SURFACE COMBAT
FREE MARS
MINI GAME SYSTEM RULES

1.0 COMPONENTS

Each Mini Game includes 40 game pieces, 18 cards, 1 11" x 17" map, this set of system rules, and a scenario sheet of rules specific to the individual game. Players will need at least one die (d6) to play the game (six is ideal).

2.0 INTRODUCTION

FREE MARS! SURFACE COMBAT is a solitaire game system. The player commands a Hyper Team, commandos whose goal is to infiltrate an enemy world or base to perform daring missions in Decision Games' **Free Mars** "universe." The Opposition Force (OPFOR) is controlled by the game system via a deck of Operations (Ops) Cards. The game is played in missions, in which you must accomplish various tasks, generated by Mission Cards. Each game includes a campaign scenario allowing you to link the individual missions into a larger campaign. Note that the Scenario exclusive rules will supersede or modify the system rules.

3.0 THE MAP

Each game in the series shows a portion of a planetary body or base.
  Cells: the hexagons. You place units in cells. Types of cells are described on the Terrain Effects Chart.
  Recruit Box: a place to put Friendly units when not in play.
  Special Units: a place to put Special units which come into play under certain circumstances.
  NET (Neural **E**lectronic **T**ransfer) **Track**: This is where you track and execute NET Runs. It also tracks the current awareness of the OPFOR to your activities and their ability to react.
  OPFOR Bin: this is a wide mouth opaque container, such as an inverted space helmet or a Decision Games mug, and is a convenient place to put OPFOR units when not on the map.

4.0 PLAYING PIECES

The square cardboard pieces are called *units*.
Scenario rules provide more information.
  Cadres: these represent individuals or small squads.
  Gear: various weapons, tools, and equipment.
  Vehicles: various types of transports.
  Special Units: various other forces to support your team.
  Friendly/OPFOR: *Friendly* units are controlled by the player. *OPFOR* are enemy units controlled by the game system.
  Unit Status: a Cadre or Vehicle unit on its front side is "Combat Effective." A unit on its reverse side is "Crashed." A Gear unit is either combat effective or eliminated/expended. The reverse of a Gear counter represents a different type of Gear.

5.0 CARDS

There are two types of cards: **Mission** and **Ops** (short for Operations). These are explained under their rules sections.
OPERATIVE TERMS
  May: you have the option to take this action or not.
  Must: you must take this action.
  Pick: choose randomly the card or unit indicated.
  Reveal: flip a face down card or counter face up.
  Select: sort through the cards or pieces indicated and deliberately choose one.
  You: the player.

6.0 HOW TO WIN

The game is played in *Missions*. Each Mission will require you to complete one or more Objectives. You win if you fulfill the Objective(s) by the end of the game. You lose if: **1)** you do not accomplish the Mission Objective by the end of the game (when there are no more Operations cards to draw), or **2)** if all Friendly Cadre units are eliminated from the map at any time.

7.0 HOW TO SET UP THE GAME

1. Shuffle the Mission cards and pick one, keeping it **face down**. The rest of the Mission cards will not be used in this game. You will determine the nature of the mission in the course of play.

2. Place the NET Run marker on the NET Track space indicated by the Scenario (generally space 1).

3. Shuffle the Ops card deck. Deal out a number equal to the number stated in the Scenario Rules and place them face down. This will be your initial Ops (draw) deck for the game. The remaining cards are placed in a separate (Reserve) deck, face down (and may come into play later). Ops cards remain face down until picked, at which point they must be played.

4. The Scenario rules will give you a designated number of **Team Points** (TP). You can use TP to recruit starting units. To recruit, expend the points and select the units. Keep track of TP with pencil and paper (or chips or dice). Unused TP are retained and may be used to recruit units via Recruit special actions during the game.

5. **Recruiting costs.** During initial deployment you may purchase Friendly units, at the designated cost in TP:
  Each Gear: **1 TP**
  Each Cadre: **2 TP**
  Each Vehicle: **3 TP**

6. Place all un-purchased friendly units next to the game map for possible entry during the game.

7. Begin play of the game using the Sequence of Play (below).

8.0 SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Each Mission will assign a starting number of Operations to be used during a scenario. An Op is recorded by picking the top card in the Ops card deck, turning it face up, and implementing its effect.
  Player's note: *There is no Turn Record track, unlike many games. The Ops cards are used to track turns. The Ops phase occurs after the Movement phase, so you get a chance to move before picking the card.*
1. Sequence of Play
One Operation is defined taking the following actions in this order.
  1) Team Movement Phase: You may move the Team via the rules of movement.
  2) Operations Card Phase: You must pick one Operations Card. Implement the instructions on the card.
  3) Combat Phase: If the Team is in the same cell with OPFOR units (generated by an Ops card), it must engage them in combat.
  4) Special Actions Phase: The Team may execute any one special action. (NETRUN, Nano-Morph, Recruit, etc.).
  5) Mission Resolution Phase: If the Team is in the same Cell as the Nexus marker, it may attempt to conduct Mission Resolution.
2. End of Scenario
When you have run out of Ops cards, or fulfilled the conditions for victory or defeat, the scenario comes to an end. If there are no more Ops cards to draw, the game is lost.
3. Rules precedence
Scenario rules and card instructions supersede the Standard game rules.

9.0 MISSION CARDS & NEXUS MARKER

1. Each scenario will have one Mission card. This is initially placed face down. The other Mission cards are placed aside, also face down.

2. Revealing the Mission card
You reveal a Mission Card via NET Run outcomes (see below).
A successful NET Run result will allow you to flip over the
face down Mission card and place the Nexus marker.

3. Nexus Marker
The Nexus is placed at the instant the Mission card is revealed. Use
the Random Placement Procedure to place it in a Cell on the map.
4. The Nexus marker indicates the location where your Team
may perform Mission Resolution. The marker has no other
effect on play—it is not affected by combat, etc.

5. Mission Resolution
If your Team is in the same Cell as the Nexus marker during the Mission
Resolution phase, you may announce a Mission Resolution. Do the following.

1) OPFOR: the card will give the number of OPFOR units you must pick and
fight. This is in terms of "NET+ #": the current NET level plus the number
on the card. Engage in the Combat Routine (this is in addition to any
combat that occurred in the Combat Phase as a result of the Ops Card
draw). If your force survives, then attempt to complete the Objective.

2) Objective
1) The card will indicate which values are to be used via icons.
For example: *a Leader plus Hot Pilot icons means
you would use the Team Leader and Hot Pilot abilities.*
2) Determine the Team Challenge Value. This is
the total number of icons of the same type:
a) on the Team; plus
b) on Team Gear/Vehicles; plus
c) on Friendly Installations.
3) Roll a number of dice equal to the Team Challenge Value.
A success is rolling a number of Positive results (5's and 6's)
equal to or greater than the number called for on the card.
4) If you roll less than the individual icon
number or total number, you fail.
5) If a card has more than one Icon, then you must roll for each
one individually (in any order you select) and succeed in all.
6) The NET level provides for bonus die rolls that may be
applied to any icon roll. NET level die rolls may be applied
to any icon dice roll at the player's discretion as long
as there is at least one icon in play of that type.
For example, *the Mission card calls for one positive Leader result, one
positive Pilot result, and three total positive results. The player has two
Leader icons, two Pilot icons, and the NET Level is 3. He rolls for his two
Leader icons and obtains one positive result, then for his two Pilot icons and
obtains zero positives. Because he does have Pilot icons, he may roll the
three NET level die rolls to attempt to obtain the positive result needed in
the Pilot category and the third positive result needed for Mission success.*

6. Mission Success
If you succeed, then you win the individual mission. You can restart
and play with a different mission card or you can continue using
the Campaign rules to link the four missions into a Campaign.

7. Mission Fail
If you fail to execute the Mission Objective, then you must immediately
move the Nexus marker according to the Random Location Procedure. You
can try to resolve the Mission on a later Op if you get your Team to the
Nexus Cell. (You would have to engage the Mission card's OPFOR again.)

8. Mission Card Bonus & OPFOR Enhancement
These apply only in the Campaign game.

10.0 HYPER TEAMS

1. Your Team includes all Friendly Cadre, Vehicles and any Gear they may
be carrying, as well as Special Units which may accompany them.
2. Your Team always sticks together. Units can not be left behind. Hence, you
will have all Friendly units in one Cell at any particular point in the game.

3. Team Box.
This is a convenient place to put the units in your Team. They are
considered to be in the same Cell as the marker on the map.

4. Stacking
A player may have any number of units in a Cell. Also, Friendly units
may be in the same Cell as OPFOR units, installations, etc.

11.0 MOVEMENT

The Team moves during the Movement Phase. All units
in the Team must move together. There are several
types of movement: *Surface, Vehicle* and *Hop*.

1. Surface Movement
1) Movement is from Cell to contiguous Cell. You may move
the Team a number of Cells up to its movement value.
The movement value is that of the slowest Cadre in the
Team. All Gear is transported with the Cadre(s).
For example: *a Team with a Cadre with a movement of "2" can move
two, one or no spaces in an Op. If one Cadre had a movement of "2"
and another of "1," then the Team could move one or no spaces.*
2) The Team must cease movement if it enters a Cell which
the Terrain Effects Chart says STOP, or enters a Cell
containing an OPFOR controlled Installation.

2. Vehicle Move
This is the same as Surface Movement, except:
1) If a force includes a Vehicle, then it is transported by that Vehicle. A
Vehicle may transport an unlimited number of Cadres and Gear.
2) The Team moves with the movement value of the Vehicle. More
than one Vehicle may be with the Team, but they must move
together and with the movement value of the slowest vehicle.
3) Vehicles do not have to STOP for terrain. They must STOP
when entering cells with OPFOR controlled installations.
4) Transport Effects. Cadres and Gear which are aboard a vehicle
may employ their combat values and special actions.
5) Hot Pilot. The Team does not need a Hot Pilot to use a Vehicle, but
the Hot Pilot can enhance its movement. See Special Actions.

3. Hop Move
The Team may move via Hop Move if the Spaceport Installation is
friendly controlled. The Team must start in the Cell with the Spaceport.
You can then move it to any one Cell on the map. Conversely, the
Team can start anywhere and then move to a Friendly controlled
Spaceport. Do not trace movement through Cells, just pick up the
Team and move it. This is all the force's move for the Operation.

12.0 OPERATIONS (OPS) CARDS

1. During the Operations phase, you must pick one Ops
Card for the Team. Pick it from the top of the deck.

2. Ops Card Instructions
Events: The player must immediately perform
whatever instructions are on the card.
NET Check: Roll one die. If the result is less than or equal
(**<=**) to the current NET level, execute the (1) outcome.
If it is greater (**>**), then execute the (2) outcome.
OPFOR Deployment: Place OPFOR units on the
map. Go to the Combat Routine.
Reinforcements: receive the Friendly units indicated
immediately with no action or TP required.
Challenge: You must roll one die for each of the values indicated on
the line of the Action table for that value. Success occurs if you
roll at least one Positive result. *Implement the results on the card*.
Failure occurs if no Positive results are rolled (or if the Player is
unable to roll due to having no matching icons). The card will give the
Failure results (do not apply Burnouts on an Event card Challenge).
If the card calls for either crashing units or losing an Op, and there
are no units of the type called for, then you must lose one Op.
Win/Lose: If "win/lose" is printed on the card, and you win that
Combat, then you gain the designated number of Ops Cards or
NETRun Points (your choice). If you lose the Combat, then you
lose that number of Ops or NETRun Points (again, your choice).

3. Gaining Ops Cards

When you gain Ops, pick the designated number of cards from the Reserve deck (face down) and place them on the bottom of the Ops deck. If there are no further cards in the Reserve deck, shuffle the Discard deck and deal the appropriate number of cards and add to the bottom of the Ops deck, then the remaining cards become the Reserve deck.

4. Losing Ops Cards

Conversely, if a card calls for you to Lose Ops, then pick the designated number of cards from the top of the Ops card draw deck without looking at or playing them. Place them with the discards, face down. If this causes the Ops Deck to go to zero cards, then the game ends in a loss.

5. Ops Card Disposition

Generally, after they have been played, Ops Cards are placed in the discard deck, face down.

6. Reshuffle

Some Ops cards may generate a reshuffle. In this case, take the number of discards indicated and shuffle them in with the draw deck.

13.0 THE NET & ALERT

1. The NET marker starts in the space designated by the scenario. It may go no lower than "1" and no higher than the maximum on the index. The higher the marker goes, the more the enemy is alerted to your presence. But also, the more bonuses you gain.

2. The NET Level goes up or down as a result of NETRun Special Action results or Ops Card outcomes.

3. Effects

The NET Level is:
- **a)** a Friendly Tactical Edge modifier.
- **b)** the number of OPFOR units picked for combat.
- **c)** The number of extra die rolls you can make when doing a Mission Resolution (not for Challenges).

4. Full System Awareness

If at any time the NET marker is in the highest space, you can examine all cards in the Ops deck. You can't change them, but at least you know what's coming up.

14.0 NET RUNS

A NET Run is an attempt to penetrate the NET.

1. Prerequisite

A NET Run is executed in the Special Actions phase. To do so you must have:
- **1)** a Team with one or more Cadres, Vehicles and/ or Gear that has the Cyber symbol; or
- **2)** control of one or more Installations with the Cyber symbol (which can be anywhere); or
- **3)** a card allows it.

2. Procedure

Determine your NET Run strength. This is the total of the number of Cyber symbols in the Team plus controlled Installations.

3. NET Run Special Action

Go to the Special Action Table. Roll a number of dice equal to the NETRun value. Apply the results per the table. *A positive result allows you to choose one action from the listed outcomes.*

15.0 COMBAT

1. Combat is triggered when your Team is in the same space as OPFOR units. This may occur due to Ops Cards or Mission Resolution. All Friendly units in your Team Point must engage all enemy units in a Cell. Combat is only against OPFOR units, not OPFOR Installations.

2. OPFOR Units

OPFOR units are temporarily placed on the map as the result of Ops and Mission cards. They are placed in the same Cell as the force which triggered the card draw. OPFOR units are automatically returned to the OPFOR Bin after a battle concludes.

3. OPFOR Deployment Procedure

Pick randomly from the Bin a number of OPFOR units equal to:
- **a)** the current NET level, plus
- **b)** if in the same space as an OPFOR Installation the extra number indicated on the Installation Chart.
- **c)** Place the OPFOR units in the Cell with the operating Team. OPFOR units are placed on their combat effective side.

4. Combat Procedure

Each combat goes through these stages.
- **1) Determine who has Tactical Edge**.
  - **a) For the Friendly force**: roll one die and add to it the NETRun level plus "one" for each Leader icon in the Team plus "one" if in the same Cell as a Friendly Installation.
  - **b) For the OPFOR**: roll one die and add to it the Tactical Edge factor of the OPFOR unit with the single highest Tactical Edge plus "one" if in the same Cell as an OPFOR Installation.
  - **c)** The side with the higher total gets the Tactical Edge. The Hyper Team wins ties.
- **2) Battle Rounds**
  In each Battle round:
  - **a)** The side with the Tactical Edge fires first, using its total combat strength. Use the Weapons Action (below).
  - **b)** The side without the Tactical Edge fires second, using its total combat strength. Use the Weapons Action (below).
- **3) Breakoff.** You may attempt to have your Team Breakoff (you do not have to) during Combat. Declare this during the Breakoff step of the combat sequence. Select one unit in your Team and roll one die. If the result is less than or equal to its movement rating, the Breakoff succeeds. Add "one" to the movement rating if you have combat effective Hot Pilot skill. Otherwise, the attempt fails. Also, a die roll of "6" always fails.
  A **Successful Breakoff**: consult the Random Location Table and place the Team in the Cell indicated. This ends the OP. You also lose the battle.
  A **Failed Breakoff**: the Team remains in the Cell. The battle continues. You can try a Breakoff in a later round. OPFOR units do not Breakoff. A successful Breakoff ends the combat.
- **4) Next round**
  If there are surviving units on both sides, then continue the Battle rounds starting with step (2a) until only one side has units remaining.

5. Weapons Action

Determine the combat strength for a side.
- **1)** For the Friendly force, this is the total of all Combat numbers for Friendly Cadres, Vehicles and Gear. For the OPFOR side, it is the total of all unit Combat values (the top numbers).
- **2)** Roll one die per combat strength point. Cross index each die roll with the outcomes on the Weapons line of the Special Action Table. A **Positive** result will cause one combat effective Cadre, Vehicle or OPFOR unit to flip over, eliminate one already flipped Cadre, Vehicle or OPFOR unit, or eliminate one Gear.

Player's Note: Firing is non-sequential and thus one side will possibly take losses and be reduced in strength before firing back. If a side is wiped out, it can not return fire.

6. Extracting Losses

Inflict losses for both sides in any order (player's choice).

7. Winning a Combat

You win if the OPFOR is wiped out. Add the designated Ops cards to your Ops deck or NET Points to the NET track.

8. Losing a Combat

You lose if you Breakoff successfully. Subtract NET points or remove Ops cards. If all Cadres are eliminated, then you lose the game.

9. Post-Battle

- **1)** Place all OPFOR units to the Bin regardless of combat results.
- **2)** All Friendly Cadres eliminated are out of play for the rest of the individual scenario/mission. Eliminated Gear is returned

to the Recruit Pool. All surviving friendly units are returned to the Team. Friendly flipped units remain flipped (and with the Team)—they recover via Repair Special Actions.

16.0 SPECIAL ACTIONS (CATEGORIES)

1. You may conduct a maximum of one Special Action per Special Action phase. Some of these include:

Enhanced Move: this is an additional move. It requires a Hot Pilot. ✈

NETRun: this is used to penetrate into the NET to gain advantages. 👁

Recruit: this is used to acquire TP and add Cadre, Gear and Vehicles once the Scenario has begun. The Team must be in at an appropriate location (see chart). This requires a Leader capability. ⚑

Repair: this is used to repair damage to Cadre and Vehicles. This requires a Nano-Morph capability. ⚒

2. Special Action Procedure
1) State the type of Special Action to be conducted.
2) Determine the total Value for that action.
3) Roll a number of dice equal to the Value.
4) Cross index each die roll on the Special Actions Table and apply the results. The Special Actions Table gives details for outcomes.

3. Special Actions Value
This is the total number of symbols of the indicated type among units on the Team, plus Enhancers (see below). If a unit has more than one of the same symbol, count the total.

Player's note: In some cases, units lose their special ability when flipped.

4. Enhancers
Enhancers are additional bonuses you receive for control of certain Instillations. If you control any Installations with the symbol for the Special Action, add their value, regardless of the Installations' location. In the Campaign Game, control of Mission cards can provide Enhancers.

5. Combined Actions
Some Special Actions may require more than one capability. You must roll successfully for each one. If you fail for any one capability, the entire Special Action fails.

For example: a Combined Action requires a Cyber and Leader capability. You could use one Cadre with a Cyber and one Gear with a Leader, or a Gear that had both Cyber and Leader abilities.

6. Burnout
A result of Burnout flips one Cadre or eliminates one Gear with the symbol. This is one unit max regardless of Burnouts rolled. This is applied after completion of the die rolls.

Note: a Burnout result is applied when rolling for a Mission Objective, but not for Event Card Challenges (apply the Succeed or Failure result. on the card).

17.0 RECRUITING & BUILDING

1. Recruiting is adding new Cadres, Vehicles or Gear to your Team. Cadres and Vehicles are recruited on their combat effective side. When recruiting Gear, select the side you want.

2. Initial Deployment
The Scenario card will give you the initial TP to recruit units. This requires no special action.

3. In Mission Recruiting
During any Special Action phase, you can use remaining TP plus any TP obtained from the Recruit Special Action to purchase units if you are in an appropriate location. Outcomes on the Special Action Table will allow you to recruit various types of units.

4. Recruit Value
This is "one" for each Leader symbol on units and friendly Installations.

5. Cards
Some Ops cards will provide additional Recruiting opportunities that don't require TP expenditure.

18.0 REPAIR

1. Repairing is flipping friendly units to their Effective side. This can be performed anywhere.

2. Repair Value
This is "one" for each Nano-Morph symbol on the Team and on friendly Installations. Roll a number of dice equal to the total value. Each success lets you repair one Cadre or Vehicle unit.

19.0 INSTALLATIONS

Installations represent major facilities. Installations are in one of two statuses:

1) OPFOR Controlled: front of counter.
2) Friendly Controlled: back of counter.

1. Gaining Control of Installations
To gain control of an OPFOR Installation, your Team must be in the same Cell. During the Special Actions phase you execute a NETRUN Action. Successful results allow you to flip that Installation to the Friendly side. Certain cards may cause a Friendly Installation to revert to OPFOR status.

2. Friendly Installations
If an Installation is Friendly, then you gain any enhancer it provides. This is explained on the Installation Chart.

For example: You control the NET CONTOL Installation. Your Team gains the NETRUN enhancement regardless of its location on the map.

3. OPFOR Installations
If an Installation is OPFOR controlled, then you gain no advantages for it. See the Installation Chart.

4. Installations and Combat
Generally, Installations are not affected by Combat.

20.0 CAMPAIGN GAME RULES

1. You can play **Free Mars Surface Combat** as a series of Missions.

2. At the end of each Mission
1) Remove the Nexus marker from the map.
2) All Installations and any TAZ remain in place.
3) All units eliminated for any reason are returned to the recruit pool.
4) You keep the Cadre, Gear, and Vehicles and place the Team marker on any one Friendly Installation or TAZ. If there are none, use the Random Placement Procedure. All units are flipped to their Effective side.
5) Follow the Mission set up procedures for the next Mission.

3. If you win the Mission
1) Place the Mission card above the map sheet. You can use its Enhancement (these are cumulative for each card). This is cumulative for all Mission cards accomplished.

For example: if a card has one Leader and one Cyber symbol, then increase Team Value by "one" for each of these.

2) The NET stays at the level it was at the end of the Scenario.
3) Any Installations you gained control of remain Friendly controlled.
4) Keep any unused TP plus add the number of Ops cards remaining to the TP total.
5) In the next scenario, when OPFOR units are called for, pick one additional OPFOR unit per combat (to the counter limit). This is one extra unit per Mission you have won.

4. If you did not win the Mission
1) The mission card is reshuffled into the deck and you can potentially pick it again.
2) The NET Alert level is reduced by "one."
3) All Friendly Installations revert to OPFOR control.
4) Keep any unused TP.

5. You win the Campaign
When you win all Missions.

6. You lose the Campaign
If you lose two Missions in a row.