

Combat Teams, Roles, Training & Reinforcements

Introduction

A brief history lesson

Before version 50.02, any force in your TO&E (Table of Organization and Equipment) could be assigned to scenarios as long as it included at least one unit. When you added a unit to a force, that force—along with any child forces—was classified as a "Lance."

This created a problem: the most logical place to house certain units, like a DropShip, was often at a higher organizational level, such as a Company or Battalion. However, doing this meant that MekHQ mistakenly treated the entire Company, Battalion, or even larger forces as a single Lance.

When spawning a new scenario, MekHQ would randomly select a Lance. If that happened to include your DropShip, you'd suddenly face an overwhelming and unintended OpFor (Opposing Force).

To make things worse, the term "Lance" itself was ambiguous. It could mean either a combat-ready force (as defined in MekHQ) or an actual Lance, as used in traditional Inner Sphere force structures. This overlap created unnecessary confusion.

Clearly, a fix was needed.

Introducing Combat Teams

Combat Teams are cohesive groups of forces designed to fight together. A Combat Team could be a single Lance, Star, or other regional variant, or it could be a larger group like a Company made up of several Lances and their support units.

The key feature of Combat Teams is player control: you decide exactly which forces should be assigned to scenarios.

Children, Parents, and Origins

To fully understand Combat Teams, let's clarify some terms you'll encounter:

- **Child Forces:** Any force in your TO&E that is a direct descendant of a selected force.
 - Example: If you have a Company consisting of three Lances and you select the Company-level force, all three Lances are considered child forces.
 - If you click on one of those Lances, it won't have any child forces itself.
- **Parent Forces:** Any force that a selected force is a child of.
 - Example: If you have a Battalion made up of three Companies, each with three Lances, selecting a Company-level force would identify the Battalion as its parent.

- Selecting a Lance would identify both the Company and the Battalion as parents.
- Origin Force: The top-level force in your TO&E, often named after your campaign by default. This is the only force in your TO&E with no parents.

Balance and StratCon

It's important to note that StratCon was designed and balanced for Lance-level engagements. While Combat Teams give you the flexibility to field much larger formations, it's essential to use this feature thoughtfully.

If you find that engagements are becoming too large or unmanageable for your preferences, consider reducing the size of your Combat Teams to better align with StratCon's intended scale.

Building a Combat Team

By default, any force without child forces and containing at least one unit is automatically considered a Combat Team.

If you want to adjust these defaults, right-click on a force:

- Select "Never Consider a Combat Team" to exclude it. This is rarely needed, as it's often better to classify such forces as Support Forces (more on that shortly).
- Select "Always Consider a Combat Team" to force MekHQ to treat the selected force as a Combat Team.
 - Example: If you have a Company of three Lances, MekHQ would normally treat each Lance as an individual Combat Team. But if you want the entire Company to deploy as one Combat Team, you can override the default setting.

To remove any overrides, simply use the same right-click menu and select "Remove Combat Team Override".

Reading Your TO&E

In 50.02 we improved how MekHQ communicates which forces are combat-ready:

- **Bold Names:** Indicates forces MekHQ considers to be Combat Teams.
- Underlined Names: Indicates forces with overridden Combat Team classifications.
- Names Ending in ≡: Identifies Convoy Forces (explained in the Resupply documentation).
- Names Ending in ∅: Identifies Support Forces (explained below).

Combat Team Restrictions

Certain rules determine what can qualify as a Combat Team:

1. The force cannot have child forces that are also Combat Teams.
2. The force cannot have parent forces that are also Combat Teams.
3. The force (including any child forces) must contain at least one unit that is not a Support Force.

Overrides

When you override a force's status to always be considered a Combat Team, the first two restrictions are ignored for that force. However, this will automatically revoke Combat Team status from all its parent and child forces.

Understrength Combat Teams

Each contract specifies the number of Combat Teams your employer requires. This number is usually equal to approximately two-thirds of your total Combat Teams, though it can vary depending on the specific contract.

When choosing a contract, it is important to carefully evaluate this requirement. A higher number of required Combat Teams will result in more frequent combat scenarios, which increases the operational demand on your forces. Proper planning is essential to avoid overextending your forces during the contract.

What Happens with Understrength Combat Teams?

Combat Teams that do not meet the minimum number of units are still legal; however, your employer will not count them toward the required number of Combat Teams for the contract.

Example:

- Your employer requests 3 Combat Teams.
- You field the following Combat Teams:
 - Combat Team 1: 4 units
 - Combat Team 2: 4 units
 - Combat Team 3: 1 unit

In this scenario, Combat Team 3 will not count toward the employer's requirements because it is understrength. Only Combat Teams 1 and 2 will be recognized, leaving you short of the contract's requirement.

Minimum Unit Requirements by Faction

The minimum number of units required for a Combat Team to be counted depends on the faction of your campaign:

- Inner Sphere, Marian Hegemony, or Clan factions: At least 2 units per Combat Team are required.
- ComStar or Word of Blake factions: At least 3 units per Combat Team are required.

Combat Teams that do not meet these minimum requirements will be ignored when determining whether the contract's Combat Team requirements are fulfilled.

Support Forces

Before version 50.02, Support Forces were known as "Non-Combat Forces." While the name has changed, the concept remains similar.

A Support Force is any force that isn't typically deployed in combat scenarios. This classification is ideal for units like support vehicles, civilians, or other forces that belong in the TO&E but aren't meant to fight.

- To mark a force as a Support Force, right-click it and select the appropriate option.
- You can remove this designation the same way.

Support Forces are rarely deployed to scenarios, making them a useful classification for logistical or non-combat units. All Convoy Forces (explained in the Resupply documentation) are also considered Support Forces.

Interacting with Combat Teams

The Support Force designation becomes even more powerful when used alongside Combat Teams.

- Example: Assign a Support Force as a child of a Combat Team. Both forces will deploy together to the StratCon Area of Operations, but the Support Force will not actively participate in combat scenarios.

While this system isn't heavily utilized in version 50.02, future updates (50.03+) will make greater use of these features. We recommend setting up your TO&E with this in mind to take full advantage of these enhancements.

Combat Roles

(StratCon & Legacy AtB Only)

Combat Roles are an important part of preparing for a contract. Each contract specifies a required number of Combat Teams assigned to specific roles. You are required to assign Combat Teams to these roles, otherwise you will suffer a contract breach.

There are six available Combat Roles: Maneuver, Frontline, Patrol, Training, Auxiliary, and Reserve.

You have the flexibility to change a Combat Team's role at any time without incurring any penalties or restrictions.

Combat Roles and Renaming in Version 50.02

In version 50.02, some Combat Roles were renamed to better reflect their functions:

- Maneuver was previously referred to as "Fight."
- Frontline was previously referred to as "Defense."
- Patrol was previously referred to as "Scouting."
- Reserve was previously referred to as "Unassigned."

These names now better describe the purpose of each role.

The Six Combat Roles

1. Maneuver

The Maneuver Combat Role is the foundation of your forces and should be used for the majority of your Combat Teams. If you are unsure which role to assign a team, Maneuver is generally the best choice. You can never have too many Maneuver Combat Teams.

Benefits of Maneuver Combat Teams:

- Maneuver Combat Teams roll twice when making reinforcement checks, which means they are far less likely to be intercepted when reinforcing combat scenarios. The team will keep the better of the two results.

Maneuver Combat Teams are your workhorse forces and are highly reliable in most situations.

2. Frontline

Frontline Combat Teams are designed to act as the first force sent in to attack the enemy and are especially valuable for responding to enemy attacks.

Benefits of Frontline Combat Teams:

- Frontline Combat Teams can lay mines or be reinforced by infantry units—including conventional infantry and battle armor units—at no additional cost.
- Frontline Combat Teams gain ‘Tactics Points’ equal to twice the *Tactics* skill of the Combat Team’s commander.
- These Tactics Points can be spent to assign Infantry units to the scenario, in support of the Frontline Combat Team. Each infantry unit costs 1 Tactic Point. Infantry added in this way require no Reinforcement check.
- Any leftover Tactic Points are converted into mines, which can be deployed at the beginning of the scenario.

Frontline Combat Teams are ideal for static or defensive missions where securing an area is critical.

3. Patrol

Patrol Combat Teams are specialized in gathering intelligence and are highly effective for operations requiring exploration and tracking of enemy movements.

Benefits of Patrol Combat Teams:

- When a Patrol Combat Team is deployed to the Area of Operations, it removes the fog of war not only from its assigned Grid (hex) but also from all adjacent Grids.
- This makes Patrol Combat Teams invaluable for locating enemy facilities or forces.
- Patrol Combat Teams are very unlikely to accidentally deploy directly on top of enemy forces unless they are entering an unexplored Grid for the first time. This is known as deploying ‘blind’.

Patrol Combat Teams excel at providing critical battlefield awareness and are vital for maintaining control over the operational environment.

4. Training

Training Combat Teams are essential for maintaining the combat readiness and skill levels of your personnel. A well-trained warrior can make all the difference in battle, and this role ensures your personnel are continuously improving.

Features of Training Combat Teams:

- Personnel assigned to a Training Combat Team will improve their skills based on the skills and professions of the team's commanding unit (the unit containing the Combat Team's commander).
- Skill improvement only occurs while the team is deployed. Meaning you want to take advantage of the ability to remain deployed. Accessed by right-clicking on the force in the Area of Operations, once they have been deployed.
- Training Combat Teams do not count toward the number of Combat Teams required by your employer, unless the contract is Cadre Duty.

Training Combat Teams are critical for long-term success, ensuring your forces remain skilled and prepared for the challenges ahead.

5. Auxiliary

Auxiliary Combat Teams are Combat Teams that you do not intend to fight as standalone forces but are instead used to supplement other Combat Teams. A good example of this kind of Combat Team are Aerospace flights, or lances of artillery.

Features of Auxiliary Combat Teams:

- Auxiliary Combat Teams will never be automatically assigned to combat scenarios during Integrated contracts.
- Auxiliary Combat Teams do not count toward the number of Combat Teams required by your employer.
- Despite these limitations, Auxiliary Combat Teams benefit from the same reinforcement advantages as Maneuver Combat Teams.

Auxiliary Combat Teams are a flexible resource that can provide additional support without the commitment of assigning them to combat directly.

6. Reserve

Reserve Combat Teams are held back from active duty, allowing them to rest, recover, and rebuild.

Features of Reserve Combat Teams:

- Reserve Combat Teams cannot be assigned to scenarios and will never be automatically assigned to combat during Integrated contracts.
- Reserve Combat Teams do not count toward the number of Combat Teams required by your employer.
- Moving a damaged or depleted Combat Team into the Reserve role is an effective way to give them time to recover while keeping them out of combat.

- At the beginning of every contract, all Combat Teams are automatically set to the Reserve role by default.

Reserve Combat Teams are an essential tool for managing the health and readiness of your forces over the course of a contract.

Training Combat Teams: Detailed Explanation

Training Combat Teams are essential for improving the skills of your personnel and ensuring they remain combat-ready. Below is a step-by-step explanation of how the training process works, along with key restrictions and features.

Deployment and Setup

To begin using a Training Combat Team, you must deploy the team to the Area of Operations. Deployment can be done in the same way as with any other Combat Team, but to make the process easier and reduce unnecessary micromanagement:

1. In the Area of Operations tab, right-click on the deployed Training Combat Team.
2. Select the option to “Remain Deployed.”
3. When you want the Combat Team to return to base (for repairs), right-click on the deployed Training Combat Team and untick the “Remain Deployed” option.

This ensures that the Training Combat Team will stay in the field and continue passively improving personnel skills without requiring frequent redeployment.

How the Training Process Works

Once deployed, the training process happens automatically:

- Every Monday, all personnel within the Training Combat Team will begin accumulating education time.
- When a character’s accumulated education time reaches a required threshold, they will improve one of their skills.
- It is not possible to use Training Combat Teams while on Integrated contracts. Your employer paid for your TO&E and they intend to use it.

This process is completely passive and will continue as long as the Training Combat Team remains deployed. However, several rules and restrictions influence how skills are improved, as detailed below.

How Skills Are Improved

1. Identify the Team’s Commander

- The first step in the training process is to identify the commander of the Training Combat Team.
- All characters assigned to the commander’s unit are considered educators (including the commander).
- The educator’s skills determine what can be taught to the rest of the team.

2. Evaluate the Commander's Skills

- MekHQ identifies all non-leadership skills associated with the commander's combat professions.
- These skills and their associated experience levels are compiled into a list for use in training.

3. Determine What Each Team Member Can Learn

- MekHQ evaluates each character in the Training Combat Team to see if the educators can teach them new skills.
- An educator can only teach skills up to one experience level below their own. For example:
 - An educator with a Veteran-level Gunnery/Mek skill can teach up to Regular-level Gunnery/Mek or lower.
 - An educator with a Regular-level Piloting/Mek skill can only teach Green-level Piloting/Mek.
 - Please be aware that it is the level of the *skill* that is considered for this, and not the overall experience level of the educator.
- For multi-crewed commander units, such as vehicles, only the educator with the best experience level in each skill is used. For example:
 - A unit with two gunners, one with a Veteran-level Gunnery/Ground Vehicle skill and another with Regular-level Gunnery/Ground Vehicle.
 - When considering what level skills can be taught up to, only the Veteran-level Gunnery/Ground Vehicle will be used.
 - It is not necessary for all trained skills to come from the same educator.
- Educators (characters assigned to the same unit as the Combat Team's commander) do not benefit from training.

4. Apply Skill Level Restrictions

- Maximum Trainable Level: No character can improve a skill beyond Regular while part of a Training Combat Team. Higher levels must be achieved independently through other means.
- Minimum Required Level: A character must already have at least an Ultra-Green-level skill to benefit from training. Skills below this level cannot be improved via Training Combat Teams.

These restrictions ensure that training remains focused on developing foundational skills while leaving more advanced skill development to other methods.

Education Time Requirements

The amount of education time required to improve a skill depends on the experience level being achieved:

- From Ultra-Green to Green: 28 days of education time are required.
- From Green to Regular: 56 days of education time are required.

Lower-level skills are always prioritized for improvement before higher-level skills.

Factors That Influence Training Speed

Several factors can influence how quickly characters improve their skills:

1. Experience Multiplier in Campaign Options

- The time required to improve a skill is multiplied by the Experience Points (XP) Multiplier set in the Campaign Options.
- For example, if the XP Multiplier is set to 0.50, it will only take 14 days to improve a skill from Ultra-Green to Green instead of the usual 28 days.

2. Character Intelligence (if Personality Traits are Enabled)

- When personality traits are enabled, a character's Intelligence attribute directly affects how quickly they improve their skills.
- Characters with higher Intelligence require fewer days of education time to improve their skills.

Timing and Tracking Progress

MekHQ tracks and applies training progress as follows:

- Training progress is checked once per week, on Mondays.
- Any unused education time that exceeds the requirement for a skill improvement will carry over to the next week. This ensures that no progress is lost.
- Any unused education time is retained at the end of a contract, available for the next contract. However, assigning a character to an academy, via the Education Module (see Education Module documentation for more details) will remove all unused education time.
- Education time is a silent value, which means it cannot be tracked by the player.

Notifications for Training Limitations

If a character cannot improve a skill for any reason, MekHQ will notify you via the Command Log. Reasons may include:

- The character has reached the maximum allowable skill level (Regular) for all available skills.
- The character's skill levels are below the minimum required for training (Ultra-Green).
- The character does not have any skills eligible for improvement based on the commander's abilities.

These notifications help you identify and address any issues with your Training Combat Teams.

Summary of Key Points

- Training Combat Teams improve the skills of personnel deployed to the Area of Operations.
- Deployment can be streamlined by using the "Remain Deployed" option.
- Training occurs passively every week, with education time accumulating for each character.
- Commanders determine which skills can be taught, and restrictions limit the maximum skill level that can be achieved.
- Education time requirements are influenced by Campaign Options, personality traits, and weekly progress checks.
- Notifications in the Command Log inform you of any training limitations or issues.

By understanding and managing these processes, you can effectively use Training Combat Teams to enhance your personnel's capabilities and maintain their combat readiness over the course of your campaign.

Reinforcements

In some situations, a single Combat Team will not be enough to handle the challenges you face. Whether outmaneuvered or outgunned, there are times when calling in reinforcements is essential. However, before delving into the mechanics of reinforcement, it is important to understand a crucial strategic principle:

You are not required to fight every scenario. Sometimes, the wisest course of action is to retreat or let the enemy win a smaller engagement now, in order to preserve your strength for a larger victory later. War is about seeing the bigger picture and making strategic decisions that ensure success in the long term.

Support Points

Support Points are the fuel for reinforcements. They represent the ability of your Admin/Transport team to liaise with allied command and your individual forces to ensure that reinforcements have a reasonable chance of success. For example, arranging DropShip transport, air cover, and fuel deliveries. Reinforcing always costs at least 1 Support Point, however more can be spent to ensure a better chance of success (as described later).

At the beginning of a contract all Admin/Transport personnel will make a skill check using their *Administration* skill. If the check is successful 1 Support Point is generated. The maximum number of Support Points that can be generated in this manner is equal to the number of forces required by the contract multiplied by 3.

Once the contract has begun, each Monday your Admin/Transport personnel will roll again, with each check adding a further Support Point to the pool. However, once the contract has begun the number of Support Points is soft-locked at the number of forces required by the contract. This means that while it *can* exceed this value, it will not be through weekly generation.

How to Deploy Reinforcements

Reinforcements can be deployed to any scenario by following these steps:

1. Right-click on the scenario where reinforcements are needed.
2. Select the “Manage Scenario” option.
3. Choose your reinforcements from the available Combat Teams.

After selecting reinforcements, a dialog box will appear. This dialog will display:

- The Target Number required for a successful reinforcement.
- Options to reduce the Target Number by spending additional Support Points.

Important Notes:

- Reinforcements require a minimum of 1 Support Point to be deployed.
- Once you confirm the reinforcements, MekHQ will perform a Reinforcement Check to determine the outcome.

The Reinforcement Check Process

The outcome of a reinforcement attempt depends on several factors, which MekHQ evaluates as follows:

1. Command and Control

- MekHQ identifies the most senior character in your campaign who holds the Admin/Command role.
- If no Admin/Command personnel are available, or if the senior-most character lacks the Administration skill, the reinforcement attempt will automatically fail. This failure is due to a lack of command and control, which is essential for coordinating reinforcements.

If an eligible Admin/Command character is found, their Administration skill level sets the base Target Number for the reinforcement check.

2. Enemy Morale Modifier

Next, MekHQ evaluates the balance of power in the area of operations by looking at the enemy morale. The higher the enemy morale, the more difficult it is to reinforce.

3. Skill Level Comparison

The skill level of your allies is compared to the skill level of the enemy.

- On Independent contracts, your campaign's average skill level is used in place of allied skill levels.
- Each skill level is assigned a numerical value:
 - None: 0
 - Ultra-Green: 1
 - Green: 2
 - Regular: 3
 - Veteran: 4
 - Elite: 5
 - Heroic: 6
 - Legendary: 7

The skill value of your allies (or your forces in an Independent contract) is subtracted from the skill value of the enemy, and the difference is applied as a modifier to the Target Number.

4. Liaison Bonus (Liaison Contracts Only)

If you are on a Liaison contract, your employer's Liaison can assist with reinforcements, improving the Target Number by 1 point.

5. Support Points Spent

For each additional Support Point spent beyond the first, the Target Number is reduced by 2 points.

Final Reinforcement Check

After all modifiers are applied, the final Target Number is calculated. To determine success, MekHQ rolls 2d6 and compares the result to the Target Number.

- Maneuver and Auxiliary Combat Teams have an advantage: they roll twice and keep the better result.

Reinforcement Check Outcomes

1. Fumble

If the 2d6 roll results in a total of 2, the reinforcement attempt critically fails:

- The Combat Team is unable to reinforce the scenario.
- Any Support Points spent on the attempt are lost.
- A roll of 2 always results in failure, even if the Target Number is 2 or less.

2. Success

If the 2d6 roll is equal to or greater than the Target Number, the reinforcement attempt is successful.

- The reinforcements will arrive and be available to fight in the scenario.

3. Failure

If the 2d6 roll is less than the Target Number, the reinforcement attempt fails, but the situation may still be salvaged.

In this case, the enemy forces may attempt to intercept your reinforcements. The outcome depends on the following:

- **Enemy Morale:**
 - If the enemy morale is set to Routed, no interception attempt will occur. This is treated as a successful reinforcement, but the reinforcements may arrive delayed.
- **Interception Decision:**
 - If the enemy decides not to intercept, the reinforcements will still succeed, but they will be delayed.
- **Interception Attempt:**
 - If the enemy chooses to intercept, the Combat Team's commander must attempt to evade the interception.

Evading Interception

If interception occurs, the Combat Team's commander must roll 2d6 to evade. The roll must be equal to or greater than 9 minus their Tactics skill.

- If the commander does not have the Tactics skill, the target number will be 10. This represents a +1 malus for being unskilled.

Evasion Results:

1. **Successful Evasion:**
 - The Combat Team avoids the enemy forces and reinforces the scenario, though they will be delayed.
2. **Failed Evasion:**
 - The Combat Team is intercepted and must face their attackers in a new scenario.

- In this case, you may need to send reinforcements to this new scenario as well.

This risk is the price of failure and highlights the importance of strategic planning and skilled commanders.

Reinforcement Speed

Even when a reinforcement attempt is successful, reinforcements may not be immediately available at the start of the scenario. The exact arrival time of reinforcements depends on several factors, including unit speed, the abilities of the Combat Team's commander, and whether the reinforcements are delayed.

Below is a step-by-step explanation of how reinforcement arrival times are determined:

1. Determine the Slowest Unit's Speed

The first step is to evaluate the movement capabilities of the slowest unit in the reinforcing Combat Team.

- Find the lowest walk speed of all units in the Combat Team. This is the Combat Team's "speed".
- If the slowest unit has jump capabilities and is not infantry: Add 1 to the unit's walk speed.
- If the slowest unit is jump-capable infantry: Use the unit's jump speed instead of its walk speed.

2. Calculate the Base Arrival Delay

Using the adjusted speed of the slowest unit:

1. Divide 25 by the adjusted speed.
2. Subtract the result by the *Strategy* skill of the Combat Team's commander.

The resulting number represents the round during which the reinforcements will arrive.

- Important Note: The minimum arrival time is 0, meaning reinforcements may arrive immediately at the start of the scenario if calculations yield a negative result.

3. Adjust for Delayed Reinforcements

If the reinforcements were delayed due to factors such as failed evasion or other complications, their arrival time is further increased by 2 to 3 additional turns.

Key Takeaways

- Reinforcements Are Strategic, Not Guaranteed: Successfully deploying reinforcements requires a combination of strong command structure, resource allocation, and strategic decisions. Always consider whether committing reinforcements is worth the risk.
- Fumbles Can Be Costly: A roll of 2 on 2d6 results in a fumble, causing the reinforcement attempt to fail and any Support Points spent to be lost.
- Interceptions Add Complexity: Failed reinforcement attempts may trigger enemy interceptions, leading to potential secondary engagements. Skilled commanders with high *Tactics* levels improve the chances of evasion, reducing the risk of cascading conflicts.
- Reinforcements May Be Delayed: Even when reinforcements are successful, their arrival time depends on several factors:

- The slowest unit's speed in the reinforcing Combat Team determines the base arrival delay.
- The Strategy skill of the Combat Team's commander can reduce this delay.
- Delays due to interception or other complications can add 2 to 3 additional rounds to the arrival time.
- Plan for Arrival Times: Reinforcements might not arrive immediately at the start of the scenario. Properly accounting for potential delays allows you to position your initial forces more effectively and mitigate risks until reinforcements arrive.

By carefully understanding and managing the mechanics of reinforcements and reinforcement speed, you can maximize their effectiveness and avoid unnecessary risks, ensuring your campaign stays on track for victory.