

# Field Guide to Lancer Field Guides

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FIELD GUIDE****1**

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**SECTION 0**

# **INTRODUCTION TO THE FIELD GUIDE**

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# FIRST QUESTIONS

## A TEMPLATE

This document is produced using, and describes how to use, the Lancer Field Guide package for  $\text{\LaTeX}$ . It makes it (relatively) simple to create a document in the format of the official Lancer content.

It's important to know that  $\text{\LaTeX}$  is a text markup language that gets compiled to PDF files. It's very like a programming language. However, this package (the `FieldGuide.sty` file), hides as much of the complexity as I can so all you have to do is type in your text, numbers, and image names.

## WHY LATEX?

First of all,  $\text{\LaTeX}$  is free. Both in the money sense, and in the information sense. You can download it on pretty much any computer and use it.

It's also capable of doing amazing things when formatting text. You'll see some of that below. To be truthful, I'm not a  $\text{\LaTeX}$  expert. I've probably messed things up horribly in this template, but I do hope it will be useful to at least one person to help them make better Lancer content, without worrying about graphic design.

## FIRST STEPS

First, you need to install  $\text{\LaTeX}$ . Go to: [TeX Live](#), download, and install it. It's going to take a while (no, seriously, get a book or go do something else for a bit), there's a lot of useful packages it will download.

While that's going on, open up [Overleaf](#) and check it out. This website is a very good source on basic  $\text{\LaTeX}$ , and is very good to have open as you work.

Now, open `Main.tex` in your favorite text editor. VSCode is a popular, free choice, because it has extensions for  $\text{\LaTeX}$  that let you compile on save, intellisense, custom keyboard shortcuts, and things like that. But any text editor works, from notepad to vim to emacs.

## ABOUT THE TEMPLATE

The template is in two parts. Most important is the file `FieldGuide.sty`, which defines a lot of useful commands, symbols, and formatting. Second is the file `Main.tex`, which sets up the skeleton that you will be filling out.

Here is the full text of `Main.tex`, and we'll use this to explain what it does, then we'll get into `FieldGuide.sty`.

```
\documentclass[twoside,headings,letterpaper,
  twocolumn]{article}
\usepackage{FieldGuide}
% Set path for images
\graphicspath{{./images}} % or multiple paths \
  \graphicspath{{./images}{../../mystuff/Lancer/
  images}}
% Use this command to make the table of contents
  ALL UPPERCASE instead of exactly what you typed
  .
\renewcommand{\sectioncase}[2]{ \FillLine{\
  MakeUppercase{\#1}\#\#2}}
% Use this command to start at SECTION 0 like the
  core book does.
\setcounter{section}{-1}

\title{Your Title Here}
\author{Your Name Here}

\begin{document}
  \frontmatter
  \maketitle
  \clearpage
  \tableofcontents
  \mainmatter
\end{document}
```

First is the preamble, everything before `\begin{document}`. The first line you shouldn't mess with, as it defines the basic format of the book. The `usepackage` command includes the `FieldGuide.sty` file, and you can also use it to import other  $\text{\LaTeX}$  packages. Next in the preamble are three settings.

- The `graphicspath` defines where it looks for images. So if you've already got all the images in a specific folder, define it here.
- The `renewcommand` option exists to make the table of contents all uppercase. Whenever you define a section, subsection, or subsubsection, the name you type in gets used everywhere, but this makes it appear uppercase in the contents. If you turn it off, it will just be however you typed it. Just be consistent.
- The `setcounter` option makes the first Section number into 0, like the core Lancer book does. If you want to start at one, just comment it out.

After `\begin{document}`, there is the content of the document, which you will be modifying. The `frontmatter` command starts the roman numeral page numbering, and sets the style, while the `maketitle` command inserts the title page using the title and author set in the preamble. You may add additional text below the `maketitle` command to show other text, acknowledgements, ect.

One thing you may want to do is add a full-page cover. If you do, before the call to `maketitle`, add a `fullpageimage` command, referencing your cover (see Adding Images).

The `tableofcontents` command inserts the table of contents. The `mainmatter` command switches to arabic page numbers and indicates you're ready to go by filling in empty space until the next left page.

After that, it's all yours. Next is what you put on all these wonderful blank pages.

# USEFUL AND CUSTOM COMMANDS

## BASIC FORMATTING

The basic text formatting commands are **bold** (\textbf{bold}), *italic* (\textit{italic}), and **KEYWORDS** (\KeyWord{KeyWords}). The last is defined by the FieldGuide template, and sets the text in small caps (plus a bit of spacing adjustment). Keyword is what is used for all of the, well, key words like **STUNNED**, **ENGAGED**, ect.

## SECTIONS

You will be wanting to divide and sub-divide your Field Guide to keep things organized. This too is simple. The largest division is the section, like **INTRODUCTION TO THE FIELD GUIDE**. These are created by typing \section{SECTION NAME}. You can also add images to the pages by doing \section[left-image] [right-image]{SECTION NAME}. The section command forces the book to the next left page, occupies two facing pages, and everything after is on the next page.

A subsection starts on a left page and places a banner across the top of the page, like **USEFUL AND CUSTOM COMMANDS**. You create it by, drumroll please... \subsection{SUBSECTION NAME}. A subsubsection, like **Sections** is created by \subsubsection{SubSubSection Name}, and a named paragraph, like **Damage Symbols**, is created with \paragraph{Title}.

**WARNING!** The text of the sections needs to be plain-text. No latex macros, no spacing, nothing that uses the \ and so forth. There's probably a way to make it safe for you to do that, but I haven't figured it out.

## LANCER SYMBOLS

Lancer has a great deal of custom symbols, contained in a custom font, which is automatically included.

### DAMAGE SYMBOLS

✖	\CCKinetic{}
⚡	\CCEnergy{}
*	\CCExplosive{}
🔥	\CCBurn{}
🔥	\CCHeat{}
•	\CCVariable{}

## ATTACK SYMBOLS

☒	\CCThreat{}
✓	\CCRage{}
↗	\CCLine{}
⊕	\CCBlast{}
◎	\CCBurst{}
▷	\CCCone{}
▣	\CCIvade{}
✚	\CCAccuracy{}
⊖	\CCDifficulty{}

## COMPON SYMBOLS

❖	\CCMovement{}	❖	\CCHex{}
❖	\CCStructure{}	❖	\CCStress{}
🛡	\CCArmor{}	♥	\CCHP{}
⬡	\CCHollowHex{}	●	\CCCircle{}
⌚	\CCRepair{}	🔋	\CCCP{}
❖	\CCEffect{}	❖	\CCSystem{}
❖	\CCEvasion{}	✉	\CCEDEF{}
❖	\CCAactivation{}	⚙	\CCGear{}
⚡	\CCOvercharge{}	✿	\CCOvershield{}
❖	\CCSystemPoint{}	☒	\CCDrone{}
☒	\CCDeployable{}	㉚	\CCDTwenty{}
❖	\CCRoll{}		

## MECH SIZE SYMBOLS

SIZE 1/2	\CCSizeHalf{}
SIZE 1	\CCSizeOne{}
SIZE 2	\CCSizeTwo{}
SIZE 3	\CCSizeThree{}

## NPC CLASS SYMBOLS

▲	\CCArtillery{}
♥	\CCBiological{}
◎	\CCController{}
🛡	\CCDefender{}
^K	\CCSupport{}
▼	\CCStriker{}

## NPC TIER SYMBOLS

▢	\CCTierOne{}
▢	\CCTierTwo{}
▢	\CCTierThree{}

## SPACING

The most useful tool for spacing is the `\pagebreak` command. It has an optional argument ranging from 0-4 (ie: `\pagebreak[2]`) that indicates how important it is to break right here. A 0 means don't break the column here, no matter what. A 4 means break right now, and is the default value, if you supply none. If you're in the second column of a page, it moves to the next page. You can also force it to go all the way to the next page with `\clearpage` or to the next left page (IE: if you had a physical book) using `\cleardoublepage`.

For a space like the indentation of this paragraph, use the `\quad` command, or `\quad\quad` for twice the space. To add a gap that pushes text to the right, use `\hfill` like so.

... Really, you want *more* control? How specific do you want to get? Fine. `\hspace{x}` and `\vspace{x}` both add arbitrary amounts of space. `x` can be in several units, pt, mm, cm, in, em, and even things like `0.5\baselineskip`, or half the height of a line. L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X has a great many pre-defined lengths, so read the [documentation](#) to find out what there is.

## INFO BOXES

The Lancer rules have several types of fancy boxes.

### COLORED BOX

The most basic is the flat, rectangular, colored box. Most of the special box options have a color variable, and ones that Lancer uses have been pre-defined. More are available, and check out the [documentation](#) for instructions on how to define your own (the `xcolor` package).

There are two arguments. Box color, and text. You can format the text as usual for latex, including spacing and setting your own text color (ie: use `\textcolor{black}{Blah}` if you use your own light color for the box. Or if you think it looks better.)

This box is what you use when defining terms, such as on page 20 of the core book, or for Talents

---

```
\lancercolorbox{red}{red} \\
\lancercolorbox{purple}{purple} \\
\lancercolorbox{turquoise}{turquoise} \\
\lancercolorbox{blue}{blue} \\
\lancercolorbox{green}{green} \\
\lancercolorbox{orange}{orange} \\
\lancercolorbox{magenta}{magenta}
```

---

red
purple
turquoise
blue
green
orange
magenta

### TITLED CORNER BOX

One of the types is the one used on Page 30 of the Core book, here called the "Titled Corner Box". The command for it has three options: Color, Title Text, and Body Text.

---

```
\titledcornerbox{red}{%
  \textbf{THE TITLE}%
}%
  This is the text inside the box.
```

---

produces the output

#### THE TITLE

This is the text inside the box.

#### CORNER BOX

Another type of box is very similar to the previous, but with no title. It's used on page 66 of the core book. The command has two options: Color, and Body Text. The color is automatically shaded towards white, so it has the same color as the body of a similar titledcornerbox.

---

```
\cornerbox{red}{%
  This is the text inside the box.
}
```

---

produces the output

This is the text inside the box.

## MOUNT BOX

Similar, but not quite, is a series of commands for the mount boxes used creating Lancer Frames.

```
\MainMount\MainAuxMount\FlexMount\HeavyMount\  
AuxAuxMount
```

produces the output



## INFO BOX

And probably the most common type of box in the book, the what is here called the “Info Box”. It is what you use to define the weapons, systems, tech attack options, and most everything else to do with a Frame. An infobox has four arguments. The color, the title, the mechanical text, and (optionally) the flavor text. If you don’t have any flavor text, just leave that argument empty, just a {}.

```
\infobox{black}{  
  \textbf{\large Weapon Name}\\"  
  \TechnicalText Superheavy Cannon\\  
  {[CCRange{8} [1d6\CKinetic{}]} }  
}  
Mechanical text looks like so.  
}  
Flavor Text looks all special like this.  
}
```

### Weapon Name

Superheavy Cannon  
[✓8][1d6 Ø]

Mechanical text looks like so.

.....  
Flavor Text looks all special like this.

You can also mark a section for special emphasis, like the Invade box from the core book on page 70.

```
\infobox{purple}{  
  \textbf{Invade}  
}  
When you \KeyWord{Invade}, you mount a direct  
electronic attack against a target. To \KeyWord{Invade}, make a tech attack against  
a character within \KeyWord{Sensors} and  
line of sight.\\  
On a success, your target takes \textbf{2\CCHeat  
{}} and you choose one of the \KeyWord{  
Invasion} options available to you.\\  
<snip text>  
\infoemphasis{
```

\KeyWord{Fragment Signal.} You feed false information, obscene messages, or phantom signals to your ‘targets’ computing core. They become \KeyWord{Impaired} and \KeyWord{Slowed} until the end of their next turn.

}

You can also <snip text>

}%No Flavor Text

}

## Invade

When you **INVADE**, you mount a direct electronic attack against a target. To **INVADE**, make a tech attack against a character within **SENSORS** and line of sight. On a success, your target takes **2 ⚡** and you choose one of the **INVASION** options available to you.

**FRAGMENT SIGNAL** is available to all characters, and additional options are granted by certain systems and equipment with the **INVADE** tag.

**FRAGMENT SIGNAL**. You feed false information, obscene messages, or phantom signals to your target’s computing core. They become **IMPAIRED** and **SLOWED** until the end of their next turn.

You can also **INVADE** willing allied characters to create certain effects. If your target is willing and allied, you are automatically successful, it doesn’t count as an attack, and your target doesn’t take any heat.

## TABLES

If you’re making your own random roll tables, you’ll need to know how to make a table. `\begin{tabular}` is for single column tables and `\begin{tabular*}` spans the entire page. The multicolumn and multirow commands let you merge cells.

## IDENTITY ROLL 1D20

- 1 An infamous private military corporation.
- 2 Glory-seeking warriors.
- 3 Union regulars, career soldiers.

```
\begin{NiceTabular}{|l|X|}  
  \CodeBefore \rowcolors{0}{white}{lightgray}\Body  
  \Hline  
  \Block[1]{1-2}{\textbf{\Large IDENTITY}\\"  
    textcolor{gray}{\textbf{ROLL 1D20}}}\\"  
  \textbf{1} & An infamous private military  
  corporation. \\  
  \textbf{2} & Glory-seeking warriors. \\  
  \textbf{3} & Union regulars, career soldiers.  
  \\\Hline  
\end{NiceTabular}
```

## CUSTOM FRAMES

While not strictly a box, the page for a new Lancer Frame is an important thing to automate. It is significantly more complicated than anything else, and takes up one or two pages. There are a total of 5 arguments, which will be shown separately, so commentary can be interspersed.

---

```
\LancerFrame[Stats]{Traits}{Mounts}{Core Power}{

Flavor Text

\LancerFrame[Manufacturer=IPS-N, Name=FAKEDRAKE,
Size=2, Class=Defender, Class Icon=\CCDefender{}], Armor=3, HP=8, SP=5, Evasion=6, E-Defense=6, Heat Cap=5, Sensors=10, Tech Attack=+0, Repair Cap=5, Save Target=10, Speed=3, Background Image=IPS-N-Background, Facing Image=Drake-Facing]
```

---

The first argument is the Frame stats, name, and, in truth, all the things that can be described in a single value. The only two truly optional values are the Background Image and the Facing Image. Background Image is a full screen image, placed behind everything like the company logos in the core book. Facing Image is the optional image on the facing page, like the Drake in the core book. It is optional because some mechs may not have art, and you simply want to start in on the License Levels. If you don't want them, simply don't provide the argument.

Everything else is required. If you forget to put one of the values in, then the result will be a magenta colored box. To demonstrate, the Speed option has been removed from the next page. If you *really* want to have a blank space, fill the argument with {} instead.

You can have dual class Frames. For example:

```
Class=Defender\slash{}Controller
Class Icon={\CCDefender{}\\\CCController{}}.
```

---

```
{\titledcornerbox{red}{HEAVY FRAME}{The Drake can't be pushed, pulled, knocked \KeyWord{Prone}, or knocked back by smaller characters.}
\titledcornerbox{red}{BLAST PLATING}{The Drake has \KeyWord{Resistance} to \textbf{damage}, \CCBurn{} and \CCHeat{} from \CCBlast{}, \CCBurst{}, \CCLine{}, and \CCCone{} attacks.}
\titledcornerbox{red}{SLOW}{The Drake receives \textbf{+1 CCDifficulty{}} on \KeyWord{Agility} checks and saves.}
\titledcornerbox{red}{GUARDIAN}{Adjacent allied characters can use the Drake for \textbf{hard cover}.}
}
```

---

The second argument is the Traits of the frame. Usually it's a set of saying what the frame does. Honestly, not too complicated.

---

```
{\MainMount\MainMount\HeavyMount}
```

---

Neither is the list of mounts. Just look at the available ones [HERE](#).

---

```
{\Large\textbf{FORTRESS}
\infobox{orange}{
\textbf{Fortress Protocol}\\
{\TechnicalText\normalsize Active (1CP), Protocol}
}
{You deploy heavy stabilizers and your mech becomes more like a fortified emplacement than a vehicle. When activated, two sections of hard cover (\textbf{\CCLine{}}2, \KeyWord{Size} 1) unfold from your mech, drawn in any direction. These cover sections have \KeyWord{Immunity} to all damage.}
```

Additionally, the following effects apply while active:

```
\begin{itemize}
\item You become \KeyWord{Immobilized}.
\item Snipped for size
\end{itemize}
This system can be deactivated as a \textbf{protocol}.
Otherwise, it lasts until the end of the current scene.}{%No Flavor Text
}
```

---

The Core System is marginally more complicated, but usually just because it has more content. Insert the typical boxes and info boxes and such as needed to make up that content.

Last is the Frame's flavor text. There's no example. It's just text, and if you wanted to you could put bold, boxes, or other fancy effects, go right ahead. Maybe some pretty colors?



# IPS-N FAKEDRAKE

Defender

The Drake, IPS-N's first foray into military-grade mech design, is the backbone of any proactive trade-security or anti-piracy force. Its massive, simian frame is built around a single-cast bulkhead, sloped and reinforced to handle sustained fire and the vagaries of vessel-proximal hardvac travel. The Drake is an imposing chassis, its frame evoking the might of ancient armored infantry from a time when greater numbers guaranteed victory.

The standard fleet license for the IPS-N Drake outfits each chassis with IPS-N's high-velocity, high-projectile fragment assault cannon for suppressing and overwhelming targets, and a heavy kinetic-ablative shield for defense. Advanced models feature upgraded weapons and armor including the formidable Leviathan Heavy Assault Cannon, a high-rpm anti-materiel weapon.

## CORE STATS

Size: 2

Armor: 3

### HULL

HP: 8

Repair Cap: 5

### AGILITY

Evasion: 6

Speed: 4

Save Target: 10

Sensors: 10

### SYSTEMS

E-Defense: 6

Tech Attack: +0

SP: 5

### ENGINEERING

Heat Cap: 5

## TRAITS

### HEAVY FRAME

The Drake can't be pushed, pulled, knocked PRONE, or knocked back by smaller characters.

### BLAST PLATING

The Drake has RESISTANCE to damage, ⚡ and ⚡ from ☀, ☀, ⚡, and ⚡ attacks.

### SLOW

The Drake receives +1 ⚡ on AGILITY checks and saves.

### GUARDIAN

Adjacent allied characters can use the Drake for hard cover.

## MOUNTS

MAIN MOUNT

MAIN MOUNT

HEAVY MOUNT

## CORE SYSTEM FORTRESS

### Fortress Protocol

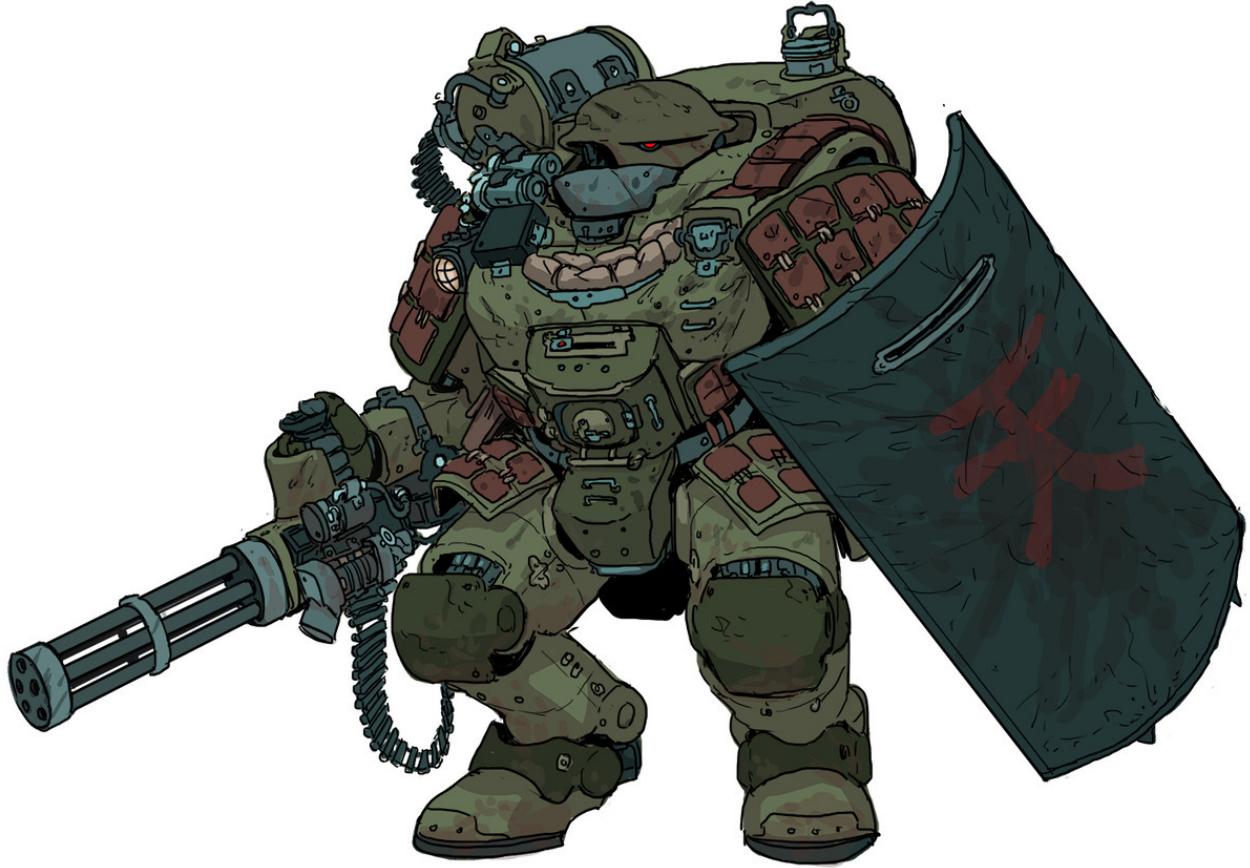
Active (1CP), Protocol

You deploy heavy stabilizers and your mech becomes more like a fortified emplacement than a vehicle. When activated, two sections of hard cover (↗ 2, SIZE 1) unfold from your mech, drawn in any direction. These cover sections have IMMUNITY to all damage.

Additionally, the following effects apply while active:

- You become IMMOBILIZED.
- You benefit from hard cover, even in the open, and gain IMMUNITY to KNOCKBACK, PRONE, and all involuntary movement.
- When you BRACE, you may take a full action on your next turn instead of just a quick action.
- Any character that gains hard cover from you or your cover sections gains IMMUNITY to KNOCKBACK, PRONE, and all involuntary movement, and gains the benefits of Blast Plating.

This system can be deactivated as a protocol. Otherwise, it lasts until the end of the current scene.



## IPS-N “Drake”

鉄神ヅレーク

Heavy Assault/Fire Support

“Argonaut” assault shield, “Leviathan” class heavy gatling cannon

LANCER  
The mech RPG

**SIZE  
1**

# FAKEASSAULT

Striker



Assault mechs are the most common primary battle frames found throughout the galaxy. Fitted with a heavy rifle, a sidearm, and a suite of systems that enhance movement, targeting, and defensibility, they are straightforward, reliable, and hardy combatants. The pilots of Assault mechs are also the cheapest to train and outfit, but that doesn't make them any less dangerous.

TIER 1 <b>MECH SKILLS</b>	TIER 2 <b>MECH SKILLS</b>	TIER 3 <b>MECH SKILLS</b>			
Hull: +1 Agility: +1 System: +1	Engineering: +1	Hull: +2 Agility: +2 System: +2	Engineering: +2	Hull: +3 Agility: +3 System: +3	Engineering: +3
<b>CORE STATS</b>	<b>CORE STATS</b>	<b>CORE STATS</b>	<b>CORE STATS</b>	<b>CORE STATS</b>	<b>CORE STATS</b>
HP: 15 Evasion: 8 Speed: 4 Heat Cap: 8 Sensors: 8 Armor: 1	E-Defense: 8 Size: 1 Save Target: 10	HP: 18 Evasion: 10 Speed: 4 Heat Cap: 8 Sensors: 8 Armor: 1	E-Defense: 9 Size: 1 Save Target: 12	HP: 21 Evasion: 12 Speed: 4 Heat Cap: 8 Sensors: 8 Armor: 1	E-Defense: 10 Size: 1 Save Target: 14

Unsurprisingly, the NPC command is simpler than the Frame command. It has two arguments. The second is just the flavor text at the top, same as the Frames, but the first argument has its own quirks.

---

```
\LancerNPC[Stats]{Flavor Text}

\LancerNPC[Name=FAKEASSAULT, Size=1, Class=
    Striker, Class Icon=\CCStriker{}, 
    Tier1={Hull=+1, Systems=+1, Agility=+1,
        Engineering=+1, HP=15, Evasion=8, Speed
        =4, Heat Cap=8, Sensors=8, Armor=1, E-
        Defense=8, Size=1, Save Target=10},
    Tier2={Hull=+2, Systems=+2, Agility=+2,
        Engineering=+2, HP=18, Evasion=10, E-
        Defense=9, Save Target=12},
    Tier3={Hull=+3, Systems=+3, Agility=+3,
        Engineering=+3, HP=21, Evasion=12, E-
        Defense=10, Save Target=14}] {Flavor
text goes here.}
```

---

The first few arguments are the same as the LancerFrame command. The Tiers are different. At Tier 1, you need to specify all the values, or you get the same magenta box. For Tiers 2 and 3, you only need to specify the values that change.

# CARRIERS

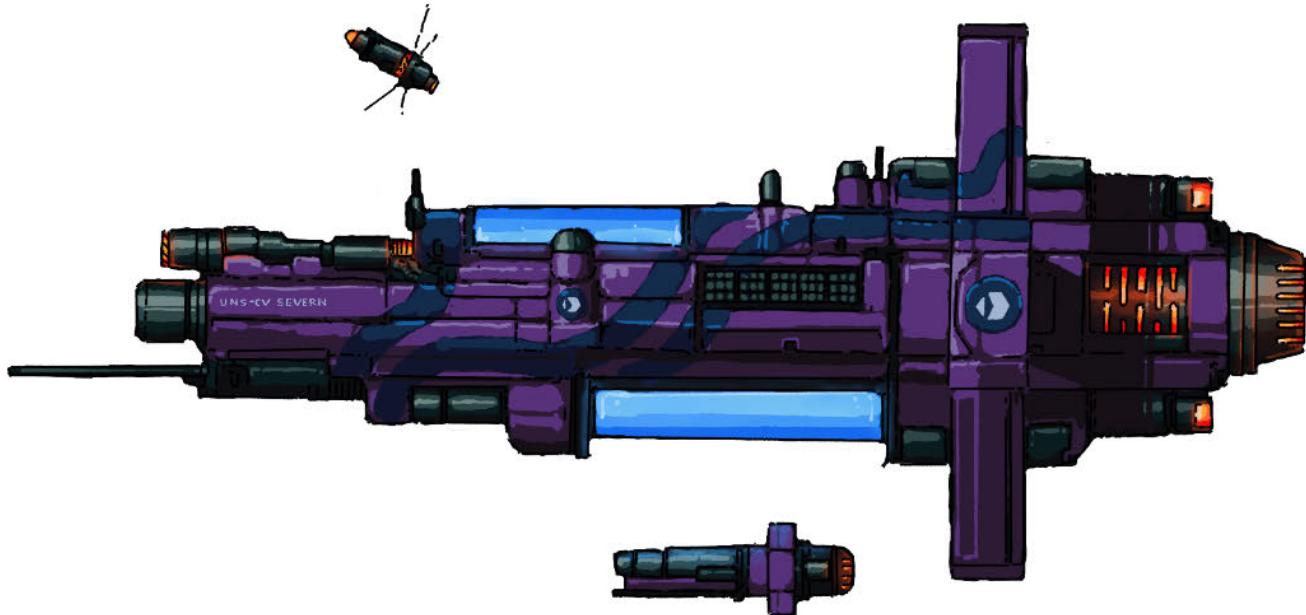
This is where your flavor text goes. Image credit JWST. Thanks NASA!

You create this by the command shipclass with four arguments. The title at the top of the page, the color of the first column, the flavor text under the image, and the background image.

```
\shipclass{Carriers}{blue}{This is where your flavor text goes. Image credit JWST. Thanks NASA! <snip recursion>}{JWST-Jupiter}
```

GMS Tongass-class

A versatile carrier for coordinating both strike craft and subline vessels, with fleetwide command-and-control integration.



## GMS TONGASS-CLASS LINE CARRIER

POINTS	HP	DEFENSE	OPTIONS
4	14	14	2 Auxiliary, 2 Escorts

Contemporary doctrines recognize two distinct uses for carriers in naval combat: launching strike craft and supporting subline vessels. Subline ships, those smaller than so-called "ships of the line", typically require additional logistical support to maintain effective combat readiness. Carriers built to support squadrons of low- to mid-tonnage subline combat vessels do so not necessarily by housing them in launch bays, but by transporting them and their crews to deployment areas, then providing tactical coordination and a base for resupply and rearmament once engaged. The Tongass-class line carrier is Union's mainstay subline support vessel, and both its dorsal and ventral umbilical berths and streamlined logistics suites allow it to maintain its escorts on fire-support missions without returning to second- or third-echelon shipyards.

### Close Support

#### Trait

Allied battlegroups in your range band may use tactics granted by this ship's **Escorts** as if they were under their control.

The Ship command is even simpler. With only three stats, a few pieces of text, and an image, it's the shortest of all. The infobox isn't even in the command, just following it, like NPCs. The next text after the command gets inserted into the second column of the page.

```
\LancerShip[Name=Tongass, Manufacturer=GMS, Points
=4, HP=14, Defense=14, Options={2 Auxiliary,
2 Escorts}, Image=Tongass, Class=Line Carrier]
{<snip flavor text>}
\infobox{orange}{\textbf{\large Close Support}}\\{\ \
TechnicalText Trait}}
{<snip trait text>}{}  


```



# IMAGES

Adding images is somewhat complicated.  $\text{\LaTeX}$  is good, but it doesn't easily contour text around the contents of images the way the core book does many times. Instead, a few useful commands are provided.

First is adding an image to the bottom of the page, across both columns. The command for this is `\bottomimage{imgname}`. It is important that this command be included with the text in the left column, or  $\text{\LaTeX}$  won't know how much space at the bottom of the page to reserve. Don't worry, it will always be pushed to the bottom of the page, even if that means moving text from after the command to before the image.

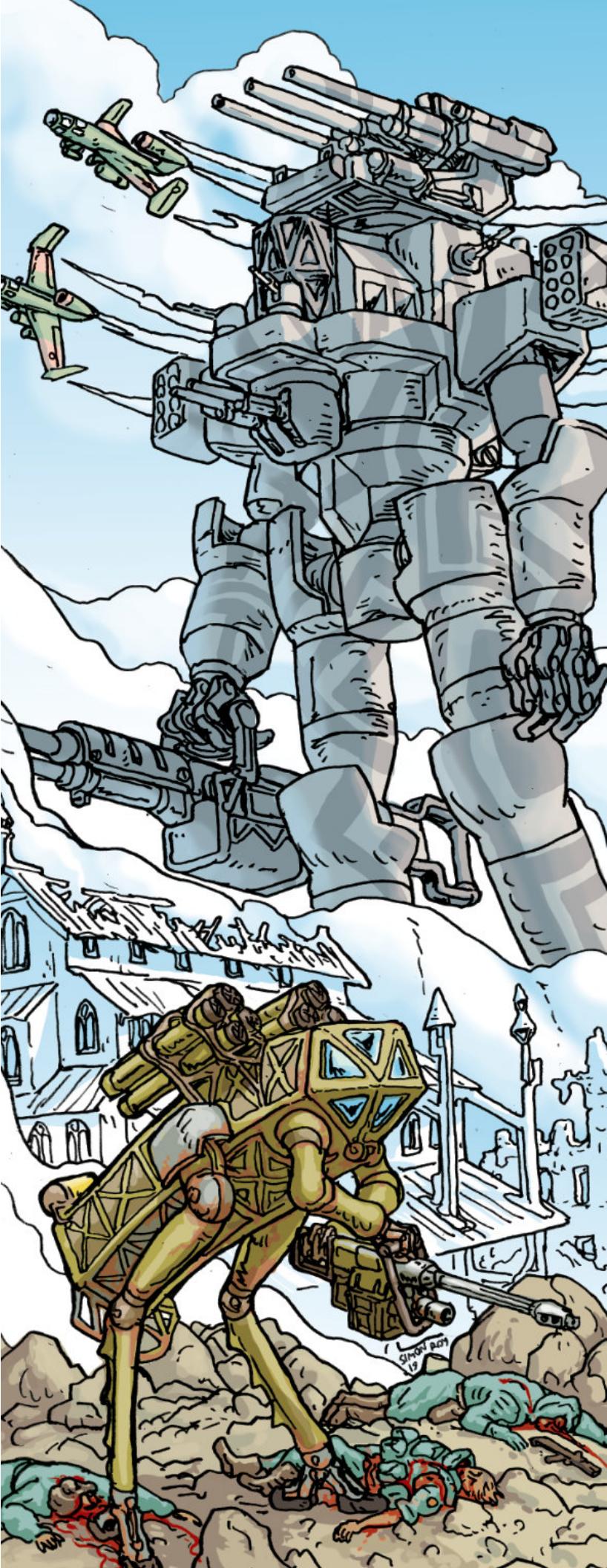
The command `\topimage{imgname}` works the same way, just at the top of the page. In the meantime, have some filler text to show how the text wraps until we describe the next image type.

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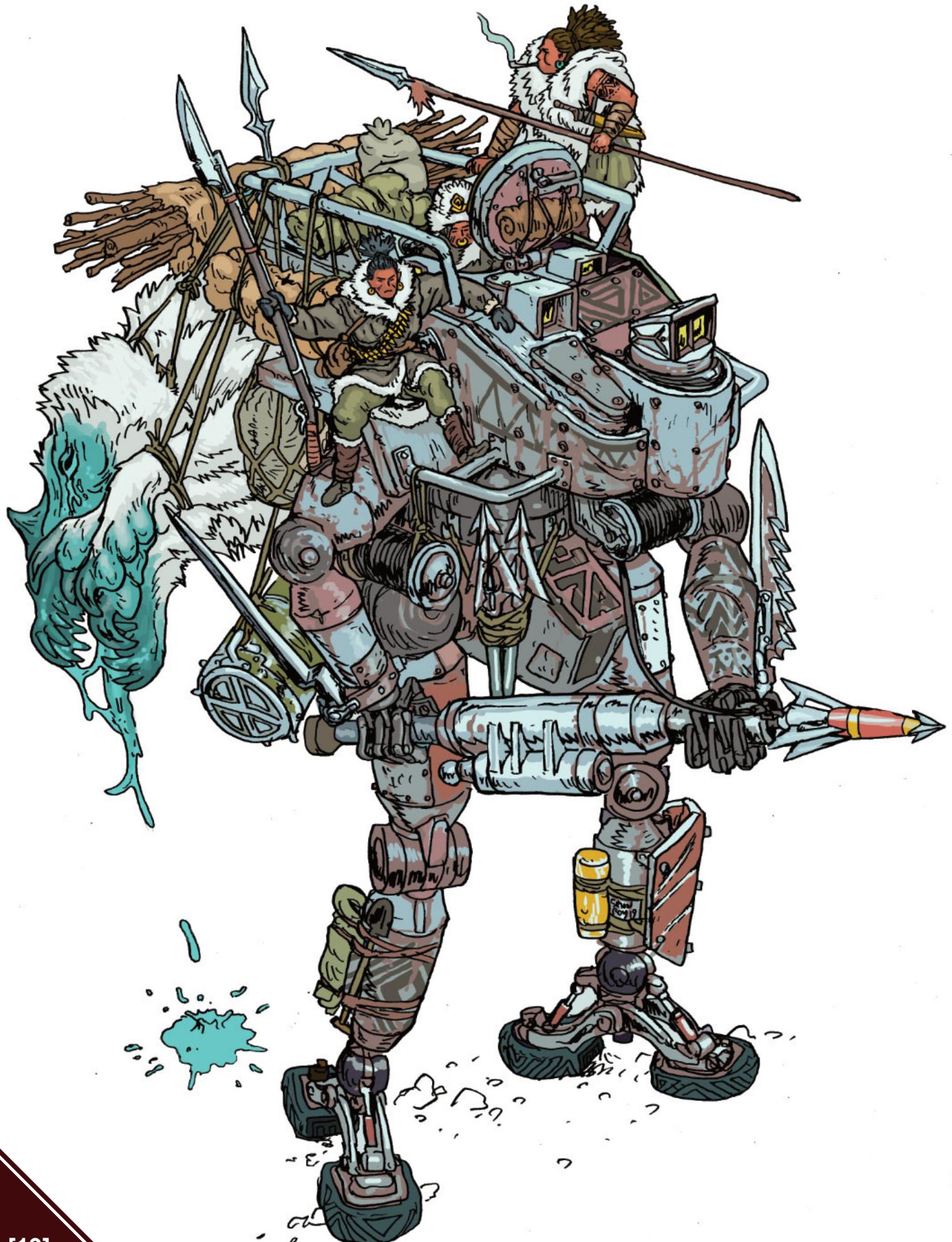
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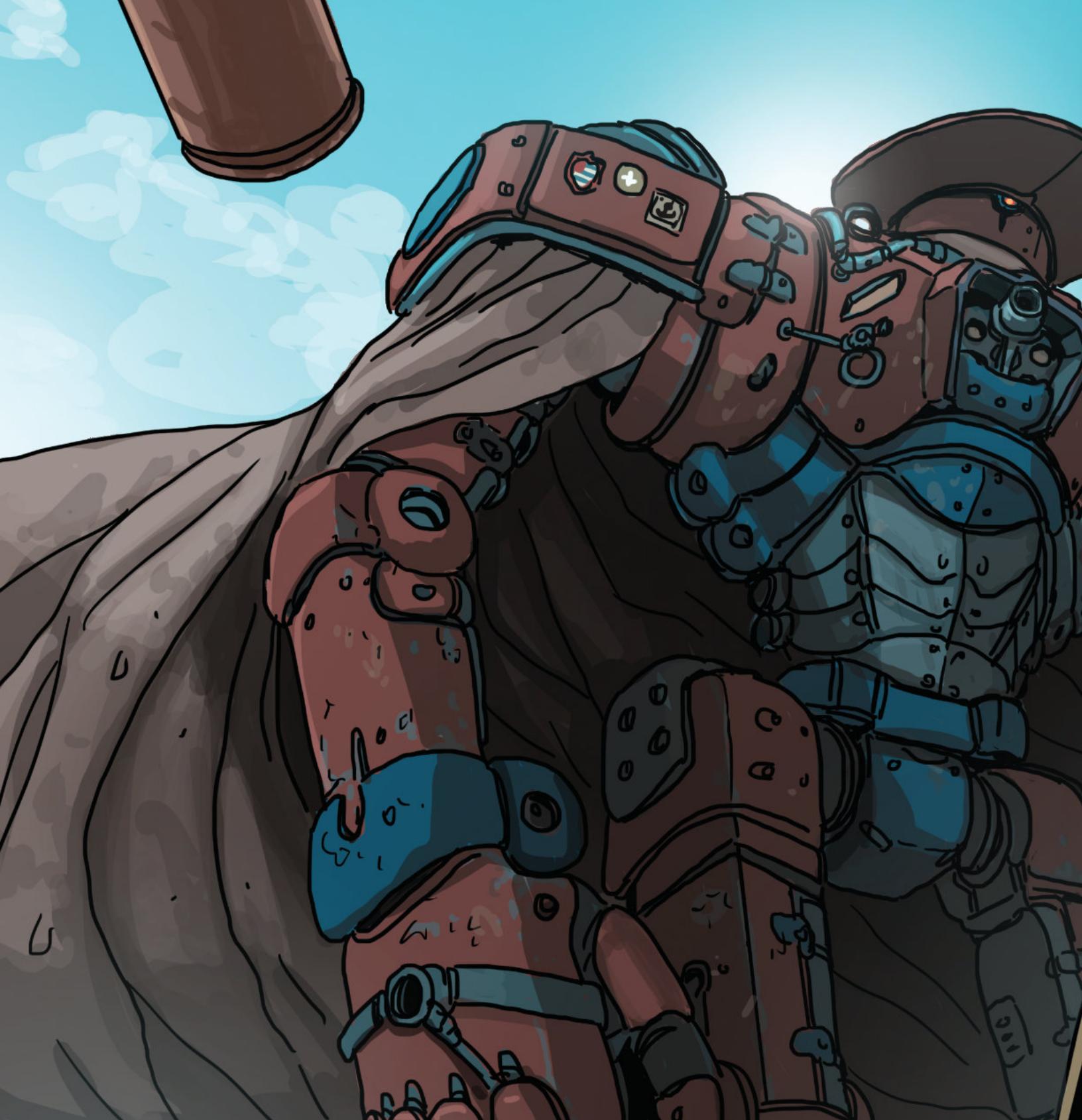


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**SECTION 1**  
**GETTING STARTED**



**INTRODUCTION**  
**PLAYING LANCER**

**23**

**25**

# INTRODUCTION

**It is 5016u, and the galaxy is home to trillions. At the core of humanity's territory there is a golden age, but outside of this newly won utopia the revolutionary project continues.**

You are a lancer, an exceptional mech pilot among already exceptional peers, and you live in a time where the future hangs as a spinning coin at the apex of its toss – the fall is coming, and how the coin lands is yet to be determined.

Far now from our humble beginnings, humanity has spread out among and between the stars for thousands of years. We have set empty worlds and barren moons alight with civilization, tamed asteroids and gas giants – even built lives in the hard vacuum of space itself. We have taken root in our arm of the Milky Way; life – in its infinite diversity – thrives and expands.

For some, life in this time is as a river – forever moving, with the land and time of their birth left somewhere far behind. For most, life is spent on their home world, moon, or station, linked to the rest of humanity via fantastic technologies, or isolated to the politics, stories, and histories of their own lands. The trillions that make up humanity live, for the most part, as you or I do now.

But wonders tie the galaxy together in this age.

Connecting all worlds is blinkspace – an unknowably vast and strange plane parallel to the one in which we live, pierced by blink gates that allow us to travel with speed and safety. Thanks to these massive, star-bound doors, every corner of space is open to the daring. These portals are common wonders: thousands of ships travel through them every day seeking trade, migration, travel, war, and myriad other aims.

Filling the lonely void is the omninet, a data-sharing network built off the blink that connects every computer, every server – everything – to everything else. The omninet is much more than a way to send messages or a means for people on far-flung worlds to read the galaxy's news; it overlays all human communications, facilitating government, industry, culture, and realms more esoteric still. Data is the new wealth, and the omninet means that all wealth can be shared.

The form of that wealth is manna. Uniting the disparate nations of the human diaspora outside the Core, manna is the universal currency accepted by every market on every planet. When a galaxy's wealth of raw resources are available for exploitation, a community's wealth comes from both its past and its potential.

The vast mass of humanity is administered by a single sprawling government: Union, the galactic hegemony. Luna and Mars, Mercury and Venus. Saturn, Jupiter, Neptune, and Uranus. Phobos and Deimos. Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto. Titan and Enceladus. These worlds strung in their orbit around Sol are the diadem atop which Cradle rests, the seat of Union's power and humanity's ancient heart. From Cradle, Union controls the three levers of the galaxy: the blink gates, the omninet, and manna. Without these levers, and without Union, the galaxy would fall into chaos.

Union is a new kind of utopia. A new state – communal and post-capital – for a New Humanity. Union was born from the ashes and ice of the Fall: the collapse that felled Old Humanity, boiling Cradle and withering her colonies entirely. Though it has been thousands of years since Union was founded – and thousands more since the Fall – New Humanity knows only one truth among ten thousand unknowns: if we are to survive, then we must come together in solidarity and mutual aid.

Despite Union's conviction – and despite its successes so far – the sheer size of this collective project is daunting. Union is distant to most people: fictionalized in omninet dramas and novels; dreamed about by children and wanderers; hailed as the promised kingdom or damned as the pit by religions across the galaxy. For all its authority, Union prefers to rule from a distance. Few have ever seen one of Union's administrators, let alone suffered one of its naval campaigns. For those who have never seen its flag, Union is all but a myth; for those whose skies have been darkened by Union's ships, the hegemony may have brought liberty – but it brought death first.

The galaxy remains a dangerous place outside the Core. Rebellions, insurrections, piracy, wars – civil and interplanetary – continue to flare and burn their way through space, though only the most desperate conflicts require Union's intervention. Disputes between Union's subject states are common enough that there is still a need for militaries, militias, and mercenaries. Five major suppliers offer arms and armor to states and entities outside the Core that desire them. These manufacturers exist in delicate balance with Union: though the administrators regulate and the suppliers comply, these two philosophies – one of post-capital utopia and the other of permanent and wild growth – rush toward an irreconcilable end.

You are one person, alive in this time of tumult and peace – a time of promise that was built on the sacrifice of those who came before and is threatened still by the heirs of old adversaries. You are one whose life is lived in the great river, where lives cross stars and time; where one person in the right place at the right time can divert the course of history; where the collective action of comrades can save worlds, lives, and better define Union's utopian dream.

You are a mech pilot – one of the best, a lancer – and yours is the story of this spinning coin at the apex of its toss. At this pivotal moment in history, what will you and your comrades do when fate, foresight, and luck – good or bad – puts you in the right place at the right time?

On which side will you fall?

## THE CAVALRY

Your character in the world of Lancer is a mechanized cavalry pilot of particular note – a lancer. Whatever the mission, whatever the terrain, whatever the enemy, your character is the one who is called in to break the siege or hold the line. When the drop klaxons sound, it's up to them to save the day.

Your lancer hails from a world and culture of your choice, but is human. They might come from Earth – or Cradle, as it is now called – but to hail from Earth in the age of Union is exceedingly rare. No, it is far more likely that your pilot hails from somewhere in the vastness of the human diaspora. In Lancer, it has been millennia since we left Earth, and most of humanity lives among the stars in our arm of the Milky Way.

This humanity is familiar and strange in equal measure. As far as we know, the only sentient, sapient beings in our stellar neighborhood are other humans, but don't take this as a limitation – there are many roads to becoming a lancer. Your character might be the product of significant technological and capital investment on the part of their employers; or, they could be a born prodigy – a wunderkind who commands a mech with innate grace and ability, perhaps discovered by a secretive recruiter. Your character might be a lucky conscript – a battle-proven draftee who managed to survive their first drop, promoted by desperate commanders looking for a hero. They could also be the scion of an ancient, atemporal monarchy, destined to inherit the chassis of their polypatriarch. Your character could be a jaded volunteer from a Union liberator team, motivated by a closely-guarded ember of hope for a better future; or an anointed Loyal Wing of the Albatross; or a facsimile of a long-dead pilot, grown in batches of thousands; a spacer who has spent too long listening to the deep whispers of the void.

Whatever led your character to the cockpit of their mech, they are the sum of many parts: enhanced through a combination of training, natural skill, battlefield experience, and neural or physical augmentation, a lancer is the equivalent of a knight of old, a flying ace, or another class of elite warrior.

Lancers, many proudly declare, are a cut above other pilots.

They aren't entirely wrong. The recruitment, training, and maintenance of a mech pilot demand the investment of much more time and capital than your average soldier. To operate a mech at peak efficiency, a pilot needs extensive physical and mental training, or advanced (and expensive) physiological and ontological augmentations. Washout and injury rates are high thanks to the demanding training process, but a high bar is necessary: once a candidate attains their final certifications and ships out to their first posting, they face only the most dangerous missions. Mechs aren't sent in to keep the peace – they're sent in when all other options have failed. Your character, a lancer, represents the best of this exceptional corps.

Remember, whatever their history, your pilot is ultimately human. They're just as flawed as the rest of us, just as perfect. Pilots are heroes and villains; brave souls and cowards; lovers and fighters, all. Some of them stand strong when everyone else runs, or are the first to face danger – our best and brightest. But they, too, break under the pressure; they fail; they kill, even when they could have spared a life.

Pilots and lancers are from all walks of life. Every station, criminal history, and economic class is represented in their ranks.

# PLAYING LANCER

Your character in *Lancer* is, first and foremost, a pilot – a dynamic, larger than life presence on and off the battlefield who inspires and terrifies in equal measure – but your character also has a second component: your mech. Though you can define their identities separately, pilot and mech are two parts of the same whole.

The first section of this book talks you through ??.

The second section, ??, is about narrative play, choosing missions, and playing during downtime.

The third section, ??, is about fighting in and with mechs.

The fourth section is the ??, in which all character options can be found.

The fifth section is the ??, which offers advice for tweaking rules, creating non-player characters (NPCs), and running missions.

The sixth and final section is the Setting Guide, ??, an in-depth reference on the canon setting.

## WHAT YOU NEED

This game uses two sorts of dice: twenty-sided dice (**d20**) and six-sided dice (**d6**). You'll roll these dice to determine the outcome of uncertain situations, such as firing a weapon, hacking a computer, or climbing a sheer cliff face. When the rules call for you to make a roll, it will also tell you how many dice to roll. For example, **1d20** means you need to roll a single **d20**, whereas **2d6** means you need to roll two **d6s**.

Sometimes the rules will call for you to roll **1d3**. That's just a shorthand way of saying you should roll **1d6 and halve the results** (rounded up). When you're called on to roll **1d3**, a result of 1 or 2 on a **d6** equals 1, 3 or 4 equals 2, and 5 or 6 equals 3.

*Lancer* is best played with 3-6 players, but can be played with as little as two or as many as you feel comfortable with. Each player needs at least one **d20**, **a number of d6s**, **and some paper or a character sheet** to write down information. If you're playing online, or welcome computers at the table, the **COMP/CON CHARACTER BUILDING TOOL** is recommended.

This game makes use of grid-based tactical combat, so it can be helpful to have paper with square or hexagonal grids, such as graph paper or pre-prepared battle maps. Miniatures aren't necessary to play this game but they can sometimes make combat easier to visualize.

Most of the players take on the role of pilots – these are the player characters, or **PCs** – but one player is the **Game Master**, or **GM**. The GM acts as a narrative guide, facilitator, and the arbitrator of the game's rules. They help create the story and narrative your group will explore and portray all of the NPCs. For more information on the GM role and a list of rules, tips, and tools for GMs to use, refer to the ??.

Finally, we recommend that all players download our free companion app, **Comp/Con**; it isn't necessary to have the app to play the game, but it can make it more accessible to players who aren't able or don't wish to thumb through this book.

## THE GOLDEN RULES

There are two golden rules to remember when playing *Lancer*:

**I: Specific rules override general statements and rules.**

*For example, when you shoot at an enemy, your roll is normally influenced by whether they're in cover; however, **SEEKING** weapons ignore cover. Because the **SEEKING** tag is a specific rule, it supersedes the general rules governing cover.*

**II: Always round up (to the nearest whole number).**

## NARRATIVE PLAY AND MECH COMBAT

*Lancer* makes a distinction between freeform **narrative play** and **mech combat**, in which tracking individual turns and actions is important.

During narrative play, players act naturally and spontaneously as needed. Time might pass more quickly, scenes might be shorter, and individual rolls might count for more or less. Most of your game's story and interaction between characters will take place during narrative play. In mech combat, players act on their turn and are restricted in what they can do and how often, making each action much more impactful and tactical. Swapping between mech combat and narrative play is fairly natural, especially if you've played other games with turn-based combat.

The reason there are two types of play is that they represent different approaches to storytelling in roleplaying games. One, narrative play, is focused on the story and characters, with a rules-light approach to conflict resolution; the other, mech combat, relies more on rules and tactics, like a board game. Depending on your GM and group of players, you could spend a whole session in one type of play or the other, or with some of both.

Neither of these is the “correct” way to play the game. Groups will find a balance between the two that works for them. *Lancer* provides rules for both so that both people who like to explore stories or who enjoy tactical combat will have an enjoyable experience.

## SKILL CHECKS, ATTACKS, AND SAVES

There are three types of dice rolls in *Lancer*: **skill checks**, **attacks**, and **saves**.

In narrative play, you will only need to worry about the first of these. In mech combat you will use all three.

You make **skill checks** when your character is in a challenging or tense situation that requires effort to overcome. When you want to act in such a situation, state your objective (e.g., break down the door, decrypt the data, or sweet-talk the guard), then roll **1d20**, and add any relevant bonuses. On a total of **10+**, you succeed. A result of **9 or less** means you failed to accomplish your goal and may suffer consequences as a result. Although the GM can’t change the target number (**10**), they have access to several tools that are explained later (p. ??), such as declaring a skill challenge or deciding that your action is **DIFFICULT** or **RISKY**.

In mech combat, **attacks** are any offensive actions against other characters, like firing a weapon or hacking into an opponent’s mech. Attack rolls are similar to skill checks – you roll **1d20** and add any bonuses – but the target number isn’t always 10, and usually depends on the defensive capabilities of your target. For an attack to be successful it needs to equal or exceed the target’s defense. Successful attacks are described as “**hits**” – so if the rules tell you that an effect happens “on hit”, that means it takes place when you make a successful attack. Some attacks also result in **critical hits**. On a roll of **20+** you perform a critical hit, which allows you to deal more damage or sometimes trigger extra effects.

Although there are different types of attacks, including ranged, melee, and tech attacks, they all use the same basic rules described here.

Lastly, **saves** are rolls made to avoid or resist negative effects in mech combat. You might roll a save to prevent a hacker wrecking your systems, to avoid being blinded by a flash grenade, or to dive away from an explosion. To save, you roll **1d20** and add any bonuses, but the target number can differ from **10** as it can with attacks. The target number for a save usually depends on the abilities of the attacker. If you equal or exceed this number, you succeed; if your roll is lower, you fail. The outcome of each result will depend on what you are trying to avoid.

### CONTESTED CHECKS

In some cases, the rules will tell you to make a **contested check**, representing a challenge between two parties. In a contested check, both participants make skill checks and add any bonuses. Whoever has the highest result wins. If the result is a tie, the attacker – the one who initiated the contest – wins.

You might make contested checks in both narrative play and mech combat.

### CHOOSING TO FAIL

You may always choose to fail a skill check or save. You might do this if an ally is trying to help you out or even just because you think failing would create a more interesting story.

### BONUSES

There are three kinds of bonuses that can be applied to rolls in *Lancer*:

- **ACCURACY** (Represented as  $\oplus$ )
- **DIFFICULTY** (Represented as  $\ominus$ )
- **Statistic Bonuses**

**ACCURACY** and **DIFFICULTY** represent momentary advantages or disadvantages (see below). **Statistic bonuses** come from three sources: your pilot’s talent and experience (**triggers**), their skill with mechs (**mech skills**), and their **GRIT**. Each roll can only benefit from one statistic bonus at a time. In many cases, none of these bonuses will apply and you will just roll **1d20**.

### ACCURACY AND DIFFICULTY

**ACCURACY** and **DIFFICULTY** are temporary modifiers gained and lost in rapid, chaotic moments of action.

For example, two mech pilots, equally matched, duel amidst the shifting debris of a shattered frigate. Attempting to land a shot, they dodge to avoid incoming fire and floating, slagged bulkheads. The debris makes it unlikely that either will land a clean hit; however, one of the pilots, thinking quickly, hides among the floating metal. When their enemy gets close, the pilot springs forth from hiding and catches their opponent unaware – making the shot much easier than normal.

Situations like this can cause pilots to gain **ACCURACY** or **DIFFICULTY**.

- Each point of **ACCURACY** adds **1d6** to a roll.
- Each point of **DIFFICULTY** subtracts **1d6** from a roll.
- **ACCURACY** and **DIFFICULTY** cancel each other out on a **1:1** basis.

If you are lucky enough to be rolling several of the same bonus dice, whether **ACCURACY** or **DIFFICULTY**, you don't add them together to determine the result.

Instead, find the highest number rolled and apply it to the final roll. Because of this, no roll can ever receive more than **-6** or **+6** from **ACCURACY** or **DIFFICULTY**.

For example:

- For an attack with **2 ACCURACY**, roll **2d6** and choose the highest of the two dice, then add that number to your attack roll. If you roll **3** on one die and **4** on the other, you add **+4** to the roll, not **+7**.
- For an attack with **2 ACCURACY** and **1 DIFFICULTY**, you only add **1d6** to your attack roll as **1 DIFFICULTY** and **1 ACCURACY** cancel each other out.
- For an attack with **1 ACCURACY** and **1 DIFFICULTY**, you don't add anything to the roll – the dice cancel each other out.

### GRIT

Pilots are lucky and unique individuals, multi-talented and resilient. Even so, brand-new pilots don't measure up to tempered, battle-hardened veterans when push comes to shove. The benefits of experience are measured by **GRIT**, a bonus that reflects your pilot's deep reservoirs of resolve and will to live.

**GRIT** is half of your character's license level, rounded up. It improves attack bonuses, hit points, and save targets for both your pilot and your mech.

## MISSIONS, DOWNTIME, AND SCENES

Ongoing games of *Lancer* are usually divided into **missions**, each of which might encompass one play session or several, separated by periods of **downtime**.

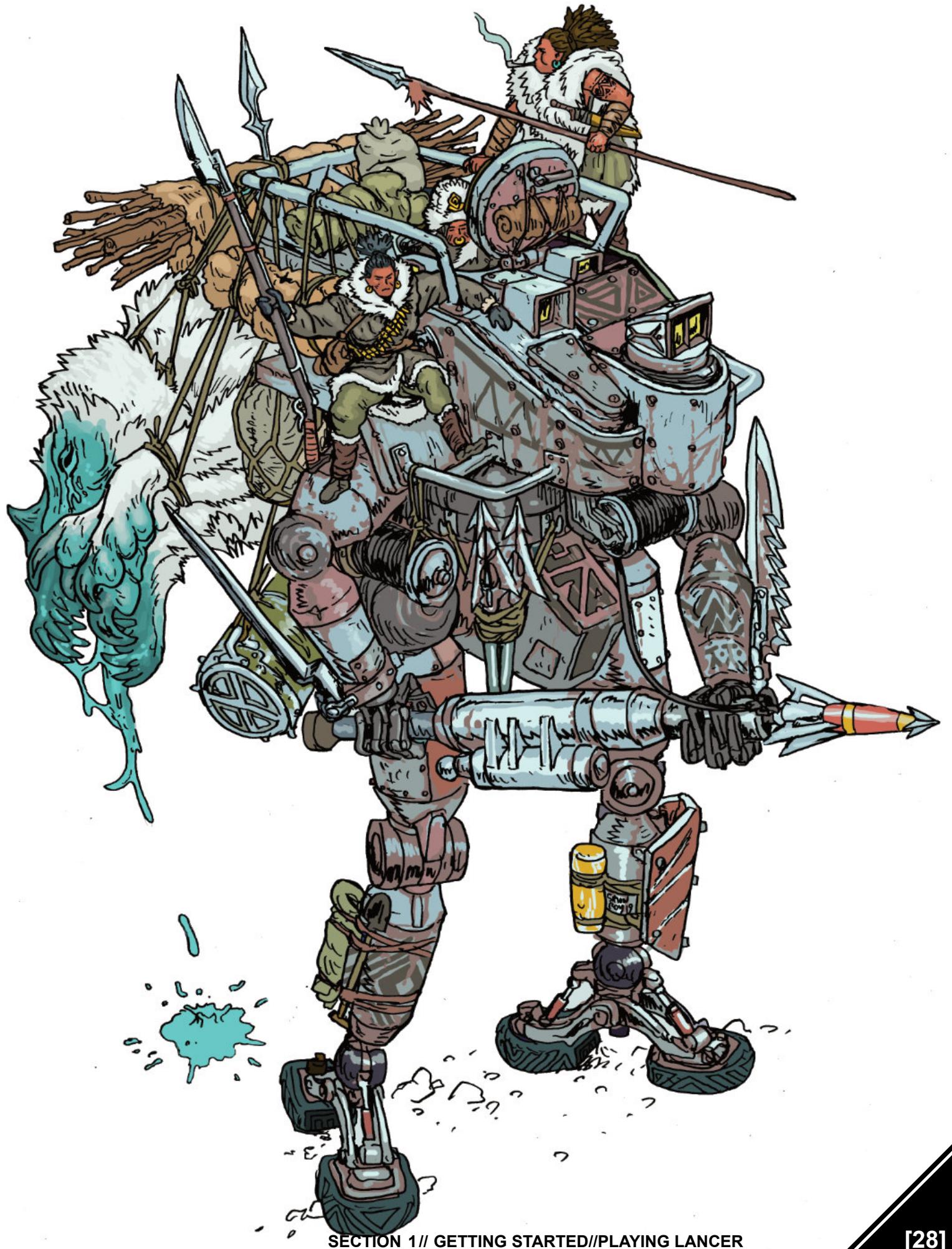
Missions have specific goals or objectives that can be completed within a discrete amount of time: destroying a building, breaking into a secure facility to recover vital data, evacuating civilians, uncovering a conspiracy, or holding the line against enemy attack, for example. Missions also provide some preparation time in which you can establish goals, stakes, and equipment for your characters.

If your character isn't on a mission, you're in **downtime**. This is the narrative space between missions, in which moment-to-moment action doesn't matter as much and roleplaying matters much more. During downtime you can progress plots, projects, or personal stories, moving the clock forward as much or as little as you want. Days, months, and even years can pass in downtime, depending on the pace of your game.

In both missions and downtime, play is divided into **scenes**. A scene is a period of continuous dialogue, action, or activity that has a discrete starting and stopping point. This is called a scene because it's helpful to think about it in cinematic terms: as long as the focus (or 'camera') is on the players and their action, a scene is happening. When the focus cuts away from the current scene, or the current action naturally ends, that's when the scene should end too.

A single combat encounter or a dialogue between characters are both great examples of scenes, but a scene can also be something like a montage.

It's important to pay attention to the beginning and end of scenes, as many special character and mech abilities end or reset at the end of a scene.



SECTION 1// GETTING STARTED//PLAYING LANCER