range and a more satisfying "crack" when fired.

Sidearm — 1 kill — Close Range
This is a laser or energy pistol, or perhaps a slug-throwing revolver. In any case this weapon can take out one enemy at Close Range (about 25 metres, close enough to see the whites of their eyes, or count the suckers on their tentacles). The sidearm has effectively unlimited ammunition.
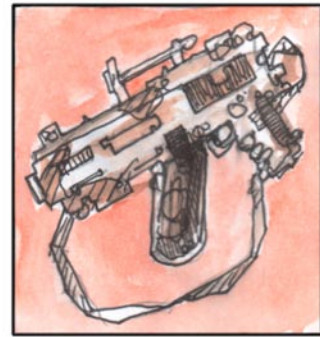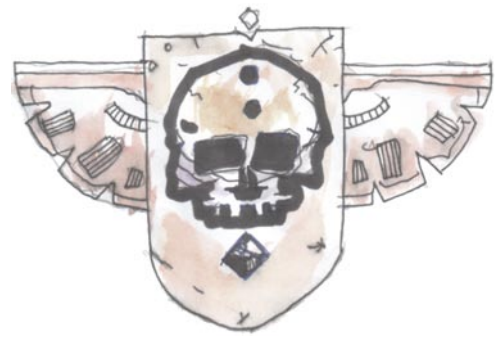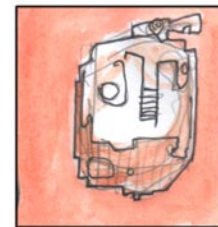
Energy Rifle
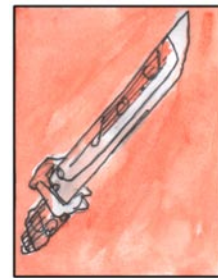
ElectroSword

Knife

Grenade

Ranges

Close Range: Within closing distance. Anything up to 25 metres. Weapons that are limited to Close Range can also be used in **Close Combat** (hand-to-hand fighting).

Medium Range: About 100 metres or so. The target has to be visible with the naked eye and give a reasonable profile to aim at.

Long Range: Within a km or so. The target can be spotted with a scope and the slugs have the power to travel that distance.

Close Combat Training

In addition to the ranged and close combat weapons that members of 3:16 have available to them, there are also fighting styles for hand-to-hand combat.

Like Close Combat with weapons the effective range is something like 5 metres.

Hand-To-Hand Training   1 kill   Melee
All members of the Expeditionary Force are trained in fighting in close combat both with, and without, weapons. Basic H2H training allows you to kill someone with your bare hands or an improvised weapon within one turn (i.e. 5-30 seconds). Narration should describe the blocking and landing of blows, or grappling, choking and breaking your opponent.

Martial Arts Training   d10 kills   Melee
More advanced training for close combat is in the form of Martial Arts. The actual art learned varies from place to place, and from trainer to trainer. They all have one things in common: they are very fucking deadly. Give your martial arts style an exotic name and pepper the narrative with vibrant and deadly moves and blows. My *Sfit-Cha* beats your *Fratd-Kong*!

Armour

Now all of this stuff is all well and good. You're giving out kills by the diceload but what about when a creature hits you? Well, if that happens you first check to see if your armour stopped the blow. They don't equip you with armour for no good reason. This stuff will keep you alive more often than not.

3:16 Armour   *Roll 6 or below to "save" when struck.*

On a roll of 6 or below you are uninjured and the armour saves you. Of course, your opponent still has the narrative and may try again next turn. But there is always the chance they will fail.

The armour also protects you from falling debris and so on.

What's the armour like?

Well, the armour has overlapping plates of steel and ceramic composite, topped off by a helmet, with a communicator and respirator. It's tough, lightweight and is resistant to most things.

For fighting in a vacuum you have a full-body suit that protects you from environmental damage and provides you with life support. The suit is powered and is able to give you unimpaired movement. It has an array of sensors and information banks.

Some suits even have jet-packs or limited thrusting rockets that can bestow the ability to fly or hover.
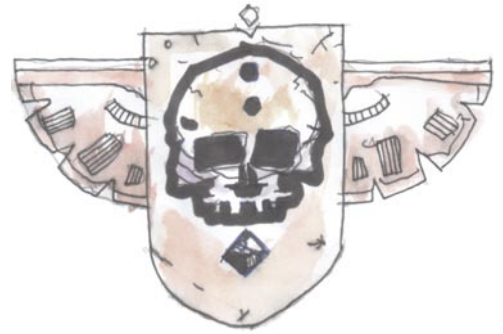
"My right fist cleaves down shattering its crab-like face into four equally sized pieces, my other fist sweeps back over the top of the trench breaking the necks of three other crabmen in one single sweeping strike..."

– Narrating a Martial Arts success.
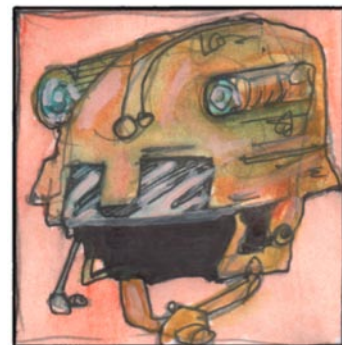
Helmet

Health and Injury

If a PC is injured they simply increment one level for every injury. A PC starts off at "White" which means they are completely uninjured. If they are injured then they mark their Life Monitor to show they are now Hurt.

The player should narratively describe the injury and any impairment that it causes. Green is a light injury that is more a discomfort than anything else. Amber indicates a noticeable wound and the impairment could be a slight fracture or a deep gash. The character will get fatigued quicker with this type of wound and needs rest and attention. Red indicates that the character is seriously wounded and needs medical attention.

Health	Description
White	Not injured in any way.
Green	Hurt by a small amount of damage.
Amber	Impaired in some way.
Red	Bleeding like a stuck pig.
Black	Dead.

Medical Attention

Any trooper can inspect another character and "patch them up" using a medical kit. The injured character stays at their current wound level but will get better by one wound box per day. So someone at Red will be at Amber a day later then Green a day after that. Three days later they will be fully fit once more.

Such are the wonders of medical science in the Universe of 3:16.

Being Killed

I feel it is a good idea that PCs cannot be killed straight out under normal circumstances. Especially if the player has a really good character and doesn't want it to die. Well, there are a few things about this.

Every player has the chance to use a Strength or Weakness to alter the narrative. To save their character they can describe a quality of toughness that makes them pull through against the odds and so on.

I'm assuming that the player is out of Strength and Weakness slots if they're being killed. Does any other player want to use a Strength or Weakness to narrate for them? Maybe they have Loyalty as a weakness and they take the blow for their brother? Or they have a Strength that allows them to intervene? If that isn't going to happen then it's hard to see why you should keep the character alive. Maybe you should just let the character die?

On the other hand, 3:16 are the Elite of the Elite of the Elite, so if everyone is in agreement then the character can be revived after the scenario is done. So the character is able to fight again another day, just not today. The others can patch you up and get you back on your feet, though they may have to be bionic. Write down some scars and disabilities in your character's description and you're good to go again. I think that's weak though.

Two times the gloves come off though.
(1) During the Final Showdown on Terra, if you have one, then you can most definitely be killed. You go black there and you're done. Period.
(2) If the Lieutenant ever, and I mean fucking-ever, uses the PK Bomb then you're all done. It's a wrap. That thing is a guaranteed Planet Killer, and it does exactly what it says on the label. If you're on the planet when that fucker goes off then it's over.
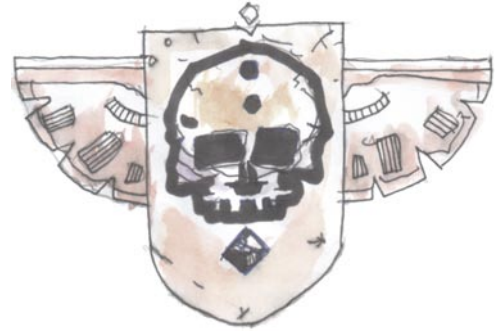
Promotion In The Field

If a character of more senior rank dies then a lower ranking character can be promoted. If the character is promoted they gain all the weapons and training of their new role.

Alternatively a new character can be introduced to replace the senior rank if you prefer.
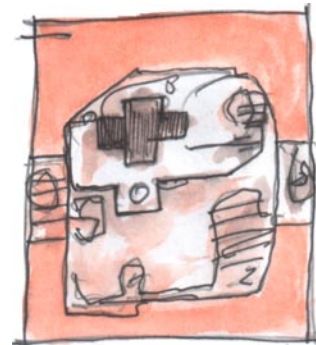
Medical Pack

Support Items

Now the unit has some pretty hefty stuff that can be used to push scenarios along.

Orbital Bombardment   Ignores Armour

Shelling from space. Every enemy is killed and all PCs on the planet take 2 wounds. A desperate measure but the Lieutenant might call this one in when everything is looking desperate.

E-Vac   Allows PCs to escape a situation

The PCs are removed from a hostile area, but suffer 1 wound in the escape. This wound can be prevented with an armour save.

Space Barge   Transport

The ship that 3:16 set off to explore in was a converted space hotel liner. It has a multitude of gun turrets and rocket pods added. Let's face it though, at some point the GM is going to set this thing on fire and kill off a load of the other troops in the unit. At that point the PCs will be looking for alternative means of transport. It does have anti-star and anti-planet missiles too.

Drop Ship   Transport

A ship that can travel in planetary atmospheres as well as space. This vehicle is bristling with cannons and all sorts of carnage-causing items. Use your imagination. It comes with an Armoured Personnel Carrier too. At a push it can be used as transport if anything were to happen to the Space Barge.
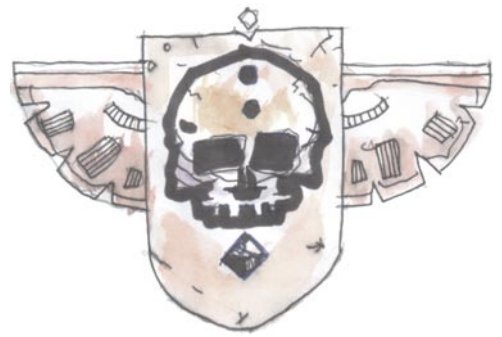
APC   Transport

Big on armour, huge of weapons, bigger on wheels. This vehicle can flat out tear over a multitude of terrain types while blasting critters on a 360° field of fire.
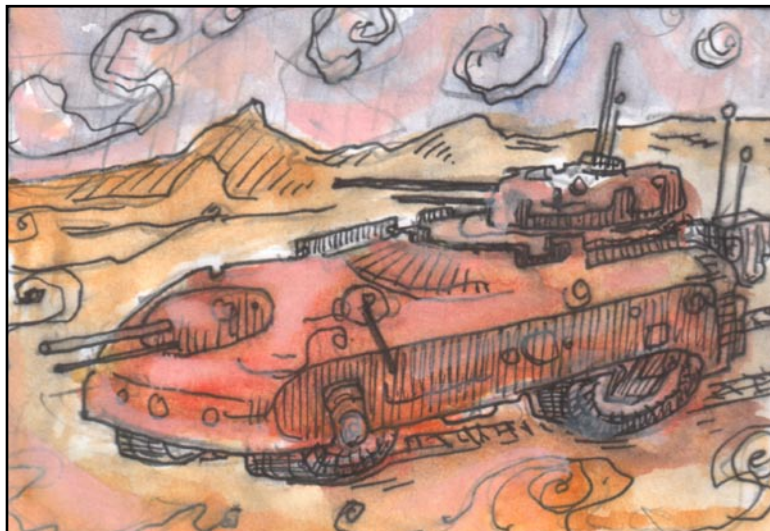
"The Barge... it's on fire! Someone has set the Barge on fire!"

– Trooper Vegrant, on seeing the unit's Space Barge explode in a fountain of flame off the cusp of Leo.

The view was serene as the ship pulled away from the star system. You could see all the planets in alignment. BWUMMMPPP! The star exploded in a huge flash as the missile hit its target.

Killing Cosmic Creatures

Most creatures that you come across exist in their millions on their planets. You'll probably meet them in groups of 10 and sometimes hundreds. For real trouble though you will sometimes meet a beast that is so-fucking-badass that you're going to have to lay some serious wood on it.

The GM should give it an FA of 11 and then it gets to rip the PCs limb from limb. Either someone grabs the narrative or it fails with a 10. Anyone still standing gets to pop a cap in it and take it out. Remember, it doesn't matter how big it is: one kill means one kill.

And, yes, the Energy Cannon really does flat-out-kill up to 100 NPCs in a single turn. Go for it, give those green and blue bastards what they got coming.

Situation and Scenarios

Scenarios for 3:16 are not just about monster hunts. I'll admit that I like nothing better than recreating a "bug hunt" or the horror claustrophobia of being stuck in a next of aliens.

But there could be more to your trips around the cosmos than these high-octane body counts.

The GM should try and make the scenarios inventive so that the players cannot just rely on using their FA to blast their way out of trouble. Some ideas that occurred to me are as follows:

• The planet is actually an intelligent being. It seeks to communicate with the troopers in dreams and visions. Do they end up figuring this out and blowing the planet with a missile from space. How do you out-think something with a brain that is literally the size of a planet.

• What if the PCs were to run into another unit from Terra. One that has gone "rogue" and is seeking to kill everyone there. Obviously the PCs should try and stop them. This scenario is interesting in that it could be used to foreshadow the PCs may take later in the game.

• A series of bizarre jump gates are discovered in an abandoned star system, yet the sensors on the ship say that there is life here. Mystery scenarios work just as well as long as the narrative and conflict is compelling enough. Perhaps the mysteries aggravate the tensions within the group and conflict can be mined from the frustration that builds. Worse still, when they discover they are being observed by a supreme alien intelligence. One that can be shot to pieces of course.

• Worlds of wonder. This is a chance for you to see worlds no one else on Terra has ever seen. Use the whole magnificence of the cosmos, from star-forming regions to supernova remnants. From black holes to icy comets speeding through space.

Trooper Smile had liked Zephyr when he first set foot on it. The winds were clear and fresh and reminded him of his home, so far away.

They had named the planet Zephyr after it winds, of course.

But all the records would record was that this was Trooper Smile's final resting place.

3:16

CARNAGE AMONGST THE STARS

Advancement

At the end of a scenario increase the level of the PCs by 1. They can then add one to either FA or NFA. It should also add a slot for Strength or Weakness depending on the level (see the Table on page 4).

Ending The Game

The end of the game should be on Terra, not some easily-forgotten backwater rock.

When all of 3:16 are dead except for the PCs and they have advanced to Level 20 the GM should give the PCs their final Weakness. Let these battle-hardened veterans return to Terra and confront the society that sent them to conquer the whole of the Cosmos.

When the PCs find themselves standing at the edge of the local super cluster confronted by a void so incomprehensibly large they'll turn back home to Terra. But probably not to a heroes welcome.

Final Thoughts

I'm running out of time to get this wrapped up, so I'm putting my list here of things I didn't get around to.

I was going to write a piece about the uniform of the regiment, but I leave that up to your imagination. Medals too.

I wanted to put in a complete example of play but I've been done for time again. If it's any consolation I did put some worked examples in but I spent the time doing the pictures.

I wanted to have a piece on the relationships between characters. I don't think it should have a mechanic but I'd really encourage using each other's Reputations and building interpersonal conflict into the narrative. It also helps that being part of a military unit you still have to work together even if you don't get along – this was kind of a feature of the Last Chancers novel I read.

What about sexual relationships between the troops? I didn't even touch on that. Up to you, though I wrote about sterility.

I wanted a piece on game preparation. So, I'll just say that the GM should prep the players before the campaign and each session. Create an agenda, make clear what the conflicts and goals are and set the tone. It always helps to be well prepared.

I also wanted to talk a bit about the level that the players start and advance at. At the moment it's *in media res* with the players at Level 10. For a longer campaign start them at 1. To shorten the campaign you can just reset the level after each scenario. Want to flash forward a bit? Then put everyone up a few levels.
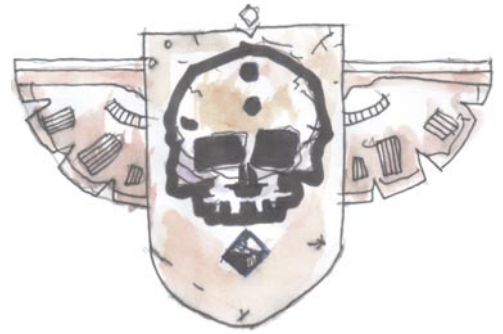
Some Antagonists

Blue Creatures
FA   4
NFA   7

Green Bastards
FA   5
NFA   3

Supreme Intelligence
FA   2
NFA   11

Rock Monsters
FA   9
NFA   1

Sea Beasts
FA   7
NFA   5

Strangling Wind-Ray
FA   6
NFA   4

Some welcome home, huh? Well, we're back Terra, and we've not come for a social visit.

Influences

Here are the things that I feel have strongly influenced 3:16: Kizo's campaign of Traveller 2300AD, from about 1990 or thereabouts – it was a big influence on doing d100 Kills; the "Union Jack Jackson" strip in the Warlord comic; the films "Aliens" and "Starship Troopers", of course; a "Tharg's Future Shock" story in the 2000AD comic about an army conquering the Universe and then slaying their now-lazy ancestors; "Kill Team: A Last Chancers Novel" by Gav Thorpe is a Warhammer 40K novel I read a little while ago about gritty warring soldiers in a grim future; Brave New World and other SF stories that paint an idyllic future with sinister motives underneath.

The system is pretty much really, really simple. Not any influences that I can directly see. I guess I've always liked the Armour Savings throw in games like Warhammer 40K, so that has leaked in from there. The weapons are pretty much influenced by Warhammer 40K and all the other SF games out there too.

It's not rocket science but I like the vibe.

Design Notes

Well, here I find myself making a second Ronnies entry. Pick two from "cosmos", "sphere", "pain" and "fight".

I went for "cosmos" and "fight".

The whole concept of the Ronnies is great for me: it's getting me to actually commit 24 hours to a game and then just throw it out there. So thanks again to Ron Edwards, and all the other participants – not just those writing games but those that are commenting on the boards at http://www.indie-rpgs.com/.

I had originally thought about doing a "God" game using Cosmos and Fight. Oh, it was going to have politics and bidding and then a showdown at the end where someone became the "Prime" force of Order in the Cosmos. Dun-dun-dunnnnn. It was even going to be designed for a little set of three-fold booklets tied by ribbons in the style of diplomatic papers…

But, no, as enticing as it sounded it seemed weak and contrived in places. I realised that I wanted something that went back to my roots in gaming. Something that I would really want to play, or that I had already played and enjoyed.

Back in the day a guy I knew ran a Traveller 2300 game that was over the top and stupidly violent. He never took the concept to its logical conclusion, as he wasn't big on concepts really. No, he was more just big on fights. So this is partly for Kizo and his World Hunters. The Elite of the Elite of the Elite as Kizo used to say.
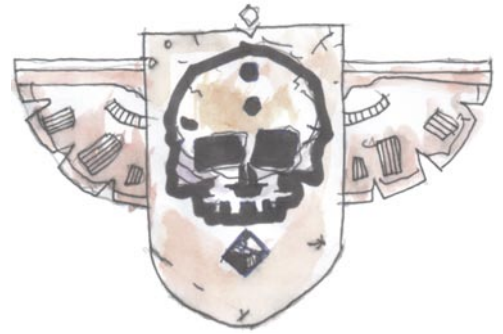
Mix that in with the fact I've always wanted to do an SF game where you just kick ass amongst the stars, and I could see what I really wanted to write with two of these four words.

So here it is. It is not very highbrow but I'd love to get a few beers and just play through the entire campaign over a year or so, and see what I could get my Kill Rating up to.

On a cosmic beach, I'll see you there.

Gregor Hutton, Edinburgh, UK
14 October 2005 • http://gregorhutton.com/

NAME

_____

RANK

_____

REPUTATION

_____

FA

NFA

KILLS

Weapon Name   *Effect*   *Range*
Description

_____
_____
_____
_____

Close Combat Training   *Effect*   *Notes*

_____

Equipment

_____
_____
_____
_____

*Notes*_____
_____
_____

Fallen Brothers _____
_____
_____

Armour _____ *6 or under to prevent damage*

Life Monitor _____

White	***Green***	***Amber***	***Red***	***Black***
OK	☐	☐	☐	DEAD

STRENGTHS

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____
6 _____
7 _____
8 _____
9 _____
10 _____

WEAKNESSES

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____
6 _____
7 _____
8 _____
9 _____
10 _____