

BATTLES IN THE ASH WASTES HIRED GUNS

by Chris Ward and Stuart Witter

Continuing our Ash Wastes series of articles, Chris Ward and Stuart Witter go in search of bounty hunters, mutant scum and other hired guns, and find that even in the Ash Wastes almost anything or anyone can be found... for a price!

Just as in the Underhive, there are many hired guns for sale in the Ash Wastes as long as you know where to look. Mercenary scum crop up at trading posts, shanty towns and journeymen depots. Wandering nomad guides are found working with many gangs. For a fee their valuable knowledge of the Wastes can help find the quickest route, or set up the most effective ambush. Even bounty hunters can be found in the wastes, after all many

outlaws think hiding amongst the dunes and pollutants can save them, and many guilders are determined to prove this is not the case.

This article details the types of hired guns that may be found and hired in the Ash Wastes, and by whom. Many of these you will already be familiar with, but some are found only in the desolation of Necromunda's ash deserts. Note that all hired guns are assumed to be equipped with a respirator even if this is not stated in their normal rules. Please show this on the model!

UNDERHIVE SCUM

Although not strictly 'Underhive' scum, there are many scum fighters to be found in the Ash Wastes: shanty scum, escaped outlaws and more. Underhive scum can therefore be used by any gangs in Necromunda: Battles in the Ash Wastes, following the normal rules in Necromunda. As it states in the rules, a scummer will never use any weapons or equipment other than his own, so he may not drive a vehicle or ride a beast, but may ride as a passenger as normal, and may take over the controls in an emergency.

Ash Waste Shaman

Well, of course you can have these! Any gangs in Necromunda: Battles in the Ash Wastes may hire an Ash Wastes Shaman except Guilders, who see them as criminals and offer a bounty on their heads, and Hive Prospector teams, who are professionals and do not hire any outside help. Ash Wastes Shamans can only ride as passengers just like other hired guns.



Bounty Hunters

These are still occasionally found in the wastes, and may be hired as per the standard rules found in Necromunda by Guilders, Journeymen and Shanty Town gangs. Again, they cannot use any other equipment than their own, so may only take over vehicle controls in an emergency, but may ride as a passenger as normal.

Ogryn Bodyguard

Guilder gangs may hire these rare and hideously expensive bodyguards, but no one else can. They cannot take over a vehicle even in an emergency, let alone drive one normally, and take up two crew spaces in vehicles that can hold five or less crew, thanks to their massive size!

Pit Slaves

Hive Prospector teams have a kind of pit slave: servitors, which are dealt with separately in the Hive Prospector rules. Of the other gangs in the Ash Wastes, none have the technology or resources to maintain pit slaves except for Guilders, who may hire pit slaves as per the normal rules in Outlanders. Pit Slaves may only ride as a passenger in a vehicle as with Scum and Bounty Hunters, and may only use their own equipment as normal. Pit Slaves are still capable of driving a vehicle, but in an emergency only.

Sniper/Defence Force Deserter

These are PDF deserters that have found their way to the shanty towns in the Ash Wastes, but may be hired following the normal rules in Necromunda magazine. Guilders and Hive Prospector teams may not hire Snipers, but all other Ash Wastes gangs can. Again they can only be passengers in vehicles. Defence Force Deserters (from Gang War 3), may not be used in the Ash Wastes; their wargear is far too hard to maintain in this hostile environment.

Ratling Sniper

These diminutive marksmen have an incredibly weak constitution and would die within hours of leaving the protection of the hive.

Ratskin Scouts

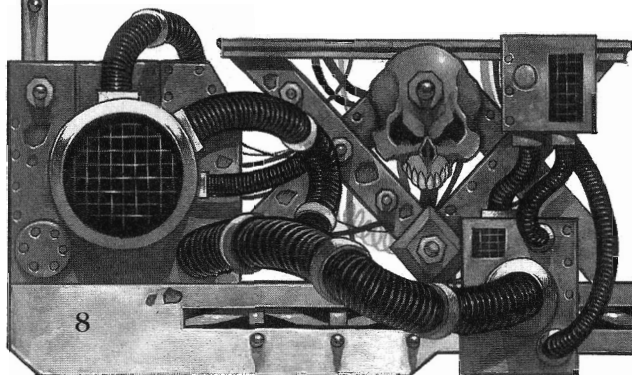
Ratskins will never abandon the underhive; it is their sacred homeland, and thus no gangs in Necromunda: Battles in the Ash Wastes may hire them when outside the hive.



Wyrds

These are much less common in the Wastes than the underhive. They are rare mutants, and thanks to the sparse population of the Wastes few survive, especially considering many Wyrds are physically weak and less able to survive in the Wastes. However, that is not to say they don't exist at all, so they may still be hired by any gang that can afford their services, except Guilders, who would sooner have them shot, and House Prospector teams who don't hire anyone. Pyromaniac Wyrds should re-roll result 5 (flame blast), as in the high winds of the Wastes they are only going to cook themselves with this power.

Beastmaster Wyrds may only have Giant Rats (evil mutant rats at that), or Milliasaurs, as Ripper Jacks have nowhere to hide and hang upside down in the dark if they go outside the hive. As before, Wyrds may ride vehicles as passengers only.





NOMAD GUIDE

Not all Nomads operate in bands of wandering raiders, some may be found walking the toxic wastes alone, surviving by their own considerable skill. They may be outcasts from the Nomad tribe, the last survivor of a gang destroyed by freak storms or simply prefer to live alone. Nevertheless, these nomads often turn up at a shanty town or mid-waste refuelling point to lend their expertise to any who can afford their services. These guides may be sought out far and wide by gangs looking for knowledge of the wastes, ambush sites and short cuts from hive to hive.

Recruiting Nomad Guides

If a player wishes to hire a Nomad guide he must pay the standard hire fee, which is 15 credits. A gang may only have one Nomad Guide. The profile and skills for a Nomad Guide are worked out after they are hired. Shanty Town gangs and Journeymen may hire Nomad Guides, Guilders see them as outlaws, Nomads view them as outcasts and Prospector teams don't hire anyone. For the purposes of calculating the gang rating Nomad Guides have a value of 75 (15x5).

Nomad Guide Profile

Nomad Guides have special skills as well as superior characteristic values. This is worked out only after the Nomad guide is recruited. The basic characteristic profile is given below, and is the base level for characteristic values. In addition to this the Nomad Guide will have a number of 'advances' as explained below.

Nomad Guide Advances

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
4	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	7

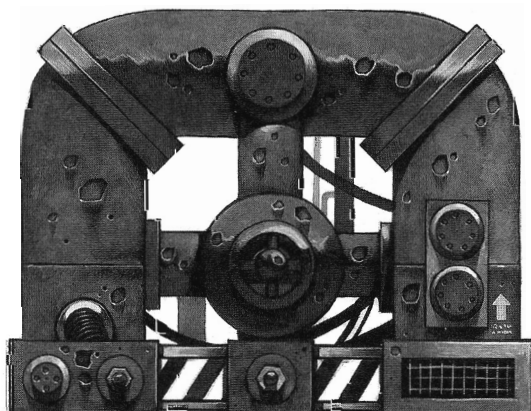
A Nomad guide has three advances, which are either bonuses on his profile or skills. Roll a D6 three times and consult the chart below, noting down the skills and increases as you go along. A Nomad guide may not increase any characteristic by more than +2; if an increase is rolled for a third time re-roll the result. Similarly if you roll the same skill twice re-roll to get another.

D6

- 1-2 +1 Ballistic Skill
- 3 +1 Toughness
- 4 Roll a further D6:
 - 1 +1 Weapon Skill
 - 2 +1 Strength
 - 3 +1 Initiative
 - 4 +1 Wound
 - 5 +1 Leadership
 - 6 +1 Attack

5-6 Roll a further D6:

- 1-3 Marksman
- 4-5 Rapid Fire
- 6 Roll a further D6:
 - 1 Crack Shot
 - 2 Ambush
 - 3 Weaponsmith
 - 4 Infiltration
 - 5 Nerves of Steel
 - 6 Dive



Special Nomad Guide Rules

Nomad Guides are experts at survival in the wilderness of the Ash Wastes, and thus have the following special rules:

Knowledge of the Wastes

The Nomad Guide's huge knowledge of the wastes; its hidden routes, weather patterns and secret lairs provide several advantages to the gang who employ him. A gang with a Nomad Guide may re-roll the first result on the Treacherous Conditions table if they wish. The second result must be accepted even if it is less favourable than the first. Note that as an Ash Nomad the Nomad Guide is not affected by the treacherous conditions himself, except the Dead Calm (26) result. This represents the Guide forewarning the gang about the conditions in that area, thus allowing them to choose another route, or another site for an ambush, or perhaps just prepare better for the conditions they will face. If both gangs have a Nomad Guide then neither gang can claim the advantage, so no re-rolls are allowed.

Loner

The Nomad Guide is completely independent; he is used to working alone in the vastness of the Wastes without the backup of a gang behind him. As a result he is treated similarly to a Leader in that he does not require another model within 2" to roll to escape from pinning.

Nomad Guide Weapons

A Nomad Guide fights with his own weapons as described below. They cannot buy other weapons or equipment. Nomad Guides generally spend all their money on keeping their equipment maintained and providing enough food and supplies for their survival in the Wastes. Nomad Guides may not be assigned as the driver for a vehicle, but may still take over in an emergency as normal.

Nomad Guides are armed with the following:

- Knife or double bladed knife

- Respirator

Plus any one of the following:

- Long rifle

- Autogun and frag grenades

- Lasgun and laspistol/autopistol

MUTANT SCUM

Scum. A catch all term for pretty much any wandering gunman that will fight for a handful of creds and a bottle of wildsnake. Even in the Wastes there are many types of scum for hire, from men wanted by the guilders that have fled the hive to shanty gunmen and drifters. However, it is in the shanty towns that a different kind of scum may be available to hire – mutants. The offspring of parents only recently cast out of the hive, there are many mutants whose genetic make-up is not yet resistant to the countless toxins they are exposed to on a daily basis in the Ash Wastes. Some of these mutants will survive, as their mutation gives them advantages that others do not have, and often leaves them far stronger physically than their weak shanty dwelling companions. Nevertheless, the life of the mutant is a lonely one, for even amongst the stunted and disfigured of the shanty people 'true' mutants are still feared and shunned. That is, of course, not to say that shanty gangs do not make use of the mutants when they choose; by searching the worst parts of the shanty a gang leader can usually unearth a mutant willing to fight for the cost of a few creds.



Recruiting Mutant Scum

If a player wants to hire a Mutant Scummer he must pay the standard hire fee, which is 10 creds per Mutant Scummer. A gang may

hire as many Mutant Scum as the player wishes, but each must have a different mutation (see later). The profile and skills for Mutant Scum are worked out after they are hired. Only Shanty Town gangs may hire Mutant Scum, nobody else is quite that desperate!

For the purposes of calculating the gang rating, each Mutant Scummer has a value of 50 (ie, his hire fee 10x5).

Mutant Scum Profile

Mutant Scum may have special skills and superior characteristic values. This is worked out only after the Mutant Scummer is recruited. The basic characteristic profile is given below, which is the base level for its characteristic values. In addition to this a Mutant Scummer will have a number of advances as explained below.

Mutant Scum Advances

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
4	3	2	3	3	1	3	1	6

A Mutant Scummer has three 'advances', which are either bonuses on his profile or skills. Roll a D6 three times and consult the chart below, noting down the skills and increases as you go along. A Mutant Scummer may not improve any characteristic by more than +2; if an increase is rolled for a third time re-roll the result. Similarly if you roll the same skill twice re-roll to get another.

D6	Advance
1	+1 Weapon Skill
2	+1 Ballistic Skill
3	+1 Toughness
4	Roll a further D6:
1	+1 Weapon Skill
2	+1 Strength
3	+1 Initiative
4	+1 Wound
5	+1 Leadership
6	+1 Attack
5-6	Roll a further D6:
1-3	Killer Reputation
4-5	Berserk Charge
6	Roll a further D6:
1	Impetuous
2	Head Butt
3	True Grit
4	Hipshooting
5	Nerves of Steel
6	Crushing Blow

Mutant Scum Special Rules

Mutants

Mutant Scum have one big difference when compared to regular gangers – they're mutants! A Mutant Scum has one mutation chosen from the list below. Note that I have allowed players to choose the mutation even though some may be considered 'better' than others for two reasons: 1) The mutation costs given in the Scavvy rules are based on games in the hive; these may not necessarily reflect on their effectiveness in the sparser surroundings of the Wastes. 2) It is assumed that many players will only have one or two converted Mutant Scum models (the idea is not just to use Scavvy Mutants) to choose from anyway.

Choose one mutation from:

Eyestalks

Claw

Tentacle

Two Heads (note that a Mutant Scum will never have two pistols though)

Spikes

Extra Arm

Wings (not as good in the Wastes though. . .)

The rules for these mutations are covered in the Scavvy gang section of Outlanders.

Mutant Scum Weapons

A Mutant Scummer is armed with his own weapons as described below. They cannot buy other weapons or equipment. Mutant Scum generally spend all their creds on Wildsnake and Second Best to try and shut out the reality of being a mutant and living in a toxic wasteland. Mutant Scum cannot be the driver of a vehicle except in an emergency as for other hired guns.

Mutant Scum are armed with the following:

Knife

Respirator

Plus one of the following:

Autogun

Stubgun with dum dums or autopistol and club/maul/bludgeon

Shotgun with solid and scatter shells