



ZONA ALFA

Salvage and Survival in the Exclusion Zone

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OSPREY
WARGAMES

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Welcome to The Zone

So, you decided to sneak past the Cordon, eh? Slip by the patrols and the towers, through the minefield, under the electric fence, to take your chances in the Exclusion Zone.

Ah yes, the lure of adventure, riches, and fame...

Well, good luck to you.

To be brutally honest, you're far more likely to find terror, dismemberment, and death – a quick death if you're lucky. But everyone has to make a living, right?

Besides, who am I to judge? I'm here, aren't I?

So, seeing as I can't dissuade you, why don't you cinch up your sack, grab your gear, and follow me. We're on our way to investigate an Anomaly that appeared in a swamp fifteen kilometers from here. The Zone being what it is, we can always use an extra shooter. You have my word you'll get a cut if we find any Artifacts.

Just don't say I didn't warn you, eh?

Part 1: Introduction

1.1 Intentions

Privet, Bratok! Nice to meet you. Have a seat and let me explain a few things.

At this advanced stage of my hobby-life, I meet plenty of people who enjoy gaming but don't have the time to invest in large, painted armies, terrain, or learn a complex rule set. They want fast and fun games with a high coolness quotient, lots of adventure, a bit of competition, and an excuse to hang out and eat pizza with friends.

Zona Alfa is my attempt to fill that bill. My first goal was to create a set of solid, straightforward wargame rules for 28mm tabletop skirmishes. I wanted a game that would allow anyone reasonably familiar with miniature wargaming to be able to stat out appropriate figures from their own collection, plunk down terrain, review the basics, and get started straight away.

My second goal, as a long-time fan of the excellent *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.* and *METRO 2033* fictional settings, was to make a game soaked in that decayed, post-apocalyptic Soviet aesthetic. What could be cooler than recruiting a few comrades, gearing up, and slipping into the Exclusion Zone hunting mutants and artifacts? *Zona Alfa* is the result. Nothing fancy or finicky, I want *Zona Alfa* to be rugged, reliable, and easy to use. Like an AK-47.

Zona Alfa is usually played between two players on a 3' x 3' game area with each player controlling between 4–12 miniatures. Boards sized at 4' x 4' or 3' x 4' are fine too and will give each crew more room to maneuver. Our local gaming group has also run games with as many as six players on a 4' x 6' area with no appreciable down time. While designed with 28mm miniatures in mind, *Zona Alfa* also works in 15mm as well. Simply substitute measurements in inches for centimeters.

It's All About The Story

Number crunching with toy soldiers is not why I got into the hobby. Narrative games, that's where it's at for me. The long shot, the impossible save, the heroic last stand... I really enjoy it when dramatic scenes unfold on the table. With that focus and type of game in mind, I have streamlined the *Zona Alfa* game mechanics and simplified various details like weapons, body armor, and troop abilities. Those are



There's only a few of us left. Mutants got Fat Boris and the new kid, Ignaty, last night. A pack of them crept up on us while we were setting up camp.
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all divided into broad categories in order to keep the game flowing and give players the opportunity to deploy the widest possible range of figures. Specific weapons and gear are referenced for flavor, but if differentiating between an AK-47 and an AK-74 is your wargame thing, *Zona Alfa* might not be for you. However, if you're willing to risk the Zone's dangers for a chance at an early retirement in a *dacha* on the Black Sea, keep reading.

Zona Alfa is not tied into to any specific game company or range of miniatures, therefore certain aesthetic elements like in-game hostiles are of the generic, mutated, post-apocalyptic kind. Feel free to use and substitute whatever figures you already have in your collection. There are guidelines later on for statting out different miniatures.

1.2 Definitions

Like any specialty area of interest, wargames have their own jargon. Here are some terms and concepts you'll need to know for *Zona Alfa*.

WYSIWYG

What You See Is What You Get. This means that models must be equipped according to actual, physical model. A t-shirt and cut-off shorts are not body armor. A pistol is not an assault rifle. There's no sense in getting finicky over types of shotguns – but the miniature should be equipped with one. *Zona Alfa* has multiple troop types, armor, and weapon categories, along with variables like special abilities and equipment to accommodate and represent nearly any miniature out there. I trust players can identify their own figures accurately and assign them to the fair and appropriate categories.

LOS/LOF

Line of Sight/Line of Fire. A model must be able to trace a line to its target in order to 'attack' it. If the model can 'see' any part of the enemy model, it can shoot it (of course, that means it can shoot back...). This is your excuse to finally buy that cool laser pointer you always wanted! The only exceptions to this LOS/LOF rule are Indirect Fire capable weapons like mortars or grenades. More on that later (see page 27).

Unit

Zona Alfa is a skirmish game where players command a squad composed of individual models. Each model is a single soldier, and is termed a 'unit'. However, there will be times in the game when a 'unit' is composed of multiple models. Typically, these are Zone Hostiles that function as a pack or swarm like Dogs, Rats, or Mutants. These multiple model units are always composed of similar troop types with similar stats, abilities, and equipment. Multiple model units must perform the same Action simultaneously, e.g. all Move, all Attack, all Check for Morale etc. Players might consider basing multiple models on one large base for ease of movement and track casualties with tokens. More on that later (see page 21).

D10

Abbreviation for a 10-sided die. *Zona Alfa* uses D10s. Four to six should be sufficient for each player. When the rules call for '3D10' it means the player rolls three, ten-sided dice. A result of the base Target Number or less (+/- modifiers) is a Success. So, a high roll = bad. A low roll = good.

D6

Abbreviation for a 6-sided die. In *Zona Alfa*, D6 are used to determine results on the Zone Effects tables.

Critical Success/Critical Failures

The unbelievable save, the knockout punch, standing against astonishing odds... those twists of fate that make a game that much more exciting. Critical Successes and Critical Failures mean a player always has some chance to win or lose, regardless of how overwhelming the odds may appear. Critical Successes and Critical Failures occur with any unmodified D10 rolls of 1 or 10 respectively.

- **A Critical Success is an unmodified D10 roll of 1:** Regardless of the task's difficulty or modifiers, a roll of 1 means the Action/task attempted was automatically successful **and** the model gains a **free, extra** Action. This extra Action must be taken at the end of the model's current activation and does not roll over into the next turn.
- **A Critical Failure is an unmodified D10 roll of 10:** Sometimes Bad Luck is the only kind of luck you have. Regardless of the task's difficulty or modifiers, a roll of 10 means the attempt was automatically unsuccessful and the model is immediately burdened with a Pinned counter.

In each case it is important to remember all other dice results rolled in the same pool are calculated and resolved as normal. Resolve Critical Successes first and Critical Failures last.

- **Critical Mix:** In the event unmodified 1s and 10s show up in the same roll, say when making a Ranged Attack or defending against one, the Critical Successes and Critical Failures cancel each other out. There are **no** additional benefits or penalties and the results are tallied normally with any and all standard applicable modifiers and Stats.

Also note that Additional Actions and Pin Penalties due to Critical Successes/Failures are calculated by the round, not the individual die results in the round. For example, a 3D10 roll with two 1s and one 10 would be a Critical Mix with no Benefits or Penalties but a 3D10 roll with two 1s and a 7 would grant the model one extra Action, not two.

Activation/Actions

In the course of a single game turn, each player's units will 'Activate' once. When Activated, the unit can perform any available Action. Units can perform 1, 2, or 3 separate Actions, depending on their level of Combat Experience. Combat Experience and Available Actions are explained in Section 3 (see page 11).

Stats/Modifiers

To represent abilities on the battlefield, game models are assigned 'Stats', or numeric values corresponding to movement, attack, defense, and morale. There are two types of Stats: Model Stats and Weapon Stats (See Section 2, page 9). These Stats can be further modified by special in-game circumstances like terrain, special abilities, or equipment.



I arrived in the Zone last night with only my backpack and rifle. We nearly got nabbed by Military patrols twice, but the guide knew his business and got us away.

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1.3 Essentials

You and your comrades will need seven things to enter the Zone:

1. A flat surface of at least 3' x 3'. For larger games with more players, use a 4' x 4' or 4' x 6' area.
2. Dice. Four D10s per player, and at least one D6 for the Zone Effects Tables.
3. A tape measure or ruler marked in inches (A cool laser pointer will come in handy too).
4. **Battlefield Terrain:** Appropriate terrain and scenic items to represent the dangerous sections of the Zone. The more, the better. There are dozens of excellent terrain companies out there. Model railroad trees and foliage work well too, are easy to find and inexpensive. For ruins and large buildings, our local game group is partial to Impudent Mortal's MDF kits, and we use smaller plastic and resin scatter pieces from assorted companies.
5. **Tokens and Templates:** Tokens are an easy way to note a model's in-game status. You can use paper chits, acrylic tokens, or glass beads. You will need tokens to mark Activated, Alert, Pinned, and Wounded states. For Templates, you will need a set of Blast and Flamethrower Templates (Large Blast Template is 5" diameter, Small Blast Template is 3" diameter, and the Flame Template is a 8" x 3" teardrop). These can be plastic or paper. We use an excellent set from Pyrkol. You also might want to get markers for the Zone Hot Spots, Mission Objectives, and Anomalies. These are always at specific locations on the table and we mark them with a small piece of Scatter Terrain, but we've found Litko tokens come in quite handy to distinguish that particular piece from the others on the battlefield.
6. **A Turn Counter:** *Zona Alfa* missions have a turn limit, so you'll need to mark the countdown, whether that's notations on paper, a die, or a nifty dial.
7. **Miniatures:** You'll need figures for both Zone Crews and Zone Hostiles. For the Crews, dig through your collection and find 4–12 suitably-attired and equipped miniatures to represent your interests in the Exclusion Zone. Lead Adventure Miniatures offers an outstanding range of Soviet-flavored post-apocalyptic figures, but any Modern range works perfectly well. Take a look at The Assault Group, Eureka, Empress, and SASM for more inspiration. For Zone Hostiles, this is your excuse to purchase that mob of zombies you always wanted (or swarm of rats, pack of dogs, gang of bandits, horde of mutants... your call). Again, Lead Adventure Miniatures offers some excellent options, but feel free to use whatever you have to represent the Exclusion Zone's dangerous inhabitants.



Don't Let Them Bother You

We get them from all over, these thugs and punks. They shove and strut like roosters. They think the Zone is just another territory to control, like the streets of Moscow or the docks at Vladivostok. Bah!

As if the Zone cares about prison ink and Bratva connections...

Flex that attitude here and she'll kill you in the time it takes to sneer.

You want to survive, you need four things above all else: a strong back, a stout heart, a keen eye, and quick feet.

Everything else is for chickens to laugh at.

Part 2: Vitals

In *Zona Alfa*, there are two types of Game Stats: **Model Stats** and **Weapons Stats**.

Model Stats are for models (no surprise there). There Four Model Stats: Movement, Combat Ability, Armor, and Will. Every model/unit is assigned a numerical value in each of these four categories. These numbers reflect the model/unit's general proficiency and ability in battle.

Weapon Stats are separate from Model Stats and pertain to the model/unit's specific armament. There are three Weapon Stats: Range, Firepower, and Damage. These values represent the weapon's in-game effectiveness.

Odd as it may seem at first, these are two separate stat-lines and sets of values because a highly trained Spetsnaz Veteran's effectiveness in combat situations will vary depending on how he is armed. Does he have a combat knife, a Vityaz SMG, or an RPG 30R?

Both types of Stats are explained below.

2.1 Model Stats

- **Movement:** The distance in inches ("") a unit can move in one Action. The average human foot soldier moves 6"/Action.
- **Combat Ability:** The unit's proficiency with ranged and melee weapons. The average human trooper's Combat Ability is a 5.
- **Armor:** The unit's physical capacity to absorb or deflect damage from ranged or melee attacks. For example, non-powered military grade body armor affords the wearer level 6 protection.
- **Will:** The unit's mental resolve, knowledge, and intelligence. A combination of morale and training. This is also the primary Stat for Skill Checks (see page 13). The average human soldier has a Will of 6.

2.2 Weapon Stats

- **Range:** Given in inches, this is the weapon's effective range under stressful, frantic, combat conditions. In general, the smaller the weapon, the shorter the range. An Assault Rifle has an in-game range of 36".

We were moving in for a closer look when the sky turned black and it started bucketing down like the end of the world. We waited out the storm in the hut and when it was over, we came back out to find the anomaly was gone.
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I'm out of food, down to half a canteen of water. Even worse, something big chased me last night and I lost my leg bag getting away. Only ammo is the magazine in my AK.

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- **Firepower:** This stat is indicative of the number of rounds expended in a single attack and expressed as the number of dice rolled per attack Action. Assault rifles and squad support machine guns capable of burst-fire or full auto will roll more dice than a sniper rifle or handgun. An Assault Rifle has a Firepower value of 3, meaning it rolls three dice.
- **Damage:** This represents the weapon's stopping power or penetration. It is a negative modifier to Target's Armor stat (Cuts through X layers of Armor). The heavier the caliber, the greater the Damage. A standard, modern assault rifle has a Damage rating of 1.

These two stat lines – Model and Weapon – are the foundation of *Zona Alfa*. They are intentionally broad so a gamer can generate reasonable values for a wide range of models, armor, and weapon types. See the Armory (page 24) and remember the WYSIWYG Rule!

The details are explained further in, but here is a sample profile for a Crew Leader:

Name	Major Timur Bok	Faction	Military
Wounds	2	Combat Experience	Veteran
Movement	6"/Action	Combat Ability	6
		Armor	Mil-Body Armor (6)
		Will	7
Skills			
<p>Leader: There's one in every crowd and only room for one in a crew. Leaders grant a +1 bonus to all Will/Rally rolls for allied units within Line of Sight of the Leader figure. Leaders also have a special 'Order' Action that allows them to 'transfer' their Actions to other members of their Crew. The recipient must be within 12" and in Line of Sight of the Leader figure, and must immediately perform the Ordered Action. Any effects of this transferred Action/s must be taken and resolved before the Leader can perform any more Actions.</p> <p>Unload: When this model spends two consecutive actions on a Ranged Attack with an appropriate weapon against a single target, it adds two bonus dice to the combined Firepower roll. Unload represents emptying the weapon's magazine. After using the Unload Ability, the model must spend 1 action to 'reload' the weapon before it can be fired normally.</p>			
Equipment			
<p>Military Body Armor: Armor 6. Model counts as Obscured Target from Ranged Attacks when in Cover.</p> <p>Hand Grenade: (2) SBT (Small Blast Template)</p> <p>SLOT 1: Laser Sight (AK74): +1 to Ranged Attack Combat Ability Rolls at half range or less.</p> <p>SLOT 2: NODs/Night Optics: Negates Low Light/Night LOS and range penalties.</p> <p>SLOT 3: Med-Kit: (1) Can be used on equipped character or on Allied unit. Action cost of 1 when used on Ally. Model must be in base-to-base contact with Wounded ally. Can be used to revive a single-Wound model. Med-Kit replaces the Wound with two Pin counters. Once the Pinned Counters are removed by Rally Actions, the model can act as normal. Med-kit can be self-administered at no Action Cost. Replace Wound result with two Pin counters.</p>			

Weapon Type	Range	Firepower	Damage
MP443 GRACH Pistol	M-12"	1	0
AK74 Assault Rifle	1"-36"	3	1
F1 Hand Grenade	1"-18"	1	2/Model. SBT

That's it for now. Let's move on to the *Zona Alfa* basic rules.

Part 3: Core Mechanics

3.1 Initiative and Alternating Activation

At the start of every turn, players will each roll a D10 to determine that turn's Initiative. This Initiative die roll result is modified (penalized) by the number of that player's currently Pinned Units. The player with the highest result, after modifiers, activates first. The winner of the Initiative Roll may also pass that option to their opponent, if they deem it tactically advantageous.

Players will then alternately activate one unit at a time, resolving all movement and combat, until every unit in both forces has Activated. No unit may be Activated more than once per turn. Once every available unit has Activated, the game turn ends and a new Initiative Roll is required.

Each unit can Activate one time per game turn. When Activated, a unit can perform one, two, or three available Actions. The number of possible Actions is determined by the model's Combat Experience. Combat Experience and available Actions are explained below.

3.2 Combat Experience

(Soldatskaya smekalka – “Soldier's tempering”)

Many different kinds of people risk the Zone's dangers. While all of them are a little crazy or at least desperate, only some of them have enough combat experience to function under pressure. In *Zona Alfa*, your squad mates perform according to their level of Combat Experience. There are three levels of Combat Experience – Rookie, Hardened, and Veteran – each with a corresponding ability to act in battle.

Rookie

(Dukh translates as ‘ghost’ in Russian). Despite the dangers, there's no shortage of newcomers in the Zone. Not the best, brightest, or most well-equipped, they are cheap to recruit. Rookies are capable of one Action per Activation. They start with no Skills and only **one** Equipment Slot.

Hardened

(Kirza translates as ‘hard leather’ in Russian). These are the individuals who have survived the first couple months and stuck around. With a few missions under their belt and decent gear, they can hold their own in the Zone. Hardened squad mates are capable of two Actions per Activation. They have learned enough to acquire one Skill and have **two** Equipment Slots.

Veteran

(Tyazheliy translates as ‘heavy one’ in Russian). Few and far between. Lean, quick, quiet, the stupidity burned off, these are the ones who have stared the Zone's dangers in the face and lived to tell about it. Veterans are capable of three Actions per Activation. They have two Skills and **three** Equipment Slots.

3.3 Actions

When Activated, a player will select any one of their units to perform various Actions. The amount of available Actions is determined by the level of Combat Experience. Actions can be performed in any order, as many times as possible.

Below is the list of available Actions. With the exception of ‘Alert’, each of the Actions below counts as a single action in the normal rigors of a Zone mission.

Complex efforts such as defusing a bomb or repairing a generator generally require multiple Actions and have a related Skill Check.

Aim

Use immediately prior to an Attack Action. Aim can be used for Ranged or Melee Combat. It adds a +1 bonus to model's Combat Ability in the subsequent Attack Action **and** a +1 bonus to Weapon Damage if the attack was successful. An Aim Action can be used when firing into Melee, although the +1 bonus to the shooters' Combat Ability and Weapon Damage is negated by frantic movement. However, the shooter is able to select their target and roll as normal without the possibility of hitting a friendly model/unit.

Alert (Special)

At the cost of **two** Actions, a unit may hold One Action in reserve to interrupt an opponent's Activation. This interruption can be any Action. For example, Move, Shoot, Aim, even Prep and Throw a Grenade etc.

Attack

One Ranged or Melee attack:

- **Ranged Attack:** Fire a ranged weapon **one** time at an enemy unit. Roll the number of Firepower dice appropriate to the particular weapon.
- **Melee Attack:** One Melee Attack at one enemy model currently in base to base contact. Roll the correct number of Firepower dice assigned to the melee weapon.

Climb

The model can scale any appropriate vertical surface more 1" tall, such as a building face or rock wall. Calculate the model/unit's movement at half its regular Move stat (e.g. Climb 3" = 6" of Movement or one Action). This does not apply to stairs or ladders. These are traversed at model's regular Move rate.

Inspect

Similar to Aim, this Action is used when a model is in LOS and within 12" of a suspect location such as a Zone Hot Spot or Mission Objective. This Action allows the player to add or subtract 1 from the Zone Hostile Table roll for that particular location during this turn. This only applies if the Action is taken in the same turn prior to the crew engaging that location.

Jump

Allows the model to jump a horizontal gap up to 2" wide for the cost of 1 Action. Jumping beyond 2" requires a Move Action prior and a Skill Check with the target number being the model/unit's Will Stat.

Move

Model/Unit moves up to its Movement Stat in inches. Movement does not have to be in a straight line and the model is not required to move the full amount. Model may move up or down a level in multi-level terrain via a slope, stairs, or ladder at their normal, unmodified, distance.

Prep and Throw a Grenade

This counts as a single Action. Rules for Grenades and Molotov Cocktails are listed in the Armory in Section 5 (see page 24).

Rally

Remove one Pinned Counter from an earlier combat result. Removal is automatic at one Action per counter and does not require a Will check.

Recover

Similar to Rally, this is essentially standing up and getting your bearings. In the event of a fall, an environmental or scenario specific event, the Model uses an Action to regain footing after being knocked prone.



Reload

Reload Ranged Weapon. Certain ranged weapons or specific combat conditions, such as Unload, require a weapon to be reloaded after use. See the Armory in Section 5 for details (see page 24).

'Savak says bring me this!' 'Savak says wait there!' 'Savak says stay away from here!' Savak, Savak, Savak... Ugly little weasel. Who does he think he is, ordering me around?

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Use Item/Interact

A catch-all Action that covers a variety of different events. This Action is used to Search a Terrain Item, Toss a Bolt at a Hot Spot, Apply a Med-Kit to an ally, Free a prisoner, Switch on a doomsday device...

3.4 Complex Tasks and Skill Checks

While not related to Combat, Complex Tasks and Skill Checks add a dramatic element to *Zona Alfa* missions. These checks represent difficult or complicated situations that require the character to spend a number of Actions as well as utilizing their Will Stat.

The specifics will be left to your imagination and the requirements of the scenario. Some examples of a Complex Task/Skill Check would be repairing a generator, defusing an IED, picking the hatch lock on a BTR-80, or hacking a computer terminal. Situations like these require a model to spend between one and three Actions, as well as make an initial one-time D10 Skill Check roll against the model's Will stat. This Skill Check roll is a Free Action.

To attempt a Complex Task, the model/unit must first be in base to base contact with the terrain item or model that represents the difficult task, be that a vehicle, a computer console, or a locked crate. Second, it must make a successful Skill Check to start the Task. This Skill Check is a single D10 roll made against the model's Will stat and does not cost an Action.

Complex Tasks have Difficulty Ratings. Most often this is 0 and the Skill Check roll is made at the model's straight Will stat. However more complicated jobs might have a Difficulty Rating of 1, 2, or even 3. This value is a penalty to the model's Will Stat, so defusing that IED (Difficulty 2) might require 2 Actions at -2 Skill Check. Bear in mind, special Gear and/or Skills will also modify Skill Check rolls.

Again, the Skill Check roll is free and does not require an Action. Once a successful roll has been made, the model/unit may then expend actions to accomplish the task.



When Actions are spent on Complex Tasks, they do not have to be performed all at once and can be ‘banked’. Make a note on the model’s stat sheet or use chits to mark the number of Actions spent. While the Actions can be rolled over from turn to turn, they must be spent by the initiating model. Should that model move away from the task area, be injured or killed, a new unit may attempt the task, but it must start over and roll a successful Skill Check to start.

Some Skill Checks may be restricted only to those models with specific Skills or Equipment. For example, mechanical repairs are much easier for a technician, while IED removal might be a bit less nerve-wracking for a demolition and ordinance expert. Regardless of how you want to play it in *Zona Alfa*, special abilities make characters better at certain Skills/Tasks than others.

3.5 Movement, Field of View, and Terrain

Movement

When performing a Move Action, movement is measured from the front of the model’s base and ends on the rear of the model’s base (Front to Rear). Yes, this adds the base width to the Move Action but it really cuts down on arguments. Movement does not have to be a straight line, neither is the unit required to use its full movement. A model can turn at any point during their movement and end facing any direction. I’m a big fan of movement gauges but, if necessary, using a length of string for complicated maneuvers can also do the job.

Field of View

The Zone is a dangerous place that requires constant vigilance. All models are considered to have a 360-degree field of vision, regardless of the facing of the model.

Terrain

Most terrain features are large scenic items that add atmosphere to the game. This includes hills, trees, buildings, foliage, walls, industrial equipment, storage containers, signage, and the like. These items block and/or affect model’s Movement, Line of Sight, and Line of Fire. “If you can see it, you can shoot it!” is the rule, so unless the model/unit is equipped with an Indirect Fire capable weapon, any terrain feature taller than the model blocks or prevents Ranged/Melee attacks, unless one party is at a higher elevation.

Terrain features will affect a unit’s Movement and require the unit expend additional Actions and Movement to go around, through, or over it.

3.6 Cover: Obstructions, Soft Cover, and Hard Cover

Terrain items shorter than a model’s height can be used to conceal or protect it by interrupting LOS/LOF or adding to model’s defense. If a terrain item partially covers a model from a specific angle, it may grant a Cover bonus to that model. To receive a Cover bonus, the Defending model must be in base to base contact with the terrain item, and in position to benefit from Cover in relation to the angle of attack.

Cover falls into four broad categories: Obstructions, Soft, Hard, and Hardened.

- **Obstructions** are the first form of terrain modifier. They are any low terrain scenic that interrupts but does not totally block the Line of Sight/Line of Fire in the intervening span between the Attacker and the Defender. It’s not protecting them but it is partially blocking the shot. Obstructions give a -1 penalty per item to any Attacker’s Combat Ability. Obstructions are cumulative with each other and other types of Cover.

- **Soft Cover** items are wooden boxes, low bushes/scrub brush, a chain link fence, and the like. Soft Cover gives -1 penalty to Attacker's Combat Ability and +1 bonus to Defender's Will Stat.
- **Hard Cover** items are brick walls, jersey barriers, dragons' teeth (tank obstructions), and similar solid material. Hard Cover provides a -1 penalty to Attacker's Combat Ability, a +1 to Defender's Armor stat, and +2 bonus to Defender's Will stat.
- **Hardened Cover** is serious protection like that offered by concrete bunkers and sandbag weapon emplacements. Hardened Cover, when encountered, gives a -2 penalty to Attacker's Combat Ability, a +2 to Defender's Armor stat, and +3 to Defender's Will stat.

Remember: Combat Ability is the base Target Number for a unit's attack and is affected by terrain and equipment modifiers. Firepower is the number of dice rolled when attacking with a particular weapon.

Example

The mutant hunter Raven is shooting at a Rad-Ghoul. There is a low hedge in the way (Obstruction) and the irradiated creature is crouching behind a stone wall (Hard Cover). Raven's Ranged Attack suffers a combined -2 penalty (-1 for the Obstruction and -1 for the Stone Wall) while the Ghoul defender is granted a +1 Armor bonus and +2 to their Will check.

If Raven's Combat Ability is 6 and she is shooting an Assault Rifle, Raven would roll three D10s hoping for a 4 or less (Assault Rifle Firepower is 3). Each result of 4 or less would count as a Hit.

Elevated Attacks

In case you needed another reason to take the high ground, any Ranged or Melee attack made from a higher elevation against a target in Cover reduces the Defender's Cover level by one degree. This means Hard cover shifts to Soft, Soft cover shifts to Obstruction, and Obstruction modifiers are cancelled entirely when the Attacker is at a higher elevation than the Defender.

3.7 Squad Cohesion and Actions

Wolf and I were tracking a mutant pack down the Number 9 Highway near that village with the red water tower when we came across an abandoned BMP.
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Zona Alfa is designed to be a skirmish game with players controlling a squad of individual soldiers, specialists, and characters. However, there may be an occasion where a "Unit" is composed of multiple models. In this case, the Squad Cohesion and Common Actions rules will apply.



Squad Cohesion and Common Actions

Because the squad is trained to act as a team, they must stay together and engage in identical Actions when Activated.

Squad Cohesion means models in a multi-model unit cannot be further than 1" from at least one other model within the unit. Think of this like a chain rather than a clump, so a skirmish line is fine. Common Actions require all models in the unit undertake the same Action together, e.g. to all Move, all Shoot, all Melee, etc. In addition, when attacking, all models concentrate their attacks on the same target.

A majority of the time, the only multiple model units are Zone Hostiles who act as a mob or a swarm like zombies or rats. Essentially, treat a multi-model unit as a single model with more Firepower and Wounds than a single model.

Part 4: Combat And Wounds

These are the two types of combat: Ranged and Melee.

4.1 Ranged Combat

When engaging an opponent with a Ranged Attack, the attacker must have three things:

1. At least one Action to expend performing the attack.
2. Line of Sight to the Target model.
3. A weapon with sufficient range to reach the Target. Pre-measuring is allowed. If any part of the target unit's base falls within the effective range of the attacker's weapon, the attack is allowed. If not, there's no shot or hit.

Attack Roll

To perform a Ranged Attack, the Attacker declares they are expending the Action, identifies the intended Target, then checks the range and Cover modifiers (see page 15). They will then roll the appropriate number of Firepower Dice according to their weapon type (see the Armory, page 24).

The target number for a Hit is the model's Combat Ability, plus or minus any modifiers (Cover, Terrain, Aim, Special Gear etc). Any die rolls of the **modified target number** or less are a Hit.

Armor Save For Ranged Combat

Successful Hits do not automatically inflict damage. To represent the modern advances in body armor, new technology, and plain old luck, the Defender is allowed an Armor Save roll.

The Defender must take one D10 per Successful Hit and roll to determine the extent of that Hit's damage. The Target Number for the Defender is their Armor stat, minus the Attacking weapon's Damage, plus or minus any Cover modifiers. Any die rolls of the **modified target number** or less count as Deflections and no physical damage is sustained.

Example

Savak (aka the Weasel) is scavenging an old fire station deep in the Exclusion Zone when he spots a Bloodsucker. He fires his AK-74 at the mutant hoping for a bounty, or at least a few free drinks at the bar for taking out such a dangerous threat. The Weasel's Combat Ability is 5. The Assault Rifle has a range of 36", a Firepower of 3, and a Damage stat of 1. The Bloodsucker has an Armor stat of 3. An intervening split log fence counts as an Obstruction. Weasel would spend one Action to roll three dice, (weapon's Firepower is 3) hoping for a result of 4 or less to Hit the mutant (5 for attacker's Combat Ability, minus 1 for the Obstruction).

Every result of 4 or less counts as a Hit, and for every Hit, the Bloodsucker must roll one D10, hoping for a result of 2 or less to deflect that Hit (Armor of 3, minus attacking weapon's Damage of 1).

Weasel brings his rifle up and pulls the trigger...



Turns out not everyone evacuated after the first Incident. They still call this place 'home.' © Lead Adventure Miniatures

4.2 Melee Combat

Melee Combat has similar requirements to Ranged Combat in that the Attacker must spend an Action to Attack and have an appropriate weapon. They must also be in base to base contact with their Target. With rare exception, Melee Combat is resolved by all models involved simultaneously. It is important to note up front that while the Attacker must expend an Action to engage their opponent, Melee

Combat is considered simultaneous, the Defender does **not** have to expend Actions to fight back.

In this simultaneous brawl, both the Attacker and Defender will roll the appropriate Firepower and Armor Save rolls at the same time for every round of Melee. Each player takes into account their model's respective Combat Abilities, Special Abilities, weapon Firepower, Damage, and Armor ratings. Any die rolls of the **modified target number or less** are a Hit. Successful Hits are tallied and compared. The results are applied at the end of each round of Melee.

Hit and Parry

At the end of each round of Melee, the number of the Successful hits by both Attacker and Defender is compared. The Attacker then has the option to use any of their Successful Hits to Parry (i.e. cancel) an equal number of the Defender's Successful hits. Any remaining Hits are subject to Armor Saves and resolved as normal. So, depending on the dice results, this can allow the Attacker to avoid damage while inflicting it (It's also entirely possible for the Attacker and the Defender to kill each other). The last model standing is the winner.

Example

Savak the Weasel is having a bad day. Not only did he encounter a Bloodsucker, but he shot and missed. The Bloodsucker has charged him and now he's up close and personal with one very angry, ugly, vicious mutant.

Savak's Combat Ability is a 5. Unfortunately, he does not have a melee weapon (see the Armory section, page 24) so he must use his AK-74 at a -2 penalty. On the other hand, the Bloodsucker has big claws and a Combat Ability of 6. It also has 2 attacks in Melee (FP 2).

In the first round of melee, Savak would roll 3 dice and subtract 2 from each roll, hoping to get a 3 or less to hit (3 FP dice at Combat Ability 5, minus the non-Melee weapon Penalty). The Bloodsucker would roll 2 dice, trying to get a straight 6 or less.

As the Attacker, the Bloodsucker would be able to spend any of its Successful Hits to Parry any of Weasel's hits. Any leftover Hit results would be applied, with both players making appropriate Armor Save rolls.

Make your peace with St. Strelok, Weasel!



Time to visit Zakhar. He got a new shipment yesterday and rumor has it there was an RPG-7 in the lot.

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4.3 Combat Results: Miss, Deflected Hits and Successful Hits

Melee Combat

In the desperate and adrenaline fueled frenzy of Melee combat, only Misses and Successful Hits are counted. A Deflected Hit is considered as a Miss.

Ranged Combat

While Ranged Attacks do not always damage the target, they may still affect it. There are three possible outcomes for Ranged Attacks: Successful Hit (A hit with a failed Armor Save), Deflected Hit (A hit with a successful Armor Save), and Miss.

Successful Hits count as a Wound. These are Hits where a model's Armor Save was unsuccessful. As most models only have one Wound, (except where noted. Bullets are not your friend) a Wounded model is considered a casualty and removed from play (or leave it laying there to display the carnage).

In a round of Ranged Combat, Successful Hits are always resolved first. Use a token to mark models with multiple Wounds.

Deflected Hits do not cause Wounds. These are Hits where the model's Armor Save was successful. However, given the impact of high-caliber rounds on body armor, they have enough power to stun. To reflect this, for every round of Ranged Combat with a Deflected Hit, the Defender must take a Will check to determine if the shots unnerved them.

The Defender rolls 1D10 against their Will stat for every round of Ranged Combat with Deflected Hits, (not the number of Hits!) taking into account any modifiers from Cover or special abilities. If the Defender fails the Will check, place a Pinned Counter beside the model. If the Defender passes the Will check, they carry on as normal (see page 22).

Again, for every failed Will check from a round of Ranged Combat with Deflected Hits, place one Pinned Counter beside the Defender. Remember Pinned Counters are assigned according to each round of Ranged Combat.

For Multi-Model Units and/or Multi-Wound Models, this Target Number is further modified by the number of Wounds/Casualties they have sustained. This number is a negative modifier to the Defender's Will stat.

A Miss causes no physical damage and does not affect the model.

Deadlocked and Withdraw in Melee Combat

In the event of an Attacker/Defender tie or no definite combat result, the combatants are considered Deadlocked and the Melee Combat continues into the next turn.

A model with sufficient Actions wishing to Withdraw from a Deadlocked Melee may only do so *after* the opponent unit has made a **free** Melee attack. The Defender rolls their Armor Save dice on any Hits and any success is considered a Dodge.

Kicking Them When They're Down

Melee Attacks on a Pinned Defender receive a +2 bonus to their Combat Ability for the first round **only**. Should the Defender survive the initial attack, they are considered to be alert, on their feet, and fully engaged in self-defense.

Ranged Attacks on a Pinned Defender suffer a -2 penalty to their Combat Ability rolls as the Defender is making the most of any and all terrain to stay low and out of sight. This penalty is cumulative with regular Cover modifiers.

4.4 Wounds, Pinned, Rally, and Med-Kits

Wounds

Most units in *Zona Alfa* have one Wound, meaning all but the largest and most dangerous enemies can be taken out by a single clean shot or a solid hit. Now a Wounded, single Wound unit isn't necessarily dead, but they are placed Out of Action. Place the figure face down on the table and mark them with an appropriate token or chit (a tiny plastic skull is suitably morbid).

A model that has been Wounded and put Out of Action, but is **not** healed (see Med-Kits, page 22) before the end of the mission must roll on the Battle Scars Table when the mission is finished to determine the injury's lasting effects (See Section 8.5, page 46).

A one-Wound and Out of Action model that is Wounded again in a different round of combat while Out of Action is considered Permanently Dead. Any Equipment, Weapons, or Armor they have goes into their crew pool and can be used to equip other crew members or recruits.

Multiple Wound Models

When starting a *Zona Alfa* game, only your Crew's Leader – the model you selected to represent your interests in the Zone – starts with two Wounds. Other crew members can achieve this level of resilience with enough experience and advances, but to start, the boss is boss for a reason (See Section 8 for more on Advances and Campaign Rules, page 38).

When a Zone Crew Leader, or some other multi-Wound model, receives their first Wound, mark the model's stat sheet or place an appropriate token by their base (An acrylic blood drop, a numbered chit, a colored bead are all good markers). The Wounded model remains in the game but functions at a reduced capacity, moving at **half** their normal Movement rate and fighting at **half** their normal Combat Ability (rounded up). Also, there is a -1 penalty to their Will stat. This 'Two Wound Rule' keeps named characters in the game without making them invincible.

At the Stalls, everything has a price. It's like a farmer's market, but with guns.
© Lead Adventure Miniatures



Pinned and Rally

In order to remove a Pinned Counter, the Pinned unit must expend one Action to Rally. One Rally Action removes One Pinned Counter. Removal is automatic and no die roll is required. The removal simply consumes time and energy. i.e. an Action. A unit cannot be burdened with more than four Pinned Counters. With the exception of defending itself in Melee Combat, a unit cannot perform any other Actions until all Pinned Counters are removed.

A Pinned unit is eligible for Cover bonuses (being behind Soft or Hard cover) and receives an additional bonus to their Armor stat from all Direct Fire Ranged Attacks so long as they remain Pinned behind Cover (an additional +1 for Soft and +2 for Hard). The unit is considered to be hunkered down for protection, taking full advantage of the cover (They're trying to crawl under their helmet!).

If a model has two wounds, like a Leader, they may elect not to use the Med-Kit right away and suffer the wound penalties. This choice might make sense in the moment, say to move to better cover or to complete their part in an ambush or other multi-stage/multi-model action.

Med-Kits

Models may have purchased Med-Kits before the battle. If self-administered, a model may use the Med-Kit as a Free Action that takes place immediately. The Wounded marker is removed, however the model gains 2 Pinned counters. It's important to mention individual Med-Kits can only be applied to individual wounds. They will not work on a model hit and Wounded multiple times in the same round of combat. Now if a model receives two Wounds and has two Med-Kits, it may replace both Wounds with 4 Pinned Counters (2 for each Wound) but 2 is the maximum number of Wounds that can be dressed in a single round of Combat (Three and you're Out of Action).

If there are no Med-Kits available and/or the unit has been Wounded three or more times, mark it as Out of Action and place it face down (with that tiny skull beside it). It can no longer take part in the mission – unless it is Healed.

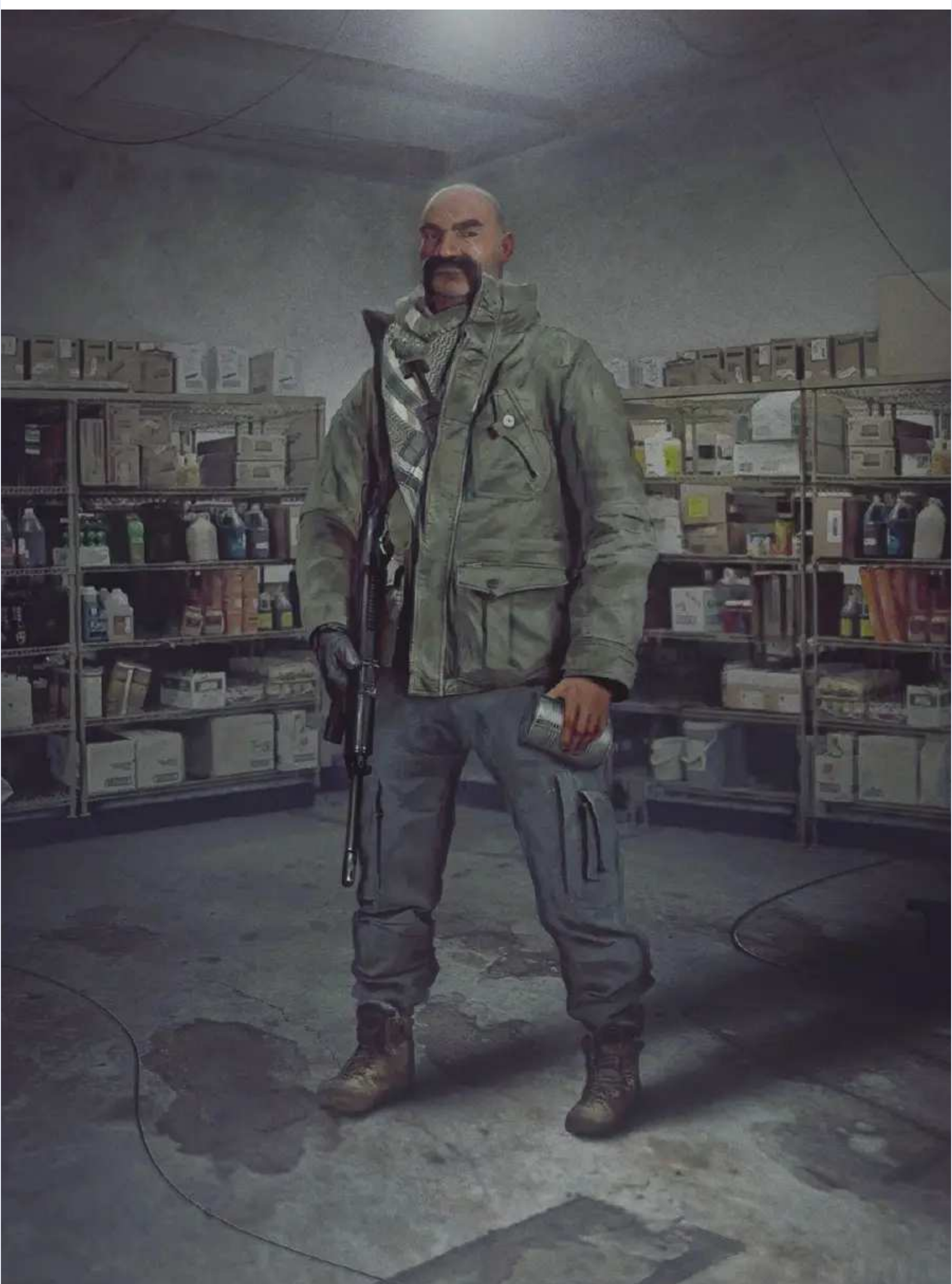
An Out of Action model can be healed by an ally with a Med-Kit before the mission ends. Now this attention represents full medical attention and remedies all wounds, but the model cannot rejoin the action for the duration of that mission.

If a Crew Leader (or Multiple Wound Unit) has a Med-Kit, they may use it to negate the effects of a Wound. Remove the Med-Kit from the unit's inventory and replace the Wound marker with two Pinned Counters. No further penalties apply then. Wounds negated by Med-Kits are always replaced by two Pinned Counters (except for a model with the Bone Doc ability, see page 30). Applying a Med-Kit to an injured Allied model costs one Action and the medic must be in base-to-base contact with the injured model. A model applying a Med-Kit to itself is a 'free Action' and can be done at any time, such as *after* the Wounded model drags itself to the nearest Cover.

Example

Zakhar "The Turk" has been running goods in and out of the Exclusion Zone longer than anyone can remember. He was one of the first to slip past the military cordon and has been here ever since. Tough as old leather, dour as a stone, rumor has it the Turk's eyes have surveyed every square meter of the Zone's terrible beauty, even inside the Sarcophagus itself. The old gas station where he trades has been known as "The Turk's House" for years.

If the Turk is ever wounded, his normal Combat Ability of 7, Move Rate of 6" and Will of 7, would be reduced. His Combat Ability would drop to 4 (half of 7, rounded up) his Movement to 3", and his Will would be 6. The Turk would be in a tough spot. But then the Turk has been in plenty of tough spots over the years. That's why he carries a modified Saiga-12 and an extra Med-Kit wherever he goes – even to the latrine.



Ranged Attack Summary

To conclude, every time a unit is targeted by a Ranged Attack, resolve Successful Hits/Wounds first. Next, roll Will checks for every round with Deflected Hits, placing Pinned Counters for Failed Checks. Misses are a waste of good ammunition. Aim better next time, comrade!

- Ranged Attack Successful Hit = Wound or Casualty
- Ranged Attack Deflected Hit = Possible Pinned Counter
- Miss = Miss

Time To Kit Up?

You want reliable guns and gear, you need to see the Turk.

AKs, Saigas, ammo, grenades, body armor, GLONASS satnav sets...Zakhar has everything and what he doesn't have he can get. Even military kit, if you've got the Script.

Go eleven kilometers on the Number Three East road. There's an old petrol station at the top of the hill. That's his trading post.

When you come to the front gate, keep your weapon slung and your hands visible. The password is 'Cheeki Breeki'.

The place looks battered but don't let that fool you; there's a dozen guards, reinforced walls, and MON-50 mines sprinkled everywhere. That gas station has survived a hundred attacks. It'll survive a hundred more.

Zakhar won't be cheap, but the gear he sells will work. And that's what's important.

Part 5: Armory, Body Armor, And Indirect Fire Weapons

5.1 The Armory

Now we get to the crunchy part. Below is the Armory section. While Russian-flavored, *Zona Alfa* does not differentiate between types of Assault Rifles (AK74 vs Vintorez VSS) or handguns (Makarov vs Grach) and the like. The rules are not tied to a proprietary range of figures, so Weapon and Armor types are broad, catch-all categories to allow gamers to use their coolest miniatures. Remember the WYSIWYG Rule and stat out your models according to the closest appropriate Weapon/Armor type listed. Tweak Damage, Range, and Firepower to customize your character's firearm, but only so long as the other players agree!

Notes before you continue: weapons marked 'Melee' can only be used in Melee combat (makes sense, right?). Certain ranged weapons such as Pistols, Sub-machineguns, and Shotguns can be also used in Melee with no penalty. Other ranged weapons such as assault rifles incur a -2 penalty to the attacker's Combat Ability when used in close combat. Where the weapon calls for a "template" – be that a teardrop Flame, a Small Blast, or a Large Blast – the sizes and shapes referenced are commonly used in other game systems and are readily available (for sizes please see page 7). If you are partial to another, particular set of sizes, feel free to use them so long as they are used consistently.

*The Vladivostok crew is at it again.
They're slipping past the Cordon from*

*the North, following the old gas pipe
straight to the refinery in the Red Hills.*

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Melee Weapon Table

Weapon	Range	Firepower	Damage
Knife, Claws/Teeth	Melee	1/weapon	0
Machete, Big Claws/Teeth	Melee	1/weapon	1
Very Big Claws/Teeth	Melee	1/weapon	2
Pistol	Melee-12"	1/weapon	0
Magnum Pistol	Melee-12"	1/weapon	1
Shotgun	Melee-12"	3	3 at melee-6" 2 at 6+"
SMG	Melee-18"	4	0

Rifle Table

Weapon	Range	Firepower	Damage
Assault Rifle (AK 74)	1-36"	3	1
Battle Rifle (AK-15)	1-48"	2	2

Support Weapon Table

Weapon	Range	Firepower	Damage	Special Rules
Flame Thrower or Chemical Sprayer	Flame Template	NA	3/model/flame template	Limited Ammo, Support Weapon, Burn
40mm Grenade Launcher	4-24"	1	1/model. SBT	Indirect Fire, Reload, Limited Ammo, Support Weapon
Squad LMG (RPD or RPK)	1-48"	4	1	Support Weapon
Rocket Launcher (RPG)	4-48"	1	4 (anti-armor)	Reload, Limited Ammo, Support Weapon
Rocket Launcher (RPG)	4-48"	1	2/model SBT (anti-inf.)	Reload, Limited Ammo, Support Weapon, SBT
Sniper Rifle (Dragunov SVD-63)	1-60"	1	4	Support Weapon
HMG	1-60"	4	3	Crew Served
Mortar	6-60"	1	2/model LBT	Crew Served, Indirect Fire, Reload, Limited Ammo

Grenades and Explosives

Crew members can carry up to two (2) grenades of any type for free. Grenades come in pairs and the first set **does not** use an Equipment Slot (see Section 6.2, page 31). Additional sets of Grenades do use an Equipment Slot. Grenade types can be mixed as desired. Track their use on a character's Stat sheet. All Grenades and Explosives are capable of Indirect Fire (see page 27).

Grenades and Explosives Table

Weapon	Range	Firepower	Damage
Molotov Cocktail	1-18"	1	SBT 1/model. BURN
Flash Bang	1-18"	1	SBT Auto 1Pinned/model
Smoke Grenade	1-18"	1	LBT/Smoke Blocks LOS/Will check -2 for any model caught in LBT.
Hand Grenade	1-18"	1	SBT 2/model
Satchel Charge	2-12"	1	LBT 3/model

Weapon Special Rules

Indirect Fire Weapon

See Section 5.4, page 27.



...at the bridge near the hospital outside the Dead City. I've never been this deep in the Red – Anomalies are everywhere.
© Lead Adventure Miniatures

Reload

One Action must be spent after each Shooting Attack to reload this weapon.

Limited Ammo

Five (5) Rounds per Load-Out.

Support Weapon

Due to weight and or awkward size, models equipped with one of these weapons have their Movement rate reduced by 1" per Action.

Crew Served

Crew Served weapons are stationary positions. No movement possible.

Small Blast Template and Large Blast Template (SBT/LBT)

Small 3" diameter Blast Template, Large 5" diameter Blast Template.

When determining targets for Area Effect weapons, any and all models under or touched by the blast template must roll for Damage.

Flame Template

Approximately 8" long and 3" at its widest point, and tear drop shaped. No Combat Ability roll is necessary to place a teardrop template. Simply place the template as desired with the small end touching the base of the Attacker and orient as to maximize casualties. Any and all models under or touched by the template must roll for Damage.

Burn

All affected models under/touched by template must keep rolling Armor Rolls until they have suffered their last Wound (and go Out of Action) or until they make a successful Armor Save.

Penalty for Non-Melee Weapons

Unless the weapon range lists 'Melee', attacks with a Ranged Weapon in Melee Combat suffer a -2 penalty to Attacker's Combat Ability.

Powered Weapons Most Sci-Fi or Near

Future settings offer hi-tech versions of standard weapons like a Gauss Rifle or Laser Pistol. My solution to keep the game balanced is to grant powered versions of weapons increased Damage ratings but offset that by requiring a Reload Action between each shot. Flavor to taste, but we have found it best to make such weapons extremely rare and experimental.

5.2 Terrain Features and Area Effect Weapons

Terrain items will modify or block a template's Area of Effect. Models caught in an Area Effect Template but behind Soft Cover receive a +2 bonus to the Armor Save roll. Hard and Hardened Cover will completely block the blast effect. This means it's possible for one of your troopers to toss a grenade into a nearby room or drop it over an adjacent brick wall and not be affected.

5.3 Body Armor

Most modern militaries and police forces are equipped with some form of body armor. Even well-equipped street gangs, crime cartels, and private security have access to quality body armor. Below are the seven types of Body Armor/Tactical Wear for *Zona Alfa*.

Body Armor Types

- **Basic BDU/Foul Weather Gear:** No Armor Save (except the Critical Success roll of 1). Counts as an Obscured Target from Ranged Attacks when in Cover.

- **Salvaged/Improvised Body Armor:** Scrounged ballistic nylon and ceramic plates sewn into tactical vests, battle dress, and foul weather clothing provide Armor 3 and renders the wearer an Obscured Target when in Cover. Most Zone Hostile Bandits and Raiders employ Improvised Body Armor.
- **Civilian/Commercial Body Armor:** Armor 5 and the unit counts as an Obscured Target from Ranged Attacks when in Cover.
- **Military Body Armor:** Armor 6 and the unit counts as an Obscured Target from Ranged Attacks when in Cover.
- **Advanced Body Armor:** Armor 7 with a -1" penalty to Move Stat but also the unit counts as an Obscured Target from Ranged Attacks when in Cover. Grants 1 extra die to Armor Save rolls, choosing best result.
- **Mimetic Camo:** Armor 4 **plus** Counts as an Obscured Target for **any** Melee or Ranged Combat. Cumulative with regular cover and obstruction modifiers.
- **Military Exo Suit:** (Power Assisted Advanced Body Armor) Armor 7 with a +2" bonus to Move stat. **PLUS** counts as Obscured Target from Ranged Attacks when in Cover. Does not need to make a Will check for Deflected Hits. Grants 1 Extra die to Armor Save rolls. Choose best result.

Obscured Target When in Cover

Models wearing BDU's made with disruptive pattern material receive a benefit when in Cover and targeted by a Ranged Attack from an appropriate angle. Similar to an Obstruction, an Obscured Target gives a -1 penalty to a Ranged Attacker's Combat Ability Roll. This modifier is additional to and cumulative with standard Cover modifiers.

Toughened Hide, Shells, Chitinous Plates

Mutants and other Zone creatures have developed natural protection, be that camouflage coloration, chameleon-like pigmentation, or just plain old thick skin. This makes them notoriously tough to kill. Remember the WYSIWYG rule and stat out your Zone Hostiles with the closest appropriate Armor type.

Armor Ratings for Drones, Robots and Light Vehicles

As mentioned, *Zona Alfa* is a small unit skirmish game. Large vehicles and heavy armor bump the scale of battle beyond its intended scope. However, light equipment like drones, remote-controlled robots, and smaller vehicles such as bikes, jeeps or single operator heavy armor suits and walkers are certainly appropriate in small numbers. To that end, here are the suggested Armor Ratings for small vehicles.

Small Drone or Robot: Armor 3. Medium, human-sized robot: Armor 4. An enclosed truck or jeep: Armor 4, 5, or 6, depending on its size and if it is up-armored. A Light Walker, Piloted Exo Suit, or IFV should have an Armor rating of 6 or 7, and possibly two Wounds with diminished abilities in the same manners as a Crew Leader (see page 21).

Players are certainly free to include whatever figs and troop types they want, but should endeavor to maintain game and mission balance so that no particular side has an inordinate chance of winning.

5.4 Indirect Fire

Indirect Fire Weapons

Most weapons are direct fire (i.e. shoot in a straight line). However, weapons listed with this special rule in the Armory are capable of Indirect Fire, meaning they can fire over intervening terrain features.

Nerves of Steel – Literally. It should be noted Drones, Robots, fully enclosed vehicles and/or walkers/suits do NOT take a Will check for Deflected Hits. Open jeeps or truck cabs do not count as fully enclosed.

Indirect Fire Penalty

When using Indirect Fire the Attacker suffers a -1 penalty to their Combat Ability when the Target is in LOS. If no LOS is available but LOF is possible, then the Attacker suffers a -3 penalty to their Combat Ability (They're guessing at the target's location).

The Shadow Rule of Indirect Fire

A unit is said to be in the **shadow** of a tall LOS/LOF blocking terrain feature if it is within a distance equal to the terrain feature's height. For example, a 2" tall wall has a 2" wide shadow from its base.

This unit **cannot** be targeted by Indirect Fire from the other side of the terrain item, **unless** the Attacking unit is also within the same terrain feature's shadow.

The **shadow rule** is here to reflect the nature of indirect fire and parabolic arcs for abstracted game play. It reflects the idea that a munitions' trajectory can't abruptly drop out of a natural arc.

Example

A Bandit is skulking in the other side of a 3" tall concrete wall. There is a Zone Enforcement trooper on the other side of the wall. Since he cannot attack the Bandit with his AK-74, due to blocked LOS/LOF, he decides to toss a hand grenade. To do so, the Zone Enforcement trooper must be within 3" of the wall as well.

Indirect Munitions and Deviation

The Zone Enforcement trooper pulls the pin and lobs his grenade. Hopefully, he was on target. If not, that hand grenade still landed somewhere. Whenever an Indirect Fire attack misses the intended target, determine the actual point of detonation with a single D10 roll.

Roll 1D10 per grenade. Referencing the intended point of impact, the number shown indicates the **half** the distance in inches the grenade deviated from its target, the point (or tip) of the D10 notes the direction it traveled. This is the new impact location. Center the Blast Template on this new point and resolve any damage (Yes, it can land on friendly troops).

A Word To The Wise

You really want my advice, bratok? Leave now, while you still can.

No? Well then find a decent crew and learn to do one job well. Seriously.

Forget trying to master everything. That approach only leaves you good at nothing.

You've got to realize you don't rise to the occasion so much as sink to the level of your training, and if you've trained hard, that's what is going to save you and your comrades. Nothing else.

When the crap hits the fan, and trust me it will, luck favors the prepared.

Oh, and one other thing: never, ever skimp on equipment.

You bought the cheapest gun on the rack trying to save money? I guarantee it'll jam at the worst possible moment.

And a little thing like that can ruin your whole day.



Part 6: Skills And Abilities, Equipment And Equipment Slots

6.1 Skills and Abilities

A *Zona Alfa* crew is a hot mess of the desperate and the disparate; a collection of fugitives, loners, thrill-seekers, and misfits who are crazy enough to risk the Exclusion Zone, and skilled enough to stay there. This *eclectic* band of unique individuals will form your crew and, through your leadership, achieve fortune or death.

Now the easiest way to portray the distinct skill sets of these individuals is to vary the model's Combat Experience and starting Equipment. For example, a Green recruit in the military's Zone Enforcement Unit would certainly have military-grade equipment but probably a low Will and Combat Ability. On the other hand, a street-hardened thug signing on to a bandit crew, or hired to protect a private Salvage run, would have decent Combat Ability and Will, but lesser quality weapons and armor.

Zona Alfa uses another variable to distinguish between tactical styles and combat proficiency: Skills. While Combat Experience reflects various degrees of training and proficiency by granting an increased number of Actions per turn to more veteran characters, Skills allow players to create unique characters with other, distinct abilities.

Remember Green recruits do not begin with any particular Skills. Hardened crew members have one, while Veterans can select two. Of course, your crew members can advance and gain experience, increasing their Combat Experience over successive games, so long as they stay alive. No character may have more than two Skills.

Skills List

- **Bone Doc:** Probably attended Med-School for a semester or had some combat medic training in the military, a Bone Doc can double up on Med-Kits when assigning them in his Equipment Slots, meaning that two can be carried per slot. When a Bone Doc applies a Med-Kit to himself or Allied unit, the Wound is replaced with one Pinned Counter rather than two.
- **Fuse Cutter:** The explosives expert, the Fuse Cutter can carry up to three Hand Grenades, Molotov Cocktails, or Satchel Charges, instead of the standard two. The Fuse Cutter also receives a +2 to all Explosives-related Skill Checks like de-fusing an IED or booby-trapped door.
- **Hard:** Walking that fine line between bravery and stupidity, this character ignores their first Pinned result and always receives a +1 bonus to their Will Stat when rolling for Deflected Hits.
- **Hustle:** Quick on their feet, whenever this model spends two consecutive Actions to Move, they receive an extra 2" to the total. So a Hardened trooper can move 14" with two back-to-back Move Actions rather than the standard 12".
- **Knife Man:** Knife men function best up close and personal. They receive a +1 to all Melee Combat rolls and, if appropriately armed, may fire/use two Melee weapons in close combat for one Action.

When you're in the Zone, always assume someone or something is trying

to kill you- even if you can't see it. Most of the time, you won't be wrong.

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- **Leader:** There's one in every crowd and only room for one in a Crew. Leaders grant a +1 bonus to all Will/Rally rolls for allied units in Line of Sight to the Leader figure. Leaders also have a special 'Order' Action that allows them to 'transfer' or give their own Actions to other members of their squad. The recipient must be within 12" and in Line of Sight of the Leader figure, and must immediately perform the Ordered Action. Any effects of this transferred Action/s must be taken and resolved before the Leader can perform any more Actions.
- **Scrounger:** Some guys have a knack for finding stuff. Scroungers can Search a Hot Spot twice instead of just once. Each Search is a separate Action, but they double your chance at finding something useful.
- **Steady Hands:** Maybe their grandfather took them hunting, perhaps they received some special Military training, either way, these shooters get a +1 to all Ranged Attack rolls. This Ability stacks with the Aim bonus modifiers and any appropriate Gear.
- **Unload:** When this model spends two consecutive Actions on a Ranged Attack with an appropriate ranged combat weapon, such as an Assault Rifle, against a single target, it adds two bonus dice to the combined Firepower roll. Unload represents the model emptying the weapons' magazine in one go. After using the Unload ability, the model must spend 1 Action to 'reload' the weapon before it can be fired again.
For example, a two Action Ranged Attack with an Assault Rifle against the same target would roll 8 Firepower dice rather than the usual 6. A similar attack with a pistol – say in Melee – would roll 4 Firepower dice instead of 2. A model armed with a Flamethrower, RPG, Grenade Launcher, or Sniper rifle would not be able to use the Unload ability.
- **Wrench:** This is the one who's always tinkering with the GAZ engine, modding the gas tube on his AK-74, or jury-rigging the camp stove. Handy with anything mechanical, a Wrench gets a +2 to all Mechanical-Related Skill checks.



I entered the Chernya Woods four days ago, trying to find a short cut to the west edge of the Red Zone. Big mistake. Compass went all wonky in here and the place is a damn maze.
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6.2 Equipment and Equipment Slots

"Take care of your gear and your gear will take care of you." True everywhere, but especially in the Zone where a reliable piece of kit can mean the difference between life and death. Zone hunters take extra care to stay on the right side of that divide. There are three categories of Equipment in *Zona Alfa*: Basic, Advanced, and Special. Characters start with items from the Basic List and can purchase or even find items on the Advanced or Special Lists over the course of a campaign. Don't worry about item values now. They will come up in Section 8 (see page 38). Starting players can select three items from the Basic Equipment List when making their Crew Leader. Other Crew members start with two. See page 24 for the Equipment Lists.

Rather than weight restrictions or carrying capacity, each character in *Zona Alfa* has Equipment Slots. Players can select and assign one item to each Equipment Slot. Multiples of the same item can be equipped, like Med-Kits. The number of slots can be increased over the course of the game with Campaign Advances and Special Items like a Chest Rig or a Load Bearing Vest. See the Special Items Table, page 32.

Reminder: Green crew members have one Equipment Slot, Hardened have two, and Veterans have three.

Bear in mind each crew member is presumed to have a backpack to carry Salvage, Artifacts, and miscellaneous items. There is essentially no limit to the amount of Salvage that can fit in them. This is different than Equipment Slots which represent specific items that are readily available and used in the course of a mission.

Gear listed in the Special Items Table do not count as Equipment and do not use an Equipment Slot.

Basic Equipment Table		
Item	Description	Value (Zone Script)
Binoculars	+12" to Inspect range when surveying Hot Spots and Mission Objectives.	200
Electric Juice	Methamphetamine and Vodka with a twist of lime. Immediately grants two additional Actions. Side Effect: Only one Action is allowed the following turn.	100
Gas Mask	No Will check required for Smoke or Fumes.	200
Med-Kit	Replace 1 Wound with 2 Pinned Counters. 1 Pinned Counter if Bone Doc.	250
Red Dot Sight	For Pistols, SMGS, Shotguns, and Assault Rifles. +1 to Ranged Attack Combat Ability Roll at half the weapon's effective range or less.	400

Advanced Equipment Table		
Item	Description	Value (Zone Script)
Detector	+ 2 bonus to their Will check when Searching an Anomaly.	500
Tool Kit	+2 to All Mechanical Skill Checks and -1 to Action cost.	600
NODs	Negates Dark and Low Light LOS and Ranged Attack penalties.	750
Hot Load Ammo	Ranged weapons only. +1 to Weapon Damage. Enough for one mission.	350
Scope	Assault Rifles, Battle Rifles, and Sniper Rifles Only. +1 to Ranged Combat Ability Rolls at greater than half the weapons effective range.	750

Special Item Table		
Item	Description	Value (Zone Script)
Chest Rig	+1 Grenade and +1 Equipment Slot	1,000
Load Bearing Vest	+2 Grenade and +2 Equipment Slot	1,500
Under Barrel Grenade Launcher	Assault Rifles Only. Adds a 40mm Grenade Launcher Option to a character's weapon.	1,800
Kevlar Plates	+1 to character's Armor Rating. Can be added twice per crew member.	1,800
Heavy Weapon Reload	+5 ammo of any single type of Limited Ammo weapon.	2,000

Value = Resale value at The Stalls (see page 51). Zone Script = Currency used in the Zone and earned during campaigns (see pages 38).

Like Stravinsky

Listen druzhishe, a good Crew Boss knows his team like a conductor knows his orchestra. Soft, loud, strong, weak... He knows their mothers, their lovers, their most hated enemies. He knows what gets them going and what trips them up. He's got a handle on each and every one of them.

Don't like symphonies, then think of your comrades as tools in a box; you've got to pick the right one for the job. Sure, to a hammer everything is a nail, but only an idiot uses an axe to kill a mosquito.

Someday you'll have Bandits on your trail or a swarm of Mutants at your heels, and you'll need cover, fast. Cowering outside some old warehouse, a Crew Boss

needs to know who can lay down fire and who can pick a lock. It'll mean all the difference in the world.

And believe me when I say the sound of that door swinging open will be sweet music to your ears.

Part 7: Comrades On The Battlefield

7.1 Character Composition and Squad Creation

So, you've decided to form a crew and take your chances in the Zone. Well then let's talk about leaders and *khrabrost*'.

The Crew Leader is in charge of the squad and that leader represents you; competent, experienced, determined to make your fortune. Select a miniature that best reflects the style and type of soldier you want to be and give it the following Stats and equipment:

Movement Rate of 6", Combat Ability of 6, Military Body Armor (Armor 6), and a Will of 7. Classed as a Veteran, they will have three (3) Actions per turn and two Wounds.

Next, select one Ranged Weapon and one Melee Weapon, two grenades of any type, and three items from the Basic Equipment table (see pages 25 and 32). Finally, assign them the Leader Skill plus one other Skill you feel will give you and your crew an edge in the Zone.

When you're done, your stat sheet should look something like this:

Name	Boris	Faction	Military
Wounds	2	Combat Experience	Veteran
Movement	Combat Ability	Armor	Will
6"/Action	6	Mil-Body Armor (6)	7
Skills			
Leader: Leaders grant a +1 bonus to all Will/Rally rolls for allied units in Line of Sight to the Leader figure. Leaders also have a special 'Order' Action that allows them to 'transfer' their Actions to other members of their squad. The recipient must be within 12" and in Line of Sight of the Leader figure, and must immediately perform the Ordered Action. Any effects of this transferred Action/s must be taken and resolved before the Leader can perform any more Actions.			
Hustle: Quick on their feet, whenever this model spends two consecutive Actions to Move, they receive an extra 2" to the total. A Hardened trooper can move 14" with two back-to-back Move Actions rather than the standard 12".			
Equipment			
Military Body Armor: Armor 6. Model counts as Obscured Target from Ranged Attacks when in Cover.			
Slot 1: Electric Juice – Methamphetamine and Vodka. Immediately grants two additional Actions. Side Effect – Only One Action allowed the following turn.			
Slot 2: Med-Kit – Replace 1 Wound with 2 Pinned Counters. Free Action and is Self-Administered. 1 Action otherwise.			
Slot 3: Red Dot – (on AK-15) +1 to Ranged Attack Combat Ability Roll at half weapon's effective range or less.			

Weapon	Range	Firepower	Damage
AK-74	1-36"	3	1
MP 443 Grach Pistol	Melee-12"	1	0
RGN Grenades (x 2)	1-18"	1	SBT 2/model



Khrabrost'

They say you can't measure an intangible like courage, only see it in action. Well *Khrabrost'* (translated from Russian as 'mettle, bravery, or courage') is how *Zona Alfa* measures a Zone Crew's potential effectiveness in battle. It's the main value used to build a squad.

A Zone Crew's *Khrabrost'* (K) is equal to the total available Actions among its members. A normal, starting crew's *Khrabrost'* is Twelve. The Leader takes up three of those, so there are nine *Khrabrost'* left to 'spend' to recruit the remaining squad members. Veterans cost three, Hardened men cost two, and Rookies cost one.

Section 8 explains how crew members can improve their capabilities and gain Advances over the course of a campaign, so it's possible a Leader could take a number of Green rookies and slowly, steadily build them up. A safer bet might be to take several Hardened men, or perhaps another Veteran and a single Rookie. It's your call.

The player does not have to spend the *Khrabrost'* limit on squad members when creating a crew. Leftover *Khrabrost'* points can be used to boost another member's Stats instead. If for example they elect to add only one Hardened and one Rookie member, the leftover points can raise any single member's Movement, Combat Ability or Will by 1 (1" in the case of Movement).

Crew members are still allowed to select their Weapons, Grenades, Skills and Abilities, and Equipment (see pages 25, 30, and 32). However, the newly recruited members start with the following Stats, Skills, and Equipment capacity, depending on their Combat Experience. The starting stat lines for each type are below.

Rookie (1K Each) 1 Action Per Activation

Name	Movement	Combat Ability	Armor	Will
Dmitry Dukh	5"	4	Improvised Body Armor (3) Counts as Obscured Target when in Cover.	4
Options				
Choose 1 Ranged Weapon, 1 Melee Weapon. 2 Grenades, and 1 Piece of Basic Equipment.				

Hardened (2K Each) 2 Actions Per Activation

Name	Movement	Combat Ability	Armor	Will
Kirill Kirza	6"	5	Civilian Body Armor (5) Counts as Obscured Target when in Cover.	5
Options				
Choose 1 Ranged Weapon, 1 Melee Weapon. 2 Grenade, 1 Skill, 2 Pieces of Basic Equipment.				

Veteran (3K Each) 3 Actions Per Activation

Name	Movement	Combat Ability	Armor	Will
Timur Tyazheliy	6"	6	Civilian Body Armor (5) Counts as Obscured Target when in Cover.	6
Options				
Choose 1 Ranged Weapon, 1 Melee Weapon. 2 Grenades, 2 Skills, 3 Pieces of Basic Equipment.				

12K is the value used for starting crews. It can increase with hires and promotions – and decrease due to casualties – over the course of a campaign. At some point, players may well find themselves forced to adjust their style of play and mission objectives because of uneven odds. 12K is also a starting point for force values for two player pick-up games. You and your opponent may agree to a 16K, 10K, or 8 K game. Whatever fits your collection.

7.2 Factions

The final thing you got to do before heading out is choose a Faction, because like it or not, you've got to pick a side.

There are six Factions in the Exclusion Zone, and while you have to pay Faction Dues, membership has its benefits. Depending on your choice, you get a couple pieces of special Gear for your Crew as a 'signing bonus', discounts when buying certain items at The Stalls (see Section 8.6, page 51 for details), and find it easier to recruit certain skilled team members later in the game. The specifics depend on which one you join. The Factions and their benefits are explained below.

Military

The Zone Enforcement Unit is tasked with containing the Zone and interdicting the flow of illegal Salvage and dangerous artifacts. Ironical as it's the Military that secretly allows and assists in the flow of said items. Military Crews start with three free pieces of Equipment: two Red Dot Sights and one load of Hot Load Ammo. They get a 20% discount when purchasing new Weapons, and can recruit Rookies at 25% less of the normal price later in the game.

Scientists

Affiliated with the government and several large private research agencies, the Scientist faction studies the Zone, hoping to understand – and control – its causes and effects. Although technically protected by the military's Zone Enforcement Unit, they frequently hire teams to perform elemental research in dangerous areas, run errands, and provide security. Scientist crews start with a free Detector, one free Med-Kit, and one free Tool Kit. They receive a 25% discount when purchasing Med-Kits, Tool Kits, Gas Masks, and Binoculars at The Stalls, and can hire two Hardened recruits at 50% the normal price later in the game.

Bandits

Vultures, jackals, scavengers, vermin, maggots... the epithets are endless. These thugs rob, harass, and extort anyone and everyone they can. Some Bandits crews are street gangs seeking new turf, others are extensions of organized crime syndicates muscling in on the lucrative flow of goods in and out of the Zone. It's all about money. Bandit crews start with two free doses of Electric Juice and a Chest Rig. They always receive one free Molotov Cocktail when visiting the Stalls. Later in the game, they can hire one Veteran recruit at 25% less the normal price and can always recruit at Rookies 50% normal price.

Independents

Everyone's got to make a living and this bunch plies their trade in the Zone. Whether it's scavenging for artifacts, acting as a guide to researchers and thrill-seeking tourists, or hunting mutants for bounty, Independents want to be left alone and get on with their lives. Independents receive a free Gas Mask, Med-Kit, and Scope to start, and get a 20% discount on Basic Equipment items at the Stalls. Independents can always add Hardened recruits at 30% less the going rate.

Cultists

'If you find a kettle of crazy, it's best not to stir it'. Well, the Zone is a whole cauldron of madness and there's no shortage of folks willing to whip it to a boil. Cultists

Salvage is everywhere in the Zone. So are enemies, traps, and environmental hazards. © Lead Adventure Miniatures



believe the Zone is a mystical, mysterious place, and have devoted their lives to see it grow and spread. Technically at odds with everyone else, Cultists nonetheless have uneasy alliances with Scientists and Traders, passing valuable information and rare artifacts for profit. Cultists receive a free set of NODs and two Med-Kits when starting. They receive a 20% discount on all Advanced Equipment items at the Stalls, and when hiring new Crew members later in the campaign, their first Veteran and Rookie recruits are free.

Traders

Someone has to grease the wheels of commerce and these are the guys who keep it all moving. Traders pass goods and information in and out of the Zone and among the various Factions. This makes them extremely useful, as well as a frequent target of Bandits. Because of this, Traders are always looking for reliable security. Traders do not receive any additional starting Gear. However, they receive a permanent 40% discount on all items at the Stalls and can hire Veteran recruits at a 25% discount.

Faction Dues

To enjoy the benefits of your declared alliance, you must pay Faction Dues after each Zone Run, successful or not. 10% of the total value of all Salvage and artifacts is automatically deducted from the total. If no salvage is taken, the Faction deducts 10% from the crew's current Zone Script reserve, including the amount in the 10,000 Ruble Retirement Fund.

Allies and Enemies

So, you chose a Faction and have friends inside the Zone. Great that someone has your back. Problem is that means you have Enemies now too – someone who will stab you in the back, given half a chance.

Relationships in the Zone come in three flavors: Allied, Neutral, Enemy. In *Zona Alfa*, anytime you encounter members of a different Faction, there are certain obligations, animosities, and unspoken agreements that come into play.

- **Allied** crews have made pledges of mutual assistance. These groups avoid attacking one another and concentrate on common enemies and common interests. Allied crews tend to cooperate on Zone Runs to eliminate any Zone Hostiles and split the Salvage. In order to break an alliance and attack an Allied crew, a Crew Leader must pass a one-time Will check at Difficulty 4 (Will Stat on a D10, subtract 4 from the roll result). This roll does not need to be declared to the other players, however it requires two Actions to make. If successful, the player may then act in whatever manner they deem expedient. If an attack is made, the two particular crews are classed as Enemies for the rest of the campaign.
- **Neutral** doesn't necessarily mean friendly. In a dangerous place like the Zone, "Live and let live" can be the order of the day. However, there are no obligations or understandings one way or another when facing a Neutral Crew, so Leaders can use approach the mission any way they want.
- **Enemy** crews fight like junkyard dogs the moment they spot each other. Any time an Enemy Crew is in the mission area, Mission Objectives and Salvage become secondary and the destruction or rout of the Enemy is the team's priority. All Objectives and Hot Spots are ignored. If a Crew Leader wants to override this antagonism, they must roll a one-time Will check at Difficulty 2



This is the end!
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(Will Stat on a D10, subtract 2 from the roll result). A Success means they can act normally for the rest of the game, otherwise, Mission Objectives and Hot Spots can only be pursued after the enemy Crew is dealt with.

Below is the table of alliances and grudges between the Zone Factions. Read the table rows left to right to determine your default reaction to members of a particular Faction. Notice the attitudes among the Factions aren't necessarily reciprocal; groups have their own motivations for helping others, reasons that might not be mutual.

Faction Alliance Table						
Faction	Military	Scientists	Bandits	Independents	Cultists	Traders
Military	Allied	Allied	Enemy	Neutral	Enemy	Neutral
Scientists	Allied	Allied	Neutral	Allied	Neutral	Allied
Bandits	Enemy	Enemy	Allied	Neutral	Neutral	Enemy
Independents	Neutral	Allied	Neutral	Allied	Neutral	Allied
Cultists	Enemy	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Allied	Allied
Traders	Neutral	Allied	Enemy	Neutral	Allied	Allied

There you have it. Once you have created your Leader and Crew, kitted them out as best you can, signed on with a Faction, you're ready to enter the Exclusion Zone.
Ni Pukha, Ni Pyera, comrade!

She Smiles, She Snarls

There are days I think the Zone is alive, as if it sees me, knows me.
There was one run last winter where I swear something was leading me on. I ended up deep in the Red, but I didn't care. There was this constant sense of being watched. Each step of the journey had tiny clues like breadcrumbs drawing me after.
It was a bitter December, miserable cold. I almost bought it three times. But I made it back.
That run was the biggest haul I've had, before or since.
You have to stay sharp though. Keep your eyes peeled. The Zone is fickle; you can never be sure if the trail leads to a treasure – or a trap.

Part 8: Zone Runs, The Mission Area, And Post-Mission

8.1 Zone Runs

The Exclusion Zone: fame, fortune, and the high probability of mysterious and violent death packed into 2,600 square km. This is where you and your *comrades* are headed. There's money to be made doing Zone Runs: salvaged gear is always worth some coin. Scientists will pay well for a mutant's body parts, or for you to deliver messages, equipment, and data to and from their remote research stations. And those mysterious artifacts? One of those beauties could fetch a month's wages. Or more. So chamber a round, take a swig of vodka, and off you go.

Now some people believe the Zone is more than a fixed geographic location, a place damaged by radiation and peppered with mysterious physical and temporal anomalies. These people insist the Zone is alive – a conscious awareness that seeks to expand and alter our entire world. Guess you'll find out soon enough and come to your own conclusion.

In *Zona Alfa*, the Zone is an active participant in the games, with beasts, mutants, and hostile creatures emerging during the mission. Some think these Zone Hostiles follow their own violent instincts, others maintain they're like protective antibodies guarding a fragile system, or even servants sent to do the Zone's will. Regardless of what you decide, I guarantee your Zone Run won't be a walk in the sun.

Force Parity

In terms of challenging but balanced games, I'm of the opinion most tabletop gamers are capable and fair-minded enough to create their own scenarios. As outlined in Section 6 (see page 30), Zone Salvage crews are built on *Khrabrost*: the number of Actions per turn in each crew. Game-wise, in order to create a sense of parity between players, *Zona Alfa* uses the crew's *Khrabrost* level as a guide to build crews for each mission. Both players decide on K value for the build, say 10, 12, or even 16, and set that as the limit for the scenario. All players who want to go on the Zone Run must then build Crews of various Combat Experience that are equal to or under that limit.

Example

BUNKER RUN: a 9 K Game:

Gennady Lukhov leads a force of three Hardened Zone hunters to investigate an isolated military bunker in the East side of the Zone. Three K for Gennady as Leader, plus Two K each for the crew makes 9 Available Actions per turn (3 + 6) Or 9 K.

The Opposing Player could then field a force composed of their Leader (3K) plus Six Green recruits (1K Each) to get a total of 9K. Instead, they could bring their Leader along with 2 Hardened men and 2 Green newbies (3K + 4K + 2K).

Any combination is acceptable so long as it does not exceed the agreed on 9K Limit.

This method has been found to give players a definite force composition mechanic, reasonable guidelines, as well as a fair amount of flexibility to tailor unique crews with troops, the skills, and the equipment that fits their playing style.

8.2 The Mission Area

Zone Threat Levels

First and foremost, every section of the Exclusion Zone has been categorized by Threat Level (TL). The TL is a standing assessment of that area's danger based on reconnaissance, scientific monitoring, and incident reports. It also reflects the type and quantity of potential Salvage, hostile creatures, and presence of anomalies.

The Threat Levels are color-coded on all official Zone maps: Blue, Yellow, or Red, designated TL1, TL2, or TL3 respectively.

Blue 1 Low Threat Levels are on the perimeter, Yellow 2 Medium TLs are a bit farther in, and Red 3 High Threat Level areas are found in the deepest parts of the Zone near the center. As a rule, the higher the Threat Level, the greater chance of locating valuable Salvage – and of encountering dangerous hostile forces and hazardous environments.

Crew Leaders always choose which areas they explore, what jobs they take, what risks and rewards they are willing to face. A low TL equals low risk, but minimal

Salvage. If you want big money, it means you have to play big stakes. Just remember the Zone plays for keeps. Every mission will be walking the razor's edge between staying alive and making a living.

Mission Objectives, Turn Limits, and Hot Spots

In order to keep *Zona Alfa* games focused and moving, there are three key ingredients to every scenario: a single, important Mission Objective, Turn Limits, and evenly distributed Hot Spots. The Mission Objective keeps players focused on a goal, a Turn Limit ensures everyone is on the move instead of camping and sniping, and the Hot Spots provide secondary opportunities for loot and Campaign Advances.

A **Mission Objective** is the main reason for the scenario. It can be something as simple as recovering an item from an abandoned building, or escorting a scientist to a specific spot on the table. It can be complex, or multi-stage, like clearing out a nest of mutants before repairing a cell tower to restore communication in the region. Whatever you decide, achieving the Mission Objective gets the successful team the lion's share of that game's Campaign Advances and allows them one free roll on the appropriate TL Salvage Table.

Turn Limits in *Zona Alfa* raise the tension and force players to make tough choices. For smaller, 3' x 3' or 4' x 4' sized game areas, the Turn Limit is 4 +D3 turns. For larger tables with more players, bump the Turn Limit up to 6 +D3 turns. Here's your excuse to buy (or make) that cool turn counter you wanted. The reason for the deadline can be anything from an imminent Emission, to a Zone Enforcement recon fly-over, or a stampeding herd of mutants. Whatever it is, the teams have a definite window to operate in the mission area and accomplish the objective.

Hot Spots are different from Mission Objectives. Hot Spots are specific locations on the battlefield, say a tool shed, a stand of trees, or even a stack of crates on the south side, third floor by the corner window in an abandoned warehouse. They can also be a scenic item like an abandoned vehicle, a crashed UAV, or a dead body. This indicates not only the presence of valuable Salvage but also the probability of danger. All Hot Spots should be clearly marked with a token or chit.

The number of Hot Spots on the battlefield is determined by the Threat Level of the area being explored. The number of Hot Spots in a given mission area is the Threat Level (TL) multiplied by 2. So, a Threat Level 1 area would have 2 Hot Spots. A Threat Level 2 area would have 4, and a Threat Level 3 area would have 6. Distribute them evenly throughout the board, giving both sides equal accessibility. Hot Spots are secondary, optional mission goals in the game, additional to the main Mission Objective.

Triggering Mission Objectives and Hot Spots

If all anyone had to do was walk up and flip a switch or grab the black box to get rich, the Zone would be overrun with slackers, hoodlums, and posers. But nothing is that easy. There's always a catch.

Mission Objectives and Hot Spots are where the 'Risk v Reward' dilemma kicks in. Both grant valuable experience and Salvage, but engaging with them always triggers a response from **Zone Hostiles** – the strange, dangerous creatures who make their home in the Exclusion Zone.

Anytime a player's models pass through or end their movement within 3" of the Mission Objective or Hot Spot, the player has triggered the location. This 3" distance, or 6" diameter centered on the item, is known as the location's Reaction Radius. When triggered, the player responsible must roll on the Zone Hostiles Table (see page 41) to determine the Zone's response to the intrusion. This means, in essence, Mission Objectives and Hot Spots are area effect locations. Use a ruler or make a 6" template

to determine the location’s precise reaction radius. Center it on the scenic item – any model touching or within the template’s reach triggers the Hot Spot.

Bolt Toss

Mission Objectives and Hot Spots can also be triggered by other means. Players can have one of their models Toss a Bolt into the location’s 3” Reaction Radius to make the Zone Hostiles spawn. Simply have a crew member declare the intention and spend the Action to make the attempt (treat as a grenade throw, see pages 12 and 27). If successful, this Bolt Toss triggers the location and the Zone Hostiles spawn according to the rules. If unsuccessful, the Action is spent and nothing happens.

Bolt Toss allows players to trigger the location remotely, either with a nearby comrade on Alert, or when a rival crew is in proximity (Zone Hostiles attack the nearest model in clear Line of Sight, see pages 5 and 15 for further details).

Binoculars and the Inspect Action also come in handy here as they make it possible for a crew to check out the area from a distance and tweak which type of Zone Hostile spawns – for better or worse.

Clearing Mission Objectives and Hot Spots

Remember both Mission Objectives and Hot Spots trigger Zone Hostiles. In order to accomplish a Mission Objective or clear and search a Hot Spot, the Zone Hostiles associated with that location must first be eliminated.

Once that is done, at least one crew member must spend one Action to interact or search the location. Some Objective or Hot Spots may require additional Actions or even a Skill Check to clear, as dictated by that particular Zone Run.

8.3 Zone Hostiles

Whenever a Mission Objective or Hot Spot is engaged, the player responsible for triggering the Zone Hostiles rolls a D6 and checks the table below in the appropriate Threat Level column. The Zone Hostile miniatures appear immediately. The number in parentheses indicates the number of figures that spawn.

Zone Hostiles by Threat Level

Zone Hostiles Table			
D6 Roll	Threat Level 1 Blue	Threat Level 2 Yellow	Threat Level 3 Red
1	Vermin Swarm (1)	Vermin Swarm (X 2)	Feral Dogs (6)
2	Vermin Swarm (2)	Feral Dogs (6)	Zombies (8)
3	Feral Dogs (4)	Zombies (6)	Rad Ghouls (6)
4	Zombies (4)	Rad Ghouls (6)	Bandits (4) *
5	Rad Ghoul (4)	Bandits (4) *	Mutants (2) *
6	Bandits (4) *	Mutant (1) *	Large Mutant (1) *
* indicates the presence of an Anomaly. Roll on the Artifact Table after all standard Hostiles and Salvage issues are resolved (see page 46).			

Quick Note on Zone Hostiles

As Zona Alfa isn’t tied to any particular line of miniatures and the goal is to allow players to use figures in their collection, the Zone Hostiles are of a generic, post-apocalyptic type. Substitute as needed. If you don’t have feral dogs for instance, use spiders. If you want to use rat men instead of ghouls, or already have a nice selection of hooded cultists, go for it. Simply scale their abilities to fit the threat they represent. Take a look at the Zone Hostile Stat Table (see page44) and tweak as needed. So long as it works for you and your gaming group, roll with it and keep playing.



Zone Hostiles Deployment

Zone Hostile miniatures are placed on the table using the D10 Indirect Fire Deviation method (see page 27), with the deviation calculated from the center of the Hot Spot. Hostile models appear instantly and can make one free move to seek cover or engage the nearest visible enemy.

Once Zone Hostiles appear, they join the Initiative/Activation sequence in last place. If multiple Hot Spots have been triggered and a number of Zone Hostiles are present, one unit from each separate Zone Hostile force activates after the other, until one unit from each group has gone. Then the new round of Activation begins. (Yes, this can lead to a wave of Zone Hostiles moving in on the crews. The Alert Action will come in useful here).



Sewer pipes... Only an idiot would think they're a safe way to travel fast and unseen. Who knows what lurks down there?

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Alternate Deployment for Zone Hostiles

There may be times when it is more logical in the scenario to have the Zone Hostiles already deployed and visible on the table at the start of the game. Say your crews are entering an area known to be infested with mutants or controlled by Bandits. In that case, simply place them to the best advantage around the particular Hot Spot or Objective and start the game. That Hot Spot or Objective is considered Triggered. No further rolls are necessary. Visible Hostiles follow the same A.I. Rules as those that are triggered.

Zone Hostile A.I. Rules and Control

Zone Hostile models – either those triggered by a Hot Spot/Mission Objective, or present on the battlefield at the start of scenario – follow four basic rules:

1. They are centered around that specific location on the table and will not range further than 12" from it.
2. They are aggressive and will always attack within that territory, using Cover whenever possible.
3. They always attack the closest, visible model. Enemies in the open take priority over those in cover. If multiple opponents are present, they will attack the one in clearest Line of Sight, continuing to attack that opponent until either it or they are destroyed.
4. They will defend themselves if attacked in Melee. Only Melee attacks can draw their attention away from the closest, visible opponent.

All Zone Hostile models are controlled (moved and rolled) by the opposing player. So if your team triggered a Hot Spot and is attacked by Hostiles, the **other player** moves and rolls all Attack, Defense, and Will dice. Zone Hostile control will shift between players, depending on whose crew the Hostiles are attacking.

The number of Actions a Zone Hostile can take is linked to the Threat Level area. With one Action for TL1, two Actions for TL2, and three Actions for TL3.

Hostile models DO NOT trigger other Hot Spots, only player models.

Zone Hostile Stat Table					
Zone Hostile	Move	Combat Ability	Armor	Will	Weapon
Vermin	6"	4	2	4	Teeth/Claws
Dogs	8"	4	2	4	Teeth/Claws
Zombies	4"	4	6	NA	Teeth/Claws
Ghoul	7"	5	4	6	Big Teeth/Claws
Bandit	6"	5	5	6	Ranged/Melee per Armory
Mutant	6"	Range: 4–6	4–6	6	Big Teeth/Claws
Large Mutant	6"	Range: 5–7	5–7	7	Very Big Teeth/Claws

Zone Hostile Weapons

The Zone Hostile Stat Table is a guide. Tweak as necessary to suit the scenario and your particular miniature collection. See the Armory in Section 5 and outfit as needed (see page 24). Feel free to increase Firepower on Melee attackers, say from a 1 for a zombie’s slow, clumsy assault to a 2 or 3 to reflect a ghoul or rabid dog’s frenzied mauling. Bandits can use any Ranged or Melee weapon in the Armory. Increase Combat Experience Stats and Equipment if your scenario calls for something like a rogue military unit or a rival NPC Crew.

Quick Note on Zone Hostile Experience Levels

If the standard rule of linking Zone Hostile Experience levels/Actions per turn to the Threat level of the mission area is too easy, then by all means bump the Stats. This is your game. Rabid dogs, rager zombies, a seasoned bandit crew, or military patrol all obviously present more of threat, regardless of what TL Area they were encountered in. However, if your crews are consistently outgunned by Zone Hostiles, consider scaling them back a bit.

8.4 Salvage, Anomalies, Environmental Hazards

Salvage

Rubles, that’s what this is all about, right? Otherwise, we’d get a job.

After, and only after, the Hostiles guarding a particular Mission Objective

or Hot Spot are eliminated can the area be Searched for valuable Salvage and the Mission Objectives. Hot Spots yield Salvage and each Hot Spot can only be Searched **once**. An exception to this is if a model has the Salvager ability (see page 30). They can spend two Actions to Search and find Salvage twice. Roll on the table below and determine the Salvage value/item according to Threat Level. Once Salvage has been retrieved, remove the Hot Spot token. The area is no longer viable for searching.

Radioactivity is the silent killer. If an area seems untouched, strangely free from mutants and bandits, you can bet there’s a reason – a 100 rads worth.
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Salvage Table by Level			
D6 Roll	Threat Level 1 Blue	Threat Level 2 Yellow	Threat Level 3 Red
1	Salvage Value 200	Salvage Value 350	Salvage Value 500
2	Salvage Value 350	Salvage Value 500	Salvage Value 750
3	Salvage Value 500	Salvage Value 750	Salvage Value 1,000
4	Salvage Value 200 plus one roll on Basic Equipment Table	Salvage Value 500 plus two rolls on Basic Equipment Table	Salvage Value 750 plus two rolls on Advanced Equipment Table*
5	Salvage Value 350 plus one roll on Basic Equipment Table	Salvage Value 750 plus two rolls on Basic Equipment Table *	Salvage Value 1,000 plus two rolls on Advanced Equipment Table*
6	Salvage Value 500 plus one roll on Basic Equipment Table *	Salvage Value 1,000 plus one roll on Advanced Equipment Table*	Salvage Value 2,000 plus one roll each on the Advanced Equipment Table and the Special Items Table*
* indicates the presence of an Anomaly. Roll on the Artifact Table after all standard Hostiles and Salvage issues are resolved. See page 46 for more information.			

Every crew member is equipped with a backpack for holding valuable Salvage and recovered Equipment. There's no real limit to the amount of Salvage a model can carry. Carrying such items does not use Equipment Slots; they are tucked away and inaccessible for the duration of the mission. However, they can be distributed among various team members and used in later games.

Anomalies

Anomalies are what set the Exclusion Zone apart from every other devastated, quarantined area in the history of the planet. Anomalies are micro-distortions in the flow of space and time that seem to bend the laws of physics. While certainly unique, mysterious, and potentially hazardous, they also yield strange and valuable Artifacts. The potential for Anomalous Hot Spots is contingent on the area's Threat Level and the chance of encountering Anomalies increases by Threat Level.

In a TL 1 Area, any time a 6 is rolled when triggering a Mission Objective or Hot Spot, the location not only contains Salvage but also an Anomaly. In TL 2 areas, an Anomaly is present on a roll of 5+, in TL 3 sectors, a 4+. When the appropriate die result is rolled, the player also rolls on the Artifact Table. This roll/effect is in **addition** to the regular Threat and Salvage table rolls, and represents the presence of additional dangerous, uncommon phenomenon and rare, valuable Salvage.

Anomalies generate no additional Zone Hostiles (they are dangerous enough on their own!). The standard Zone Hostiles and Salvage issues are always resolved first.

Searching Anomalies for Artifacts

Anomalies are treated as an Area Effect similar to a grenade blast. In order to avoid the effects of the Anomaly and retrieve whatever Artifact lies at its center, the Model must expend one Action to Search, as well as pass a Will check. The Will check is taken prior to the Search Action and does not cost an Action. The Target Number for this Will check is the searching model's Will stat, with a negative modifier equivalent to the mission area's Threat Level.

Nearby Leaders grant a bonus to this roll, as does having the Detector Equipment equipped in one of their Slots. However, the model performing the Search must have it listed as a piece of Gear.

Anomaly Effect

If the Will check is unsuccessful, the Anomaly is triggered and all models within or touched by the Hot Spot radius (Large Blast Template) take a Damage 2 attack.

If the Search Action is successful, the searcher has skillfully navigated their way through the Anomaly and may roll a D6 on the Artifact Table below.

Note that models with the Salvager ability may Search an Anomaly twice but must pay the Action cost and pass the Will check each time. Only the Salvager can pull Two Artifacts from an Anomaly. Once an Artifact has been removed from the Anomaly, the area goes inert and is no longer viable.



We found the nest yesterday. Anton and Ilya are dead. Oleg went mad and ran off. I don't think Yakov will make it another hour.
There are hundreds of them down here.
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Artifacts

A warped length of steel rod. A pinecone crackling with greenish electricity. A soap bubble that glows like a light bulb and won't burst. A flap of cloth that undulates as if alive... these and many other strange objects have recovered in the Exclusion Zone. Forged by the immense and bizarre distortion of natural forces inside an Anomaly, they are highly sought after by scientists, governments, corporations, and private collectors not merely for their other-worldly uniqueness, but for the rare, almost magical properties they possess.

Below is a table of Artifacts commonly found in a majority of the Anomalies encountered to date. This list is by no means exhaustive, as the landscape in the Zone is constantly shifting in subtle but profound ways. Who knows what new items will be found and who can say what properties they might possess?

After a Successful Search in an Anomaly, roll a D6 and determine which Artifact has been retrieved.

Artifact Table	
D6 Roll	Artifact
1	Artifact Value 2,000
2	Artifact Value 3,500
3	Artifact Value 4,500
4	Artifact Value 4,500 + Movement bonus (+1")
5	Artifact Value 5,000 + Armor bonus (+1 Armor)
6	Artifact Value 5,500 + Will bonus (+1 Will)

Environmental Hazards (Optional)

To say the Exclusion Zone is having something of a climate crisis is an understatement. In addition to being home to bandits, beasts, mutants, physical and anomalies, the Zone is known for strange and severe weather conditions. At the start of each Zone Run, roll a single D6 against the Environmental Hazard Table and apply the results. Feel free to ignore this section or restrict it to higher Threat Level Areas.

Environmental Hazard Table	
D6 Roll	Environmental Hazard
1	Overcast: No Effect
2	Sudden Darkness: LOS/LOF ranges are cut to 12"
3	Overcast: No Effect
4	Rainstorm: All Movement at -1". Ranged Attacks at half range
5	Sunny Day: No Effect
6	High Radiation Area: Subtract 1 from the Turn Limit. All Salvage Rolls are x2

8.5 Post Mission: Advances and Battle Scars

Advances

The Zone is a splendid teacher – if you live long enough to learn its lessons. Upgrading Gear and Equipment, improving Skill sets, transforming a green Rookie who barely knows the noisy end of an AK into reliable Hardened soldier, or even a Veteran Zone hunter, takes patience, skill, and luck. Campaign Advances are a measurable way





Don't you love it when you run into an old friend you haven't seen in a while?
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Put Out of Action and didn't recover before the mission ended? Well that rattled your cage. Your comrades dragged you out and you escaped with your life. No Advance for you. Roll on the Battle Scars table and thank Saint Strelak you made it out at all.

to track your fighters' progress, improve their abilities, and even acquire new skills. There's a bit of bookkeeping involved but treat it like kill marks carved in the stock of your rifle and it'll be easier.

Crew Credit

First thing to understand is all Advances are credited to your entire Crew, not the individual. Achievements like surviving missions, killing Zone Hostiles and/or opponents, salvaging Hot Spots, accomplishing the Mission Objective, go into a Crew pool. This might seem unfair at first, but once you're accepted in a Crew, everything is an even split. Of course, you can improve a particular character that's doing well, but this allows

the Crew Leader to use Advances to improve any member according to the greater needs of the unit.

So, the next question is: what do I get credit for? And the one after that usually is: what gives me the most credit?

Campaign Advances are given for accomplishing any of the four following tasks. Surviving, Killing, Salvaging Hot Spots, Achieving the Objective. You get one Advance for Surviving a Zone Run, one for each Zone Hostile and/or rival Crew kill. Three Advances for each Hot Spot you clear, and Five for accomplishing the Mission's main goal.

1. Surviving the Mission. Any disaster you can walk away from is a good one, eh? It's true. Stunned? It happens. Hit and Wounded but revived during the mission? Keep your head down next time. Squads get One Advance for every squad member that survives and is not Out of Action at the end of the mission.
2. Killing Enemies. Be it Zone Hostiles or a rival crew member. You get One Advance for every unit you kill or put Out of Action. Multiple model units count as a single unit, so you've got to take down the entire swarm/mob to get credit.
3. Salvage a Hot Spot. On top of the Kill credit and Salvage, a Crew gets Three Advances for every Hot Spot successfully looted.
4. Accomplish the Mission Objective. You did the job you went there to do. Well done. Five Advances for your crew, plus whatever Salvage.

Advance Pool and Spending Advances

It's important to remember Advances racked up by Crew members are not credited to the individual character model but rather go into the Crew's Advance Pool. These Advances are traded in (or spent) however the Crew Boss sees fit, regardless of a particular model's actual contribution. *The ghosts of communism die hard, eh comrade?* Think of it as an investment to your collective security. Unspent Advances remain in the crew's Advance Pool.

Model Stat Line

For every 10 Advances, a Crew Leader can improve one of his crew's (or their own) Model Stat line by One. The hard lessons taught by the Zone have filtered down to their bones: they fight harder or use their armor and cover that much better. Maybe they move a hair quicker or are no longer easily unnerved by the Zone's horrors. Whichever it is, the Player Model's Combat Ability, Armor Rating, Movement, or Will are improved by 1 (1"/Action in the case of Movement).

Additional Equipment Slot

For every 10 Advances, a Crew member can add an additional Equipment Slot to their Model Stat line. Perhaps the Bone Doc learned how to distribute their gear load more efficiently in order to carry more Med-Kits. Maybe one of your shooters wanted to trick out their AK-74 to be ready for any situation. Could be that Scrounger taught themselves how to be really handy with a Detector *and* the Binoculars. It's your call.

New Skills

For every 15 Advances you can add a single new Skill to one of your crew members. Let's say you want to give your Bone Doc the Hustle ability to help them get to the wounded faster. Steady Hands would certainly be a benefit to that crew member lugging around that SVD sniper rifle. Whatever you choose, it has to be consistent with the model's existing designation and equipment. For example, no giving the Unload Skill to someone with an RPG.

Promotions

Live long enough, you're bound to learn something. This is particularly true in the Zone. For every Five Missions a Player Model survives, (i.e. not Out of Action at the end of the Zone Run) they are promoted to the next Experience level and their model Stat line is adjusted accordingly. So a Rookie moves to Hardened and a Hardened moves to Veteran. Model Stat adjustments are automatically applied on promotion. Adjust the Model's Stat Line accordingly. If a Model's Stat Line has previously been improved by Advances, the Promotion benefits do not apply in that particular area. Promotions do **not** apply to Veterans. Their Stat Line is improved by Advances only.

Messy Resolutions

All the shouting, smoke, gunfire, explosions, bullets flying around, mutants jumping out from everywhere, it was kind of hard to see who did what and when. Who gets the credit when more than one crew accomplishes a task? Your guys cleared the Hostiles from a Hot Spot, but then some other *chuvak* jumped in and grabbed the loot.

Well, you get the Kill Credits and they get the Hot Spot Salvage credit. You want 'fair'? Look between 'failure' and 'fraud' in the dictionary. Bet you'll plan better next time, eh?

Professional Development

Advances can also be purchased. Let's say you trade in a good haul of loot and maybe even an Artifact. Crews can purchase Advances at the Stalls at the rate of 1,500 Zone Script (ZS) per 1 Advance. We'll assume you're paying for some expert instruction or training at one of the larger, established camps inside the Zone rather than blowing it all on vodka and strippers. Like all Advances, purchased ones are added to the crew Pool and can be spent as the Boss sees fit.

Battle Scars

The Med-Kits in *Zona Alfa* essentially grant models the ability to take hits and survive (see page 22). Think of them as extra Wounds. As explained earlier, if a model is Wounded and has no Med-Kit of their own to off-set the damage, they are considered Out of Action and are out of play until they are revived by someone with a Med-Kit. If they are revived **before the end of the game**, they can get up and return to the fight.

However, any time a player character is Out of Action and not revived before the mission ends, they have one of those 'Near Death' experiences than profoundly

Note the Skill and Gear limitations for the three different Combat Experience levels apply only to NEWLY RECRUITED members. Advances allow you to improve on the initial restrictions.



affects their character. Near-death survivors are said to have ‘Battle Scars’ and suffer from some kind of permanent effect or quirk.

For every model in your crew that was put Out of Action and remained incapacitated for the duration of the game, roll a D6 on Battle Scars Table. Note the result and make a notation on the crew member’s roster. Over time, it’s entirely possible crew members could suffer from the effects of multiple ‘Battle Scars’. Word of advice: any more than two, you might want to consider retiring them and hiring a new Crew member.

Battle Scars Table	
D6 Roll	Battle Scar
1	Obsessed: Battle Lust. Wants to kill every enemy/hostile they see. Model must roll and pass a Will check at the start of each Activation to act as normal (Will check is a Free Action). Otherwise, they must attempt to kill every enemy in LOS or move to contact if no enemies are visible
2	Obsessed: Must Salvage. Has to search every Hot Spot. Model must roll and pass a Will Check at the start of each Activation to act as normal (Will check is a Free Action). If failed, they must move toward nearest Hot Spot, regardless of the Boss’ orders.
3	Slow: -1” to Movement. No jumping or climbing without ladder or stairs.
4	Squeamish: Will check to enter Melee and when charged by Hostile (Will check is a Free Action). -1 CA/Melee. Failure means the Model must spend 1 Action to move away from Melee threat.
5	Dazed and Confused: -1 to all Will checks.
6	It’s just a flesh wound. No Effect.

Obsessed Models want to ignore orders and act on their obsession (try to kill every enemy in sight or try to search every Hot Spot). Each time an Obsessed model is Activated, they must pass a Will check on 1D10 to act normally. This Will check is a free Action, but if the Will check is failed, they must immediately move, Attack, or Attempt to Trigger and Search the nearest visible Hot Spot. If a Battle-Scarred model manages to receive both the Must Kill and Must Salvage results, whichever object is nearest takes precedence.

8.6 Post Mission: The Stalls

Need a new bolt cover for your AK? Go to The Stalls. A new gas mask? A replacement crew member? The Stalls. Anything and everything a Zone hunter and a Crew Leader needs to do their job can be found there.

The Stalls is a roving, open air exchange. They are never in the same spot two days in a row, constantly on the move, advertized only via the Zone grapevine, but somehow everyone who needs to know about it, finds out where it will be when they need it. Think of it as a farmer’s market. Without the farmers. And with lots of guns. This is where your crew will reequip between missions, converting valuable Salvage into new gear, ammo resupply, improved body armor, and replacement crew members.

The only legal tender accepted at the Stalls is Zone Script (ZS), so you’ll need to visit the Traders to have your loot converted into hard currency (of course they take a cut). The Zone’s economy is set at the ‘AK Standard’: the fixed exchange rate for a working AK-47, and all Zone Script bills are printed, circulated, and accounted for by the Trader faction. Which could be the reason the Bandits target them so often!

When trading at The Stalls, first you have to convert your Salvage into Zone Script. Equipment, Artifacts, and Salvage sell for listed price, less the Traders’ 10% cut. So that 2,000 Value worth of Salvage you pulled in that last run will net you 1,800 in Zone Script. From there, you can wander the booths picking up new Gear, or stop by the bar and hire a recruit. Don’t forget to set some aside for retirement. Prices for new Equipment are listed in the table below.

Equipment Price Table	
Item	Price (Zone Script)
Binoculars	220
1 Dose of Electric Juice	110
Gas Mask	220
1 Med-Kit	275
Red Dot Sight	440
Detector	550
Tool Kit	660
NODs	825
1 load of Hot Load Ammo	385
Scope	825
Chest Rig	1,100
Load Bearing Vest	1,650
Under Barrel Grenade Launcher	1,980
Kevlar Plates	1,980
Heavy Weapon Reload	2,200

Armor

Tired of running around in patchwork body armor or old surplus with conspicuous holes in important places? The cost to upgrade your personal protection is simple: 1,000 Zone Script per level of Armor Rating. So that Military Body Armor will run you 6,000 ZS. The good news is you can trade in your current armor at 50% of cost. Not great, but getting 1,500 for your worn, Improvised Armor vest will take some of the edge off.

Weapons and Explosives

So that Shotgun just doesn't have the reach you need? And melee with a sniper rifle is like flailing around with a boat oar – plus it knocks your scope out of zero? Well the Stalls make a Texas gun show look like a Sunday knitting circle. Plunk down your Zone Script and get what you need. No waiting period or background checks here. Oh, and you can get 50% of the retail on your current weapon if you want to sell it!

Weapon Price Table	
Weapon	Price (Zone Script)
Combat Knife	100
Machete, Axe	150
Chainsaw	250
Pistol	200
Magnum Pistol	300
Shotgun	350
Flame Thrower or Chemical Sprayer *	400
SMG	400
Assault Rifle (AK 74)	500
Battle Rifle (AK-15)	650
Grenade Launcher * (M79 or Milkor MGL)	1,000
Squad LMG (RPD or RPK)	2,000
Rocket Launcher (RPG) *	2,000
HMG (crew-served. 2 minimum. stationary)	4,000
Mortar * (crew-served. 2 minimum. stationary)	4,000
Sniper Rifle (Dragunov SVD-63 or VSSK Vychlop)	4,000
*Weapons come with 5 Rounds to start. Additional ammunition must be purchased separately (see page 32).	

Hand Grenades and Explosives: a new twist on the phrase ‘Disposable Item’. You’ll want to re-up on these between every mission.

Remember, Grenades come in pairs, you can mix and match to taste, and the first set does **not** take up an Equipment Slot. Additional sets do, however.

Grenade and Explosives Price Table	
Weapon	Price (Zone Script, Per Item)
Molotov Cocktail	150
Flash Bang	300
Smoke Grenade	300
Hand Grenade	300
Satchel Charge	500

Recruits

New Blood, Warm Bodies, Fresh Meat, Zone Fodder... deadly as the Exclusion Zone is, there’s always someone hanging around the Bar looking to sign on with a crew. Prospects range from punks fresh out of prison with no other career options, to recently de-mobilized military vets addicted to the rush of combat and the camaraderie of shared hardship. All new hires come with the Stats, Armor, Weapons, and Gear listed in their respective profile. See below for Hire Price and details.

Rookie (Hire Price: 1,500 ZS)

Name	Movement	Combat Ability	Armor	Will
Dmitry Dukh	5"	4	Improvised Body Armor (3) Counts as Obscured Target when in Cover.	4
Options				
Choose 1 Ranged Weapon, 1 Melee Weapon. 2 Grenades, and 2 Pieces of Basic Equipment.				

Hardened (Hire Price: 2,500 ZS)

Name	Movement	Combat Ability	Armor	Will
Kirill Kirza	6"	5	Civilian Body Armor (5) Counts as Obscured Target when in Cover.	5
Options				
Choose 1 Ranged Weapon, 1 Melee Weapon. 2 Grenades, 1 Skill, and 2 Pieces of Basic Equipment.				

Veteran (Hire Price: 4,000 ZS)

Name	Movement	Combat Ability	Armor	Will
Timur Tyazheliy	6"	6	Civilian Body Armor (5) Counts as Obscured Target when in Cover.	6
Options				
Choose 1 Ranged Weapon, 1 Melee Weapon. 2 Grenades, 2 Skills, and 3 Pieces of Basic Equipment.				

And there you have one-stop shopping for the four essential ingredients of any successful Zone venture: weapons, ammo, armor, and warm bodies.



Whatever it was came back. It's stalking me. There's a large clearing ahead. I see three tall rocks near a little hill. I'll make a stand there.

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the items you salvage – don't sell it all – and be smart. You can't trust everyone around here, but you can trust some of them; make alliances when you can. Help each other. Better a smaller share of the take than a shallow grave somewhere in the wild.

And above all, set aside a percentage for retirement. You can't do this forever. The Zone is terrifying and beautiful, wondrous and lethal all at once. She has a thousand moods and every date will leave you spent and breathless. She'll even give up her treasures if you court her carefully.

Remember, everyone looks good at the start – the real trick is to get out alive. Good hunting. May Saint Strelok watch over you.

No Fur, No Feathers

You're off to a solid start: good weapons, decent gear, a few stout comrades, a new map, and some kind of plan, right? Well done. I bet you're chomping at the bit, ready to tear into the Red Zone and swoop up a sack full of mysterious artifacts. Become a Zone legend, eh?

Ha! I did too when I first got here.

But trust me when I say the best way to a happy ending is to take it nice and steady. There'll be danger enough without you kicking a sleeping bear.

Build up your resources, keep a few of

the items you salvage – don't sell it all – and be smart. You can't trust everyone around here, but you can trust some of them; make alliances when you can. Help each other. Better a smaller share of the take than a shallow grave somewhere in the wild.

And above all, set aside a percentage for retirement. You can't do this forever. The Zone is terrifying and beautiful, wondrous and lethal all at once. She has a thousand moods and every date will leave you spent and breathless. She'll even give up her treasures if you court her carefully.

Remember, everyone looks good at the start – the real trick is to get out alive. Good hunting. May Saint Strelok watch over you.

Part 9: Linked Missions And End Goals

9.1 Linked Missions

As mentioned in Part One, *Zona Alfa* is story-centered. Connected, narrative games tend to get players involved and help them stay focused. The Three-Act sequence is ideal to create an escalating sense of tension and purpose. Casualties, experience, Salvage all carry over as part of a larger, over-arching quest. When making a set of linked missions, Mission Objectives should relate, directly or obliquely, to that bigger goal, and ideally, the rewards and the danger should ratchet up each mission too, all to culminate in a final battle that is the most dangerous and the most rewarding.

If you get stuck, here are some Mission prompts. Roll a D6 for each column and use the results to create a scenario. Tweak and bend as needed. For example, if you roll *Eliminate/Sabotage* – *Supplies* – *Old Factory*, both sides could vie for the chance not simply to destroy select items in a larger cache, but complete the objective by poisoning the food or mixing defective ammo in with the boxes. Or, if the Crews are Enemies, you might task one side with demolition and the other with preventing their destruction. This is your chance to make a story and invent a motive for a follow-up mission.



Mission Table			
D6 Roll	Action	Item	Location
1	Retrieve/Deliver	Data Recorder	Disabled Vehicle Convoy
2	Defend/Protect	Downed Aerial Drone	Remote Outpost
3	Eliminate/Sabotage	Supplies	Abandoned Village
4	Investigate/Repair	V.I.P.	Old Factory
5	Locate/Hunt	Vital Component	Military Bunker
6	Escort/Steal	Mutant	Ruined City

Example

The Lost Military Convoy

Rumor has it there is an abandoned military convoy that has a supply of weapons, armor, and decent gear. Everyone knows someone who heard it's on a back road in the North part of the Zone, near a village with a well. Sounds great except 'Up North' and 'village with a well' are kind of vague. No one has been able to nail down any definite information about where these Army trucks are located.

Now the Zone churns out rumors like a swamp in August breeds mosquitoes, and they're twice as annoying. But this one just won't die. So perhaps there's some truth to it. The only one who seemed to have his teeth in this tale was Big Ears Boris, and he's overdue from a supply run to some scientists in a Blue area east of here.

Mission One: Get Big Ears' PDA

Area: Abandoned Village TL 1 (2 Hot Spots). Objective: Locate and Search Big Ears' corpse. His PDA has clues about Convoy's whereabouts.

Mission Two: Fill 'Er Up

Area: Fuel Depot/Gas Station. TL 1 (2 Hot Spots) Objective: The Convoy does indeed exist but there's too much to carry away. The smart thing to do is pack it all in one of the vehicles and drive everything out. But to do that, you'll need a Wrench to fix up a truck, and some petrol. You can hire a Wrench at the Stalls, but there's only one place in the area where you can get petrol without letting everyone else know what you're up to, so off you go to that old gas station.

Mission Three: Road Rage

Area: Wooded region with single road down the middle and several vehicles. TL 2 (4 Hot Spots) Objective: Clear the Area and get a truck running (Skill Check, Difficulty 2). Don't forget the petrol.

There's a bounty board on the Zone dark net: 300 ZS per Bandit. Cash payment. Collect at the Traders Guild hub outside Surov. No questions asked.

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9.2 End Goals: The 10,000 Ruble Plan and Other Retirement Options

“Have SMART ambitions”, is that not what your life coach told you? No? Well then let me extol the benefits of having Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely goals. Especially if you're risking the Zone. You have to know when to cut your losses and get out with your hide in one piece.

Individual *Zona Alfa* games have specific Mission Objectives and Turn Limits to put an edge and end on the action. In the same way, individual crews should have a retirement goal in mind. The idea here is to minimize uneven matches between highly experienced, tooled up crews, and a gaggle of newbs clutching surplus AK-47s.



The first and simplest option is to set up a retirement account. For that, 10,000 is the magic number.

At the end of every mission, calculate the value of your Salvage, replace any spent Gear, buy some new Equipment or perhaps improvements for your crew, but always remember to set some money aside for your retirement.

Track your savings on your team roster, tallying up after each mission. Once your retirement fund reaches 10,000, that crew can bow out. You've pressed your luck, you've spit in Death's face one too many times and now it's time to step back and let some other no-brain, weasel-eyed, itchy-trigger finger newb have a go. It's time to kick back at the Black Sea with vodka, caviar, and half a dozen Russian lingerie models.

Other Options

If a Retirement Fund is too simple, imagine your Crew has been contracted to retrieve 12 Zone Artifacts of any type. Everything else found along the way is yours to keep and do with what you will. This job could be from a Scientific Organization, a Consortium of Investors, or an Ultra-Wealthy Private Collector. Of course, rival Artifact Hunters will be angling to fill the same order before your crew.

It may be possible that a secretive Government faction has decided the Zone is too mysterious, too dangerous, too unpredictable to be allowed to exist. These politicians believe it must be destroyed and so have arranged to have a 20-megaton nuclear warhead placed into the center of the Zone. This device will be detonated remotely following a 6-week, increasingly alarmist PR media blitz that investigates the area's 'inherent instability and threat to the region.' Of course, the detonation would be purely coincidental and would serve only to cement the group's legitimacy and power.

Structure a campaign where you and your crew must find the means and the men to disarm the device. But be aware this faction has sent in private security teams to ensure their plan is successful. Alternatively, you could be the ones gathering components, smuggling the device deep into the center, fending off attacks by those who want to stop you!

Perhaps your Crew specializes in mutant hunting expeditions or is part of a research Institute charged with data and sample collection from every Threat Level in the Zone, in every region, North, South, East, and West. This means 12 separate excursions, 13 if they demand you travel to the Center. (That's a lucky number, right?)

Part 10: Introductory Zone Run – Red Gypsy 3

'Red Gypsy 3' is an introductory set of three linked missions designed to ease you and your new crew into the Zone.

It starts with a cake walk: all you have to do is retrieve a piece of lost luggage. Actually, it's a briefcase in a disabled BTR in a deserted village on the edge of the Zone but still easy, right?

Next is a stroll through the woods. Sure, it's in a Threat Level 1 area, but a little exercise never hurt anyone.

Lastly you and your comrades arrive at a deserted town a bit deeper in the Yellow Zone, (TL 2) hunting for the hidden entrance to an old military cache. You've heard there's at least one other crew on the trail of this same prize, plus God knows what else is lurking in the area, but no risk, no rewards, eh?

Good hunting, comrade.

Game One: The Crossroads at Blyatsk

Rumor has it, less than nine weeks after the first Incident, a military detachment on the edge of the Zone was attacked at night by a huge swarm of mutants. Up to that time, no one had ever seen creatures like that, let alone so many. Anyway, the soldiers panicked and bolted.

Their little convoy almost made it out too, but they were overrun practically in sight of the Cordon in a small, one-cow village called Blyatsk.

Now, this was early one and no one had any idea what the Zone was or what was going on, and a few dozen deaths became just another statistic. Well it turns out those troops had been guarding one of the ‘Gypsy’ supply caches.

Who knows if it’s true, but damned if there isn’t a blown BTR at the cross roads at Blyatsk. Right there, out in the open.

Anyway, a guy knows a guy who said he heard someone in a bar say there was a military attaché case in the rusty transport with the location of Red Gypsy 3 – the third of the military stashes.

All we have to do is get there, rummage inside the old rust bucket and find the case – if it’s there. If we hurry, we can get back before dark.



Little Boris swears there’s a Red Gypsy – one of the military caches – somewhere around here. It’s crazy, right? A pipe dream. © Lead Adventure Miniatures

Table Size

4’ x 4’

Threat Level

Zero – White. Just inside the Cordon. One Mission Objective. No additional Salvage, no Hot Spots.

Terrain

Two roads crossing in roughly the center of the mission area. Minimum of four structures clustered around the middle, plus stands of trees, hedges, fences, water towers, and any other appropriate scatter terrain. Some type of military vehicle (a jeep, truck, APC...) should be placed in the crossroads in the center of game area

Suggested Crew Experience

Starter Crew with Veteran Crew Leader.

Deployment Zones

Crews set up in opposite corners inside a 6” x 6” area.

Turn Limit

Seven.

Zone Hostiles

Two Packs of Feral Dogs already deployed at random in one of the four structures. And the Zombified Crew of military vehicle (Four Zombies – Hardened – 2 Actions per Activation). Use standard Zone Hostile deployment rules.

Salvage

Successful Search Action of vehicle after the area is cleared yields a moldy military-issue attaché case, two regular hand grenades, and one roll on the Basic Equipment Table (see page 32).

Game Two: Walk in the Chernya Woods

The stinking Rotters came out of nowhere... You never knew something that decayed could move so fast. So, you yanked a moldy old leather briefcase from under a seat, swept up a handful of stuff from an open gear bin and ran for it. You never knew you could move that fast either.

Most of the papers were ruined, but one at the very bottom had the heading ‘RED GYPSY 3’ on it in big block print. And below there was a list of rifles, pistols, a column of ‘Special Weapons’. Cases of ammo, boxes of grenades... All of it typed up neat as could be. If half this stuff is there, we’ll be rich.

Trouble is that same piece of paper mentioned a keycard – a one-of-a-kind special keycard that’s needed to unlock the steel door that leads to the stash. And that’s a problem.

Yuri mentioned the last guy who passed through Blyatsk was new to the Zone: some thug named Big Nikolai. Apparently, he got tired of being a junior *Bratva* bull in Moscow and decided he wanted a bigger slice of the pie. So, he grabbed a handful of his boys and bribed his way past the Cordon guards. Word is he’s camped in the Chernya Woods.

You’re not big on that forest, or chatting up Bandits for that matter, but it’s the only lead you’ve got right now.

Guess it’s time for a walk in the woods.

Table Size

4’ x 4’

Threat Level

One – Blue. One Mission Objective. Two Hot Spots.

Terrain

The mission area is a wooded location that’s bisected by a dirt trail. This trail runs from one corner of the mission area to the lower, opposite corner and divides the game table into two triangle-shaped sections. In the center of the mission area, on the trail, is a large clearing with four makeshift barriers: stacked rubbish, shrubs, short sections of broken fence or stone walls. This is the Mission Objective.

There are two smaller clearings, one in the middle of each of the two triangular halves of the mission area. These are not on the dirt trail. These are the two secondary Hot Spots.

You’ll need plenty of stands of trees for this one. The floor of the Chernya Woods is relatively clear of undergrowth and debris.

Suggested Crew Experience

Starter Crew with Veteran Crew Leader.

Deployment Zones

Crews set up in opposite corners either on the trail or in the woods inside a 4” x 4” square.

Turn Limit

Seven.

Zone Hostiles

Mission Objective: Five Bandits already visible: four Rookies lead by a Hardened Boss. 1 and 2 Actions per Activation, respectively. All of them are armed with

AKs, wearing Commercial/Civilian Armor, and each are equipped with a single Med-Kit and a Molotov Cocktail. The Bandits start in Cover and on Alert Actions. Place models and tokens appropriately. With Big Nikolai and his men present and visible, the Mission Objective is considered already Triggered. Roll as needed on the Threat Level 1 Zone Hostile Table for occupants of the two secondary Hot Spots (see page 41).

Salvage

Successful Search Action of Big Nikolai's camp after it is cleared yields one worn but very official looking keycard for an office building in the town of Ishikhov, a Molotov Cocktail, and two rolls on the Basic Equipment table (see page 32).

Secondary Hot Spots yield Salvage per appropriate Hot Spot Salvage Tables.

Game Three: The Ishikhov Shuffle

The town of Ishikhov used to be the regional administration center. Just off Highway 109 and Route 7, it was close to the military base, the refinery, and the mine. Soldiers, workers, clerks all made their home there. It had apartments, row houses, shops, nice roads, parks... even a supermarket.

It was wiped out in the first Incident and the inhabitants were killed instantly.

All those families and stores, most people believe there's plenty of regular supplies and salvage still there, lying all over the place. But everybody in the Zone seems to know a guy who went looking for easy pickings and never came back.

Word now is the place is haunted. That much death so sudden, some say it's cursed. A few of the old-timers insist the original citizens of Ishikhov are still there, lurking in the ruins of their former homes.

You're going to find out one way or another because the keycard says 'Basement 2. Central Planning Office'. The Central Planning Office (CPO) is a big, ugly concrete and steel building, built like a fortress, full of narrow halls and tiny cubicle offices. It stands dead center in the town of Ishikhov.

And that's where you're going.

Table Size

4' x 4'

Threat Level

Two – Yellow Zone. One Mission Objective. Four Hot Spots.

Terrain

The mission area is a deserted town filled with ruined homes and buildings. Two streets run North to South and two streets run East to West. These divide the table into nine sections roughly equal in size. Place the largest building in the center section and arrange other buildings and scatter terrain as desired in the remaining areas. Place one of the Secondary Hot Spots in each of the four table quadrants. These should be centered and accessible, and cannot be within 6" of the table edge or another Hot Spot.

Suggested Crew Experience

Reinforced Starter Crew with Veteran Crew Leader.



Official reports say hundreds died in the first incident but apparently not everyone stayed dead.

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Deployment Zones

Crews set up in opposite edges of the mission area anywhere up to 4" from the edge.

Turn Limit

Seven.

Zone Hostiles

Turns out the old-timers were right all along. Place four zombie models at each of the four road intersections. These zombies activate as a single mob and will move toward and attack the closest player model in line of sight. If no player models are visible, they will move toward the CPO. They will only stop converging if a player model appears. At TL 2, they have two Actions per Activation.

These are additional Zone Hostiles not connected to the present Mission Objective or secondary Hot Spots. Roll as needed on the Threat Level 2 Zone Hostile Table to determine the occupants of the four Hot Spots (see page 41).



We'll take a short cut through this tunnel. Of course it's safe.

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Salvage

After the CPO is cleared, the crew can 'enter' the building. A successful Search Action will yield 2,500 ZS worth of Salvage plus two rolls on each of the Basic, Advanced, and Special Item Equipment Tables.

Secondary Hot Spots yield Salvage per appropriate Hot Spot Salvage Tables.

Aftermath

Well done, comrade. Your first run. You put down some Zone scum, got a few notches on your AK, picked up some new gear, a new recruit maybe. Even set aside some in your Retirement fund. It's like you were made for this place. You belong here.

But a word of advice: you really want to hit it big, you need to collect Artifacts – that's where the real money is. And those are only found deep in the Zone. That's where you really want to go.

Part 11: The Last Bit

You're in the Zone now. There are enemies, rivals, horrors and mysteries waiting in the fog-shrouded, irradiated wilds. And treasure, treasure beyond your wildest imagination. It'll be terrifying, brutal, bloody and immensely rewarding – if you survive.

Zona Alfa was ordered around the simple thought that the rules shouldn't interfere with the game. They should support rather than suffocate. They should minimize friction and streamline gameplay, not bog players down in complex record-keeping, gimmicky or tedious combat mechanics. And you definitely should not have to constantly flip pages back and forth to get through a turn.

Hopefully, these rules are robust, reliable, and easy to operate. They won't cover any and every potential in-game situation, so if you encounter something during a mission, roll dice to resolve the problem, keep playing, and discuss the specific instance afterwards. I'm confident players can come up with a solid solution in keeping with the core rules and the spirit of the game.

Which is what it's all about: the story that unfolds on the table as you and your rivals advance your Crews toward the Mission Objective, never quite knowing what terrors and treasures the Zone is holding for you there.

Crew Roster

Crew Name		Faction	
Advances		Rubles(Retirement Fund)	
Salvage (V)		Zone Script	
Spare Equipment			
Artifacts			
Notes			

Name		Faction	
Wounds		Combat Experience	
Movement	Combat Ability	Armor	Will
Skills			
Equipment			
Notes			

Name		Faction	
Wounds		Combat Experience	
Movement	Combat Ability	Armor	Will
Skills			
Equipment			
Notes			

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Good Hunting, Comrades!

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