

RUINSTARS

Squad Operations In A Dying Galaxy

CORE RULES

2nd Edition v20260308





RUINSTARS

1. INTRODUCTION

THE GALAXY IS IN RUINS

The stars are going out. The great empires are gone or gutted, their borders redrawn in ash. But the galaxy isn't empty. Factions still fight over what's left - and what's left is worth fighting over.

The galaxy is dying. War lives on.

AT A GLANCE

- **Players:** 1-4 (PvE), or 2 (PvP)
- **Sessions:** ~45-90 minutes
- **Dice:** D6
- **Table Size:** 2' x 2'
- **Free:** Download the complete rules

WHAT IS THIS GAME?

Ruinstars is a narrative sci-fi skirmish wargame about elite squads on dark-ops missions, and the brutal choices that decide who gets to walk away. Fast, lethal, and objective-driven. Built for solo, co-op, and competitive play.

- **Squad-Scale Tactics:** Command 4-10 Units in tight, terrain-heavy fights where positioning and timing matter more than raw stats.
- **Narrative Without the Bloat:** Campaign play adds scars, rewards, and hard choices, without turning your table into bookkeeping.
- **Play Modes:** PvE solo or co-op campaigns, PvP, and Horde Mode.

GETTING STARTED

1. Download the [Core Rules](#)
2. Gather some dice (D6) and your miniatures
3. Play the Intro Mission (in the Core Rules, p. 10)
4. Select your [Faction](#) and build your Squad
5. Play your first PvP Mission, start your PvE Campaign, or test your mettle in Horde Mode

THE APP

Draft a Squad, manage your GP budget, and share it with a link.
[Create a free account](#) to get started.

NOTE ON USE OF AI

Ruinstars is still in development and includes select concept art and visuals generated with the aid of AI image tools. While these assets support visual development and thematic exploration, they are not final and all images will be replaced with art created by actual artists by the time the game is finalized.

2. CORE MECHANICS

DICE ROLLS

Ruinstars uses 6-sided dice for all rolls. These will be indicated throughout the rules as **D6**.

Some rolls will require more than one die. For those, the number of dice to roll will be indicated before **D6**.

For example, to indicate a roll of 3 dice: **3D6**. To indicate a roll of 1 die: **1D6**.

Some rules and abilities will include rolling a **D3**. To roll a **D3**, simply roll a normal **D6**, divide the result by 2, and round up.

D6 Roll	D3 Result
1-2	1
3-4	2
5-6	3

SUCCESSSES AND FAILURES

When rolling against a Unit or weapon stat, a die roll is a success if its value is equal to or lower than that stat.

Irrespective of any modifiers or Stats, a die roll of **6** is always a failure.

A roll of **1** is always a Critical success and trigger special effects depending on the roll (see Combat).

RE-ROLLS

Certain rules and events allow you to re-roll a die. In those cases, announce the die to be re-rolled, pick it up, and roll it again. Once a die is re-rolled, its result is final and it cannot be re-rolled again.

3. GAME CYCLE

MISSION START

SELECT MISSION

PREPARE BATTLEFIELD

DEPLOY UNITS

TURNS (1-4)

START OF TURN

ACTIVATE UNITS

END OF TURN

MISSION END

VICTORY

EARN MP

APPLY INJURIES

MISSION START

1. Select Mission

Select a Mission, scripted operation, or Horde mode

2. Prepare Battlefield

Prepare the battlefield as defined by the selected mission. Place terrain, markers, and items such as crates and barrels.

3. Deploy Units

Follow the Mission's briefing to deploy your Units and spawn enemy Units.

TURNS

Missions typically have four Turns, but some Missions may have different conditions.

1. Start of Turn

1. Mark all Units as Ready (not Activated)
2. Resolve all "Start of Turn" skills or events
3. Each player rolls **1D6**. The Squad with the lowest result wins Initiative and chooses which Squad activates first this Turn. On a tie, re-roll.

2. Activate Units

The Squad with Initiative activates one unit. Squads then alternate activating units until all units have been activated. How opposing units are controlled depends on your play mode. See also [Alternating Activations](#).

3. End of Turn

Resolve all "End of Turn" actions or events. Score Mission Points according to the selected Mission.

MISSION END

1. Victory

Determine success or failure of the Mission.

2. Earn MP

Player Squad gains MP according to the mission briefing.

Mission Points are a campaign resource earned at the end of each mission.

How MP is scored and spent is defined in your chosen play mode book.

3. Apply Injuries

Roll **1D6** for each Unit that was Taken Out during the Mission, and apply the corresponding Injury.

Injury resolution varies by play mode. The full Injury table and rules are defined in your chosen play mode book (PvE Missions, PvP Missions, or Horde Mode).

ALTERNATING ACTIVATIONS

Each turn, squads alternate activating one unit at a time. The squad with Initiative activates first. This continues until all units on the battlefield have been activated. In PvP, each player controls their own squad. In PvE and Horde Mode, opposing units are controlled by NPC rules defined in the relevant play mode book.

4. STAT CARDS

StatCards describe your Units and their Weapons with numerical values, and any special Skills they may have. In general, the higher the stat number, the better the Unit or Weapon.

Note that in the [app](#) and on the website, you can click or tap Specials to view what they mean, and Skills or Equipment to get their full description.

1. TOLAND STRAK		
ACT 3	ARM 4	HIT 5
WEAPONS		ATT SKL
✘ Combat Knife (2MC) ^{1GP}		2 4
⊕ Reaper (2RC) ^{5GP}		4 5
SKILLS		
Leader*		Strategize* (1 ACT)
SQUAD SPECIALTY		Duty Before Death
<p>Duty Before Death: When this Unit reaches 0 HIT, it may perform one free basic or mission action before losing its last HIT. That action must be 1 ACT or less.</p> <p>Leader: This Unit gains +1 HIT, +1 SKL on its Weapons, and Leader: While this Unit is Standing, you may roll an additional 2 dice to determine Tactical Orders every turn.</p> <p>Strategize (1ACT): This Unit's Squad gains +1 TO.</p>		
Strike Trooper 13+6GP		FV: 2

UNIT STATS

- **ACT** - Action Points
The maximum number of Action Points this Unit can spend on [Actions](#) during its activation.
- **ARM** - Armor
Indicates how well this Unit resists damage during [combat](#).
When rolling Armor Saves, results of this stat or lower are successful.
- **HIT** - Hit Points
The Unit's number of Hit Points. When a Unit reaches zero **HIT**, it is **Taken Out** and removed from the battlefield (see [Combat](#)).
If a Unit has at least 1 **HIT** remaining, it is considered to be **Standing**.
- **GP** - Gear Points
The total cost in Gear Points (GP) for this Unit.
- **FV** - Force Value
The Force Value of this Unit. **FV** is used in some missions to determine a Unit's contribution to Mission Points. For example, in the [Attrition](#) Mission, Squads gain MPs equal to Taken Out Units' Force Value.

For example:

- Toland Strak is a Strike Trooper
- **ACT** - He can spend up to **3** Action Points on Actions during each of his activations.
- **ARM** - Each time he is the target of Combat and rolls Armor Saves, each result of **4** or less is a successful Save.
- **HIT** - He starts each Mission with **5** Hit Points.

WEAPON STATS

- ✘/⊕ - Weapon Type
✘ indicates a Melee weapon, ⊕ indicates a Ranged weapon.
- **ATT** - Attacks
How many Dice are rolled each time this Weapon is used.
- **SKL** - Skill
Indicates the skill of this Unit when using this Weapon. Rolls that are equal to or less than this value are successful strikes.
- **(SPECIAL)** - Weapon Specials
Specials for this weapon are listed next to its name. In the [app](#) and on the [website](#), click or tap on them to read their full description. Don't worry about remembering the codes; they will quickly become second nature to you.

For example:

- ⊕ - Toland Strak's **Reaper** is a Ranged weapon.
- **ATT** - Each time it is used, Toland Strak rolls 4 dice.
- **SKL** - Each result of 5 or less is a success.

SKILLS

Some Units will have Skills listed on their StatCard. These are unique properties of that Unit that may allow them to perform a specific unique Action, or gain a bonus (or debuff) for certain game mechanics.

- Skills that have an **ACT** cost can be performed using the Unit's **ACT** Stat or a [Tactical Order](#), or a combination of both.
- Skills that have a **TO** cost cannot be performed using the Unit's **ACT** Stat; they must be performed by spending [Tactical Orders](#).
- Skills and Equipment that do not have an **ACT** or **TO** cost are passive skills that do not require spending an Action Point or Tactical Order.

For example, Toland Strak has 3 skills: Duty Before Death, Leader*, Strategize*.

5. BUILDING YOUR SQUAD

A standard Squad is 4-10 Units built from your chosen Faction's available Units, with a total cost of **100 GP**, including all units and gear. Full Faction lists are available in the [Factions PDF](#) or on the [Factions Page](#).

For your first mission, use the Starter Squad provided: a multi-purpose Hegemony Interdictor squad that covers the core rules in play.

When building your squad, keep these rules in mind:

- Your squad must include exactly one Leader.
- Units, Skills, and Weapons marked with an asterisk (*) are Unique: your squad may only include one of each.
- Each unit card lists its available gear, weapons, and skills. Items with a GP cost are optional; add that cost to your total if selected.
Items marked with an asterisk (*) are also optional and Unique: only one Unit in your Squad may have it.

Build your Squad using the [app](#), or print and fill your own [Squad Sheet PDF](#).

When playing cooperatively, players may choose one of the following formats:

- **Shared Squad:**

Players share control of one full 100 GP Squad. Players take turns activating Units in that Squad.

- **Mini Squads:**

Each player deploys a reduced-size Squad from any faction:

- 2 Players → 50 GP each
- 3 Players → 34 GP each
- 4 Players → 25 GP each

Notes:

- Units that are in different mini-Squads are considered to be Squadmates.
- Each Mini Squad may include a Leader. However, only one Leader counts for rolling TO dice. Before the mission begins, players agree on which Leader this is. That Leader is the **Squad Leader**.
- While the **Squad Leader** is Standing, roll 5 TO dice as normal. If the Squad Leader is Taken Out, roll 3 TO dice, regardless of whether other Leaders are still Standing.

FACTIONS

HEGEMONY

Order through force. Survival through control.



INTERDICTORS

We are the mandate. We do not fail.



PRAXIUM CORPS

Doctrine is a weapon.

CRIMSON SHROUD

The Song Beneath The Stars



SILENT CHOIR

We were always here.

EIDOLON REVENANTS

Time is a slow poison.



RELICT WARDENS

We arise.

THE SWARM

Extinction doesn't negotiate.



DRONE POD

One claw rips. A thousand claws erase.



HUNTER KILLERS

There is no outrunning what was bred to hunt.

OUTER CLAIM

The galaxy forgot them. They remember.



CLAIMANT WARBAND

Old debts in new blood.



DESPOILERS

Pain is strength.

GRUTAK

Loud. Violent. Effective. Mostly.



KRUMPFISTS

Call Dat a Krump?

6. ACTIONS

During its activation, a Unit can perform a number of Actions up to its **ACT** stat (see [StatCards](#)).

Each Action costs a number of Action Points or **ACT**.

Actions with an **ACT** cost can be performed by spending the Unit's **ACT** Action Points or the Squad's [Tactical Orders](#), or any combination of the two (for example, if a Unit's skill costs **2 ACT**, you can spend **1 ACT** + **1 TO** to perform that action).

Actions with a **TO** cost can only be performed by spending the Squad's [Tactical Orders](#).

Each action costs its listed number of **ACT** the first time it is performed in a Unit's Activation. Each time that same action is repeated in the same Activation, it costs one additional **ACT**.

For example, a Unit with **3 ACT** may perform 2 Moves in its Activation. The first Move costs **1 ACT**, and the second one costs **2 ACT**.

BASIC ACTIONS

All Units can perform the following Actions during their Activation:

Action	ACT	Description
Move	1	The Unit <u>moves</u> up to 6".
Dash	1	The Unit moves up to 2". This movement follows the same rules as a <u>normal Move</u> .
Ranged Combat	1	The Unit makes a Ranged attack against a valid target. See <u>Ranged Combat</u> .
Melee Combat	1	The Unit makes a Melee attack against an Adjacent target. See <u>Melee Combat</u> .
Pick Up	1	The Unit picks up an Adjacent marker or token it controls.
Drop	1	The Unit drops a marker or token it is carrying in a position Adjacent to the Unit.
Give	1	The Unit passes a marker or token it is carrying to an Adjacent Squadmate it controls.
Open/Close Door	1	The Unit opens or closes an Adjacent door.
Mission Action	-	Mission Actions are special mission-specific Actions that can be performed according to the Mission Briefing.

MISSION ACTIONS

Certain Missions will define special Actions that can be performed by Units. Read the Mission Briefing to determine if the Mission defines any such Actions.

TACTICAL ORDERS

Tactical Orders are a shared Squad resource that represents command, coordination, and the ability to react when the plan starts to fall apart.

At the start of each Turn, players roll for **Tactical Orders (TO)**. Each roll of 1-3 is a success and give that Squad **1 TO**. The number of dice to roll is:

- **Leader:**

- If the Squad's Leader is still Standing, roll **5 TO dice**.

- If the Squad's Leader has been Taken Out, roll **3 TO dice**.

- **Taken Out:** For each Unit that was Taken Out during the Mission, the Squad gains 1 additional Tactical Order (e.g. if 2 Units were Taken Out, the Squad gains 2 Tactical Orders on top of the results of the roll).

At the end of each Turn, any unused Tactical Orders are lost; they do not carry over to the following Turn.

USING TACTICAL ORDERS

Tactical Orders may be spent to:

- Perform a Unit's **TO** Skill. Unless otherwise indicated, **TO** skills cannot be performed more than once per Turn
- Re-roll any one die for any of your rolls (including during one of your opponent's Units' Activations, for example during Melee combat).
- Change the result of one of your rolled dice by +/- 1. Note that this is stackable; you can spend **2 TO** to reduce the result of a die by 2, or spend multiple **TO** on multiple dice in a given roll. Modifying a die roll in this way does not trigger roll-specific effects (e.g. reducing an Attack die roll of **2** to **1** does not turn it into Critical success).
- Perform an Additional Basic or Mission Action during a Unit's Activation.

7. MOVEMENT

BATTLEFIELD

The Battlefield is typically 2' by 2', or 60cm x 60cm. Other valid formats include 3' x 3', 2' x 3', and 30" x 22". You can bring your own battlefield, or use our print-at-home [Battlefields](#) with a pre-marked grid.

If you prefer to play with a grid, see [Playing on a Grid](#) for details.

MOVEMENT

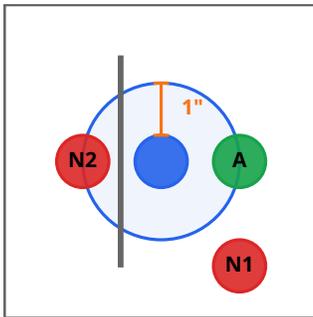
When a Unit performs a Move Action, the maximum distance it can travel is **6"**.

A Unit may not move in a way that would require its base to cover an enemy Unit's base at any point in the movement.

ADJACENT

Two Units or Items are considered to be **Adjacent** if:

- The closest edges of their bases are within 1" of each other,
- They are on the same elevation, and
- There is no wall between them.



CONTROL

A Unit **Controls** a marker, Unit, or objective if all the following conditions are met:

- The Unit is Adjacent to that item,
- The Unit is not Adjacent to any enemy Units, and
- The item is not Adjacent to any enemy Units

ATTACKS OF OPPORTUNITY

When a Unit Moves or Dashes out of Adjacency to an enemy Unit, that enemy may immediately perform a free Melee attack against the moving Unit. This is called an **Attack of Opportunity**.

If the moving Unit is Adjacent to multiple enemies, only one of those enemies may perform an Attack of Opportunity, though they still get support in the Melee Combat Action.

The moving Unit may choose to spend some or all of its movement inches to blunt the attack. For each 2" of movement it spends in this way, reduce the number of attack dice the enemy rolls (the weapon's **ATT** stat) by **1**.

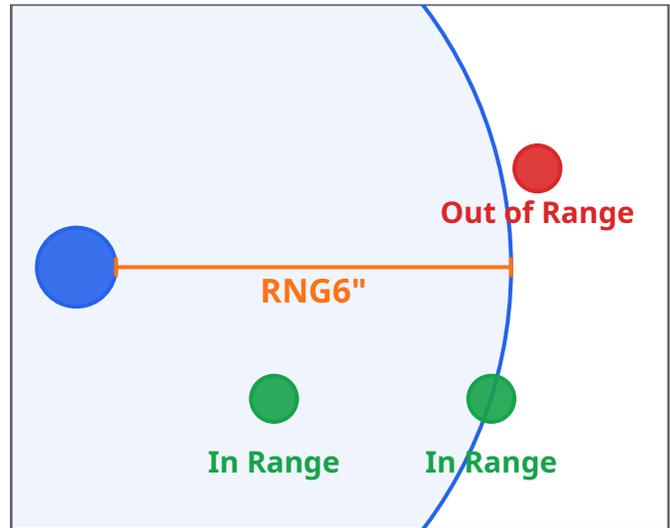
Each Unit can perform only one Attack of Opportunity per Turn.

DISTANCES AND RANGE

To measure the distance between two Units or Items (for example, to check if a target is within the Range of a given Ranged Weapon), only measure on the Horizontal plane; ignore vertical distance.

The target is considered to be in range of that weapon if the distance between the two closest points of their bases is equal to or lower than the weapon's range.

If a Ranged weapon does not have a specified Range (**RNGx**), its range is infinite.



*The soldier has a Ranged weapon with a range of 6" (RNG6). The bugs marked in **green** are within range, while the bugs marked in **red** are out of range.*

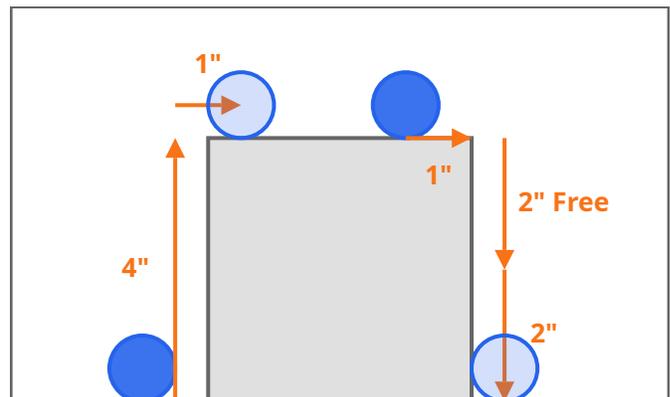
VERTICAL MOVEMENT

Climbing Up:

When a Unit climbs vertical terrain, it spends movement distance inch-for-inch on the vertical height, then spends an additional 1" to move onto the top of the terrain. All of this distance counts toward the Unit's total movement for the action. A wall or surface may only be climbed if all players agree it is Climbable at the start of the battle. Climbable terrain should be clearly identifiable, such as by ladders, handholds, or similar features.

Climbing Down:

Climbing down follows the same rules, but vertical distance costs 2" less (to a minimum of 0"), representing controlled descent.



8. COMBAT

RANGED COMBAT

SEQUENCE

1. Select Target

1. The Attacker selects one of their Ranged weapons to use
2. The Attacker selects a valid Target. The Target must:
 - Not be Adjacent to the Attacker or the Attacker's Squadmates
 - Be within the Weapon's range (**RNGx**)
 - Be in the Attacker's Line of Sight

A Unit may not perform this action if it is Adjacent to any enemy Units.

2. Roll Attacks

1. Roll a number of dice equal to the weapon's **ATT** (Attacks).
2. Each die result equal to or less than the weapon's **SKL** (Skill) is a successful strike and inflicts 1 point of Damage on the Target.
 - A roll of **1** is a **Critical Strike** and inflicts 2 points of Damage
 - A roll of **6** is always a failure

3. Roll Armor Saves

1. The Target rolls one die per point of Damage inflicted.
2. Each result equal to or less than the Target's **ARM** (Armor) is a successful Save.
 - A roll of **1** is a **Critical Save** and counts as 2 Saves
 - A roll of **6** is always a failure
3. Each unsaved point of Damage causes the Target to lose **1 HIT**
4. If a Unit reaches zero **HIT**, it is Taken Out and removed from the battlefield.

MODIFIERS

Condition	Description
Cover	If the Target is in <u>cover</u> , the Target may re-roll one Save die.
High Ground	If the Attacker is at least 4" higher than its Target, the Target does not benefit from Cover

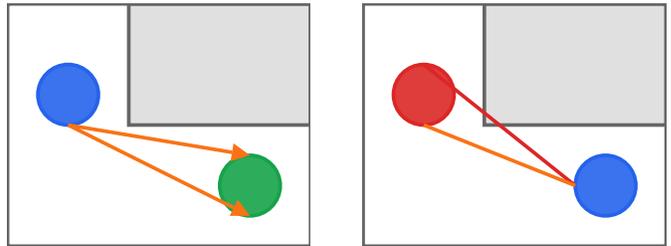
LINE OF SIGHT

A Target is said to be in an Attacker's **Line of Sight** if two uninterrupted lines can be drawn from one of the point of the Attacker's base to two opposite edges of the Target's base.

A Unit cannot target an enemy Unit for Ranged Combat if there are other Units on that Line of Sight (i.e. a Unit cannot shoot "through" other Units).

SPECIAL CASES

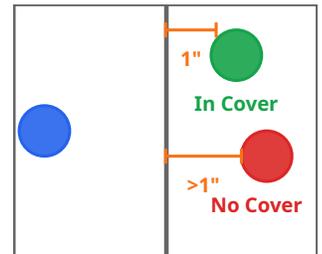
These rules mean that in some cases, a Unit may be able to target an enemy Unit even if that Unit cannot target them in return.



COVER

If a Target is only partially visible to the Attacker (for example, there is a short wall between the two Units), that Target is said to be in cover. Cover only applies to Ranged attacks; there is no Cover benefit for Melee attacks.

A Target is in Cover if a piece of terrain blocks the Attacker's full view of the Target and that terrain is within 1" of the Target.



MELEE COMBAT

SEQUENCE

1. Select Target

1. The Attacker selects one of their Melee weapons to use
2. The Target must be Adjacent to the Attacker

2. Roll Attacks

1. Roll a number of dice equal to the weapon's **ATT** (Attacks).
2. Each die result equal to or less than the weapon's **SKL** (Skill) is a successful strike and inflicts 1 point of Damage on the Target.
 - A roll of **1** is a **Critical Strike** and inflicts 2 points of Damage
 - A roll of **6** is always a failure

3. Roll Armor Saves

1. The Target rolls one die per point of Damage inflicted.
2. Each result equal to or less than the Target's **ARM** (Armor) is a successful Save.
 - A roll of **1** is a **Critical Save**:
 - It blocks 1 point of Damage, and
 - Inflicts 1 point of Melee Damage on the Attacker. The Attacker then rolls their own Armor Saves for that returned Damage.
 - This effect can chain: if the Attacker then rolls a Critical Save, they return damage to the Target, and so on.
 - A roll of **6** is always a failure
3. Each unsaved point of Damage causes the Target to lose 1 **HIT**
4. If a Unit reaches zero **HIT**, it is Taken Out and removed from the battlefield.

MODIFIERS

Condition	Description
Support - Attacker	For each of the Attacker's Squadmates Adjacent to the Target, the Attacker may re-roll one Attack die.
Support - Target	For each of the Target's Squadmates Adjacent to the Target, the Target may re-roll one Save die.

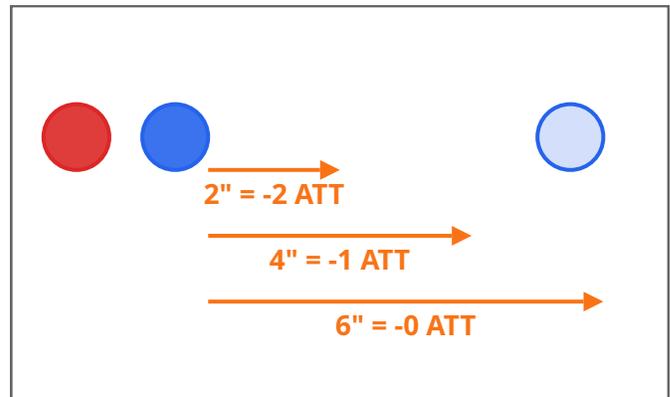
ATTACKS OF OPPORTUNITY

When a Unit Moves or Dashes out of Adjacency to an enemy Unit, that enemy may immediately perform a free Melee attack against the moving Unit. This is called an **Attack of Opportunity**.

If the moving Unit is Adjacent to multiple enemies, only one of those enemies may perform an Attack of Opportunity, though they still get support in the Melee Combat Action.

The moving Unit may choose to spend some or all of its remaining movement inches to blunt the attack instead of moving. For each 2" of movement it spends in this way, reduce the number of attack dice the enemy rolls (the weapon's **ATT** stat) by **1**.

Each Unit can perform only one Attack of Opportunity per Turn.



9. PLAYING ON A GRID

Ruinstars supports two ways to play: freeform measurement in inches, and squares. Both are fully supported. Neither is a simplified version of the other. If you're new to the game, or just prefer not to reach for a ruler, the grid is a clean on-ramp with no mechanical trade-offs.

The print-at-home Battlefields tile into a 12x12 grid of 2" squares across nine letter- or A4-sized pages. Printed and assembled, the board is 24"x24".

GRID RULES

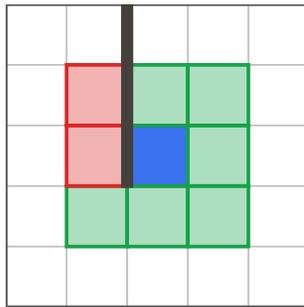
GENERAL RULES

To keep things simple, treat each square as 2". This applies to weapon ranges (so a weapon with **RNG6"** has a range of **3 squares**) and abilities that have a **within x"** requirement. Similarly, the Move action is 3 Squares (= 6") and the Dash action is 1 Square (= 2").

ADJACENCY

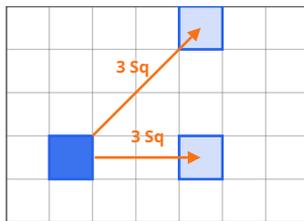
Two units are Adjacent if they occupy contiguous squares on the same level with no wall between them. Diagonal squares count as contiguous.

All rules that depend on Adjacency, including Control, apply unchanged.



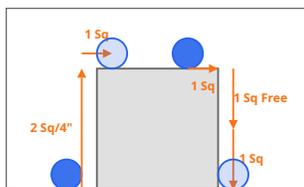
MOVEMENT

A Move action allows up to 3 squares of movement. A Dash allows 1 square.



Climbing Up: Each square of vertical height costs 1 square of movement. Cresting the top or going over an edge onto the lower surface costs 1 additional square horizontally.

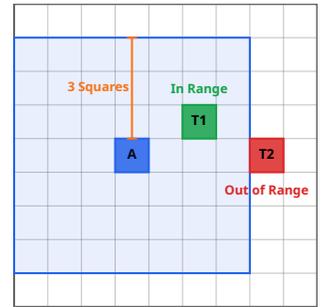
Climbing Down: Same as climbing up, but the first square of vertical descent is free (minimum 0).



RANGE

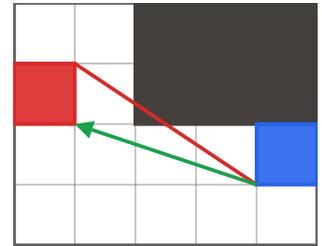
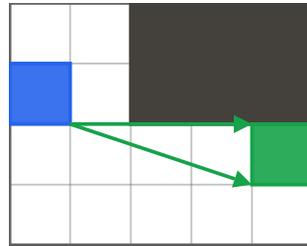
Count squares between the Attacker and its Target, as if the Attacker was moving horizontally (ignore vertical distance).

Unit A has a weapon with range 6" (RNG6"), which translates to 3 Squares. Target 1 is in range, and Target 2 is out of range (4 Squares away).



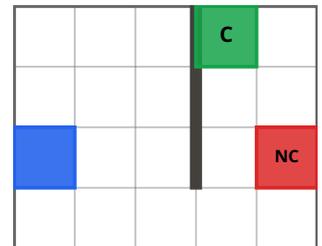
LINE OF SIGHT

Draw two uninterrupted lines from any corner of the attacker's square to the two nearest corners of the target's square. If both lines reach their destination without crossing a wall, the target is in line of sight.



COVER

A target is in Cover if a wall occupies any of its square's edges.



10. FIRST MISSION

This first mission is designed to introduce the core mechanics of Ruinstars in a contained, high-pressure scenario. Your Squad deploys at the center of the battlefield and must push outward to locate and destroy three Bug Spawn Points before the end of Turn 4, while managing an ever-growing swarm that gets larger every turn. You'll practice moving under pressure, choosing between offensive and defensive priorities, and coordinating activations across your Squad. There are no objectives to carry, no doors to open, and no special actions to remember, just movement, combat, and the hard choices that come when you can't do everything at once.

The city has been dark for three days. What began as isolated sightings on the outer districts has become something else entirely: a coordinated infestation moving inward with purpose. Command has designated the central strongpoint as the last viable defensive position in the sector, and your Squad has been ordered to hold it. The mission is simple: find the Nests, destroy them before the swarm becomes uncontrollable, and don't let the horde overrun your position.

No reinforcements are coming. No extraction window has been scheduled. Command doesn't need you to win. They need you to buy time.

AFTER YOUR FIRST MISSION

The introductory mission focuses on area control and core movement and combat.

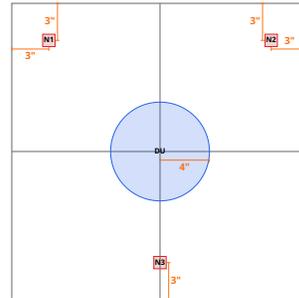
Ruinstars is designed around three distinct ways to play, each with its own book that builds on these Core Rules:

- [PvE Missions PDF](#) is the recommended next step for most players. It adds procedurally generated missions, cooperative or solo squad play, campaign structure with persistent injuries and rewards, and a roster of NPC factions to fight against. Pick this up if you want solo or co-op play with narrative progression.
- [PvP Missions PDF](#) pits two players head-to-head with their own custom squads across a set of competitive missions with their own campaign structure. Pick this up if you want to test your squad-building and tactics against another player.
- [Horde Mode PDF](#) is a standalone survival experience where your squad faces escalating waves of enemies with no extraction, just how long can you last? Pick this up if you want a brutal, replayable challenge with no campaign overhead.

All three modes use the same Core Rules you've just learned. Each play mode book defines its own mission structure, scoring, turn additions, and campaign rules. You don't need to read all three, just pick the one that fits how you want to play.

1 - SURVIVE

BATTLEFIELD



- DU Player Squad Deployment Zone
- N1 Nest 1
- N2 Nest 2
- N3 Nest 3

DEPLOYMENT

Player Units deploy anywhere within 4" of the center of the battlefield

SPECIAL

At the start of each Turn, spawn x Bugs (max 4) Adjacent to each Spawn Point, where x is the Turn number (i.e. one bug in Turn 1, two bugs in Turn 2, etc.).

Bug Units are activated after each player Unit activation, alternating player control.

Unit	ACT	ARM	HIT
Bug	2	3	1
Weapon		ATT	SKL
(M) Bite		3	4

Spawn Points are treated as items and can be targeted in combat. Spawn Points cannot be targeted in ranged combat if there is at least one Bug Adjacent to that Spawn Point.

Item	ACT	ARM	HIT
Spawn Point	-	4	1

VICTORY

At the end of Turn 4, if all Spawn Points have been Taken Out, your Squad wins the mission.

FIRST MISSION UNITS

1. LEADER

ACT 3	ARM 3	HIT 4		
WEAPONS		ATT	SKL	
✘ Melee Weapon		3	4	
⊕ Ranged Weapon		3	4	
Leader 20GP			FV: 2	

2. TROOPER

ACT 2	ARM 3	HIT 3		
WEAPONS		ATT	SKL	
✘ Melee Weapon		3	3	
⊕ Ranged Weapon		3	3	
Trooper 15GP			FV: 2	

3. FIGHTER

ACT 2	ARM 3	HIT 3		
WEAPONS		ATT	SKL	
✘ Melee Weapon		3	4	
⊕ Ranged Weapon		3	2	
Fighter 15GP			FV: 2	

4. SHOOTER

ACT 2	ARM 3	HIT 3		
WEAPONS		ATT	SKL	
✘ Melee Weapon		3	2	
⊕ Ranged Weapon		3	4	
Shooter 15GP			FV: 2	

5. BUG

ACT 2	ARM 3	HIT 1		
WEAPONS		ATT	SKL	
✘ Bite		3	4	
SKILLS				
Swift	Behavior			
<p>Behavior: - If there is a valid Melee target, attack that target in Melee combat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dash to be adjacent to closest enemy Unit • Move toward closest enemy Unit, to cover if possible • Dash toward closest enemy Unit, to cover if possible <p>Swift: Each time this Unit performs the Dash action, it costs one less ACT. This means that the first time this Unit performs a Dash in each of its Activations, it costs zero ACT.</p>				
Bug 0GP			FV: 0	

QUICK REFERENCE

DICE & ROLLS

1 CRITICAL	2-5 NORMAL	6 ALWAYS FAIL
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Success: Roll equal to or lower than the target stat.

Always fails: A roll of 6 is always a failure regardless of modifiers.

Critical: A roll of 1 is a critical success with bonus effects.

Re-rolls: Each die may only be re-rolled once. Result is final.

D3: Roll D6 ÷ 2 rounding up. (1-2 = 1, 3-4 = 2, 5-6 = 3)

ACTIONS

Each action costs listed ACT first time; +1 ACT each repeat in same activation.

ACTION	ACT	EFFECT
Move	1	Up to 6"
Dash	1	Up to 2", same rules as Move
Ranged Combat	1	Attack valid target in LoS & range
Melee Combat	1	Attack Adjacent target
Pick Up / Drop	1	Adjacent marker/token
Give	1	Pass token to Adjacent squadmate
Open/Close Door	1	Adjacent door
Mission Action	-	As defined in Mission Briefing

RANGED COMBAT

SELECT TARGET > **ROLL ATT** > **ROLL ARM SAVES**

Valid target must:

- Not be Adjacent to Attacker or Squadmates
- Be within weapon range (RNGx)
- Be in Line of Sight

Cannot attack if Adjacent to any enemy.

MODIFIER	EFFECT
Cover	Target may re-roll 1 Armor Save
High Ground	Attacker 4"+ higher: target loses Cover

Cover applies only if terrain is within 1" of target.

MOVEMENT & POSITIONING

RULE	DETAIL
Move	Up to 6" per action
Adjacent	Bases within 1", same elevation, no wall between
Control	Adjacent to item, not adjacent to any enemy
Climb Up	1" per inch of height + 1" to crest top
Climb Down	Same but vertical costs 2" less (min 0")
Range	Horizontal only - ignore vertical distance

Attack of Opportunity: When a unit moves out of Adjacency to an enemy, that enemy may make a free Melee attack.

Spend 2" of movement to reduce enemy ATT dice by 1. Max 1 AoO per unit per turn.

GAME CYCLE

MISSION START

SELECT MISSION > **SET UP** > **DEPLOY UNITS**

EACH TURN

START OF TURN > **ACTIVATE UNITS** > **END OF TURN**

ACTIVATIONS

Squads alternate activating one Unit until all Units are activated.

MISSION END

VICTORY > **EARN MP** > **APPLY INJURIES**

MP & Injury rules defined in your play mode.

TACTICAL ORDERS (TO)

Roll TO dice each turn. Each 1-3 = 1 TO. Unused TO are lost end of turn.

CONDITION	DICE
Leader Standing	5 dice
Leader Taken Out	3 dice
Per Unit Taken Out	+1 TO

SPEND TO TO:

- Perform a Unit's TO Skill
- Re-roll any one die
- Change a die result by +1 (stackable)
- Perform an extra Basic or Mission Action

MELEE COMBAT

SELECT TARGET > **ROLL ATT** > **ROLL ARM SAVES**

Target must be Adjacent. Cover does not apply to Melee.

ROLL RESULT	EFFECT
ATT roll 1	Critical Strike - 2 Damage
ARM roll 1	Critical Save - blocks 1 dmg + returns 1 dmg to attacker (chainable)
SUPPORT	EFFECT
Attacker side	Per squadmate Adjacent to target: re-roll 1 ATT die
Defender side	Per squadmate Adjacent to target: re-roll 1 Save die

SQUAD BUILDING

Budget: 100 GP total (units + gear).

Size: 4-10 Units.

Leader: Exactly one per Squad.

Unique (*) Units and gear: max one per squad.

CO-OP MINI SQUADS

2P → 50 GP each · 3P → 34 GP each · 4P → 25 GP each

Only one Leader across all mini-squads.

WEAPON SPECIALS

CODE	NAME
*	Unique
	A Squad cannot include this Gear more than once.
ZMC	Double Melee
	During each of its Activations, the second time this Unit performs the Melee Combat action with this weapon costs 1 less ACT.
ZRC	Double Ranged
	During each of its Activations, the second time this Unit performs the Ranged Combat action with this weapon costs 1 less ACT.
ACCx	Accurate x
	Each time this Weapon is used in Ranged Combat, the Attacker may re-roll up to x of its Attack dice.
AUTx	Autohit x
	Each time this weapon is used in Combat, x of this Weapon's Attack dice is an automatic Strike without rolling it. You may still choose to roll that die.
BLS	Blast
	Each time the Unit uses this weapon, it fires against the target and any other Adjacent Units (including Squadmates) visible to the original target. Roll Attack dice once and apply the resulting strikes to each affected Unit.
BRUx	Brutal x
	Each time this weapon is used in Melee Combat, the Attacker may re-roll up to x of its Melee Combat attack dice.
CHRx	Chain Reaction x
	Each time this weapon is used in Combat, after resolving the Attack on the primary target, you may apply the same Attack roll's strikes on up to x other secondary targets Adjacent to the original target.
HIT	Hit Strikes
	This Weapon's ATT is equal to this Unit's remaining HIT.
HVY	Heavy
	This weapon penalizes the Unit's movement and firing actions: If the Unit performs a Move Action, its next combat action performed with this weapon costs 1 additional ACT. If the Unit uses this weapon in combat, its next Move Action costs 1 additional ACT. Units can perform a Dash Action with this weapon equipped without any penalties.
LIM	Limited Ammo
	This weapon can only be used once during each Mission.
NCV	No Cover
	Each time this Weapon is used in combat, targets do not benefit from Cover.
PBK	Point Blank
	This Ranged weapon can target an adjacent Enemy. Note using this weapon in this way is still a Ranged attack.
RLT	Relentless
	Each time this Weapon is used in combat, you may re-roll all die results of 6.
RNDx	Reuding x
	Each time this weapon is used in combat, up to x Critical Strikes cause 3 Damage (instead of 2).
RNGx	Range x
	This weapon's maximum range for target selection is x.
SPR	Spread
	Each time this Weapon is used, the Unit may select multiple targets as long as each selected target is a valid target and is Adjacent to another selected target. If multiple targets are selected, distribute this weapon's Attack Dice between these selected targets and perform attacks accordingly. Allocate at least one Attack die to each selected Target.
STN	Stun
	Each time this Unit uses this weapon, if it rolls at least one Critical Strike, the target gets -1 ACT in its next Activation (minimum 1).

AFTERWORD

COMMUNITY

This is a community-driven project, and we welcome contributions, feedback, and suggestions. If you have ideas for new features, improvements, or just want to chat about the game, please join our community channels.

- [Ruinstars.com](https://ruinstars.com) - Main website and app
- [Discord](#) - Come say hello!
- itch.io - Includes devlogs for the game
- [GitHub](#) - Full source code
- [WargameVault](#)
- [BoardGameGeek](#)

NEWS AND CHANGES

2ND EDITION IS LIVE!

Mar 7, 2026

Second Edition of Ruinstars is LIVE and published! This new version simplifies a great many concepts, uses freeform inches for all measurements, and introduces a Solo/Coop PvE Mode with dynamic missions and campaigns.