

REMNANTS

A Campaign Sourcebook for *3:16 Carnage Amongst the Stars*

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0: Introduction

I came up with this stuff while I was waiting to find a group with which to play Gregor Hutton's *3:16*. I fully acknowledge that, as stated in *3:16*, it is preferable to work out the details of the game universe during play, so that everyone has a hand in the fiction. This 'campaign' is simply the result of too much isolation and thinking about a game I might like to run. Maybe it will inspire your group.

~ Aaron M. Sturgill



1: Universe

VISION

Gritty, action-packed hard SF (not as goofy or tongue-in-cheek as *Starship Troopers*). Inspired by *The Forever War* by Joe Haldeman and, to a lesser extent, the Culture Series by Iain Banks. In fact, you could consider this setting to be a kind of prequel to the latter. (Or, a prequel to a game of *Diaspora*...)

TECH (GENERAL)

No faster-than-light drives; hyper-sleep is a necessity. Troopers get around like the space marines from *Aliens*.

However, artificial intelligence is an important aspect of daily life. Most humans think of computers as sentient personalities. (See p. 4, "Miscellaneous Ideas", for more on these topics.)

THE REMNANT

On many planets they visit, the PCs will find evidence of an ancient, powerful civilization. True to Terran centrist philosophy, this civilization is named The Remnant (e.g., "evidence of The Remnant").

- ▶ **Early evidence:** ancient artifacts, hollowed structures devoid of technology.
- ▶ **Later evidence:** remnant cybernetic servitors (an Alien Threat), either guarding further relics/ruins, or waiting for a sufficiently advanced race (Terrans) of which to warn their far-flung creators.

Eventually, this ancient Culture will return to the galaxy and face off against the TEF, sparking a galaxy- (possibly generation-) spanning conflict.



COLONIES

The Terran Council officially recognizes twenty-three off-world colonies: six within the Sol System (such as Luna 01 and 02), and seventeen in neighboring systems (such as Alpha Centauri). These are the first fruits of the TEF's rapid deployment and highly effective cleansing methods. These colonies are variously (a) installed on hospitable worlds, (b) founded on newly-terraformed planets, or (c) space-bound, such as orbital space stations or (in one instance) a giant city-ship.

Civilian life is roughly equally idyllic wherever you find Terran civilization. Therefore, a Soldier's potential Hatred of Home can refer to a colony of origin, or to Terra itself. Likewise, the Brigadier's **secret** orders apply to Terra and all TC-sanctioned off-world colonies.

What this means on the ground: it is exceptionally rare (forbidden except in extreme circumstances) that TEF soldiers will ever interact with Terran civilians.

UNSANCTIONED COLONIES

No such colonies exist. It is unthinkable that anyone could want more than the idyllic life offered by Terra and its colonies.

2. New Technology

REMOTE SENSOR DRONE

One player asked for a remote sensor drone that would detach from her MandelBrite suit and perform cursory scouting and scanning ahead of the squad. Since I wasn't prepared to give a brand new PC a piece of advanced equipment (although, perhaps after a few missions), I decided ("Yes, and...") that this was a creative extension of her MandelBrite suit, and garnered an occasional +1 to an FA or NFA roll when she used it well. (see p. 87 of 3:16).

CYBERNETIC ENHANCEMENTS

Another player wanted a bionic hand. Using the same logic as above (no advanced tech for n00bs), I negotiated ("Yes, but...") that the hand would have no special abilities aside from colorful narration (so as not to steal the thunder of the PowerClaw).

THRUST-PACKS

The TEF has begun introducing **Thrust-Packs**: attachable propulsion units that render the wearer of MandelBrite armour space-worthy for limited distances. These are available to all ranks, at the discretion of Command, usually for special operations where normal dropships and e-vacs aren't ideal or possible.

Each Thrust-Pack provides sub-light propulsion to a single soldier. They are small enough that a Trooper can attach it to the back of his own suit, unassisted. Troopers can use these to travel ship-to-ship, ship-to-planet (and back), etc. They can also be used planetside to provide boost/flying abilities. As an abstraction of fuel capacity, let's say they can be used once to travel from a ship to a planet it's orbiting, and back again. That's pretty generous.

Combat ability, planetside: Troopers wearing a Thrust-Pack gain the Leaping ability (normally restricted to aliens, p. 62 of 3:16): during combat, move two range steps on a successful NFA roll. On a failure, still move one step (except for a 1 – don't move).

3. GM Notes

DON'T...

... Get sidetracked by a 'space opera' theme. For instance, it's not appropriate for the PCs to be part of a civilian fleet, or have a non-military home base of any kind. Life in the TEF is cold, brutal, and violent. Your mission from now until your untimely demise is to cleanse. You have no home with the rest of your kind.

BUT...

... Are there civilians populating shallow or deep space? Yes. The human race outgrew Terra before the Terran Council's strict procreation policies came into being. Besides – hundreds, thousands of Troopers perish every day in the effort to cleanse the galaxy of non-human life, so new recruits have to come from somewhere... (See 'Colonies' section.)

ENCOUNTERS, MISSIONS, AND PLANETS

The text of 3:16 seems a bit fuzzy on the delineation between Missions and Planets: does 'Planet' equal 'Mission', or can a Planet have multiple Missions?

At first, I attempted to squeeze multiple Missions onto a single Planet. Between each Mission, the PCs returned to their carrier ship for debriefing, medal awards, leveling up, weapon advancement, development rolls, and full healing. However, I should have foreseen that, using this generous model, two of the PCs leveled up twice in a single evening, on a single Planet (resulting in absurdly high stats).

So, I'm going back to a more conservative interpretation: the post-Mission process I just mentioned (advancement, healing, etc.) only happens after an entire Planet is completed. The PCs can be assigned multiple 'missions' (lowercase) on a single planet, but these will simply be narrative tools to be paced along with Encounters.

Also: always use the Threat Token equation from the original text ($(\#/\text{players}) \times 5$). I used 4 as the multiplier (to 'go easy' on the n00bs), but it was WAY too easy!

4. Miscellaneous Ideas

Here are some wild hares, largely culled from other sources, that can probably be plugged into your 3:16 campaign with little effort.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Each major ship in TEF service is governed by a sentient Mind. Each ship and its resident Mind share a designation... the PCs' initial troop carrier is called *End of Innocence*. The Mind is characterized by a palpable sadness and sense of loss. It is far from derelict in its responsibilities, but all who must interact with it find its moroseness either affecting or annoying.

- ▶ **TARA:** At some point, PCs of Officer ranks will learn that an AI system is responsible for coordinating their missions. (TARA – Threat Analysis and Response Authority.)
 - **Ranking Up:** Each Officer's rank is stamped onto his DNA, such that TARA will recognize him on any ship or base in the fleet. ("Hello, Captain Tucker... Here is your mission briefing." "Thank you, TARA.")

UNSANCTIONED COLONIES

There've got to be some dissenting humans that have found a way to reject the decadent and stifling Terran existence. Perhaps these rogue colonists have already intermarried with alien species. They can be engaged as enemy aliens, like any others – but, they should at least cause the PCs to stop and think about the nature of their mission.

INTRODUCING FTL – THE REMNANT

The Remnant will return, from beyond the galaxy, to put down the out-of-control Terran Expeditionary Force, which threatens to very sanctity of life and natural progress throughout the galaxy.

At some point after the Remnant is introduced, the TEF will steal FTL tech from them. [What type...?] In their attempt to quell the upstart Terran menace, the Remnant will have provided them with the means to place the entire stellar cluster (and more) under its heel.

SOLAR ORBITAL SPHERE (SOS)

New planet type. Like the Dyson Sphere from *ST:TNG*. Perhaps the squad has to cut/break into the sphere to engage the "hostile" inhabitants therein. (**Note:** explore logistics of interacting with the interior of a super-massive spherical surface surrounding a star.)

First Planet: Fisher



DESCRIPTION

A temperate planet with a dominantly forested surface.

CREATURE FORM

Furred creatures (swift and angular bears and wolves).
Possibly a giant frost serpent at the end.

AA
5

SPECIAL ABILITIES

None

THREAT TOKENS [# /players] x 5

SUGGESTED ENCOUNTERS

5 (2 Missions) _____

IDEAS/IMAGES

- ▶ Only one super-continent spans the surface of Fisher. Mission 1 will be in the temperate, densely-forested equatorial region; Mission 2 is set in the icy north.
- ▶ An eerie amount of ambient forest noise. Insects, snapping foliage, an occasional howl.
- ▶ PC or NPC Troopers gunning down any fauna that crosses their path.
- ▶ A giant, ferocious **BEAR** rearing up and brandishing its claws and maw before ripping an NPC's arms right off (MandelBrite and all).
- ▶ A pack of **WOLVES** surrounding an isolated Trooper and attacking him en masse, leaving only bones and nauseating viscera.
- ▶ The Troopers' confusion as they take down a giant bear, but their Kill scores rise impossibly. Similarly, if the PCs start firing at small fauna (such as rodents), especially outside of an Encounter, their Kill scores do not rise. The Sergeant PC has no explanation for this, but Captain Dexter can fill them in (see related document). (First appearance of disparity between actual and recorded Kills.)

NPCs

- ▶ **Captain Aaron Dexter:** Commander of the Company. A lean, well-kept man of 30. He chooses his words precisely, and demands precision and dedication from his troops. He will deliver their mission briefings.
- ▶ **Corporal Brad "Hot Shot" Warren:** An excitable, sophomoric soldier who believes wholeheartedly in his superiority to his fellow soldiers. (GM's note: plan on him being the first to get possessed by the Shadows in the next adventure. For now, let him get his kills and annoy the PCs.)



Mission 1: Woodland

Captain Dexter, in the briefing room: "Preliminary scans indicate that Planet Fisher is a densely-forested world, populated by a variety of mammals similar to those found in Old North America. These are likely to range in size from small rodents to two- or three-meter bear-like creatures. Please annihilate all animal life you find with extreme prejudice."

This will be _____
first mission as Sergeant, since the death of Sgt. Horatio. I expect you to respect [him/her] as much as you did Horatio." (The Sergeant PC was recently promoted, upon the death of Sgt. Horatio.)

SUGGESTED ENCOUNTERS

Players may tire quickly of massacring bears and wolves, even if they're "more ferocious" than their extinct Terran counterparts. I recommend only 2 Encounters for the temperate woodland. Let's assume 4 players, and 20 Threat Tokens.

1. **Scouting Mission (3 Threat Tokens):** The PCs are part of the first wave, dropped in on the eastern coast of the main continent to test the strength of the creatures and begin cleansing. Resistance is fierce, but minimal. They will encounter large rodents, wolves, and bear slightly larger than themselves.
2. **Deep Wood (6 Threat Tokens):** The thicker the forest gets, the more isolated each squad becomes from each other. Communication with Command is sporadic at best. The beasts seem to come out of hibernation and, despite their apparent lack of intelligence, seem to be working together against the Terrans. (This is the only notable ability the creatures possess.) **In addition**, they will meet a singularly large bear, over twice the height of a human (4 m./12 ft.). After taking it down, they will note unusually high Kill scores for those that injured it.



Mission 2: Icy North

Capt. Dexter suddenly contacts the squad: “We’ve lost contact with one of the squads assigned to scout the northern polar area of the continent. We need you to drop in near their last known location, and determine their status. What we know from their last communication is that you can expect similar indigenous resistance as in the temperate regions. Report back as soon as you can.”

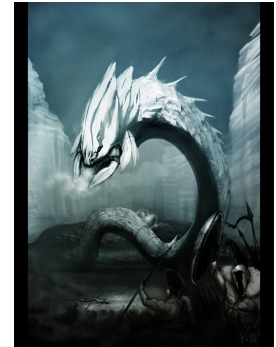
SUGGESTED ENCOUNTERS

3; 11 Threat Tokens remain.

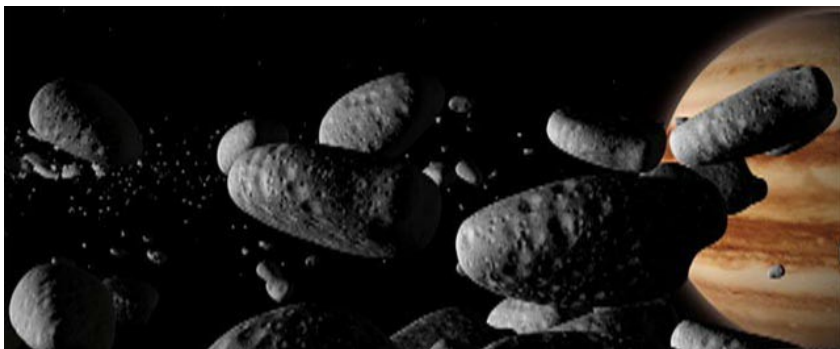
- 3. Reconnaissance (2 Threat Tokens):** The PCs are deposited at the last known location of the lost squad. They can still make out tracks that lead them into the icy mountains even further north. Presently, they are attacked by a pack of ravenous white wolves.
- 4. The Obelisk (1 Threat Tokens):** If the PCs try to return to the *End*, Captain Dexter orders them to proceed further into the imposing mountains to investigate strange energy readings the ship has detected. (If they need any further convincing or foreboding, they hear a terrifying low roar which shakes the ground and sends sheets of ice and snow cascading down the near mountains.) The avalanches

aren’t lethal to the Troopers, but they expose several ancient obelisks made of an onyx-like black material. They cannot read the inscriptions. Captain Dexter made no mention of sentient inhabitants. They come across one or two hardy polar bears, but they aren’t attacked – they appear to be fleeing something further up ahead.

- 5. The Dragon (8 Threat Tokens):** Giant, snakelike, and protruding from a dark cave in the ground. It is massive, and definitely worth 8 Threat Tokens by itself. The remains of the missing squad lie strewn around the mouth of its cave. Kills will increase as the Troopers damage it, but the one who takes the last one will receive the glory of the Kill.



Second Planet: The Warhol Belt



DESCRIPTION

Asteroid belt encircling a type of star which is prime for the mining of solar energy.

CREATURE FORM

Shadow Beasts (transphasic specters codenamed "The Shadows").

AA
6

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ambush; Possess*; Immune to Physical Weapons* (GM's choice)

THREAT TOKENS [#/players] x 5

SUGGESTED ENCOUNTERS

3

IDEAS/IMAGES

- ▶ Landing on a silent, ashen rock. The only sound is that of your com system, and other suit technology.
- ▶ Literally chasing shadows that are just shadows of other asteroids floating by.
- ▶ The Shadows are 'transphasic' (not a Special Ability in the mechanical sense): when not actually attacking, they are immaterial, and barely visible. They only manifest physically briefly before and after they attack the Troopers.
- ▶ *(Optional new Alien Ability): Certain Shadows are able to **Possess** Troopers (new Special Ability). Any PC who has just taken a Kill must roll NFA against AA; failure means that a Shadow has possessed you. Possession is terrifying, both for the victim and his fellow soldiers. The Shadow will immediately start firing upon the other troopers. For the next three rounds, the PC can do nothing but attempt to shake the possession by rolling NFA vs. AA. Success: the Shadow is ousted. Final failure: the Trooper's psyche is beyond saving, and is permanently taken over by the Shadow.
- ▶ *(Optional new Alien Ability): Given their **Transphasic** substance, only beam weapons can affect the Shadows.

- ▶ The Shadows are actually the psychic remnants of the inhabitants of the planet that the asteroid belt used to be.

NPCs

- ▶ **Captain Aaron Dexter:** Commander of the 16th Company. A lean, well-kept man of 30. He chooses his words precisely, and demands precision and dedication from his troops.
- ▶ **Corporal Brad "Hot Shot" Warren:** An excitable, sophomoric soldier who believes wholeheartedly in his superiority to his fellow soldiers. (GM's note: plan on him being the first to get possessed by the Shadows.)



Mission 1: Scouting

Captain Dexter, in the briefing room: “Our purpose in the Warhol system is to set up a solar energy collector around the Warhol Star. However, our scout ships haven’t been able to penetrate further than the asteroid belt... in fact, none have returned.

“Our scouts have detected the movement of life-forms within the Belt. They sporadically blip on and off of our sensors, so they will probably be difficult to detect once you get down there. Your job is to land on one of the larger asteroids, and annihilate these life forms for the glory of Terra!

“You’ll be operating in low-light and low-gravity conditions. The asteroids are pockmarked with caverns and craters, so be on the lookout for ambushes. The entirety of the 16th Brigade is being committed to cleansing the Warhol Belt, so watch out for friendly fire.

SUGGESTED ENCOUNTERS

We’ll assume you’re playing at home, with no time constraints. 4 players, 20 Threat Tokens. Remember: as per the 3:16 rules, Encounters should be improvised, not prescribed. The following is merely a suggestion.

1. **Touchdown; Overwhelming Attack (4 Threat Tokens):** Play up the rock’s baleful atmosphere. The PCs’ squad of 7-10 soldiers is the only presence on this sizable asteroid. There is no sound, save for their comm. chatter. Then, the shadows come. Slowly, at first, skirting among the Troopers and likely causing panic. Then, they strike with horrific visage and ferocity. Hot Shot gets possessed, if you’re using that Ability.
2. **Regroup & Entrench (3 Threat Tokens):** Perhaps the PCs retreat from one of these Encounters... they must find a semi-secure position in which to establish a foothold. An open, well-lit area makes a lot more sense against this foe than a cave or outcropping.

Mission 2: Capture

Captain Dexter: "I'm entrusting your squad with a highly sensitive mission of grave import to the TEF's initiative in this system. You will be escorting a team of TEF research scientists into hostile territory. Their mission is to effect the capture of one of the alien Shadows.

"The equipment and personnel we're committing to this mission are highly sensitive. Consequently, we are giving you every tool at our disposal. You may have heard something about the experimental Thrust-Packs..."

Info on Thrust-Packs can be found on p. XX. Fill the PCs in – all of them will be outfitted with these units for the duration of the mission.

The team of scientists consists of three highly-trained Tactical Research Specialists. They are formidable soldiers in their own right, with advanced xenobiological expertise. They're equipped with:

- ▶ A large containment unit that **should be** able to safely contain one of the Shadows for study.

- ▶ Experimental multiphasic helmet lamps that can detect the Shadows better than standard vision/sensors. ^{are}
- ▶ Experimental beam weapons that **may be** able to trap and hold a Shadow long enough to contain it.

SUGGESTED ENCOUNTERS

We're down to 13 Threat Tokens (assuming no Alien Special Abilities have been used).

3. **Bait (2 Threat Tokens):** The Tactical Research team asks the PCs to create a disturbance with their Thrust-Packs and weapons to draw out The Shadows. Due to the nature of their mission, the PCs are obligated to obey the Specialists, despite any misgivings. Naturally, things don't go smoothly.
 - a. Option: You can kill the TR team (or worse), and have Command refuse to extract the PCs until their objective is complete, meaning they must acquire a prisoner themselves...
4. **Acquisition (4 Threat Tokens):** The PCs (and the TEF Specialists, if they survived) must capture one of the Shadows, while fending off an attack.

Mission 3: Setting “It” Off

After recovering from the events of the previous Mission, the PCs are ordered to report to the briefing room. Capt. Dexter: “Despite the monumental cock-up that was your last engagement, we’re sending you back in. Researchers aboard the *Anaximander* [R&D ship; part of the main fleet from which the *End of Innocence* hails] have provided us with a device that will crush the Shadows out of existence!

“We’ve dubbed this mission Operation Phoenix. The anti-Shadow devices are called the Harbinger Units. Your squad, along with several others throughout the Warhol Belt, will:

- ▶ **Deliver** a single Harbinger to Asteroid PZ-113 – a small rock, positioned deep within the Belt.
- ▶ **Activate** the Harbinger by entering a simple code sequence.
- ▶ **Protect** the Unit for a period of twelve minutes, at which point it will release a spherical wave of metaphasic energy that is deadly to the Shadows.

“You will again be equipped with Thrust-Packs for this mission. We’re not going to waste any shuttles on you this time.”

SUGGESTED ENCOUNTERS

The final 7 Threat Tokens...

5. **Placement (2 Threat Tokens):** The Troopers are responsible for delivering a single Harbinger Unit to a predetermined location within the Belt.
6. **The Last Stand (5 or all remaining Threat Tokens):** The Troopers must guard the HU from a massive Shadow onslaught for a period of twelve minutes, until it spins up and detonates effectively. Oh, yeah – and, they might want to escape intact (their superiors are indifferent).