

The Renegade Mage's Technomancer US Military Notes, 4th Ed.

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Air Force

Airfields at first look to have the same troubles that rendered the Navy's aircraft carriers too vulnerable, but it's a matter of scale. It's easier to disrupt real-time monitoring of a military airfield in the middle of a country than on an aircraft carrier on the high seas, and it's much easier to maintain multiple redundant runways on land than multiple redundant flight decks on a carrier. These factors pushed the Air Force to favor large bases with secured perimeters deep in the United States, relying on mid-air refueling to gain the range to strike targets and on entity control during long flights to target to keep pilots rested for combat, but did not require radical changes in Air Force operations.

Army

A standard US Army rifle platoon on Merlin in 2023 strongly resembles its real world 2023 counterpart, but with the following adjustments.

First, the real-world M4 carbine is replaced by the M6 EPS carbine. Second, the "automatic rifleman" with a SAW in each rifle team is replaced by a second rifleman with an M6 and an M136 rocket launcher (FFV AT4, *High-Tech* p.149). Third, the grenadier in each rifle team replaces the M320 grenade launcher (H&K AG36, *High-Tech* p.144) with an M317 EPS grenade launcher (half weight and cost per shot, 240 shots before exhaustion, other stats matching the M320).

Finally, the weapons squad is completely replaced. The Merlin weapons squad consists of:

- a) Six titanium golems with Gunner (Machine Gun)-16 and Soldier-9; three armed with Saco Mk 19 automatic grenade launchers (*High-Tech* p.143), three armed with Browning M2HB .50 caliber machine guns (*High-Tech* p.133).
- b) Three titanium golem exoskeletons with Guns (LAW)-16 and Soldier-9, each armed with the M3E1 MAAWS (the FFV M3 variant of the Carl Gustav 84mm recoilless rifle, *High-Tech* p.148) and the Javelin ATGM (*High-Tech*, p.153).
- c) An E-6 staff sergeant squad leader, also titled "Golem Director & Operator" (GDO), wearing one golem exoskeleton (and who will take control to use the Javelin).
- d) Two E-4 corporals (the revival of the "corporal" title in the field reflecting their command training and authority over the golems of the squad) as Assistant GDOs (AGDOs), each wearing one golem exoskeleton (and who will take control to use the Javelin).

It is reasonably common for the weapons squad to be deployed as three weapons teams (one machine gunner, one automatic grenadier, and one GDO/AGDO with anti-tank weapons), each assigned to one of a platoon's rifle squads. In the past, heavier weapons (like 30mm autocannon) were experimented with in weapons squads; the conclusion was that even with the carrying capacity of the titanium golems, the ammunition weight and bulk for sustained fire was a greater drawback (in part because of laden golems sinking on soft ground) than the advantage given by the improvement in firepower over the M2HB.

True rifle platoons are becoming uncommon, however. They're being displaced by the remote-controlled automaton infantry (RCAI, pronounced "Are-kai"), which sends no human beings into the field. An RCAI deploys ABS plastic golem "drones", with titanium golem "drones" for the heavy weapons squad. The golems are all equipped with embedded communicators and cameras, and each is remotely commanded by a single human being back at a (hopefully) safe communications center far away. An RCAI company's TOE matches a human rifle company except 1) there are no attached medics, 2) there are no distinct GDO/AGDO positions, and 3) golem exoskeletons are replaced with standard golems.

In both types of units, golems (including any exoskeletons) wear extensive armor to reduce damage taken in the field; in *High-Tech* terms, they are equipped with assault vests, trauma plates, ballistic leggings, DAP, firefighter boots, and ballistic helmets. Titanium golems wear versions with double DR, cost, and weight. Unlike human soldiers, the golems never complain about comfort, nor choose to remove their protective gear.

Marine Corps

Marine infantry doctrine does not use remote-controlled or unpiloted golems. Every one of the fifteen members of a rifle platoon carries the M6, and each fire team has an M317 EPS grenade launcher.

A rifle company's weapons platoon consists of a mortar section, a machine gun section, and an assault section. The machine gun section has three machine gun squads consisting of a squad leader (an E-5 sergeant) and two machine gun teams. The three members of each machine gun team (by the TOE, one E-4, one E-3, and one E-2/1) are in titanium golem exoskeletons with Gunner (Machine Gun)-16 and Soldier-9, armed with the Browning M2HB .50 caliber machine gun. The assault section is headed by an E-5 sergeant and consists of three squads of four (by the TOE, one E-4, one E-3, and two E-2/1s), six in titanium golem exoskeletons with Gunner (Machine Gun)-16 and Soldier-9, armed with Saco Mk 19 automatic grenade launchers, six in titanium golem exoskeletons with Guns (LAW)-16 and Soldier-9, each armed with the Mk 153 SMAW (no 4th edition stats; the Carl Gustav is a reasonable approximation).

With the number of heavy machine guns (eighteen) and automatic grenade launchers (six) in a rifle company's weapons platoon, giving the weapons company a heavy machine gun platoon would be quite redundant. Instead, a weapons company includes a Light Air Support platoon with seven LUC-1W flying carpets, each carrying four Marines, six equipped with a GE M134 "Minigun" (*High-Tech*, p.153) and one for the platoon headquarters element.

Navy

The Navy makes extensive use of ABS plastic golems as crewmen. They of course need supervisors to make up for their lack of good judgment, but then, so do new human crewmen, and the golems are cheaper, don't get bored or fight, don't eat or sleep, don't drink or do drugs, and don't get ill or pregnant. On submarines they usually are imprinted with Submariner-12 and Submarine (Large Sub)-12, while for surface duty Seamanship-12 and some specialty of either Boating-12 or Gunner-13 are typical skills.

Space Force

The original proposal to create a separate Space Force was floated in the 1980s, as part of the Space Defense Initiative of the Reagan Administration. The Air Force initially managed to fend off the pressures by instead creating a Space Command within the Air Force in 1983, but teleport-based operations and orbital installations had little in common with aircraft and airfields, and the idea persisted. The US Space Force became a separate service on October 1, 2022, and its Space Operation Command was immediately the dominant element of the United States Space Command (the unified combatant command for the US military in orbit and beyond). In the separation, the Air Force retained responsibility for US ICBMs.

The Space Force was further separated from the Air Force institutionally in 2019. In that year, the Department of the Space Force (still within the Department of Defense) was formed, and the new Space Force Academy opened just east of Alamogordo, New Mexico.

The Space Force uses a variant on Navy rank titles and insignia for officers; the differences are naming the O-7 grade "Commodore", O-3 "Major Lieutenant", O-2 "First Lieutenant", and O-1 "Second Lieutenant" (the latter two matching the Army/Marines/Air Force), while the epaulettes for flag-rank officers have the Space Force delta rather than an anchor. For enlisted grades, it uses the same rank titles and insignia as the current real-world US Space Force.