

# **GearHead Arena**

## **Player's Guide for V0.830**

### **Release 1.0**

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## **1.0 Introduction.**

### **1.1 Overview to the Guide.**

Welcome to the GearHead Arena Player's Guide. You're reading the definitive how-to for the game, everything from where to get the game to the most invasive source diving spoilers possible. Well, it will be eventually. GearHead is a complex and detailed game, and this is going to take a while to put together.

For this first official release of the Guide we've managed to cover 90% of the information in the non-spoiler sections of the Guide and an extensive array of hints and tips. The spoiler sections are going to take much longer to complete, so please bear with us as those are expanded in future releases.

As the Guide is as yet incomplete you will find throughout the document comments (*((italicised and in double brackets like this))*). These are 'editors notes' and highlight areas of the Guide that need to be completed, or requests for help and information. Feel free to post on gearhead\_dev with contributions to help clear these notes out. All contributors get their names in the credits.

If you have any comments, queries or corrections to be made to the Guide, please post on the gearhead\_dev Yahoo! group with [GHG] in the header of your mail.

### **1.2 What is GearHead and where can I get it?**

GearHead Arena is a roguelike roleplaying game set in an area of a post-apocalyptic Earth known as the Federated Territories, written by Joseph Hewitt. The main focus of the game is on combat using giant war robots called Mecha, but there's a great deal you can do without using a mecha. GearHead is written in FreePascal, an open source Pascal compiler. The game itself is also open source and the source files are available along with the game itself from the following websites.

<http://www.geocities.com/pyrrho12/programming/gearhead/index.html>

This is the main homepage for GearHead. The page itself tends to be out of date, but the latest release version of the game is always available here.

<http://gearhead.roguelikedevdevelopment.org>

A mirror site to the main page, with just the downloads available. Beta releases of the game are typically available here as well as the current official release.

<http://gearhead.slp.pl/>

Versions up to 0.801 are available for download here.

GearHead comes in two main varieties. 'Regular' which uses ASCII characters in place of graphics and is suitable for low end computers, and an SDL version which uses high res coloured graphics for a prettier experience, but at a higher cost in terms of processor requirement. Both versions play exactly the same.

At the time of writing the latest release version of GearHead is v0.812. The latest beta version is v.0.820.

Release versions of the game are available in both Windows and Linux compiles. Other compiles may be possible through the use of the FreePascal compiler, but you're on your own there.

FreePascal can be downloaded from <http://www.freepascal.org>

### **1.3 Where to get further help.**

There are two main places you can go to ask for help with the game.

Firstly there's the usenet newsgroup, [rec.games.roguelike.misc](mailto:rec.games.roguelike.misc). If you don't have a newsreader or access to a usenet server then try this url;

<http://www.roguelikedev.com/thread.php?group=rec.games.roguelike.misc>

The best place to try though is the Gearhead Development mailing list. You can sign up for this via the main GearHead webpage, or by going to Yahoo! Groups and seeking out 'gearhead\_dev'. Or alternatively just follow this url;

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/gearhead\\_dev/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/gearhead_dev/)

### **1.4 Tips for beginners.**

Here's a quick and dirty beginner's guide, to help you get started in the game. It was originally posted in [rec.games.roguelike.misc](mailto:rec.games.roguelike.misc) by Joseph Hewitt and is reproduced here by his kind permission.

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Create a character who is decent at both mecha and personal combat. One of the automatically generated characters should do nicely. Speak to Megi in Hogle and select one of her offers; this will give you some experience and a starting mech. Find the mine entrance in Hogle and practice combat there. You'll earn a lot of XP there; return to the

surface for healing when you need it. At the bottom of the mines you'll find an elevator. Get in and claim your second mecha.

After that you'll want to go to Snake Lake. Assuming that you didn't waste too much time in the mines you'll meet a bounty hunter who's searching for a weapon smuggling ring. If you speak to the guardian and the bandit in town you'll learn that an important data card was flushed down the toilet. Locate the entrance to the sewers; it should be a yellow dot surrounded by some patches of dirt. Go down to the first level and you'll find the data card there. Bring it back to either the guardian or the bandit and you'll get to go on a mission with them, earning some cash and an ally.

Somewhere in Snake Lake there'll be someone who wants to speak with you. I can't tell you exactly who it will be or what they're going to say because I don't know. Your character's personal story is randomly generated each time you play. Try to discover rumors by chatting with NPCs, and locate the person who wants to see you.

The bottom two levels of the Snake Lake sewer are good for more XP, and you can find a lot of treasure in Bone-Cracker's lair on the third level. Other places that may be interesting include a shrine in the park's nature trail (useful if you have the Mysticism skill) and some machines in the Corporate Zone (useful if you know Science). There's a hidden store in the waterfront where you can purchase cybernetics.

Next you're going to need some reputation and some combat practice. Leave Snake Lake, follow the highway north to Gyori and enter town. Go to the Warhammer Arena and fight there. Afterwards, head East to Namok and compete in the Colosseum. Also remember that there was a mecha arena back in Hogye. Once you've earned a bit of renown you may want to think about getting a job. The Guardians, the Solar Navy, the Federation Defense Force, Kettel Industries, RegEx corporation, BioCorp, and Hwang-Sa Temple may be willing to accept you as a member. Joining a faction earns you a new mecha, guaranteed missions, and rewards each time your rank improves.

At some point in time you'll probably find yourself without a mecha. This is a very bad situation to be in- if you don't have enough money to buy a new one right away, and you don't have any spares lying around, your best bet is to find some bounty hunting jobs. Use the buses to travel to Snake Lake or Namok and ask the bounty hunters there if they have any contracts available. Town leaders, guardians, and monks may also have personal-scale missions worth doing. Hopefully you'll be able to save up enough cash to buy a mecha soon.

There are a number of non-random adventures you might get involved in. If you visit the Factory in Gyori, Elisha Kettel may offer you a dangerous job. In Namok you'll find a professor whose research assistant has gone missing. In Last Hope, the westmost town in the Federation, you can discover what horrors BioCorp has been growing in its desert lab.

Keep following the leads on your personal story and eventually you'll get to the endgame.

There will be a gigantic battle with your arch-nemesis, and if all goes well you'll win. The end.

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Eeviac has also written a startup guide based on his own experience and submitted it for use in this Guide.

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*Eeeviac's GearHead Quickstart Guide*

- From Zero To Zerosaiko In Ten Minutes -

## Introduction

Finding yourself hopelessly lost, wandering the wastes? Overwhelmed by weapon/armour/skill selections? Confused by mech's and menus? Worried about your J-Idol being bitten in the face by a rat? Then this quick guide is for you. In no way is this meant to provide a comprehensive overview of the gameplay options provided within Gearhead, but merely to give players rudimentary gameplay information so they can quickly enter a world of rebellion, conspiracy, and 60 ton violence.

This guide is written based on SDL Gearhead, version .820.

## Before you begin

I strongly recommend creating a file called arena.cfg. It contains two lines :

```
NOAUTOSAVE  
MechaControl R
```

The first line stops the game from autosaving whenever you enter a town, dungeon, or wilderness area. This means that you'll have to save manually using shift-x, but you won't have the game save when you return to town after a failed mission. The second line makes the mech combat default to "rogue style" controll (where you use the numberpad to move, and the "a" key to select attacks,) rather than the "menu style" of controll (where each move is selected through a menu.) This second line is merely a personal preference.

You'll need a text-editor to make this file - I used Crimson Editor - a free text editor available from <http://www.crimsoneditor.com/> - but I'm sure there are other alternatives. Notepad writes a .txt extension on the file and did not work for me. When you've made the file, place it in your Gearhead directory with the arena.exe and you're set to play.

*((Editor's note: Windows notepad is fine for this job, you just need to have Windows set up*

to **not** hide known file extensions and then specify the .cfg extension when using 'save as'.))

### Your character

The pre-generated characters work fine, but if you have a totally irrational aversion to pre-generated characters (like I do,) here are some decisions to ponder. Much of the early game involves personal combat, grafting experience to bump up your skills. I prefer fast characters (high Reflexes, high Speed) that get close and use melee weapons. You don't need to reload melee weapons (or more importantly carry around ammunition, something to consider if you want to use a ranged character), most are fast and do good damage. Early on you'll be fighting four enemies at most at one time, so melee combat is an easy way to go. You'll need a few points in the Armed Combat and Dodge skills. Being able to swing a steel-pipe or chainsaw around can get you through a fair amount of the early game. Being a shotguns-akimbo ranged master might sound good in theory, but in my experience is a bit of a pain to actually play.

Apart from the mech skills (all are useful, some I've detailed further,) skills I recommend :

- Conversation
- Mecha Repair (a pre-requisite for the Tech Vulture talent, which allows you to salvage more parts from encounters)
- Intimidation (allows you to avoid some combat situations entirely, while still receiving mission completion rewards - also has a bearing on whether opposing pilots will eject in combat - whole mecha can be sold for good money)
- Spot Weakness (increases chance of critical hits,)
- Mecha Engineering (you need this skill if you want to modify the weapons load-out in your mecha.)

Understand that early characters will be flawed and mistakes will be made, which gives you the perfect excuse to experiment and be creative with your character build.

I often feel compelled to take some skills just because they fit with my character idea. I usually take medicine, not because I use it with any regularity, its just that I like the fast, combat-orientated, medic archetype. I'll let you decide whether you want to spend experience points on extraneous "flavour" skills. What's most important is that you can, if you so wish.

### Early game

There are four pieces of equipment that every player needs at the start of their adventure - a communication device, personal weapons, personal armour, and a mech. I'll handle each of these separately in reverse order.

## Mecha

I recommend that new players go through the tutorial provided by Quentin in Hogle, after speaking to Hyolee and Megi (follow the conversation options, you can't miss it.) Not only does this provide you with a basic understanding of the movement, exploration, and combat systems of Gearhead, but you emerge from the tutorial with three of the four essentials I've mentioned above - weapons, armour, and a mecha. There are numerous ways to acquire a mecha in the early game, so completing the tutorial (for the mecha) isn't necessary once you have a grasp of the gameplay mechanics. Talk to the Mecha Sporch owner about competing in the arena if you haven't done the tutorial.

## Armour

Before you've earned that mecha, you'll most likely have to make some equipment decisions. These decisions are going to depend on your stat and skill choices, but in this example I'll assume you're using a melee fighter. Obviously, I recommend not going for the most expensive and heaviest armour you can find right away. Make sure you have enough funds for armour that will cover your entire body. Some bracers and leggings will have melee weapons incorporated, like the Blade Bracers / Blade Leggings (or the formidable, but probably overly expensive, Power Claw.) Not only do they have a respectable armour class, they also provide a useful back-up in the case of weapon breakage or lack of ammunition. I recommend looking for something light (overburdening yourself with weight is detrimental to a few crucial combat stats,) preferably with an AC over 10.

## Weapons

I should point out that I've never used a character that relied solely on the offensive capabilities of his armour. Not only are primary weapons more effective at dispatching the variety of monsters and thugs that seek to do you harm, it has the added bonus of making you feel like a big man. Key in weapon choice for me are weapons with a plus bonus to accuracy (ACC.) Especially early on, when stats aren't quite as developed, I want the opportunity to hit as often as possible. I can't tell you exactly what to use (shop inventories are random so you never know what your going to be offered,) but I've never found a melee weapon to be completely useless. Rapiers, MonoSwords / MonoScythes, Chainswords, all work well. Damage class isn't really a consideration for my early characters, the difference between 30 points of damage and 120 points of damage is fairly inconsequential to the rat with 10 hitpoints.

## Communications

The final piece of equipment you need is a communication device. These differ in variety, functionality, and form. Phones and PC's can be bought from traders, as well as helmets that offer similar functionality. Basically, depending on the "feature set" of your particular bit of kit, a phone allows you to store and access information. Pressing shift-t allows you phone anyone on the map, negating the tedium of walking up to people and talking to them

personally. Pressing the m key allows you to access further functions through a menu. If your device has "Memo" it will store basic information about missions you're currently engaged in (including the name of the person who gave you the mission, very useful for collecting rewards.) If the device has "EMail" people will be able to mail you about work, which saves much of the tedium of actually talking to people at all. The final function of your communication device is "News." You can read news off monitors in stores, but devices like the Micro PC and the Internet Phone allow you to do this from in the wilderness or in the heat of battle (I like mental image of one-handing my Alba into a combat position while reading the news off the Internet Phone in my lap.) News headlines will tell you of attacks on towns (towns in trouble need combat pilots,) and broadcast your various victories and achievements.

### Gaining experience and money

Names and quests are randomized, but note that the world of Gearhead has a low unemployment rate. There will always be jobs that need to be done. Hogye has some set situations where a lot of experience can be gained early. The Hogye Mine (its a small building with stone walls with stairs leading down,) is five levels of dungeon hack. Lots of experience can be gained here, as well as being a relatively safe testing ground for some of the weapon choices you made earlier. Unfortunately, rats and Iron Monkey's don't have very large purses and good equipment is expensive.

Throughout most of the game, experience and money fit together hand in glove. As mentioned above, a town in trouble is a town with work to be done. There are two ways of going about finding jobs. Reading "news" will inform you of hot-spots in the Gearhead world, usually detailing the identity of the foe, and the organization dealing with the encounter. For example's sake, let's say Snake Lake is under attack by Aegis Luna.

Once we're in Snake Lake we need to talk to people to find out who's offering missions. NPC's will tell you about their buzz, the length of their hair, and occasionally, useful information about work. Sometimes they'll give you a seemingly insignificant piece of information about someone else. If you have a phone you can just call the person mentioned by pressing shift-t, typing their name, and finding out what information they have.

This new contact might mention that a person is looking for a combat pilot. To get the job, just contact the person and see what they have to say.

If you're having trouble getting work through Guardians, I suggest checking your character alignment by pressing the @ key. Guardians want lawful people, check that you are if you want to side with them. Renown also has a bearing on whether you get some missions. An easy way to raise your renown from the start is by competing in Mecha Tournaments. Conveniently, there's one in Hogye, just to get you started.

Once you've gained experience, press shift-l to go to the learn screen. This is where you'll



increase your skill ratings. Alternately you can press shift-c and call up the character menu. This displays your character stats, as well as providing a menu for increasing skills, stats, or learning talents.

### Exploring and fighting for beginners, against beginners, the personal way

When entering a town for the first time a player should familiarize themselves with their surroundings. Using the l key to look, placing the cursor on doors or people will reveal their name. Most shop names are self explanatory as to whether they're a restaurant, garage, or trader. When you first enter Hogye, assuming you've completed the tutorial, take a look around at what's available. Explore the map, find where the mine is. For most players the Hogye Mine will be their introduction to personal combat.

Once in the mine you'll be faced with your first foe - most likely the eternal enemy of man throughout centuries of civilization, not to mention countless RPG's - the fearsome and blood-thirsty rat. Rats aren't too different from the neophyte adventurer, they have low hitpoints and they have a melee attack. Luckily, they aren't decked in armour and they don't wield nifty weapons with accuracy bonuses. Your basic strategy will be to close to melee range quickly. Use the (a) key to enter the attack selection menu, (.) key to cycle through attacks, space bar to confirm. You can also move into the square an enemy occupies and attack automatically. If you find yourself surrounded by enemies, a good Dodge skill will help. Otherwise, try to bottleneck enemies into narrow spaces so you can deal with them one at a time.

Fallen foes will often drop a few dollars on the ground, press the (.) key while standing in their bloody remains to search them for loot. Human opponents will drop weapons and armour as well as cash.

### The mecha way

If you have a mecha, you will pilot it while exploring wilderness areas (outside towns and caves.) The controls are basically the same as exploring on foot. If you have a mecha that has hover/skim capabilities (most mecha do), use the (.) key to "change gears" or movement mode. Apart from being a faster mode of movement, skimming will allow you to explore over water areas, for those who have an obsessive need to explore black, unknown sections of game-map (like I do).

Inevitably you'll be attacked in the wilderness by Raiders who want your loot. If its a flat map, you might be able to use the look key (l) and gauge what you're up against (note that other enemies may be hidden in the black, unknown spaces.) You have the option of running, a good idea if you've already been through an encounter and haven't had time to repair and restock, just run off the edge of the map to leave. Or perhaps you're just a character that runs from battles a lot, its your choice. Gearhead caters to cowardice and heroics alike.

Let's say that your mecha is shiny and new, though. You're ready for whatever the raiders have. Common sense will go a long way in developing your strategies for mech battles. By calling up the Field HQ with shift + (h) (you can't do this in combat, by the way, so do this in a town after you've acquired your mech) you can see the stats and strengths of your machine. If you have missile racks, you'll want to stay at range and bomb enemies from afar. If you have more close combat weapons, you'll want to use as much cover as possible (trees and mountains), to try and close that distance and get into attack range. Initially you'll be fighting two or three enemies at a time so the suicidal charge towards enemies works well. As Sun Tzu says, "know yourself, know your enemy," and you're a good way towards being victorious in battle. While I'm at it, don't just pilot the mecha, BE the mecha. A mech loaded with missile racks wouldn't want to be up to its elbows in an opponents machine parts.

When your enemies lie in rubble you should sift through the wreckage for useful pieces of salvage. Walk into the tile with the destroyed mech and press the (.) key (get). Picking up weapons adds to the weight of the mecha and can hinder its combat effectiveness. Consider running from battles subsequent to encounters where you loaded up a bellyfull of swag.

### Upgrading your mecha

So you've survived combat, you've patched up your ride at the local garage, and you've acquired (from the cold, dead hands of the lawless!) some weapons that you'd like to put on your mecha. Weapons can be attached to mecha in two different ways - some can be installed, some can be equipped. Equipping weapons is by far the easier route, strap them on or take them off - no skills required. Equippable weapons can be held by mecha hands or attached to mounting points. Items of this type can be assigned through the inventory key (i), while in the wilderness, or through the Field HQ, shift + (h).

To install weapons you need the mecha engineering skill, and even then there's a chance you'll break something. You can't be in your mecha while installing components so you'll have to access the Field HQ while in a town. Simply select the mecha from the Field HQ menu list, select Examine Components, select the part you wish to install, select the install option, choose the location to install the weapon, watch it go CRUNCH, then reload your save game. A high Mecha Engineering skill will reduce the chance of breaking components while installing them, and at high levels a remarkable amount of gear can be crammed into relatively tiny spaces.

Don't install every weapon you find into your mecha either, because you'll overburden your mecha to the detriment of its performance. I recommend a few key, hard-hitting, primary weapons (these will depend on the weight you can carry) with a few backups in reserve, preferably something that doesn't require ammunition. I've gotten a lot of mileage out of mecha melee weapons like the beam sword when my missiles have run out of juice. When your technology fails, bashing things with a crooked bit of metal goes a long way.

There are too many variations and strategies to list in mecha design. As with early player characters, experiment and be imaginative with your mech design. As general advice, I'd

say Gearhead is a game of two avatars - your human self and your mechanical self. The two don't necessarily need to be congruent. As with player characters, design to optimize your strengths, without book-ending yourself into being too one-dimensional.

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Between Joseph and Eeviac you should now have a good idea of how to get started with the game and a grasp of the basics of play. The tutorial in Gyori will walk you through the basic operation of the program, so you're all covered to get started. The following sections of the Guide will provide more detailed information on the many aspects of play.

## **2.0 Character Information**

This section of the guide deals with the Player Character, your alter ego in the Federated Territories.

### **2.1 Attributes**

Attributes are the basis for your character, each one is related to several skills, and your ability to use those skills is linked back to each appropriate governing attribute. The attributes are;

#### *Reflexes (Re):*

Reflexes are a reflection of your grace and accuracy. This is your ability to move quickly and precisely. This attribute is linked to most of the combat skills and is one of the most important attributes for any player.

#### *Body (Bo):*

Body is a measure of your character's size and strength. It affects your stamina and health, as well as how much weight of equipment you can carry and certain combat skills.

#### *Speed (Sp):*

The Speed attribute represents how quickly your character can move around and react to their environment.

#### *Perception (Pe):*

Perception is your spatial awareness and general perception. It is used to spot hidden features, such as enemies in cover and secret doors. It also affects your character's marksmanship with all kinds of heavy weaponry.

#### *Craft (Cr):*

Craft is the attribute that is used for your ability to handle tools and components. It is used with most repair and assembly skills.

#### *Ego (Eg):*

This is the measure of your character's willpower and self reliance. It determines your level of Mental Energy, and is used along with your Body attribute to determine your Stamina. It also affects all kinds of influence related skills.

### *Knowledge (Kn):*

Knowledge reflects your character's general level of education and their ability to study complex matters, resulting in better results for science related skills. It also governs the maximum number of skills your character can learn.

### *Charm (Ch):*

This attribute governs how charismatic your character is. It's useful for befriending NPCs and getting information from them, and is also useful for leadership orientated characters.

There are also three attributes that are not directly determined during character creation, but are instead a reflection of the character's other attributes and certain skills. They all can change over time as they are expended or recovered, and so are displayed in a two number 'current / maximum' format.

### *Health Points (Hp):*

This attribute is a measure of the amount of physical damage your character can take. It is used up when your character is injured, and will recover over time. Recovery can be greatly accelerated with medical assistance, either through medical skills, the payment of a doctor or nurse to heal wounds, or the use of Quick Fix or Regen pills. It is determined by the Body attribute and the Vitality skill.

### *Stamina Points (St):*

This attribute represents your character's ability to push themselves physically, it is used up by running, dodging and other forms of physical exertion and can be restored by resting. It is determined by a combination of Body and Ego attributes and the Athletics skill.

### *Mental Points (Me):*

Me is your character's ability to concentrate on mentally involved tasks for periods of time. It is used up by employing skills such as Mecha Engineering, First Aid or Robotics. Your level of Me is determined by the Ego attribute and the Concentration skill.

## **2.2 Skills**

Skills represent your character's education, the abilities they've gained through both formal learning and life experience. Each skill is linked to one of your attributes and the combined scores are checked when a skill is used in the game.

There is a limit to the number of skills your character can learn, based on their Knowledge attribute. The formula is  $(Kn * 120\%) + 5$ , so a character with 10 knowledge can learn 17 skills ( $10 * 120\% = 12 + 5 = 17$ ). If you go over this limit then the amount of xp needed to raise *all* your skills will increase, which can quickly get very expensive. So think hard about whether you really need that extra skill if you're going to go over the limit.

Attempting to use a skill which your character lacks (such as operating a mecha without Mecha Piloting) is treated as though the skill were at level -2.

### Reflexes based skills:

#### *Armed Combat*

Used when attacking enemies in melee combat, throwing melee weapons such as spears and boomerangs, and when blocking enemy attacks with a shield.

#### *Mecha Gunnery*

This skill reflects your character's ability to accurately aim mecha weapons with a DC of 10 or less.

#### *Mecha Piloting*

Arguably the most important skill in the game, as this is used to avoid crashing and taking damage when stepping off high ground (eg, from height 2 to height 0) and to evade enemy attacks on your mecha.

#### *Mecha Weapons*

The Mecha Weapons skill is used when attacking with mecha melee weapons.

#### *Small Arms*

This skill is used to determine your character's ability to fight with personal scale ranged weapons with a DC of 10 or less.

### Body based skills:

#### *Athletics*

This skill increases the number of Stamina Points available to your character.

#### *Martial Arts*

Martial Arts covers your character's ability to cause harm to their enemies when attacking bare handed.

#### *Vitality*

Increases the number of Health Points available to your character.

#### *Weight Lifting*

Increases the amount of weight your character can carry before being slowed down.

### Speed based skills:

#### *Dodge*

The dodge skill is used to avoid dangers to your character's person, particularly attacks made against the character in personal scale combat.

#### *Initiative*

Your character's ability to perform actions quickly. A high initiative will allow for more opportunities to act in both personal and mecha scale combat.

#### *Mecha Fighting*

This skill is used when attacking in mecha combat using your mecha's limbs, and when using a mecha shield to block enemy attacks. When used in conjunction with the Kung Fu talent the amount of damage done to the enemy mecha's pilot is increased, allowing them to be killed and their mech to be captured intact.

#### *Stealth*

The Stealth skill increases the chance of your character remaining hidden when in cover for both mecha and personal scale combat. A successful Stealth roll will allow your character (or their mecha) to remain hidden from the enemy, unless you fire or move into the open.

### Perception based skills:

#### *Awareness*

Governs your character's ability to spot hidden units. Awareness is checked against the

'overall cover' of the area, and a successful roll will reveal all enemies not blocked by line of sight.

#### *Heavy Weapons*

This skill is used to determine your character's accuracy and ability to use personal scale ranged weapons with a DC of 11 or greater and when throwing grenades.

#### *Investigation*

The ability to study an item for useful clues and information. This skill is particularly useful for Guardians and characters on some Guardian related missions. It also governs your character's ability to find hidden passages.

#### *Mecha Artillery*

The equivalent of Heavy Weapons for mecha scale combat, this skill governs your character's ability to accurately aim mecha weapons with a DC of 11 or greater.

### Craft based skills:

#### *Code Breaking*

This skill determines your character's ability to overcome security systems such as passwords and locked doors. Using this skill uses up some Me.

#### *Electronic Warfare*

This skill is used to help resist and cause weapon status effects in mecha scale combat, such as Haywire or Overload

#### *First Aid*

Used in conjunction with First Aid supplies this skill will restore a number of Health Points. Using this skill uses up some Me.

#### *General Repair*

This skill, along with some General Repair supplies, can be used to repair personal scale equipment such as armour and weapons. This skill uses up some Me.

#### *Mecha Repair*

This skill will allow your character to repair damage to their mecha, providing they have some Mecha Repair supplies on hand. This skill will use up some Me.

#### *Spot Weakness*

Spot Weakness will increase your character's chance of scoring critical hits in both personal and mecha scale combat.

#### *Survival*

Used to determine your character's ability to survive away from the comforts of civilisation. Survival can be used on monster corpses to extract food and sometimes other items of interest.

### Ego based skills:

#### *Concentration*

Increases the number of Mental Points available to your character.

#### *Cybertech*

Governs the repair and maintenance of cybernetic implants. It helps prevent cyberware malfunctions (Cyberpsychosis) by increasing the amount of time it takes for 'malfunction points' to accumulate to damaging levels, and when used in conjunction with a Cyberware Toolkit can repair malfunctioning implants. Repair operations will use up some Mp.

#### *Dominate Animal*

This skill is used to tame wild animals and turn them into pets. Only one attempt can be made per individual animal, and using the skill will use up some Me. See section 3.3 for details.

#### *Intimidation*

The ability to make NPCs very afraid of your character. This skill can be used to make some enemies surrender rather than fight, and in mecha combat may induce enemy NPCs to eject rather than face you in combat, sometimes allowing your character to capture the enemy mech.

#### *Mysticism*

This skill represents your character's knowledge about religion and spiritual matters. It is useful for characters that intend to use the various altars scattered through the game to gain an edge.

#### *Resistance*

This skill is used to resist unpleasant personal scale status effects, such as poison and burning.

### Knowledge based skills:

#### *Biotech*

This skill is your ability to repair items based on biotechnology. It requires the use of a Biotech Lab Set and will use up some Me.

#### *Mecha Engineering*

This skill is a must for anyone who wants to be able to custom modify their mecha, as it determines your character's ability to remove and integrate systems into your mecha. The higher the skill level, the lower the chance of a component being accidentally destroyed during installation or removal, and a high level also allows more complex equipment to be integrated into the mecha. Using this skill uses up some Me.

#### *Medicine*

If some medical supplies are available this skill can be used to treat damaged limbs and remove personal scale damage effects such as poisoning. Use of this skill will use up some Me.

#### *Robotics*

This skill is used to assemble robotic NPC allies from appropriate components. See section 3.2 for details. Using this skill will use up some Me.

#### *Science*

Your character's knowledge of scientific matters. It can also sometimes substitute for other skills, such as Codebreaking or Investigation.

### Charm based skills:

#### *Conversation*

Determines how quickly NPCs will come to like your character when chatting with them.

#### *Flirtation*

Along with Conversation this skill can be used to rapidly convert NPCs of the opposite gender into liking your character a great deal.

#### *Leadership*

This is your character's ability to co-ordinate the actions of their allies. It determines the maximum number of lancemates your character can recruit. It also increases your

character's share of mission XP when fighting with lancemates.

#### *Performance*

This skill requires the possession of some kind of musical instrument. It represents your character's ability to entertain NPCs by putting on a show, busking if you will. Depending on skill level and the quality of instrument used, NPCs within range of the instrument may be entertained enough to give some money to your character in appreciation. Using this skill will use up some of your St and Me.

#### *Shopping*

A high shopping skill will earn your character discounts on items and equipment purchased in shops.

### **2.3 Talents**

Talents are a useful but optional aspect of the game. They represent special abilities or shortcuts your character knows due to their high ability with certain skills and attributes. Each talent will cost you 1,000 xp to purchase, and you are given the option to buy one talent when you've earned 0, 10,000, 30,000, 60,000 and 100,000 xp. This makes for a maximum of five talents per character.

Most talents have a Prerequisite before they can be selected, either a skill or attribute appropriate to the talent must be at or over a certain value before the talent is available for purchase.

The talents are:

#### *Anatomist*

Because of your anatomical knowledge, you are able to target an opponent's vital points. (+1 Penetration versus living targets)

Prerequisite: Medicine +5

This talent allows your character to score extra damage in personal scale combat when attacking live foes.

#### *Animal Trainer*

You are good at teaching your pets how to do tricks. (new pets gain XP bonus)

Prerequisite: Dominate Animal +5

If you're looking to expand your team with some animal allies then this is the talent for you. Just like for PCs, higher xp makes for higher skills for your animals.

#### *Bishounen*

You are androgynously beautiful. (may use Flirtation skill with all NPCs, regardless of gender)

Prerequisite: Charm 15

If you're making extensive use of the Flirtation skill then Bishounen is worth considering as it greatly expands the range of NPCs the skill can be used on.

#### *Body Builder*

You are totally pumped up. (+2 Body)

Prerequisite: Weight Lifting +5

Extra Body makes for higher Health and Stamina and makes Body based skills more



effective.

### *Born to Fly*

You are an expert with flying mecha. (+3 Mecha Piloting while flying)

Prerequisite: Mecha Piloting +5

If you specialise in flying and jumping mecha then this talent is worth considering. The mecha piloting skill determines your character's ability to dodge incoming attacks and as most flying mecha are pretty poor at that, the Born to Fly talent can make a significant difference to your ability to survive in battle.

### *Business Sense*

You are very good at negotiating favorable deals. (+25% to most mission cash rewards)

Prerequisite: Shopping +5

More cash is always good.

### *Combat Medic*

You are capable of performing emergency medicine in dangerous places. (First Aid and Medicine take 1/3 their usual time)

Prerequisite: First Aid +5

If you're out of Quick Fix pills in combat or rescuing the injured in a battle situation this can be a lifesaver as you'll take considerably less time than normal to use healing skills.

### *Diplomatic*

In conversation, you can avoid controversial topics. (may avoid reaction loss due to personality clash)

Prerequisite: Ego 15

Useful if you spend a lot of time talking to NPCs who may not particularly like your character, for example if you are a criminal type who is talking to Guardians.

### *Hap-Ki-Do*

You are an expert at self defense. (May block attacks using Martial Arts)

Prerequisite: Martial Arts +5

If you're specialising in unarmed combat then this is obviously a useful talent to have as it'll help you avoid taking damage in personal scale combat.

### *Hard as Nails*

You don't feel pain like normal people. (All attacks against PC are at -2 Penetration)

Prerequisite: Resistance +5

Another useful talent for those who get into a lot of personal scale fights as it'll reduce the amount of damage your character takes.

### *Idealist Blood*

Your ancestry includes some genetic engineering. (+1 to three random stats)

No Prerequisite.

One of only two talents that are available at all times, it's useful if you can't decide on a more specialised talent to choose, although it's random nature does limit it's usefulness.

### *Jack of All Trades*

You can do a little bit of everything. (Can use unlearned skills without the -2 penalty)

Prerequisite: Craft 15

An excellent skill to get if your Knowledge is low as it'll allow you to use any skill in the game without the usual penalty for unlearned skills. It also makes skills such as Investigation and Science to be accessed from the 'use skills' menu. While not as effective as actually learning the skills it does make your character very flexible.

### *Kung-Fu*

Your hands are lethal weapons. (+3 Penetration for Martial Arts attacks)

Prerequisite: Martial Arts +5

This talent will allow your character to cause more damage in unarmed personal scale combat. It also increases the amount of concussion damage done when attacking using the Mecha Fighting skill (attacks using your mecha's limbs). Concussion damage causes the most injury to the enemy mecha pilot, increasing the likelihood that they could be killed and allow the player character to capture their mecha more or less intact.

### *Prescence*

You have mastered a commanding stage presence. (+2 Charm)

Prerequisite: Performance +5

Higher charm will boost all your character's charm based skills.

### *Road Hog*

You are an expert with cars and other wheeled vehicles. (+2 Mecha Piloting while rolling)

Prerequisite: Mecha Piloting +5

Useful if you use a lot of wheeled mecha as it will help your character avoid attacks in mecha combat while your mecha is moving in 'roll' mode.

### *Savant*

You have more skills than is normal for a person of your intelligence. (can learn 5 more skills without penalty)

No Prerequisite

The other talent that's always available, this is very useful if you want a flexible character as it greatly increases the number of skills that can be learned.

### *Scientific Method*

Your scientific training has made you very good at discovering new things. (+2

Knowledge)

Prerequisite: Science +5

Higher Knowledge will of course increase your character's ability to use Knowledge based skills. It also increases the maximum number of skills your character can learn, although not by as much as the Savant talent.

### *Strength of Faith*

You have the power of faith on your side. (+2 Ego)

Prerequisite: Mysticism +5

High Ego will increase your character's ability to use Ego based skills. It will also increase your Stamina and Mental Points.

### *Stunt Driving*

As long as you're going fast, you can find a way to avoid most attacks. (may reroll dodge if traveling at full speed)

Prerequisite: Speed 15

An excellent Talent for the skilled player. So long as your mecha is moving at 'run' or 'full' speed you get a second chance to evade every incoming attack. The tricky part is maneuvering your mech so that it can keep moving at high speed as much as possible.

### *Sure Footed*

You are an expert with walkers and zoanoids. (+1 Mecha Piloting while walking)

Prerequisite: Mecha Piloting +5

Any boost to mecha piloting is good as that's the skill that is used to evade incoming attacks in mecha scale combat.

### *Tech Vulture*

When awarded salvage, you'll grab everything worth taking. (can salvage individual modules from defeated mecha)

Prerequisite: Mecha Repair +5

Generally considered to be the most useful talent available. If a battle scenario allows the player to gather salvage then the player will almost certainly be awarded parts of destroyed enemy mechas, such as heads, limbs and wings. These can be stripped of useful parts using the Mecha Engineering skill. Those parts can then either be used to enhance mecha owned by the player character, or sold for cash in the appropriate places.

As of version 0.830 this Talent requires a successful Mecha Repair skill roll for each module to be salvaged, so it's worthwhile boosting that skill even higher than the 5 point prerequisite to make the most of salvage.

## **2.4 Equipment**

As with all aspects of GearHead, what equipment to carry is something of a balancing act. Lug around too much gear and your character will be slowed down, resulting in penalties to your Reflexes and Speed attributes. Carry too little and risk being short of some vital item in dangerous situation. A high Body score will increase the amount of weight your character can carry, and the Weight Lifting skill will increase your capacity still further. Aquillion's done some code diving for us, and notes that Weight Lifting adds 1 kilo to your character's carrying capacity for each point of the skill.

As of version 0.830 changing equipment will take a small amount of time, so be careful when switching out weapons in a hostile area.

### **2.4.1 Weapons**

Get a weapon. There's lots of choice so there's bound to be something that will suit your playing style. The five things you need to bear in mind when choosing a personal weapon are Skill, Weight, Speed, Accuracy and Damage Class.

You're going to want to play to your strengths, so make sure you have a decent level in whatever skill is appropriate for the weapon at hand. Ranged weapons with a DC of 10 or less use the Small Arms skill. Ranged weapons with a DC of 11 or higher and hand grenades use the Heavy Weapons skill. Melee weapons of all kinds use the Armed Combat skill, as do thrown melee weapons.

The weight of your weapon is something you need to keep track of. A weight penalty may be acceptable, depending on your Reflexes and Speed attributes, but you don't want to be slowed down too much. That said, the heavier weapons also tend to have more punch. It's a tradeoff.

Take a look at the Speed value of your weapon. The higher the value, the more quickly the weapon will reload and be available for another attack. Of course, there's not much point having a weapon ready before your character is ready to use it, so a high Initiative skill will be useful to help your character keep up with the refire rate of a fast weapon.

Accuracy is something to track as well. Again, the higher the better. An accurate weapon will hit your enemy and cause criticals more often than an inaccurate one, given the same skill in using it.

Damage Class is vitally important. A high DC weapon will cause more damage when it hits than a low DC weapon. That said, lower DC weapons tend to be lighter and more accurate.

There's also the Burst Value (BV) to take into consideration. Not all weapons have a BV, but those that do will fire their BV in shots every time they're used. So a rifle with BV 5 will take 5 shots every time you fire, and use up 5 rounds of ammunition.

Don't forget ammunition either. While a short mission on the surface or within a town can be completed on a single clip of ammo, particularly in the early game, if you're going on a long dungeon dive or travelling away from civilisation then you'll want spares. Of course, spare clips increase the amount of weight you're carrying so you don't want to carry too much.

Some weapons have a Blast rating. Enemies caught within the blast radius of your shot will take damage, so be careful when fighting gang members in town or you may accidentally hurt an innocent bystander. If you care about that sort of thing.

The entire ammunition problem can be circumvented by packing an energy weapon. Items like the Plasma Pistol and Pulse Laser Cannon work off their internal power supply and don't require ammunition, but they're \*much\* more expensive than their equivalent 'slugthrowers' and tend to weigh more as well.

A lightweight source of firepower is to pack hand grenades. These one shot thrown weapons use the Heavy Weapons skill to determine the accuracy with which they're thrown, and some of the more exotic types, such as the Plasma Grenade, pack a lot of punch into a relatively small weight. Of course, it's easy to run out of these on a long mission so it's probably best to keep a few as backup weapons and rely on something more conventional for your primary offence.

*((Information on Unarmed Combat will go here, once we have some.))*

You'll also want to know about Damage Effects. These are special features that some weapons, grenades and ammunition types have. The likelihood of a damage effect taking hold of a target in personal combat depend on the attacker's weapon skill (appropriate to weapon type) and the target's Resist skill. They are:

### *Armourpiercing*

Armourpiercing attacks treat the target as having only half their rated armour, allowing more damage to be done directly to the target inside.

### *Burn*

Burn weapons set your enemies on fire, doing additional damage every few combat rounds to both armour and health.

### *Brutal*

Brutal attacks do double damage to armour and to 'scenery' features such as doors.

### *Extend*

Applying to melee weapons only, Extend allows the wielder to hit enemies who are not immediately adjacent due to the length of the weapon.

### *Haywire*

Haywire weapons will drive electronic targets out of control, making them move erratically.

### *Line*

Line weapons will hit all targets in a straight line from the firer out to their maximum range.

### *Poison*

Poisonous weapons will do additional health damage to a living target every few combat rounds.

### *Return*

Thrown weapons featuring the Return attribute will return to their owner after they hit or miss the target.

### *Rust*

Rust damage treats a metallic target as having half it's armour rating, and does double damage to the armour itself.

### *Scatter*

Scatter weapons will spread their damage over your enemy roughly evenly. They'll do less damage directly to health, but will 'eat' through armour fairly quickly.

### *Swarm*

Swarm weapons always have a Burst Value. The shots fired will be spread out across enemies within range and line of fire of the weapon, allowing you to harm multiple enemies at once.

### *Thrown*

Thrown melee weapons are exactly that. They can be thrown at distant targets, allowing

for a ranged attack based on Armed Combat skill. The maximum range is determined by your Body attribute.

### *Thrown, Returning*

These melee weapons will return to the wielder once thrown at an enemy.

There's far too many weapons to list all of them here, so instead the denizens of gearhead\_dev have put their heads together and listed some of their favourites.

By the way, there are *no two handed weapons* in GearHead, so it's quite possible to wield an Assault Cannon in one hand and a Beam Sword in the other without penalty.. except the weight, of course.

### Beam Sword (Armed Combat)

Pro: The best melee weapon in the game, it's lightweight, reasonably fast and has a massive DC:22 damage.

Con: Expensive, fairly rare to find in the shops.

### Pin Rifle (Small arms)

Pro: Cheap, lightweight and carries lots of rounds of ammo. Has a high BV.

Con: Low DC, the high BV means you'll chew through ammo fairly quickly. Expensive.

### Gun Shield (Small arms, Dodge)

Pro: It's a shield with a gun in it. Defence and offence in one convenient package. Has a decent ammo capacity.

Con: Middling DC (6), fairly weighty. There are better guns and better shields out there.

### Pulse Laser Cannon (Heavy Weapons)

Pro: High DC, accurate, good BV and accuracy, no ammunition problems as it's a beam, weapon.

Con: Heavy, *incredibly* expensive. You could buy a halfway decent mecha for the price of this gun.

## **2.4.2 Armour**

The other side of the personal combat coin, armour is what keeps you safe from harm by soaking up damage from enemy weapons. Armour will degrade as it takes damage so you'll need to get it repaired regularly, either by your friendly neighbourhood techie or through the use of the General Repair skill and appropriate supplies.

Armour is worn on the legs, arms, body and head of your character. It's also possible to strap a shield to each arm for extra protection. Wielding a shield will induce a penalty to both melee and ranged combat accuracy, and wielding a shield on both arms will of course invoke a greater penalty. AC or accuracy? That's your call to make. Weapons mounted in shields are not subject to this penalty though, which is another good reason to consider packing a Gun Shield.

Armour is easier to track than weapons as there's only two things to consider. Weight and Armour Class. A high AC armour will tend to weigh more than low AC armour. Some

armour types have extra features built in. The Gun Shield has already been mentioned, but there's also Havok armour which has swarming cannons in the arms and blast rockets in the legs, the Recce helmet has Memo, Email and Telephone functions built in, as does the expensive (but high AC) Maximus helmet.

It is also possible to buy armour with melee weapons installed, such as Blade Legging. Use of armour installed melee weapons is governed by the Armed Combat skill.

### 2.4.3 Other equipment

One of the most vital pieces of non-combat equipment you can get is some kind of PCS. The most basic type is the Databook, which offers a Memo function to remind you of missions you've undertaken and who assigned them.

The next level of PCS is the Mobile Phone, which has the Memo and Telephone functions. Telephone allows your character to contact anyone on the same map as themselves just by entering their name. This saves a lot of legwork wandering around a town trying to find a particular NPC.

The third PCS adds Email to the functionality, along with Memo and Telephone. Emails sent to your character will tip them off to missions available and sometimes clues on their main storyline.

The Internet Phone has the Memo, Telephone and Email functions, and also allows the PC to check the News without having to go into town and watch the vidscreens in the bars. News can inform you of major events in the world, such as armed forces attacking towns or major plot events.

There is also a Micro PC which has the same functions as the Internet Phone, but weighs more.

*((Need to verify other ways that the MPC differs from the IP. Is it cheaper? More easily found in shops?))*

Of course, certain armour helmets include some of the functions listed above, although there's no armour available that has the News function. So if you decide your character can live without regular news updates while in the field then you can always save some weight and go with an appropriate helmet instead.

Memo, email and news can be accessed by pressing the 'm' key. To telephone an NPC on the same map as you press shift + t and enter their name.

If you're spending a lot of time in the field then you're going to need supplies too. Repair skills of all types need supplies in order to be used, and you're going to need food out there as well.

Most of the repair skills (First Aid, Medicine, General Repair and Mecha Repair) have a variety of supply types available, from lightweight items that're used up quickly, to more complex toolkits and supply packs that weigh and cost more, but have a much longer useable life.

Cyberware can only be repaired using a Cybernetic Repair Kit.

Biotech based equipment can only be repaired using a Biotech Lab Set.

There's a wide variety of foodstuffs available to keep your character well fed and sometimes happy. They tend to be fairly weighty though, so don't bring too much. Also don't forget that what you eat has an affect on your character's morale. A character with low morale will become miserable and depressed, and their stats will suffer as a result. A high morale will get you bonuses to your character's stats, so treat them to an expensive Lobster or Steak dinner sometimes, and think carefully about what you want them to eat while in the field.

Nutrient Pills are a lightweight alternative to packing sandwiches or rations, as their weight is negligible and they'll keep your character alive. Of course, popping a pill isn't nearly as satisfying as eating a meal, and Nutrient Pills are both rare to find in the shops and quite expensive when you do.

As an alternative (or supplement) to carrying First Aid supplies, consider the Quick Fix pills. Available in packs of five or ten, they're more expensive than bandages, but will instantly raise your character's health, the value of the gain depending on their First Aid skill.

You can also get Regen Boost pills in packs of five or ten. While they won't give your character an immediate heal, they do *significantly* increase the rate at which your character will recover from harm. They're an excellent counter to the recurring damage from Burn and Poison status effects.

#### **2.4.4 Cyberware**

The good news is that Cyberware can give your character additional boosts to both skills and attributes above their gains from experience. A good selection of cyberware can turn even the weediest tech nerd into a walking tank, or help a hulking brutish moron become an expert in the sciences.

The bad news is that Cyberware is hideously expensive and will inevitably malfunction at some point, producing unwanted side effects that could really ruin your character's day. The safest place to shop for Cyberware is Silver Virtue in Namok Spaceport. There are other places selling Cybertechnology, but you'll need to find those for yourself, or consult the the spoily section of the guide. Once bought, you'll need to have the Cyberware installed by a competent Cyberdoc. The best place for this is probably Extropia Health in Ipshill Village. The resident Cyberdoc is able to install most Cyberware with a minimum of hassle, and the village itself is a safe place to recover from the operation. Unless gang warfare has erupted there, of course. A poor roll for the surgery by the Cyberdoc will result in your character being tired and groggy afterwards, needing time to recover. It can also increase the likelihood of your new implant malfunctioning. Also note that surgery can take several hours, so your character may be hungry when they awaken. Have some food on hand in your inventory or be prepared to drag them across town to the nearest eatery if that happens.

Also remember that Cyberware *cannot be removed*. If you have Cybereyes implanted the Cyberdoc is not likely to keep your old 'meat' eyes in cold storage on the offchance that you change your mind and want them back. You can replace the Cybereyes with some other type of optical implant, but you're committed to having Cyberware in that part of your body from there on.



There are four things to bear in mind when buying Cyberware. Trauma, cost, implant location, and of course, what it actually *does*.

Trauma is of vital importance to bear in mind. The higher the Trauma rating, the more difficult the implantation procedure is going to be, and the more likely it is the cyberware is going to develop a malfunction. Note that the Trauma rating listed when buying an item of Cyberware is not necessarily going to be the level of Trauma you'll undergo once the item is installed. That depends on the skill of the Cyberdoc implanting the device, and how well they make their skill roll for the surgery. Characters with the Spiritual trait will tend to get a higher Trauma rating on installed cyberware than other characters.

As has been previously noted, Cyberware is hideously expensive. Expect to pay \$60k for the simplest of devices, and upwards of \$400k for more involved equipment, such as skeletal or muscular replacement. If you're going cyber, save those pennies!

You can only have one cybernetic implant in a given part of your character's body, so if you have some CyberEyes installed and want a Sniper Scope Eye, the CyberEyes will have to go.

Rather than spoil the fun by listing all the cyberware here, a small sample of some of the goodies available is listed below.

**Spinal Pilot Link.**

Increases your character's Mecha Piloting skill by 3 points.

**Cyber Heart**

Increases your character's Body attribute by 4 points.

**Rapid Strike Muscles**

Increases your character's Reflexes and Speed attributes by 2 points each.

That's enough to give you an idea of what's available. There's a lot more out there though, so poke around.

## **2.5 Creating your Character**

So it's time to play the game and you're ready to create your alter ego in the Federated Territories? Good! This section of the Guide will take you through the process. Just follow through the steps below and you'll be all set.

### *Basic or Advanced mode?*

The first decision is whether you wish to create a character in Basic or Advanced mode. Basic mode is handy for beginners as it'll automatically generate a character with a good selection of all-round skills who'll be moderately capable at both personal and mecha scale combat. The only decisions you'll need to make in basic mode are choosing the gender of your character and entering their name.

In advanced mode things are much more complex, but it's possible to fine tune your character to your exact specifications. Don't worry if it seems daunting at first, this section of the Guide is intended to walk you through the process.

### *Choose your gender*

Male or Female? This has very little effect on the game, barring the reactions of certain NPCs. The Flirtation skill is used on NPCs of the gender opposite to yours, so you may want to bear that in mind. Unless you get the Bishounen talent, then all NPCs can be flirted with.

#### *Select your age*

Your character can start the game at any age from 16 to 30. Younger characters start with more money with which to buy equipment, but older characters start with more experience to spend on improving skills.

#### *Family history*

The game will randomly generate one or two parents and their profession. You can pick the ones presented to you or ask the game to make another random selection. This appears to have a slight effect on your character's startup although this has not been consistently documented. Banker parents do appear to increase starting cash.

#### *Assign points to Attributes*

Here you get 92 points to divide among your character's eight attributes. You'll need to consider the type of character you're creating and the skills they'll need when making your selection, see the Attributes and Skills sections of the Guide for details.. If you divide points evenly you can get 12 points in each attribute and have a few points left over to boost an attribute or two a little higher. That's a good approach for a generalised character, but if you're aiming to create a specialist then you may want to raise some attributes much higher at the expense of a few others.

#### *Selecting your own career.*

The next step is to decide what job your character was doing before their adventure began. As well as adding another layer of 'flavour' to your PC, their starting job will give them a few skill points. Igor Savin's done some work for us here and has produced the following list:

Addendum; Malte Helmert did some code diving for us and has discovered that each profession has slots for up to five skill boosts. For each slot that lacks a skill your character will be given an extra \$20,000 starting cash. So for example, being an Actor (with only three skills) will net you a \$40,000 bonus.

Actor: Conversation, Flirtation, Performance.

Architect: Spot Weakness, Mecha Engineering, Concentration.

Arena Pilot: Mecha Gunnery, Mecha Weapons, Mecha Fighting, Mecha Piloting, Initiative.

Athlete: Vitality, Athletics, Weight Lifting.

Bandit: Mecha Piloting, Small Arms, Armed Combat, Intimidation.

Banker: Shopping.

Bounty Hunter: Small Arms, Martial Arts, Dodge, Initiative, Intimidation.

Celebrity: Flirtation, Performance.

Combat Pilot: Mecha Gunnery, Mecha Artillery, Mecha Weapons, Mecha Fighting, Mecha Piloting.

Computer Programmer: Cybertech, Concentration, Code Breaking.

Commercial Pilot: Mecha Fighting, Mecha Piloting, Mecha Repair.

Construction Worker: Mecha Fighting, Mecha Piloting, Vitality, General Repair, Weight Lifting.

Corporate Executive: Conversation, Shopping.

Corporate Pilot: Mecha Gunnery, Mecha Weapons, Mecha Piloting, Electronic Warfare, Shopping.

Cyberdoc: Medicine, Cybertech.

Doctor: First Aid, Medicine.

Engineer: General Repair, Mecha Engineering, Mecha Repair.

Explorer: Dodge, Awareness, Survival, First Aid.

Firefighter: Mecha Piloting, Initiative, First Aid, Athletics, Resistance.

Guardian: Small Arms, Armed Combat, Dodge Spot, Weakness, Investigation.

Hacker: Stealth, Concentration, Code Breaking.

Journalist: Awareness, Conversation, Stealth, Investigation.

Lawyer: Conversation.

Paramedic: Mecha Piloting, Awareness, First Aid, Athletics.

Politician: Conversation, Intimidation.

Martial Artist: Martial Arts, Dodge, Spot Weakness, Athletics.

Mecha Designer: Mecha Engineering, Concentration, Mecha Repair.

Mechanic: Mecha Piloting, Mecha Repair, General Repair, Concentration.

Monk: Martial Arts, Dodge, Spot Weakness, Athletics, Mysticism.

Mercenary: Mecha Artillery, Mecha Piloting, Small Arms, Heavy Weapons, Dodge.

Ninja: Armed Combat, Dodge, Spot Weakness, Stealth.

Nurse: First Aid, Medicine, Conversation.

Pirate: Mecha Piloting, Armed Combat, Stealth, Intimidation.

Professor: Investigation, Concentration.

Recon Pilot: Mecha Gunnery, Mecha Artillery, Mecha Piloting, Awareness, Stealth.

Ravager: Mecha Artillery, Mecha Weapons, Mecha Piloting, Small Arms, Dodge.

Scientist: Science, Concentration, Bio Technology.

Shopkeeper: Shopping, General Repair.

Soldier: Small Arms, Heavy Weapons, Armed Combat, Martial Arts, Dodge.

Teacher: Awareness, Conversation, Science, Investigation.

Test Pilot: Mecha Weapons, Mecha Piloting, Dodge, Vitality, Electronic Warfare.

Thief: Dodge, Stealth, Code Breaking.

Trucker: Mecha Piloting, Armed Combat, Mecha Repair, Conversation, General Repair.

Starting characters get 1 skill point for each of the free skills associated with their profession, and their starting maximum for those skills is raised by 1. Remember that the maximum number of skills your character can learn is based on your Knowledge attribute, and free skills from their profession still count toward that limit.

### *Skills*

Now you'll get 50 points with which to buy your character's starting skills. The first two levels of a skill cost 1 point each, after that each raise in skill will cost the previous level in points, so raising from level 2 to 3 will cost 2 points, from 3 to 4 will cost 4 points, and so on. You cannot raise a starting skill above level 5.

Skills acquired from your starting job are an exception to this. You'll start with 1 point for free in these skills, and the cost of raising them will be treated as though they were 1 point

lower than they are, allowing you to raise them slightly more cheaply and enabling a maximum level in those skills of 6.

Choose carefully, bearing in mind what sort of character you're creating and your attribute selections. Although it's possible to learn new skills in the game you'll have to spend XP to do so, and that's XP you could be using to improve on skills you already have, or to raise attributes.

### *Traits*

Here you can select up to three traits to define the personality of your character. This section of character creation is optional so feel free to choose none if you don't want to bother with it. Traits will affect how NPCs will react to you. For example, lawful Guardian NPCs are less likely to get along with a Chaotic PC, and they certainly won't let your character join their faction.

### *Name*

Finally, enter a name for your character. This has no effect whatsoever on gameplay so just choose something you like.

If you're really stuck then try one of the following;

Homer Sexual  
Anne Arkey  
Hugh Jass  
Tamara Knight  
Ivor Biggun  
Helen Wheels  
Willy Makeit  
Sarah Doctorinthehouse  
Phil Meup

...you get the idea.

### *All done*

Once you've selected your character's name, you're done. You'll return to the main menu where you can choose 'Start RPG Campaign', select your new character and your adventure will begin!

## **3.0 Managing your team**

As of GearHead version 0.820 a new feature has been added to allow Player Characters to recruit allies into their adventuring party, usually called a 'Lance'. NPCs can be recruited to join as lancemates, helping out in both personal combat and piloting spare mechas into battle. Characters with the Robotics skill can build a robot assistant to help them along, and may even be able to make a sentient robot that can pilot a spare mecha and behave as though they were a recruited NPC. The Dominate Animal skill can be used to 'persuade' hostile monsters to become useful and helpful pets to join the lance, although none of them

are able to pilot mecha.

There is a limit on the maximum number of lancemates that can be recruited by a character, be they NPCs, robots or pets. It is determined by the following formula:

$$(\text{Leadership} + \text{Charm} + (\text{Renown}/10)) / 8$$

Leadership is a skill. Charm is an attribute. Renown is a Trait that reflects how famous your character is. It'll go up as you win battles (particularly highly public Arena fights) and may go down if you are defeated regularly.

Experience Points received by your character for completing missions will be divided more or less evenly between your character and their lancemates. A high Leadership skill will increase your character's share of the XP.

As of version 0.830 lancemates cannot be dismissed during battle. You'll have to wait until you get back into town if you want to fire someone.

Lancemates in mecha may eject if their mecha is badly damaged during battle. The total lance's Leadership rating will help to prevent this. Lancemates will still attempt to eject if their mecha is completely destroyed.

### 3.1 Lancemates

Igor Savin writes:

\*\*

During their travels the PC might encounter some people who will join them in their adventures. As of 0.820 version, there are two such characters (of which I am aware). If they are willing to join your lance, an option <JOIN> will be added to conversation topic's list, changing to <QUIT LANCE> after they join. Note: Sometimes characters with <JOIN> option will refuse to join (or return to) you. This depends on their reaction to you.

Lancemates already have some equipment, so you won't necessarily need to spend money to make them bring any use. In fact, sometimes they are better equipped, than PC at that point. Also they have range of skills learned already. Players have to manually equip and train their lancemates, via "Field HQ" (accessible from menu, which is called by <SHIFT>+<C>). Note - "Field HQ" can only be accessed while in a safe zone (no hostile creatures in the same area). No lancemates (that I'm aware of) come with their own mechas, so if you want them to participate in mecha-scale battles, you should give them one. Any lancemate can use mecha. While in combat, lancemates perform on their own, wandering randomly until enemy is found. When firing area-effect weapons, they will try not to harm other lancemembers, including PC <At least that's what I remember hearing about :>).

While in a safe zone, lancemates will be staying close to PC. If lancemate has some kind of heal/repair skill, he will apply them automatically if necessary.

\*\*

When using 'applied' skills like Investigation, Codebreaking or Mecha Repair the lancemate with the highest skill level will make the actual roll, with +1 bonus skill for each

other member of the lance who has 5 points in the relevant skill. This bonus is also added at 10, 15 etc but is calculated on an individual lance member's bonus only, so two other lance members with +5 each will net +2 bonus, but a lance member with 8 and one with 3 will only net +1 bonus.

If an NPC is available to join your lance, the possibility of them agreeing to do so depends on their reaction to you. In other words, they won't join you unless they really like you, so work on that Charm attribute and Conversation skill if you're planning on winning friends.

### **3.2 Robots**

Aquillion has stepped into the breach here and conducted some extensive research into the use of the Robotics skill, posting his findings on the gearhead\_dev mailing list. This section is drawn almost entirely from his notes.

\*\*

Ok, I've been playing around with Robotics a lot, and here's what I discovered so far. First, you can use up to ten equippable weapons, armor, and mecha/general repair items as fuel to construct your robot. The more repair fuel or endurance on the items you put into the robot, the easier it'll be to create, and the stronger the finished product will be. Any weapons you put into the robot will be built into the final product, if you succeed. If you succeed exceedingly well and make a robot that's good at everything, the robot may be self-aware, allowing you to talk to it, assign it to a mech, train its skills directly, and use it in every other way like an ally. If it's not self-aware, then it will be like a pet, though it may still have good skills.

Self-aware robots will always have a humanoid body. Though they may get a few extra limbs and a turret, they will never have wings or flight jets. Non-self aware robots could have really wierd bodies, with wings, flight jets, tails, mounting points everywhere, and goodness knows what else.

Yes, you can build a robot entirely out of survival knives or spears if you want. It will work fine. Sheet metal works particularly well. My favourite, though, is the robot I built entirely out of glue.

\*\*

Note also that although it's possible to build a robot using multiple weapons systems, the assembled robot only seems to want to use one of them, so save your dough and just go with one of whatever you want your robot to use. The other (up to) nine assembly 'slots' should be used for repair fuel, armour and raw materials. Most Robots will have empty hands and/or mounting points so it's easy enough to add extra weapon systems after construction.

You should also be aware that if your newly built robot is over the maximum membership limit for your lance then they will be generated as a non-aligned NPC with no particular loyalty to your character.

### 3.3 Pets

*((This section is yet to be written. In short, the Animal Dominance skill will allow you to attempt to persuade a wild monster to join your lance. Only one attempt can be made per individual monster. If you have experience with this skill and would like to write this section of the Guide then please let us know on the gearhead\_dev mailing list.))*

### 4.0 Personal Combat

You're deep underground looking for some ancient artifact of interest to the scientific community, when a sudden noise startles you. Spinning around you see a Dragon Bear, it's maw gaping as it prepares to spit a bolt of fire at you...

Walking through Downtown Snake Lake you hear a sudden cry "I'm a Blood! A Blood forever!" Some gang banger is starting a rumble and they're levelling their autopistol at your head...

The Guardians need information on a suspected crime boss. They've hired you to sneak into his mansion and dig up some evidence to help their case. You crack the security code on the door lock and peer inside. A sudden ominous hum alerts you to the fact that the security robots have noticed your intrusion and are preparing to do something about it...

Welcome to personal combat.

#### 4.1 General tips on personal combat.

Igor Savin has this to say:

\*\*

You can either specialise in a close combat, or in a ranged one. Learning both would take up additional slots and slow down training, so it's not really recommended. If specialising in close combat, you should learn Athletics (as it's used up quickly when dodging incoming attacks), Dodge (that one is obvious) and either Armed Combat (used for every close combat weapon, as well as for shields and thrown weapons except grenades) to have a decent chance to hit, or Martial Arts.

*((Igor's going to write a pro/con comparison of Armed Combat v Martial Arts once he's done researching MA))*

Key stats here would be Speed (Dodge & Initiative), and Reflexes (Armed Combat) \ Body (Martial Arts). Since Body is required also for Vitality and Athletics skills, that's additional point for taking Martial Arts for personal-scale characters, while Reflexes is mostly Mecha-related stat, thus more useful for more mecha-oriented characters.

Ranged combat requires either Small Arms, or Heavy Weapons (possibly both), depending on which weapon do you use. Small Arms governs DC1-10 weapons, Heavy Weapons -



11+. No additional ranged-combat-specific skills are needed except of course Dodge again. Key stats - Reflexes for Small Arms, Perception for Heavy Weapons. Only other combat skill worth mentioning using Perception is Mecha Artillery, while Reflexes is a must for every mecha pilot - take that into consideration.

There are also multi-purpose skills for each and every personal-scale fighter out there. That's, of course, Initiative (Speed), which speeds you up and allows to make more attacks, Spot Weakness (Craft), that increases the chance to score a critical hit.

\*\*

Your (not very) humble editor adds this:

\*\*

I have to respectfully disagree with Igor on one point. While choosing to specialise in either ranged or melee combat does help your XP go further, it's perfectly possible to have a workable combination of both. Dodge and Initiative are useful for all forms of personal combat (and Initiative is also useful for Mecha combat), as are skills such as Vitality and Athletics. With this much overlap it's no great hardship to take, for example, Armed Combat and Heavy Weapons. Yes, it's more equipment to carry, but that's a matter of personal decision.

Using up more skill slots isn't a huge issue either. You can get more skill slots by increasing your Knowledge attribute from experience, installing Knowledge enhancing cyberware (*once Joseph fixes that bug*), or taking the Savant talent.

By covering both areas you'll be able to pick off the more threatening critters at a distance, while saving ammo by taking out the weaker enemies like rats in melee combat. Of course, using energy weapons means ammo isn't an issue anyway, but they're much more expensive to buy and tend to weigh more.

Many's the time I've found my characters able to swipe at an adjacent enemy with a beam sword while waiting for their ranged weapon to recharge in order to be fired at a more distant enemy. In the deeper dungeon areas the bad guys come at you thick and fast so whatever you do, make sure you have multiple attack options.

\*\*

## 5.0 Mecha Combat

This is it, the main meat of the game. Although GearHead is a large and complex piece of software, offering players a wide variety of things to do and places to explore, the main focus of the game has always been Mecha.

The three most important attributes for any Mecha are:

### *Maneuverability (MV)*

MV represents the Mecha's agility and ability to make high speed moves. It never has a value higher than 0, and will most often be a negative value. MV is deducted from your character's Mecha Piloting skill when evading incoming fire, or pulling high-risk maneuvers such as stepping off high ground. This means that Mecha with a low MV score

will be hit more often in combat and be more likely to crash. It also determines the speed at which a mecha can change direction.

#### *Targetting (TR)*

TR is a measure of how accurately the Mecha can aim it's weapon systems. Like MV it can never be higher than 0 and will most often be a negative value. It is deducted from your character's appropriate weaponry skill when attacking a target. Low TR scores can be offset by installing a Targetting Computer component into your Mecha, but a Targetting Computer cannot raise TR above 0, no matter how good it is.

#### *Sensors (SE)*

SE represents the mecha's ability to detect the outside world and relay that information to its pilot. Unlike MV and TR it is usually higher than 0. A high value of SE will allow a mech's pilot to spot enemies at greater range and overcome enemy attempts at hiding under cover.

There are also 'lesser' attributes which have a less direct effect on the mecha, but still need to be considered by the pilot.

#### *Tonnage (t)*

Simply put, the total weight of the mecha in tons. Heavier mecha tend to have lower MV and TR ratings, and a lower speed.

#### *Points Value (PV)*

A rating of how deadly the mecha is, based on the accumulated cost of it's component parts and the values of it's primary attributes. It's also the cost of the mecha in dollars. In battle the PV of the mecha's pilot is calculated and added to the hardware PV cost, allowing players to take a guess at the skill level of their opposition.

#### *Hands (Hnd)*

The number of hands the mecha has, usually equal to the number of arms. Each hand can wield a single weapon.

#### *Mounts (Mnt)*

The number of weapon mounts on the mecha. Each mount can hold a single weapon **and** a propulsion system.

#### *Speed*

How fast your Mecha can move. This is tracked as seperate ratings for each movement system the mecha has (Roll, skim, walk, fly). Unsurprisingly, higher speed mechas move faster.

#### *Jump*

Jump is measured as time in seconds. Mecha that have arc jets or flight jets, but are not aerodynamic can jump instead of flying. This allows them to move in a straght line at maximum height (5) for however long their Jump rating is. Jump systems typically need

time to recharge after a jump.

### *Size Factor (SF)*

GearHead has three size factors. SF:0 represents personal scale items. SF:1 are 'mini' mecha such as the Strongarm. SF:2 are 'full scale' mecha and are the most common type. SF:0 and SF:1 weapon systems will be much more accurate than SF:2 weapons when fired at SF:2 mecha and will be more likely to cause critical hits, but their damage rating is much lower. SF:2 weapons are less likely to hit smaller mecha or people, but will cause huge amounts of damage when they do hit.

'Mecha' is a catch-all term for vehicles in GearHead. As well as the traditional giant fighting robots it also covers ground vehicles and aircraft. Mecha are broken down into seven main types.

### *Battroids*

These are the traditional giant fighting robots. They tend to be humanoid in shape. They are all capable of moving in 'walk' mode, and some have hoverjets or wheels installed to allow them to 'skim' or 'roll' as well. Battroids are the 'base' to which other types of Mecha are compared. Most mecha in the game are Battroids.

### *Zoanoids*

This type of mecha are modelled on dinosaurs or animals, such as the wolflike Fenris class Mecha. Like the battroids they are capable of walking, but rarely have other modes of movement. They tend to be fast and highly maneuverable, but have trouble with targetting as their weapon arrays are restricted

### *Groundhuggers*

A groundhugger is a wheeled, tracked or hovering Mecha that stays at ground level. Tanks, trucks and cars are all groundhuggers. A groundhugger is a more stable weapons platform than a battroid, resulting in higher TR scores, and they tend to be better armoured. However, their MV is typically much worse. Groundhuggers are able to take advantage of Turret modules, allowing them to mount weapons with a 360 degree arc of fire.

### *Arachnoids*

An arachnoid is a walking tank, modelled after spiders. They typically have between two and eight legs, making for a stable and maneuverable weapons platform. However, their lack of 'arms' means they cannot use shields for additional defence. Like groundhuggers, arachnoid mechas can make use of turret modules.

### *Aeromechs*

Aeromechs are aircraft, fighters, bombers and some spacecraft. They tend to be extremely fast and provide a stable platform for weapons targetting. Unfortunately they're not as maneuverable as ground mecha, tend to have poor armour in order to save weight and have a wide turning circle. They're also prone to crashing once their wings are shot off. All aeromechs have a stall speed of 150 dpr, so when modding an aeromech be sure any additional weight you add does not reduce it's speed below this value. This class of mecha

is only recommended for the expert player.

#### *Hoverfighters*

Heavier than Aeromechs, these mecha, as their name implies, maneuver in hover mode as well as flight. Unlike Aeromechs these mecha can be equipped with turrets.

#### *Gerwalkers*

This type of mecha is a hybrid of the aeromech and battroid mecha, resembling birds or winged humanoids. They're capable of both flight and ground based movement.

*((And as I never use the things I've no idea how they compare with other mecha. Someone care to step in here?))*

### **5.1 Mecha weapons and associated skills**

There are four main Mecha Weapon skills. These are;

#### *Mecha Artillery*

Used to accurately aim mecha weapons with a DC of 11 or greater. A high Mecha Artillery score will increase your chances of hitting the enemy with heavy weapons, and improve the odds of getting a critical hit on the target, with the greatly increased damage that provides.

#### *Mecha Fighting*

This skill is used when attacking with your mecha's limbs and when blocking incoming fire with a mecha shield. Hits by mecha limbs do the highest amount of concussion damage, which causes the most injury to the enemy pilot. A dead enemy pilot means there's an intact mecha for you, if you're being awarded salvage for the battle. Also, the extra penetration from the Kung Fu Talent is applicable to Mecha Fighting as well as personal scale combat.

#### *Mecha Gunnery*

Mecha Gunnery is the skill that defines how well your character can aim mecha weapons with a DC of 10 or below. As with Mecha Artillery, this skill will increase your chances of scoring a critical hit with these weapons, and so increase the amount of damage done to enemy mecha.

#### *Mecha Weaponry*

This skill is used to determine your character's ability with all kinds of mecha melee weapons. The higher the score, the more likely you are to score a hit, or even a critical hit, when attacking with mecha melee weapons.

There's not much point going into battle if you can't hurt the enemy, and this is where Mecha weapons come into play. There is a huge variety of weapons systems available for your mecha, far too many to list here, but they can be broken down into five main types:

#### *Cannons*

Guns of all kinds, from humble autocannons to the mighty Breaker Cannon. These use

ammo so it's best to make sure you have a backup weapons system in case a fight goes on for a while and you run out.

### *Energy Cannons*

Ranged energy weapons. They operate in the same way as cannons, but don't have an ammunition limit. Instead they generate heat, and an overheated mecha will suffer penalties to TR and MV, so it's best not to rely entirely on energy weapons so that a mecha can keep fighting while it cools down.

### *Missiles*

Missile systems aim and fire just like cannons, but tend to run out of ammunition much more quickly. They tend to weigh a great deal less than cannons and can pack a pretty nasty punch.

### *Rockets*

These are basically the same as missiles, but tend to be less accurate. They're also cheaper than missile systems and lighter in weight.

### *Melee weapons*

Mecha melee weapons are used for bashing enemy mecha up close and personal. No melee weapons have ammunition limits, but the more powerful types tend to be energy weapons and so generate heat. Some melee weapons can be thrown at enemy mecha. It's a good idea to have at least one melee weapon on your mecha, if only to be held in reserve for when there's nothing else available.

As with personal scale weaponry, there are several special damage effects that some mecha weapons can apply. The likelihood of an effect being applied to a target depends on the attacker and defenders Electronic Warfare skills.

### *Armourpiercing*

Attacks featuring this damage type will only take half the enemy armour rating into account.

### *Blast (x)*

Blast weapons apply damage to all targets within (x) of the target point, including friendly mecha. Use with care if you have friends on the battlefield. Use liberally if the enemy are closely packed.

### *Brutal*

Brutal weapons cause a lot of messy and obvious damage, eating through the target's armour at double the rate.

### *Extend*

Melee weapons only. Extend weapons are longer than usual melee weapons and can hit targets two squares away, instead of adjacent targets only.

### *Hyper*

Hyper weapons are especially nasty, as they apply damage to every part of the target simultaneously.

### *Intercept*

Typically a feature of smaller (SF:0 or SF:1) weapons, Intercept weapons are capable of shooting down incoming missiles and rockets.

### *Line*

Line weapons will hit every target in a straight line out to their maximum range.

### *Overload*

Overload weapons will cause electrical damage to the targets powerplant.

*((What does that mean in game terms? Does it cause heat in the enemy? Slow them down? Someone fill me in here please.))*

### *Scatter*

Scattering weapons spread their damage out over the target, allowing multiple parts to be hit with a single shot.

### *Swarm*

Swarming weapons fire at a burst value, splitting their shots across multiple targets in range.

### *Thrown*

Thrown melee weapons can be thrown at enemy targets.

*((I know Body determines range for personal scale thrown weapons, but what determines range for Mecha weapons?))*

### *Thrown, Returning*

These are thrown melee weapons that return to the wielder after the attack. Rocket powered spears are a good example of this type.

Damage class for mecha weapons is usually expressed in the form DC[a x b]. 'a' is the base damage class of the weapon and in the case of ranged weapons is used to determine whether the weapon is fired using the Mecha Gunnery or Mecha Artillery skill. 'b' is the scale factor of the weapon, which is drawn from the SF of the weapon. SF:0 weapons have no multiplier. SF:1 weapons have a x2 multiplier and SF:2 weapons have a x10 multiplier. The total damage of the weapon is found by multiplying damage by scale. So a ranged weapon with DC[6x10] is fired using Mecha Gunnery as the base damage is below 11.

Mecha weapons have similar attributes to personal weapons in terms of Range, Accuracy, Speed and Burst Value. These work in the same way as they do for personal weapons.

Another thing to bear in mind with mecha weapons of all kinds is their arc of fire. Simply put, weapons built into or attached to the head or arms of a mecha have an arc of fire of

Forward180, that is they can target any enemy that is in front of or level with your mecha. Turret mounted weapons have a 360 fire arc, so if you can see it you can fire at it... if it's in range. Weapons in other locations have a fire arc of Forward90, so your mecha has to be more or less facing a target in order to fire these weapons at it.

Aquillion has posted some of his preferred mecha weapon suggestions:

\*\*

Shaka Cannons are good when you're starting out. Other guns I've found useful if you can find them are the Chimentero's Heavy Phase Cannons (80 DC, 84 range, BV 6, only 2 tons; **not** the Heavy Phase Cannons you sometimes find in shops, which are different) and Very Heavy Autocannons (100 DC, 96 range, BV 4, 40 ammo, 3.5 tons; available relatively cheap in shops). Both of these weapons unfortunately share -1 accuracy and a speed of 1, but they can do a lot of damage if you're skilled enough to hit with them repeatedly.

\*\*

Igor Savin has this to say:

\*\*

My personal favourites are Shaka Cannons - DC100, fairly easy to find, and Repeater Cannons (6x10, not too bad either, also common weapon). For a beginning Mecha Cannons are nice (DC32?). Can't say about later weapons :).

\*\*

Your humble editor writes:

\*\*

Firstly, I'm going to echo Aquillion and Igor and recommend the Shaka Cannon. They're easily obtained in the early game as most Buru Buru class mecha carry them as part of their basic armament. It's also worth looking at the various missile and rocket pods available. They rarely have much in the way of ammunition (and the ones that do lack accuracy), but you'll find they have a respectable range and pack a good punch. You should also look into getting a melee weapon if your mecha doesn't already have one. If a fight goes on long enough that you run out of ammo your melee weapon will still be available for use. The Wolfram class mecha has a Pick Axe that does a respectable [16x10] DC which is a hefty punch for a non-energy melee weapon, although it is rather heavy.

Later in the game as you face higher level opposition you'll be able to scavenge some heavier weaponry too. Haywire missiles are available in a variety of sizes and can be useful when coupled with a decent Electronic Warfare skill as you'll be able to drive enemy mecha out of control for a few rounds, making them much less able to threaten you. Melee energy weapons such as the Beam Sword and Beam Lash pack a lot of punch for only half a ton of weight, but can generate a lot of heat if over-used so be cautious with those and watch your mecha's status bar for a grey 'O'. That's your temperature warning, and if you have a red 'O' then back off and use non-energy weapons until your mecha cools down. Finally, I cannot recommend the Light Nuclear Missile highly enough. The Gigas class aeromech carries two one-shot LNM launchers at only one ton of weight apiece. These weapons have a blast radius of three, a total DC of 200 and have a Hyper damage effect. When you're seriously outnumbered, and in the late game you will be, an LNM or two can shift the odds back toward your favour. Just make sure you and your allies are out of the

blast radius when firing.

\*\*

## 5.2 Non-weapon mecha equipment and skills

The single most important Mecha related skill is also a non-weapon skill, and that's Mecha Piloting. Your piloting ability is used to evade incoming fire and avoid damaging crashes. This is the skill that'll keep your mecha intact in battle, and as such has the greatest bearing on your chances of victory. It's especially important if you're piloting a mecha with a low MV score, as you'll need to compensate for your mecha's sluggishness. If you're serious about mecha combat then this is a skill that needs to start high and be improved as often as possible.

The other main non-combat skill that's used exclusively with mecha is Electronic Warfare. This skill comes into play when using weapons with special damage types, such as Haywire, Armourpiercing or Brutal. Your Electronic Warfare skill determines how effectively you can make these special damage types work for you, and is also used to resist them being used on your own mecha by your enemies.

The Initiative skill is one of the most useful in the game, both for mecha and personal scale combat. A high Initiative skill will allow your character to act more often in battle, resulting in more opportunities to attack or maneuver with your mecha. There's very little point in having a mecha with a large number of weapon systems if your Initiative score is too low to be able to use them all effectively.

Spot Weakness is also a useful skill to have, as it will increase the chances of scoring critical hits, which greatly increase the amount of damage done to the target. This skill applies to all weapon skills, both personal and mecha, and as such is universally useful. Intimidation is pretty handy to have around as well. In some battles there's a chance to exchange threats with the enemy before it begins, and if you're suitably intimidating then your opponent may surrender, resulting in a 500XP bonus and full pay without having had to fire a shot. That means no spending money on repairing your mecha and replacing spent ammunition, so that's more profit for you! Also, a high Intimidation score in battle can encourage your enemies to eject before their mecha is destroyed, allowing you to capture the mecha more-or-less intact if the battle allows salvage. Melee attacks using Mecha Weapons appear to be particularly intimidating.

Stealth can be used to keep your mecha concealed from the enemy, providing you're in terrain that permits concealment, such as heavy forest. If they can't see you they can't target you. Be aware that firing weapons systems or stepping out from cover will reveal your position, so don't think you can stay hidden forever. Still, it can be useful if you need time for your overheated mecha to cool down, or if you're desperate enough to want to attempt repairs in the middle of a firefight.

There are also several non-weapon mecha components to keep your eyes out for. Aside from the 'standard' stuff like cockpit, engine and gyroscope, you can also get;

### *Armour*

Armour plating comes in various types according to the mecha module they're intended to fit. At the cost of increased weight you get increased protection from damage for the



mecha location the armour is designed to fit.

### *Shields*

If your mecha has arm modules then you can mount shields on them. They come in two main types, conventional and beam shields. Conventional shields are able to block and absorb damage from physical weapons, depending on your Mecha Fighting skill. Beam shields operate in the same way, but are used to block energy attacks. It's quite possible to mount more than one shield, so long as there's only one per arm. You should be aware that wearing shields will invoke a small penalty to your ability to accurately target weapons systems, so you'll have to decide if it's worth the tradeoff.

### *Sensors*

A Sensor system will increase the SE rating of your mecha, increasing the range at which enemies can be detected and your ability to overcome attempts to use the Stealth skill to hide from you. As of version 0.830 Sensors are counted as SF:0 equipment, so their weight and CMX are negligible.

### *Targetting Computer*

A very useful system indeed, the Targetting Computer will increase your mecha's TR by it's own rating, although it will not raise TR above zero. On the slower and less maneuverable mecha this system is a must-have in order to compensate for their poor base TR.

### *Overcharger*

A turbo system for your mecha. An Overcharger will increase the output of any propulsion system it's installed with, increasing the maximum speed of your mecha.

### *Advanced Suspension*

This is a special component for wheeled groundhuggers, usually seen as part of the chassis for the Renegade class mecha used by the Guardians as a patrol car. It performs the same function as a gyroscope in walking mecha.

### *Electronic Countermeasures (ECM)*

A new feature for GearHead v0.830, this system allows the pilot of an ECM equipped mecha an extra opportunity to use their Electronic Warfare skill to avoid adverse status effects.

## **5.3 General tips on mecha combat.**

Mecha battles in GearHead can be broken down into three main types, Ambush, Arena and Mission battles.

### *Ambushes*

Typically random raiders that strike when you're out travelling on the world map, ambush battles tend to have a lower level of opposition than missions and will allow your character to gather salvage after the dust settles. However, there are situations where your character

has made some powerful enemies, and when they ambush you the odds will be much stiffer, and salvage will probably not be available.

### *Arena*

In the towns of Hogye, Gyori and Namok are the regional mecha arenas. Your character can take part in battles here once per arena per day for a cash prize. The opposition is rarely significant, being based on your character's past success in the arena. The cash prize is likewise not up to much, but after winning ten fights in each arena a grand prize is awarded which is often much more worthwhile. Once the grand prize has been won in all three regional arenas your character will be eligible to fight in the Robot Warriors arena in Downtown Snake Lake. Prizes and difficulty here are much higher, and the grand prize is something really special.

Arena battles never allow salvage, but your character will gain a large amount of Renown for winning, due to the fights being televised.

### *Missions*

The main 'meat' of the game, mecha missions are the jobs your character chooses to take on when offered by various NPCs. The most common goal is to simply eliminate the opposition, but sometimes you'll be asked to destroy a specific mecha, a power generator in an enemy base, or to spare a specific mecha in order to force the pilot to surrender. The cash reward for completing a mission is based on the level of opposition, which in turn is based on your character's Renown. The more famous and admired your character is, the tougher things get.

It's generally considered better to have a maneuverable but lightly armoured mecha than a heavier one. If a battle goes on for too long then your armour's going to be eaten away at anyway, while a maneuverable mecha coupled with a good Mecha Piloting skill is going to get hit a lot less often. A heavy mecha with a powerful weapons loadout could destroy the enemy before they're able to get many shots off, but bear in mind that for most battles you're going to be outnumbered, which means there could be several shots coming your way for each one you fire at your enemies.

Aquillion posted the following useful combat tips on the gearhead\_dev mailing list:

\*\*

Oh, that's a different problem. The reason why you lost a CYB-13 Monstrous so quickly is because they suck. They're alright for the computer, mind you, and can be a nasty challenge due to all their kickass equipment; but they're no good for the player. My reasoning here is simple: There are essentially two main options in mech design, heavy armor/weapons vs. lightweight maneuverability. The Monstrous falls fairly obviously on the 'heavy' side of the equation. In theory, you're supposed to need a balance between these two, and in one-on-one combat, both ways would be equally viable; but in practice, it just doesn't work that way.

Problem is, players virtually never enter one-on-one combat. It's rare to enter a fight with less than three opponents; four or five is more common. When you're outnumbered, dodging and speed have a clear advantage; with high enough maneuverability you can

dodge attacks from less skilled pilots all day, but no amount of armor will keep you alive for long against even mediocre opposition. Superior weaponry--the other half of the heavy-mech strategy--is supposed to help here by letting you eliminate everyone before they eliminate you, but again, that's much less likely to work when you're up against so many people. High speed, on the other hand, lets you pick and choose the order in which you engage your opponents, and lets you (sometimes) fight them one-on-one. Because of these things, I generally don't think I'd ever want to get into a fight using a mech whose MV penalty exceeds -2 or so; I prefer -1 or 0. Of course, some of that might just be personal preference, but ultimately I think that one point of MV is going to make a lot more difference than any weapon or piece of armor you might want to sacrifice it for.

Skill-wise, mecha piloting is the most important skill in the game, and whichever weapons skill you're using is the second-most important; but I probably don't need to tell either of those things. If you really want to use a heavy mech, I'd guess that initiative would become more important (though it's pretty important already); you need high initiative to take full advantage of all the weapons systems you put on a heavy mech and to take out the opposition before they can punch through your armor.

The only other advice I can give is to attack your opponents from inside of heavy forest whenever possible; that 4 points of cover is worth a lot (though not quite as much now that some weapons can burn it away). As an added advantage, that'll help keep you concealed if you have some ranks in stealth; once again, this will reduce the chances of your having to fight all of your opponents at once.

Really, I can't emphasize the forest thing enough. I've taken down teams of Monstrouses (Monstrie?) and Ovaknights with nothing but a modified Scylla before; it isn't even that hard with some good lightweight weapons.

\*\*

GearHead developer Joseph Hewitt has this to say regarding mecha combat skills:

\*\*

All of the weapon skills have their uses, in my opinion. At least that's how I've tried to balance things... I'm not sure how well it's working.

Mecha Gunnery is probably the best all-round skill. It does not get useless later in the game, since many of the better weapons still have a DC of 10 or less (Breaker Cannon, Vulcan Cannons, etc). It's definitely one of the best skills to have early in the game since most of the ranged weapons you'll have access to will be small guns.

Mecha Artillery can be useful early on if you find some nice missile launchers, and does become more useful later in the game when large-DC guns are more common. You might not want to rely primarily on this skill since most artillery weapons either run out of ammo quickly or will overheat your mecha, but you'll definitely want to have it.

Mecha Weapons is good since close combat attacks are the most powerful attacks in the game. Close combat attacks are the only type which allow both multiple hits and the Spot Weakness skill to apply at the same time. Energy melee weapons ignore half a target's armor rating even if no critical hit was rolled. In the late game it can be difficult to get close enough to use melee weapons, but with a sufficiently speed-boosted mecha you can still do it.

Mecha Fighting is useful for a number of poorly-documented reasons. First of all, it's the skill used to block enemy attacks using a shield. This is very important for just about

everyone. Secondly, the bonuses listed above for melee attacks also apply here. Third, unarmed mecha attacks cause more concussion damage than other attack types. This is the damage that goes straight to the pilot of a mecha.

Fourth, if you have the Kung Fu talent, the penetration bonus also applies to Mecha Fighting.

\*\*

## 6.0 Modifying your mecha

For many players the modification of mecha is one of the most important aspects of the game. While many mecha are powerful and effective battle machines in their own right, a good mecha modifier can turn even the poorest of mecha into a fearsome piece of hardware. Except possibly the Vespa. That thing's beyond hope. If you're going to be extensively modifying your mecha then a high score in the Mecha Engineering skill is a must. Not only will it allow you to squeeze more components into your mecha's chassis, it'll also help prevent the accidental destruction of components when installing or removing them. Few things are more heartbreaking than finally laying hands on that rare and powerful weapon, only to accidentally destroy it when trying to move it from salvage onto a mecha.

One thing that has to be remembered when modifying a mecha is the scale factor. There are three scale factors in GearHead, SF:0 represents personal scale equipment, such as rifles or bazookas. SF:1 is used for 'mini' mecha, such as the Strongarm class battroid. SF:2 is the scale factor for full sized mecha, which is most of the mecha in the game. This is important for two reasons. Firstly, components of a lower SF than the mecha they're installed in will have a negligible weight cost, meaning a lot of them can be installed before performance is impaired. Smaller SF weapons will do less damage when fired against a larger SF mecha, but are much more accurate, causing critical hits more often. A battery of well chosen SF:0 weapons mounted on an SF:2 mecha can be very useful for stripping away armour or for targetting specific systems on the mecha. It may take a few shots to actually cause damage, but when they do it'll most likely be a critical hit. Mecha parts can be broken down into two main types; Modules and Components.

Modules are the parts that define your mecha's form, things like the head, body, arms, legs, weapons pods etc. Not all modules can be installed on all mecha, it depends on their basic type. Very few groundhuggers can be fitted with anything other than a turret or a storage compartment, for example.

Components are the items that are installed into the modules and provide functionality to the mecha. The only components universal to all mecha are the cockpit (which houses the pilot and operational controls) and the engine (which provides power to the mecha).

Mecha that have some kind of walking mode (Battroids, Arachnoids and Gerwalkers) require a gyroscope to maintain their balance. Mecha that lack a walking mode will require some other form of movement (wheels, tracks, hover jets, flight jets, arc thrusters). Many mecha have more than one movement mode, for example a battroid could have wheels installed in it's legs to provide both walking and rolling movement.

Igor Savin's diligent digging in the gearhead\_dev mailing list archives has turned up this useful guide to size factors, originally written by game creator Joseph Hewitt:

\*\*

There are two intrinsic values which relate to size- Scale and Class.

Scale is the rough size category in which the mecha belongs. Scale:0 is human sized, Scale:2 is for most mecha. Small mecha are Scale:1; in GearHead it includes the Vespa, Badger, Strongarm, Doom Buggy, Rover and Swan. Scale determines what equipment a mecha/character can use. It also determines an item or character's damage points multiplier.

The "Class" attribute measures relative size within a scale category. The OvaKnight and Petrach are both Scale:2 mecha, but the OvaKnight's class of 6 means that it is much more powerful than the class-3 Petrach. Class also determined the maximum limb size and maximum armor that a mecha can be given. It also determines the stealth value of a mecha and bonus damage to close combat attacks.

In the mecha files, scale may be set using the "Scale" command. Since the default size for a mecha is 2, this command isn't used often. Class is set when the mecha's master record is created, as in "Battroid 5" or "Groundhugger 3".

Mass is determined by the total combined weight of all items making up a mecha. It's not determined by class, but since class determines the size of equipment that can be mounted, the two values often correlate.

Generally speaking a heavy mek will be harder to destroy than a lighter one, but also less maneuverable so it will get hit more often. Most GearHead designs have to maintain a balance between decent armor and decent maneuverability.

\*\*

## **6.1 Where to get spare parts**

The simplest way to get new components for modifying a mecha is to buy them in shops. Most workshops that sell repair fuel, weapons shops and mecha dealers may have mecha components in stock as well, although rarely more than one or two at a time. You can also expect to pay through the nose for them, particularly for SF:2 components. The limited selection and availability of shop bought parts means this should not be your primary means of getting what you want, but sometimes there'll be a nice surprise. Metal Psychosis in Ipshill is the most reliable source of mecha components. They usually have some sensor arrays or motive components in stock, although weapons are unusual.

It's also possible to retrieve carried weapons (that is, weapons equipped in hands and on mounting points, but not installed into modules) from destroyed enemy mecha on the battlefield. Simply stand over the wreckage and press the 'pick up' key (.), or go to 'options' and 'get' if you're operating your mecha by menu. Bear in mind however that the weight of the items you retrieve will be counted toward your mecha's load, so if you carry too much then your MV and TR could suffer. This could be bad news if there are still active enemies on the battlefield.

One of the best ways to get spare parts is to capture an enemy mecha intact. This can be achieved by either killing the pilot (which tends to involve more luck than skill), or forcing them to eject before the mecha is destroyed. The easiest way to force an ejection is to aim for the module where the cockpit is housed. When that module is destroyed the pilot either

bails out or is killed. Of course, if the cockpit is housed in the main body of the mecha then the mecha is destroyed anyway, but for head mounted cockpits this is a viable tactic. Another good way to force an ejection is by use of the Intimidation skill. A good Ego attribute coupled with a high Intimidation skill will make your character fearsome to behold in combat, and whenever you attack a given target it's pilot may be so afraid of your character that they'll bail out rather than stand and fight.

However you do it, the enemy mecha will almost certainly need some kind of repairs before it is useable, but this can easily be done at a mecha garage, or your character could do it for themselves using the Mecha Repair skill. A captured mecha can be sold for a decent chunk of cash (depending on its PV and your character's Shopping skill), kept for use as it is, or stripped for parts to modify another mecha.

Aquillion has this to say about battlefield salvage:

\*\*

First, other than the weapons you grab during combat, you can't salvage anything unless the fight is set to award you salvage when you win. Second, to be awarded anything other than complete, pilotless mechs, you'll need the Tech Vulture trait.(To get those pilotless mechs, try learning intimidation; that'll make it more likely for enemies to eject in combat.)

Anyway, all random encounters in the wilderness should give you salvage. So do generic kill-all-enemies war missions. Raid-the-base missions don't give you salvage; neither do arena fights or most missions for corps. In most circumstances, just listen to the person who gave you the mission; if they say you get salvage, then you get it, and if they don't mention salvage then you don't.

Note that the salvage will end up in the next city you enter after the fight (normally the one you took the mission from, in the case of a mission); after a fight in the wilderness, all the salvage you got will follow you around until the next time you enter a city...

Oh, and parts that were destroyed in combat can't be salvaged--not even if you'd normally be able to get them repaired.

\*\*

## **6.2 Good ideas for mech modification**

If you've read through the sections on mecha combat and mecha weapons and equipment then you should already have some ideas on how you'd like to go about modifying your mecha, so this section of the Guide is devoted to minor points of detail and tips you should be aware of to get the most out of your mecha. Special thanks to Aquillion at this point as his extensive experience in this field has made the bulk of this section possible.

Firstly, get a good Mecha Engineering skill. A high Mecha Engineering skill will allow you to extract and install components quickly and with minimal risk of accidentally destroying them.

Each Mecha module has a maximum CMX of components that can be fitted into them, and

each component has a CMX rating. A good Mecha Engineering skill can overcome this limitation by quite some way. Aquillion reports having managed to fit 8 points of complexity into a CMX 2 rated mecha helmet.

Be careful when installing components into the limbs of your mecha, as this can impede MV and TR even if the weight of the component doesn't slow things down.

Try fitting a few SF:0 weapons into your mecha. That's right, personal scale guns. Although they don't do much damage to SF:2 mecha they are very accurate, and if nothing else you'll wear down your opponent's stamina as they try to dodge all those incoming shots. Aquillion recommends the Rapid Fire Bazooka, it has a DC of 22, does Brutal Armourpiercing damage and as the name implies, has a rapid rate of fire and a maximum range of 96, greater than many SF:2 weapons.. The six-shot ammunition capacity is limiting, but this can easily be overcome by installing six or seven of them into your mecha, or by carrying spare clips in your mecha's inventory. The other advantage of fitting SF:0 scale weapons is they won't have any noticeable effect on your mecha's weight, so you can keep squeezing them on without having to worry about slowing your mecha down or impeding MV and TR. Assault Cannons also work well, although they are fearsomely expensive. Good ammo capacity, punch and a very fast rate of fire, available with Brutal, Scatter and Swarm ammunition. Their range is much shorter than the RFB, but still worth a look.

One final point about fitting SF:0 equipment, don't worry about the CMX. If you're fitting a Rapid Fire Bazooka the game'll tell you the CMX of the weapon is 13, but it'll actually only be counted as 1.

Mounting points are definitely worth your while. Rather than install weapons into the arms and legs of your mecha and risking impeding MV and TR, install a 0.5 ton mounting point on each limb and install the weapons onto those. This has the added advantage that mounting points can hold a propulsion system such as hoverjets or arc thrusters *in addition* to the weapon attached. Of course, if you're going for a slow but heavily armed mecha then you can always use mounting points in addition to internally installed weapons.

Don't forget you can squeeze something into just about anything. Even armour plating has space for a nominal 1 CMX of equipment, as do physical (non-beam) shields. With a decent Mecha Engineering score you can fit much more than that. Of course, if a piece of armour is destroyed in battle then so is the equipment installed in it, but that may be preferable to installing the equipment into the main chassis of your mecha and impeding MV and TR.

**Section 7.0 onwards has spoiler information. Do not read them if you want to find things out for yourself.**

*((The spoiler sections are far from complete, and will likely take quite some time to finish. If you'd like to make a contribution then please let us know via the gearhead\_dev mailing list.))*

## 7.0 Guide to people and places.

Welcome to the spoiler section of the Guide. This is your final warning, if you want to explore the game and discover it's secrets for yourself then **turn away now**. Sections 7 and 8 of the Guide contain a great deal of information regarding the workings of the GearHead world, and secrets will be revealed.

Section 7 is slightly less spoily than section 8. Here we will explore the Federated Territories, listing details of the locations in the game and the people and organisations that inhabit them. We're also going to look into the various 'dungeons' that can be found in the Federated Territories and expose their secrets.

### 7.1 Towns and their citizens.

*Hogye.* (Written by Igor Savin)

Description: Starting location. Small mining village near the edge of the Federated Territories green zone.

#### 1. Useful People

Hyolee (female scientist) - if have a good reaction, she will activate "Fluffy" subplot (more about it in section 8.2). Trains PC after subplot is finished. Potencial lancemate - can be invited in party after subplot.

Nurse Park (nurse) - involved in "Hogye Clinic" subplot (more about it in section 8.2) Resides in Hogye Clinic (red house).

Doctor Kim (doctor) - involved in "Hogye Clinic" subplot. Resides in Hogye Clinic (red house).

Megi (female leader) - activates one of the following subplots (mutually exclusive): either "Tutorial", "Hogye Clinic" or "Criminal Career" Resides in Mayor's House (white house).

Randomly named arena manager - activates "Mecha Loan" subplot, involved in "Tutorial" subplot. Resides in "Mecha Sporch" (light-brown house).

Vicky (female mecha pilot) - involved in "Mecha Loan" subplot. Resides in "Mecha Sporch" (light-brown house).

Quentin (male shopkeeper) - involved in "Tutorial" subplot. Resides in "Ki Rin MegaMart" (light-brown house).

#### 2. Services:

Restaraunt: "Diner" (light-brown '\$' house), \$20\meal.

Doctor: Hogye Clinic (red house), Doctor Kim. No supplies sold.

Shop: "Ki Rin MegaMart" (light-brown house). All-purpose goods. Includes Vending Machine (\$100\Boxed Lunch) and Video Terminal (News). Will buy mecha inventory items and mecha. Will also provide mecha repair and restocking.

Arena: "Mecha Sporch" (light-brown house). 10 wins result in a random variant Buru-Buru.

Transport: Bus Terminal (light-brown house). Transports to: Snake Lake. Will deliver mecha from other towns.

#### 3. Dungeon(s):



Hogye mines (more about it in section 7.3), entrance from Hogye Mine (dark-gray house).

#### 4. Fixed subplots:

"Tutorial", "Hogye Clinic", "Criminal Career", "Fluffy", "Hogye Ore", "Mecha Loan".

## 7.2 Factions

### 7.2.1 Introduction to Factions

There are several organisations in GearHead which can be joined by the PC. They will give the PC equipment, money and training and offer them regular work by emailing mission opportunities to your character. In order to join a faction your character will need traits appropriate to the faction and the faction recruiter will need to have a good opinion of your character, this is listed in each faction's section as Requirements. Head to the appropriate Recruitment location and speak to the NPC mentioned in the faction specific text to ask to join.

As your character performs missions for their faction and raises skills the faction values they will earn promotions. Each promotion will be accompanied by some XP and some kind of reward, usually cash, equipment or a mecha. The faction don't really mind what your character does with their promotion rewards, so feel free to sell off any equipment you don't want, or strip a mecha for parts to use in other mecha.

We've listed the names of the missions each faction offers here, but for specific details on each mission you'll need to see sections 8.2 and 8.3.

Often various members of a faction the PC has joined will become allies of the PC, showing up at random to assist with various missions. Very few of these individuals will be available to directly join your character's lance.

Along with missions and promotions each faction will offer your character opportunities to train in the skills the faction prizes. Speak to the faction trainer and pony up some dough for an opportunity to increase skills.

### 7.2.2 Faction details.

#### *Guardians*

The Guardians are the enforcers of law and order in the Federated Territories. They keep the peace in towns and villages and act as criminal investigators. Effectively they're the police force in GearHead.

#### Recruitment locations:

Snake Lake Waterfront, Guardian Station. Contact Britaine.

#### Requirements:

Lawful reputation and good relationship with recruiter.

#### Ranks and rewards

Recruit

250 XP, Renegade class groundhugger, \$50,000.

Patrolman

100XP, Corsair class battroid.

Ranger

\$250,000

Detective

Peacemaker handgun. DC 6, Speed 7, BV 3, 80 shots, Armourpiercing. A devastating handgun when used with a good Small Arms skill.

Sergeant

Vadel class battroid.

Junior Inspector

SWAT armour. AC 9 body armour, integrated rocket launcher, lightweight. 80 shots, Swarm. Accuracy -1. AC 9 helmet with Memo, Email and Telephone systems, lightweight.

Inspector

Special training that gives skill bonuses. *((Need to establish what skills and what values))*

Superintendent

Hammer of Justice. DC 23 melee weapon. Thrown, Returning, Extend, Brutal. Accuracy +2, Speed 4.

Commissioner

Monstrous class groundhugger.

### Trainers

Britaine in Snake Lake Waterfront offers Armed Combat, Awareness, Dodge, Heavy Weapons, Martial Arts, Mecha Artillery, Mecha Fighting, Mecha Gunnery, Mecha Piloting, Mecha Weaponry, Resistance and Small Arms.

### Missions

Gang warfare

Investigate crime boss

Murder Club

Bounty hunting

Raider hunting

Capture raider member

Eliminate raider boss

Mecha thieves

Stolen Mecha

*Biocorp*

*((Get some kind of 'flavour' description from Joseph))*

### Recruitment locations:

BioCorp Offices in Last Hope

### Requirements:

Pragmatic reputation and good relationship with recruiter.

### Ranks and rewards

Wage Slave

*((Find out joining award))*

Employee of the Month

\$150,000

Committee Head

Daum class battroid.

Assistant Junior Manager

Advanced Cybereyes. Reflexes +3, Perception +4, Craft +2, Charm -1.

Junior Manager

\$450,000

Manager

Jos class battroid

Senior Manager

Neural Cyberboost. Craft +3, Knowledge +5, Ego -1.

Branch Director

Body Optimization. Body +5, Speed +3, Reflexes +2, Ego +3

Vice President

\$500,000

### Trainers

### Missions

*Kettel Industries*

*((Get some kind of 'flavour' description from Joseph))*

### Recruitment locations:

Gyori Factory

### Requirements:

Lawful reputation and good relationship with recruiter.

### Ranks and rewards

Wage Slave

*((Find out joining award))*

Employee of the Month

\$150,000

Committee Head

Daum class battroid.

Assistant Junior Manager

Advanced Cybereyes. Reflexes +3, Perception +4, Craft +2, Charm -1.

Junior Manager

\$450,000

Manager

Jos class battroid

Senior Manager

Neural Cyberboost. Craft +3, Knowledge +5, Ego -1.

Branch Director

Body Optimization. Body +5, Speed +3, Reflexes +2, Ego +3

Vice President

\$500,000

### Trainers

### Missions

*RegEx Corporation*

*((Get some kind of 'flavour' description from Joseph))*

### Recruitment locations:

Snake Lake Corporate Zone

### Requirements:

Sociable reputation and good relationship with recruiter.

### Ranks and rewards

Wage Slave

*((Find out joining award))*

Employee of the Month

\$150,000

Committee Head

Daum class battroid.

Assistant Junior Manager

Advanced Cybereyes. Reflexes +3, Perception +4, Craft +2, Charm -1.

Junior Manager

\$450,000

Manager

Jos class battroid

Senior Manager

Neural Cyberboost. Craft +3, Knowledge +5, Ego -1.

Branch Director

Body Optimization. Body +5, Speed +3, Reflexes +2, Ego +3

Vice President

\$500,000

### Trainers

### Missions

### *Solar Navy*

The Federated Territories interplanetary military, they look after FedTer interests offworld and protect the territories from offworld threats such as Aegis Overlord Luna.

#### Recruitment locations:

Namok

#### Requirements:

Good renown.

#### Ranks and rewards

Recruit

*((Find out joining award))*

Private

Dress Uniform. Lightweight AC 7 body armour.

Corporal

Kojedo class arachnoid.

Sergeant

\$350,000

Lieutenant

Zerosaiko class battroid.

Captain

Command sabre. DC 18 armourpiercing melee weapon. Accuracy +2, speed 8.

Lightweight.

Major

Special training course. *((Find out what skills at what levels))*

Colonel

Nova Carbine. DC10 beam weapon. Lightweight, armourpiercing, Acc 3, Speed 8, BV 3.

Admiral

Ovaknight class arachnoid.

#### Trainers

#### Missions

### *Federation Defence Force*

The Federation Defence Force is the army of the Federated Territories. They specialise in protecting the FedTer from terrestrial threats, such as Deadzone clans and hostile Terran nations.

#### Recruitment locations:

Wujung

### Requirements:

Good renown.

### Ranks and rewards

Recruit

*((find out joining award))*

Private

Dress Uniform. Lightweight AC 7 body armour.

Corporal

Kojedo class arachnoid.

Sergeant

\$350,000

Lieutenant

Zerosaiko class battroid.

Captain

Command sabre. DC 18 armourpiercing melee weapon. Accuracy +2, speed 8.

Lightweight.

Major

Special training course. *((Find out what skills at what levels))*

Colonel

Nova Carbine. DC10 beam weapon. Lightweight, armourpiercing, Acc 3, Speed 8, BV 3.

General

Ovaknight class arachnoid.

### Trainers

### Missions

#### *Hwang-Sa Temple*

### Recruitment locations:

Hwang-Sa Temple

### Requirements

Meditate at the Shrine of Ascension two days in a row, then pass a test. Must not be Villainous.

### Ranks and rewards

Neophyte

Initiate

Devotee

Adept

Master of the Four Winds

Master of the World Tree

Master of the Silver Waves

Master of the Dragon's Flame  
Master of the Sun and Moon

*((The monk promotion .txt file is unclear as to the nature of the awards.))*

### Trainers

### Missions

## **7.3 'Dungeons'**

*Hogy mines.* (Written by Igor Savin)

The most easy dungeon around. Entrance to it is located in abandoned black building in Hogle.

LV1

Enemies: Rats.

Items of interest: None.

LV2

Enemies: Rats, Iron Monkeys, Oviraptors, Icky Slimes.

Items of interest: None.

LV3

Enemies: The same as LV2?

Items of interest: Pick. *((to add DC of it later))*

LV4

Enemies: The same as LV2?

Items of interest: 2 Picks, Laser Drill; Rubbles (%), containing ore (apply Science on them when skill is high enough). *((To check out exact amount of rubbles around, more about ore subplot))*

LV5

Enemies: The same as LV2?.

Items of interest: Ladder down takes to the Wolfram mecha, which will be taken with PC if no mecha present, otherwise you'll have to move it out using mecha transporting. (+50 XP)

## **8.0 Plotline section**

Welcome to the second spoiler section of the Guide. Here we're going to explore the various storylines and missions available in the game, detailing locations, NPCs involved, the choices the PC can make and what the consequences of those choices may be.

### **8.1 Main plotlines**

When your character first begins their adventure, you'll be shown a background story that explains how your character came to be in the Federated Territories and what their history is. This is used as the basis for the main storyline for this character's game. By following

this plotline your character will learn more about what's going on in the world, and will eventually be able to win the game.

*((These storylines are big and long, it's gonna take a while to fill these in))*

## **8.2 Fixed Subplots**

Fixed subplots are single or multi-mission storylines that are independent to your character's main storyline, but are fixed in place in the GearHead world. That is, they can be found at the same place or by speaking to the same NPC in every game you play.

*Hogy Ore* (Written by Igor Savin)

Descend into the Hogye Mines to LV4. There find a rubble (yellow %). Apply "Science" skill. If it's high enough, you'll get 150 XP and a message about valuable ore. Return to the city. Talk to the Megi. Tell her about the discovered ore and receive \$25,000. If you demand your share before telling about ore - -1 Lawful. If you talk to Megi and say about the ore from the beginning, you'll get nothing at all and +1 Wangtta reputation (-1 Renown). To get money you first need to say about "thing that will get Hogye rich"

*Snake Lake Smuggling Ring* (Written by Igor Savin)

When the PC first enters this city, they will be approached by an NPC, asking if the PC has seen anything strange. The PC can lead the conversation further, learning about smuggling happening around, and then ask if he can help, receiving name of a Guardian leading the case. The Guardian (most easily found using phone) will tell the PC the name of a reformed bandit associated with the case. He can be found in Soju Haus (Magenta \$ walls in the ASCII version). The PC should talk with the bandit. "Flushed into the toilet?" Aha! Find a yellow dot (.) on the ground in the city, surrounded by some brown dots. Stand on it and enter ('>' key). You'll descend into the Snake Lake sewer. Look around, you should find a Data Cartridge lying somewhere around Level 1. Take it, then return to either the Guardian or the bandit, depending on which one you want your character to befriend.. Give them cartridge for a cash reward. If you want, agree to help him. Win a mecha fight, continue to personal-scale investigation. Wander around, find Canisters (yellow "S"), touch them, then return to the Guardian/bandit. That'll wrap up the case and bring you back to Snake Lake. Speak to either the Guardian or the bandit, depending on which one you helped, to collect your reward. The Guardian will give you some XP and you will shift toward Lawful. The Bandit will give you a large slice of cash and you will shift toward Chaotic. Whichever NPC you helped will become your ally and may be available to join your lance.

## **8.3 Random Subplots**

Random subplots are usually single mission (but sometimes multi-mission) plotlines that are unrelated to your character's main storyline. Their triggering location or NPC is determined at random and so changes each time you play.

*Defeat enemy raiding party.* (Written by Wyld Karde)



As with *destroy enemy base* this mission is associated with towns being attacked by Aegis Overlord Luna, Clan Ironwind or The Bone Devil Gang. The same triggering conditions apply.

The mecha scale battle takes place on a randomly generated wilderness map. Destroy all the enemy mecha and the battle will automatically end. The level of opposition is determined by the current difficulty level. Salvage is available on this mission.

*Destroy enemy base.* (Written by Wyld Karde)

This mission is associated with towns being attacked by either Aegis Overlord Luna, Clan Ironwind or The Bone Devil Gang. It is triggered by your character speaking to one of the people defending the town, either a member of the Solar Navy in the case of Luna, or a soldier if it's Ironwind or Bone Devils. The NPC will instruct your character to attack a base being used by the enemy and destroy the power generator inside.

The mecha scale battle takes place on a randomly generated wilderness map. Somewhere on the map will be the enemy fortress, a large building with grey '#' type walls in the ASCII version. Inside the building will be the power generator, a red '&' in ASCII. Attack the power generator until it's destroyed, then leave the map to win. The fortress will be defended by a level of opposition appropriate to the current difficulty level. Salvage is not available on this mission.

*Stolen mecha.* (Written by Wyld Karde)

This mission is associated with the Guardians and is most often found during times of high raider activity. It can be triggered by speaking to the Guardian in charge of the case. PCs who have joined the Guardians will be sent an email from this NPC asking them to make contact. Non-Guardian PCs will just have to speak to Guardians until the job is offered. A local gang of criminals have raided a warehouse or cargo convoy and made off with a number of powerful mecha and the PC is instructed to destroy them before they can be used for criminal activity.

The mecha scale battle takes place on a randomly generated wilderness map. Destroy all the enemy mecha and the battle will automatically end. The level of opposition is *much* higher than normal for the current difficulty level, although the pilots are not especially skilled. ((*Salvage status currently unknown*))

## **9.0 Guide Credits**

GearHead Arena is written by Joseph Hewitt.

The GearHead Guide is compiled, edited and maintained by Wyld Karde.

Big shout out to Aquillion whose extensive experience playing the game has lead to him writing tips for large portions of this guide, including Robots, Mecha Combat, Mecha Modification and Skills Management.

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*((Hope I've not missed anyone out. If I have then drop me a line gently reminding me what you did and you'll be added with a heartfelt apology))*