Engines of War Prototype

A Card Game of War by Sam Smyth

1-Introduction

In the universe of Engines of War, conflict is constant. Armies are raised as quickly as they fall. Factions engage in unending battle just to hold power for small moments. Alliances are forged, broken, and forged again. In the end, someone stands upon the mountain of destruction, claiming victory, but there is no true victory. War does not determine who is right, only who is left.
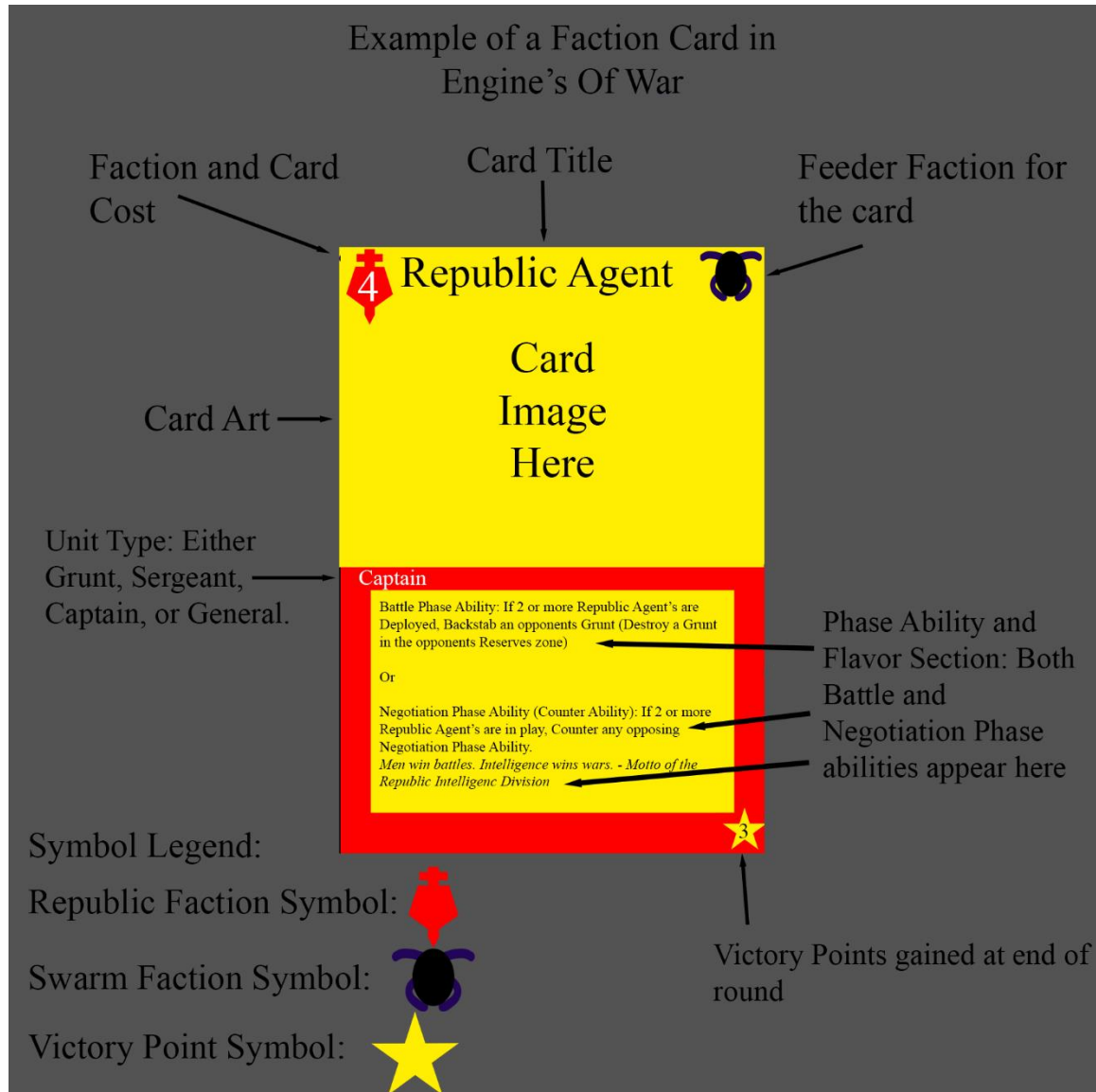
2-Gameplay Overview

Engines of War is a card game that pits 2-4 players against one another in a battle for supremacy, competing to build an army from the same deck as every other player in the game. Play is divided into three phases: The Battle Phase, the Negotiation Phase, and the Organization Phase. In the Battle Phase, players' take turns discarding cards to play other cards and build their army up to score Victory Points, using relevant card abilities to shape the nature of the battlefield. Then in Negotiation Phase, players first use card abilities to steal advantages from other players and then attempt to negotiate with those same players for a better position. Players discuss trading cards with one another, bartering with both cards in their hand and cards in their Casualty piles that were created after the Battle Phase. Once the Negotiation Phase ends, players enter the Organization Phase where they allot themselves Victory Points, reorganize their army, and lose Victory Points if necessary.

Player's can win the game in two ways:

1. Player's complete a Faction's main objective. This can be anything from having a certain number of cards in play, a specific card in play, or cards in play on the enemies field, etc.
2. The Victory Point Pool is depleted. Once the pool is depleted, Victory Points are counted up. The player with the most Victory Points wins.

3-Card Overview

Before explaining rules, we will give an overview of how cards are laid out in engines of war.

Example of a Faction Card in Engine's Of War

Faction and Card Cost

Card Title

Feeder Faction for the card

Card Art →

Unit Type: Either Grunt, Sergeant, Captain, or General.

Phase Ability and Flavor Section: Both Battle and Negotiation Phase abilities appear here

Symbol Legend:

Republic Faction Symbol:

Swarm Faction Symbol:

Victory Point Symbol:

Victory Points gained at end of round

Republic Agent

Card Image Here

Captain

Battle Phase Ability: If 2 or more Republic Agent's are Deployed, Backstab an opponents Grunt (Destroy a Grunt in the opponents Reserves zone)

Or

Negotiation Phase Ability (Counter Ability): If 2 or more Republic Agent's are in play, Counter any opposing Negotiation Phase Abilty.
Men win battles. Intelligence wins wars. - Motto of the Republic Intelligenc Division

Alongside this card overview, below is a quick rundown of Key Words you will find on cards:

1. **Backstab:** Backstab destroys cards in an opponents Reserve play zone. Backstab cannot destroy cards in an opponents Deployed play zone.
2. **Battle/Negotiation Phase Ability:** Denotes what phase the ability can be used.
3. **Deployed:** If a card ability says a card must be Deployed, it means that card must be in the Deployed play zone.

4. **Destroy:** Destroys a card in the opposing players Deployed play zone. Destroyed cards are put in the card owners casualty pile.
5. **Discard X Cards:** You must discard X number of cards to use the ability. X changes from card to card.
6. **In Play:** Abilities with "in play" can be used regardless of if the card is in the Reserves or Deployed play zone.
7. **Normal/Counter:** Denotes when a Negotiation Ability happens in the stack (Counter abilities happen before Normal abilities).
8. **Rush:** Cards with rush can be played directly into the Deployed play zone.

4a-Rules Overview: The Three Golden Rules

In this section, we will cover the rules of play and provide examples of gameplay interactions. Before this, there are three important rules in Engines of War that players must know. The first is straight forward: players are not limited to playing one faction during the game. They can use any combination of factions during play. The second important rule is that the rules written on the cards overrule the rules written in this ruleset. If a card interaction occurs that makes sense between cards but not within the context of the book, the cards win out. The third and final important rule is Faction Feeding.

In Engines of War, cards are played by discarding other cards. A simple concept, yet it gives way for dozens of strategic and tactically possibilities. Faction Feeding aims to add a little spice to the simplicity. Faction Feeding works as follows: Each faction in Engines of War has a faction it "feeds" off. In the lore of Engines of War, that could mean anything, but in the rules, the meaning is simple: if a player discards a card to play a card that feeds of the faction of the discarded card, that discarded card counts as two cards instead of one. An example:

Sam has three cards in his hand: A Captain of the red faction and two Grunts of the black faction. The captain in his hand costs 4 discarded cards to play and the two Grunts cost 1 discarded card each to play. Normally, Sam would need to discard 4 cards to play the captain, but since the red faction feeds off the black faction, he can discard the two Grunts and play the Captain card. If the faction feeding was reversed and the black faction fed off the red faction, then Sam could discard the red Captain card to put the two Grunt cards in play.

Understanding Faction Feeding is critical to succeeding in Engines of War. Armies resources must be managed correctly to win battles, and winning battles means winning the war.

Important: Discarded cards create a pool of resources and are not attached to any single card being played. For example, the 4 resources generated from discarding two red cards in order to play black cards can be distributed in any way, whether that is playing two 2 cost black cards or one 1 cost black card and one 3 cost black card.

Next, we will go through a round of play to understand, the Battle Phase, the Negotiation Phase, and the Organization Phase. A visual will be provided after the overview of round play.

4b-Rules Overview: Round of Play

1. A round of play in Engines of War begins with each player drawing six cards.
   a. The youngest player both draws first and does their Battle Phase first. Play continues clockwise.
   b. At the start of each new round, the starting player switches (swapping in a 2 player game or going clockwise in a 3+ player game)

2. **Battle Phase:** At the beginning of a player's turn, they enter the Battle Phase. During this phase, the player can play cards by discarding other cards in their hand. When a card is played, it enter one of two play zones: The Reserves play zone (the card row closer to you) or the Deployed play zone (the card zone further away from you). Most cards will enter into the Reserves play zone, meaning that even though they are in play, they cannot use their Battle Phase Ability. Certain cards have special rules that allow them to enter play directly into the Deployed play zone, allowing them to use their Battle Phase Ability on the same turn they were played. If a player's card is destroyed during the Battle Phase, that player puts that card in their Casualties pile. Once a player has completed all they want to do during the Battle Phase, they pass their turn to the next player. **Important: a player can use any cards Battle Phase ability at any point during their turn in the Battle Phase. They do not need to have played any cards or discarded any cards, unless those actions are required to use a Battle Phase ability.**
   a. **Example:** *Sam begins his Battle Phase with 2 cards in play and 6 cards in hand. He discards 3 of his cards to put 2 of the cards in his hand in play in the Reserves play zone. When those cards are put in play, he then uses one of the Battle Phase abilities of one of cards he already had in the Deployed play zone at the start of his turn. The cards ability allows him to Destroy one of his opponents cards. He then ends his Battle Phase with one card in hand.*

   Once all players have completed their Battle Phase, play moves on to the Negotiation Phase.

3. **Negotiation Phase:** The Negotiation Phase is split into two parts, the Abilities Phase and the Trade Phase.
   a. **Abilities Phase:** The Abilities Phase begins with the player that started the Battle Phase that round going first. This player can use any of the Negotiation Phase Abilities of units in their Deployed play zone on either any opposing player or other aspects of the game, such as the discard or Casualties piles. If any opposing player wishes to Counter one of these abilities, they can do so with any of their own units Negotiation Phase Counter Abilities. Once all abilities are used by one player, they pass their turn to the next player (clockwise in a multiplayer game) until all players have gone.
   b. **Trade Phase:** This phase starts with the player who went last in the Abilities Phase. During this phase, the active player makes offers to the other players to try and improve their play position through trading cards, offering to allow cards in other players Casualties pile back into their hand or the field, and so on. Once all offers have been approved or rejected, the player passes their turn to the next

player (counter-clockwise in a multiplayer game) until it the player who started the Abilities Phase completes their Trade Phase.

4. **Organization Phase:** The Organization Phase takes place simultaneously among players at the end of the round and is where players take stock of their current position.

   a. **Victory Points:** Players count Victory Points allotted to them by cards and take the number of Victory Point tokens equal to the number of Victory Points allotted to them. **Note: Player's only receive more Victory Points if the counted number of Victory Points is higher than their current stack. If their total number is not higher, then they remove one Victory Point token from their stack and place it in the Hollow Victories pile. Tokens cannot be removed from the Hollow Victories piles.**

   b. If any player has cards left in their hand from the previous round, they can choose to either discard their whole hand or keep those cards. If they decide to discard, the player places those cards facedown on top of the main deck.

   c. Players move cards in their Reserves play zone to their Deployed play zone.

   d. All cards in Casualties piles are put into the discard pile which is then shuffled back into the main deck. Players then draw back up to six cards.

Below is an snapshot of a round in play with all areas of play labeled.
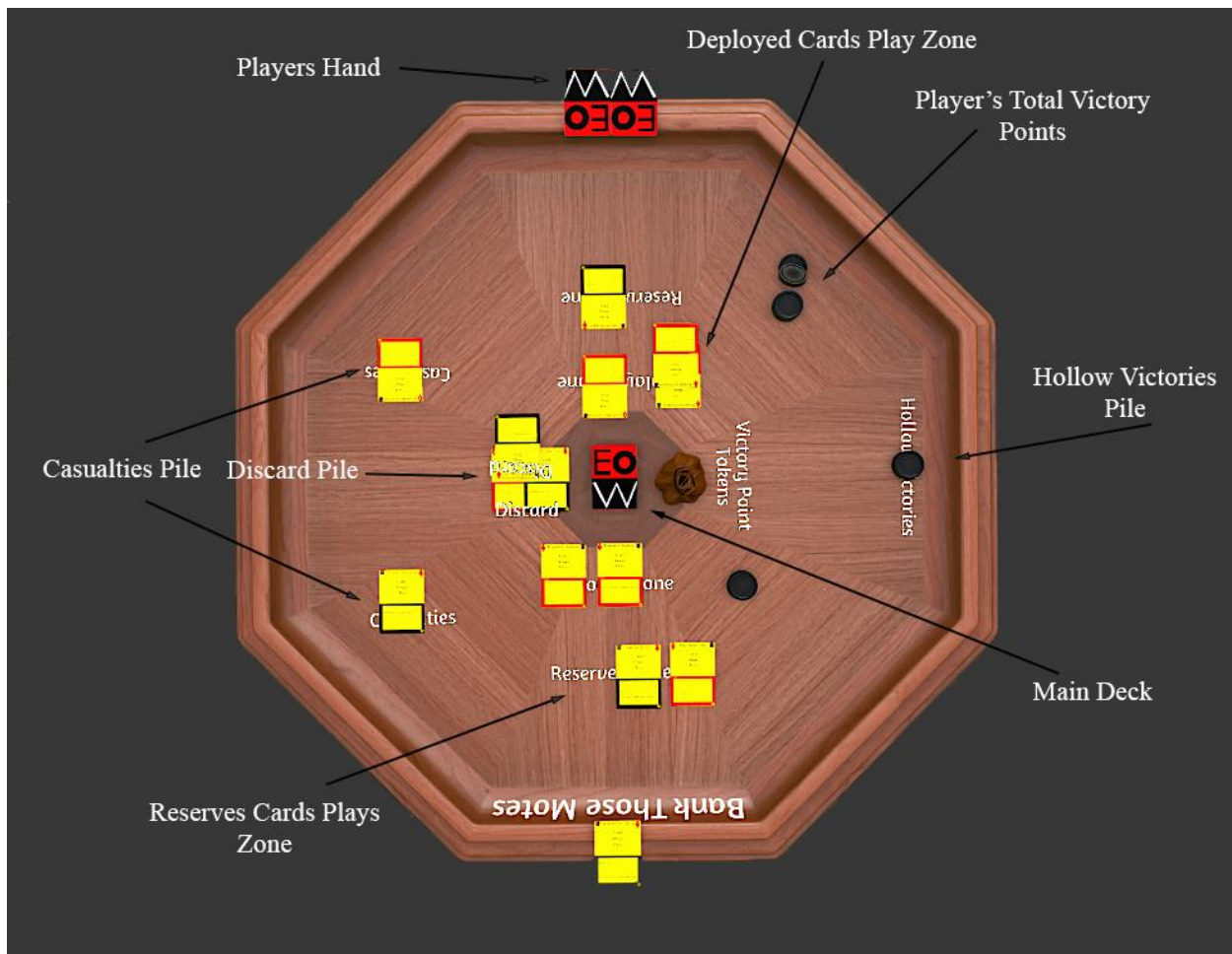
Faction Overview:

Though Engines of War is designed as a four player game, there are currently only two factions and two player games are the only kind that can be played. Below is a small overview of each faction.

1. **The Black Faction – The Swarm:**
   I saw hundreds of them. Thousands. Gnawing teeth and gaping maws. All with a singular purpose. – Commander Garus Rack of the Army of the Republic
   The Swarm is an alien hivemind of endless destruction and death. They travel across the galaxy, bringing misery wherever they go. In Engines of War, The Swarm is a faction built around outnumbering their foe. They overwhelm other armies with their numbers and rip them to shreds. However, without their numbers, they are weak and cannot cause much destruction.
   - Faction Pros – cheap cards that can be played en masse quickly
   - Faction Cons – they lack a lot of Battle and Negotiation Phase Abilities, and the ones they have require multiples of the same card to be in play.
   - Faction Primary Objective – Bring the Swarm: At the end of the round, if you have 12 or more Swarm cards in play, you win the game.

2. **The Red Faction – The Republic**
   To live is to serve. To fight is to serve. To die is to serve. For the Republic! – Republic Army motto
   The Republic is a galactic government made up of dozens of planets. They fight to preserve the freedoms of their citizens with advanced technology and skilled soldiers. In Engines of War, The Republic is a faction built around dealing damage on the battlefield, weakening their foes so they can always have the upper hand. However, maintaining the Republic Army is expensive, and bringing down the right members will bring the whole army to its knees.
   - Faction Pros – many different Battle Phase Abilities, allowing them to weaken their foes significantly
   - Faction Cons – expensive cards and a difficult to maintain win condition
   - Faction Primary Objective – The Perfect Strategy: If from the start to the end of a round, you have one Republic Faction card of each unit type (Grunt, Sergeant, Captain, General) Deployed, as well as the T95 Super Cannon Deployed, you win the game.

Breaking Ties and Ending the Game

A game of Engines of War ends when one player achieves their Factions Primary Objective or the Victory Point token pool is exhausted. There is the possibility that when either of these things happen, or when any one player cannot draw up to 6 cards at the beginning of the round, multiple players tie (2 players achieve their Factions Primary Objective or when the Victory Point token pool is exhausted, two players are tied in Victory Point token totals). If either of these scenarios happen, follow their respective charts.

Faction Primary Objective Completion Tie/Player's Cannot Draw up to 6 cards.

1. Most Victory Points
2. Most Cards in play
3. Most Cards of the same Faction in play
4. Highest cost card in play

Victory Point Token Tie

1. Closest to Achieving a Faction Primary Objective
2. Most Cards in play
3. Most Cards of the same Faction in play
4. Highest cost card in play

If in the rare instance that after all tie breakers are resolved there is still a tie, the game is declared a tie. Sometimes, there is no clear victor in war.