

Mercenaries for Hire

Hiring mercenaries is a feature of *The Battle for Xilos* using the 'Mercenary Fighters' rules (pages 68-69). This enabled the Concord, Isorian, Boromite, Freeborn and Algoryn forces to incorporate mercenaries from the Freeborn Adventurers or Boromite Clans lists. But not all mercenaries come from Boromites or Freeborn: there are some who are independent freelancers, such as the enigmatic Togg, and others who are semi-independent, hiring themselves alongside – or too – a faction like the Freeborn, such as the much vaunted Hansa Nairobi. There are others, whether simply renegades or groups of mercenaries from the many panhuman and barely-known nonhuman races around the universes connected by the Antarean Nexus.

And then there are those whose natural evolution has led them to the life of the mercenary, such as the solitary Hökk hunters and the Askar Warrior-Protectors. Together with the independents, these are grouped into an additional list, that of the **Mercenaries for Hire**.

HOW TO HIRE MERCENARIES

Units on the **Mercenaries for Hire** list can be hired in exactly the same way as units from the Adventurers or Clans lists by paying the appropriate points and assigning them to the same Combat Level slot in the hiring army's force selector. Some mercenary units (stated in their entry) have to be used to replace a particular type of unit, designated by 'Substitutes for'.

For example, an Askar, tactical squad fills a tactical slot in the army's force selector and counts towards the minimums and maximums in that slot like any other unit; an Askar Command squad Substitutes for an tactical level Infantry Command unit.

These mercenary units are not part of a separate force selector but are part of a separate Mercenaries for Hire list.

Units from this list can be hired by specific (or any) faction, either on their own or alongside mercenaries from the Freeborn Adventurers or Boromite Clans list. However, the restrictions in Xilos still apply so forces cannot use both the Adventurers and clans! Non-mercenary units must still outnumber the total mercenary units, whatever list they are taken from, by at least one unit.

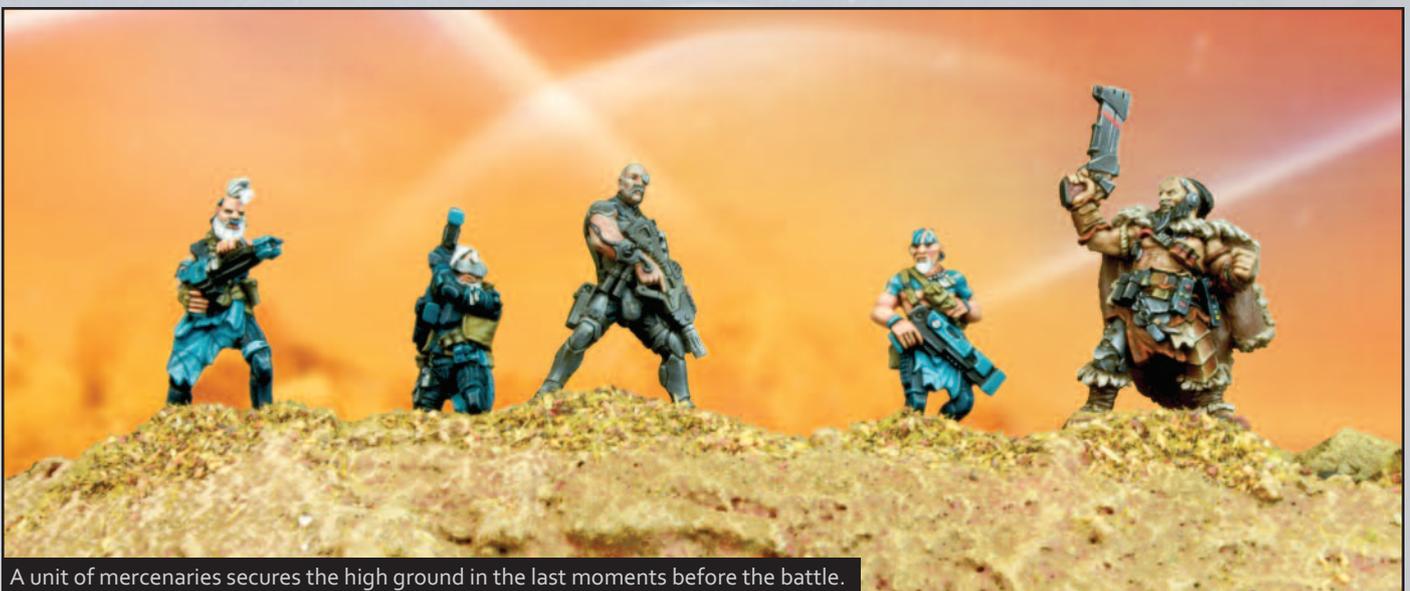
For example, a C3 shard can hire some Freeborn Adventurers **and** a Mercenaries for Hire unit providing the Concord units in the force outnumber the total of Adventurers plus Mercenaries.

HIRING RESTRICTIONS

The Boromite Clans and Freeborn Adventurers have few restrictions on who can hire them, being able to be hired by the Concord, Isorian, Freeborn, Boromite and Algoryn forces. A Freeborn Adventurer force fighting as an army in its own right can even hire Boromite Clan mercenary units, just as a Boromite Clan force can hire Freeborn Adventurer units.

However, not all Mercenaries-for-hire are well disposed towards these factions and, indeed, some non-human units might even be hired by particularly forward thinking Ghar. Some mercenary units will have specific exceptions, either stating that they cannot be hired by a given faction (such as Isorian, for example) or that they may be hired by Ghar, Ghar Rebels or, indeed, any other faction. This is designated by 'Useable by' section of units' stat blocks.

Unless otherwise stated, the above faction constraints on hiring a human mercenary unit apply. Otherwise, non-human mercenaries such as the Hökk may be hired by any faction, including Ghar.



A unit of mercenaries secures the high ground in the last moments before the battle.

When replacing a specific unit, the Mercenary for Hire unit is still subject to the same selection limitations as the replaced unit, such as 'Limited Choice'. In addition, some mercenary units, such as the Hück, might be designated 'Unique': this means that only one of that unit may be hired by an army.

Notable units on the 'Mercenaries for Hire' list include the Hück (as a Tactical unit), the forthcoming Askar (as Tactical or Tactical command), and Hansa Nairobi and Bovan Tuk (Antares rulebook, page 237) who can not only substitute for a Freeborn Command Squad but any other tactical level Command Squad – apart from Ghar, of course!

PLAYING MERCENARIES

Unless otherwise stated in the mercenary unit's description, hired mercenaries become an integrated part of the hiring forces combat shard, able to obey Follow orders, ignore friendly Subverter Matrices, receive aid from medics (if of the same species as the hiring force) and share the same order dice. Army Options can be used on the mercenaries-for-hire

just as the other mercenary lists. And Mercenaries take Break Tests just as any other unit of their type, for example vehicles only taking Break Tests when forced to do so by a combat chart result.

However, mercenaries-for-hire units suffer the same downfalls as other mercenaries: there is a chance they will turn or go out in a blaze of glory rather than be destroyed. The rules for this are on pages 68-69 of *The Battle for Xilos* but we repeat them here for clarity.

THE MERCENARY BREAK TEST

If a mercenary unit fails a Break Test and would be destroyed, roll a D10 instead and consult the Mercenary Break Test Chart. If, at the time of testing, the army contains more mercenary units of any type than it does non-mercenary units, deduct -1 from the dice roll for each mercenary unit (including the testing unit) in excess of non-mercenaries. For example, if an army has 4 mercenary units and 2 non-mercenary units and rolls a 7, the score is $7-2 = 5$.

MERCENARY BREAK TEST CHART

Score Result

1 or less **Betrayal: the unit goes over to the enemy!**

Instead of removing the unit as destroyed leave it in place. Remove the all the unit's Order Dice from the player whose force hiring the mercenaries (the still count as lost to the hiring force) and replace them with an Order Dice for the opposing side. The new Order Dice will either go onto the table beside the unit or into the dice bag, depending on whether the unit has already received an order that turn or not. Pins, MOD dice losses and casualties are retained but the mercenary unit now fights as part of the enemy's force.

Once a unit has changed its allegiance it won't change back again and, if destroyed by a Break Test result, is removed from play like any non-mercenary unit.

In games where an army's 'break level' is used to determine game length this will add to the total number of Order Dice for the force their mercenary unit has just joined and can therefore affect the number of units required to effect a break.

A unit that changes sides counts as a unit destroyed for purposes of calculating victory points at the end of a game. A mercenary unit that changes sides and which is subsequently destroyed by its former employer scores no victory points for its original employer.

2-5 **Wavering...** If no mercenary units have gone over to the enemy already, the mercenary unit is destroyed and removed from play. If any mercenary unit has gone over to the enemy, then the unit also goes over to the enemy as for 1 or less above.

6-9 **A sad loss.** The mercenary unit is destroyed and removed from play just like any other unit that fails its break test.

10 **A blaze of glory!** The mercenaries are determined to uphold their reputation even to the last moment, unleashing a hail of fire into the enemy's ranks even as they are cut down. The unit is removed like any other destroyed unit, but before doing so it gets one last chance to shoot. The unit can shoot as if it had been given a Fire order and ignores all pin markers it may have accumulated. Work out the shooting in the usual way and then remove the unit. It has gone down fighting!

