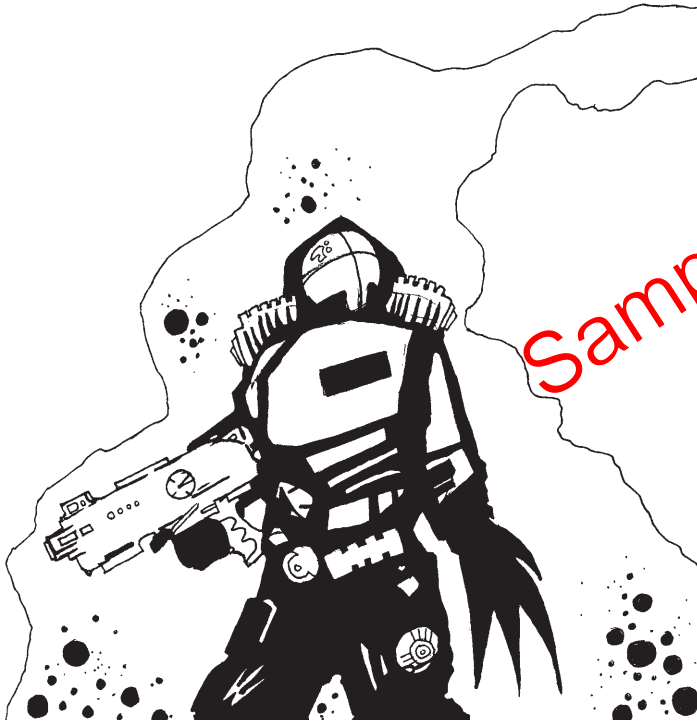




# Contents

## CONTENTS

HEXADECIMAL CHAPTER NUMBER	PAGE
0 Tollman's Tale.....	4, 5
1 What Is This Book?.....	6, 7
2 Getting Started.....	8
Glossary.....	9
3 Character Generation.....	10-13
4 How To Play.....	14-23
5 Flashbacks.....	24-27
6 Missions.....	28-31
7 Between Missions.....	32-35
8 "Replacement".....	36, 37
9 Higher Ranks.....	38-41
a The Game Master.....	42-49
b Planets.....	50-63
c An Example Planet.....	64-67
d An Example of Play.....	68-77
e War Gear.....	78-89
Weapons.....	78-81
Vehicles.....	82, 83
Bombs.....	84, 85
Everyday Trooper Shit.....	86, 87
One Use Per Planet.....	88, 89
f Play Sheets.....	90-93
Index.....	94-95
Colophon.....	96



Sample file



# 0: Tollman's Tale

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Vrakkkk-kkkk-kkkkk. Corporal Tollman's Energy Cannon converted the group of rapidly approaching creatures into a cloud of swirling space dust. Vrakkkk-kkkk-kkkkk. Another group, and another, and another. The cannon's gunnery computer was beeping into Tollman's earphones at a rapid tempo. These little green bastards were getting murdered. The Kill Counter on top of the cannon increased by the millisecond. Impassively counting the carnage. The rhythmic beeping was trance-like and hypnotic.

Vra-wheeeeeeee. The energy beam sheared off, missing the target and detonating a pile of rocks instead. Suddenly, from a sound little green men raced closer and closer. Tollman's eyes flashed back to a time long before...

*Tollman was 10 and they'd been playing The Game. In The Game you went into this really dark cave. All the other kids were there with sticks and stones. They poked, prodded, bashed and frightened you while you tried to make it to the back of the cave. You had to get there, overcoming your fear and panic, and grab some moss, slick and wet to touch, from the very furthest cave wall. Then you had to run over the wet floor of the cave avoiding the tripping feet and thrown rocks to break out into the light.*

*If you did that then they let you join their gang. It had taken Tollman five or six attempts to get to the back of that cave. But when she did she had learned not to panic or be frightened even when the unexpected happened. She was cool under pressure and had learnt to keep it simple. It was something that had served her well in the Expeditionary Force.*

**"Never panic, it'll get you dead." A strength.**

Back to the present Tollman lowered the cannon and swept a series of leveling beams of energy through the fast-approaching hordes. They fell into clouds of dust. Motes drifting intricately through the alien atmosphere of this hell-hole of a planet.

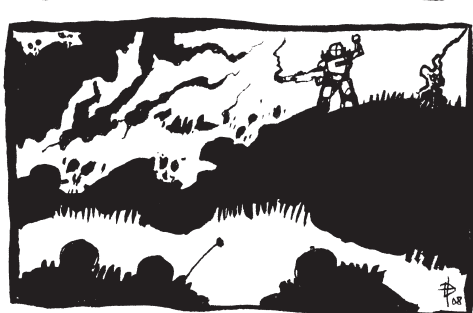
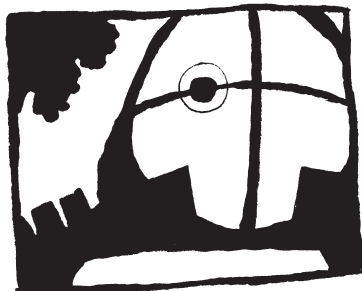
Vrakkkk-kkkk-kkkkk. The last little green bastard evaporated into a cloud of constituent atoms. The Kill Counter stopped at 97. The tip of the cannon was glowing white hot and the whine of the cooling fans was the only sound left. The encounter was over.

Sergeant Brand looked over the top of the trench, "Corporal, status?"

"All Clear, Sergeant. A series of trenches ahead and then we're done here. After that," she paused, "it's not so certain."

Brand nodded at the Lieutenant next to him in the trench. The first hurdle had been cleared.

CARNAGE AMONGST THE STARS





# 1: What Is This Book?

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## **3:16 is a role-playing game.**

There is a very good chance that you already know what this means. If so, please skip ahead to the next column.

OK, still here. So, a role-playing game is an activity that you take part in with a group of people. It's like improvisational theatre, and you create stories together in much the same way that musicians "jam" with each other.

One of the group is called the Game Master (GM, for short) and they have a chapter dedicated to all the things they are responsible for (see p. 42). Briefly, the GM sets the scenes and plays characters and aliens that you will meet in the game (known as "Non-Player Characters" or NPCs).

The others play a character each (called a "Player Character" or PC). Each player is responsible for describing what their character is doing and saying, and for rolling dice when a test is needed for something that their character does.

The aim is to have fun and create stories together.

## **3:16 is a role-playing game set in the far future.**

It's a Science Fiction setting where everyone plays members of the elite 3:16th Expeditionary Force. This military force left Terra over 10,000 strong many years ago with an explicit mission.

Their whole mission was to fight, and defeat, everything in the Universe that they could find. Alien civilizations, intelligences and life of any kind were to be wiped out to protect the future safety of the people home on Terra. Threats were to be neutralized at their source.

Terra is a prosperous place. No one works any more and there is no disease, no hate and no crime or trouble. People are sterile and have to seek the permission of the Terran Council to have children. Successful applicants have medical modifications made that allow for procreation and the children themselves are sterilized at the onset of puberty. They leave childish things behind them and become a citizen of Terra.

Life expectancy is now essentially a meaningless statistic. How long do you want to live for? You only leave this life when you want to, and who would want to?

## “Tired Of Life? Join The Expeditionary Force And See The Cosmos.”—Recruitment Advert

Paradise is reality.

When the Council formed the Expeditionary Forces they found it easy to recruit. After all they offered a life of excitement and adventure. See the cosmos, travel and live life to the full. Don't drop yourself in a suicide booth, serve your fellow Terrans by joining the Force. Child permits were raised as necessary to meet the demand, and everyone rejoiced in the plan.

Later recruiting posters featured wholesome troopers drinking cocktails on a cosmic beach on the edge of known space—an ideal that many wanted to live. Terrans had a taste for this glamorous promise. So they sought adventure in the Force.

For years they have recruited Terrans for the Expeditionary Forces and sent troopers out into space. The players all play characters that joined the elite 3:16th unit. The 16th Brigade of the 3rd Army.

These characters will experience a series of events strung across the vastness of the cosmos. And perhaps one day they will return to Terra.

That is 3:16.

