

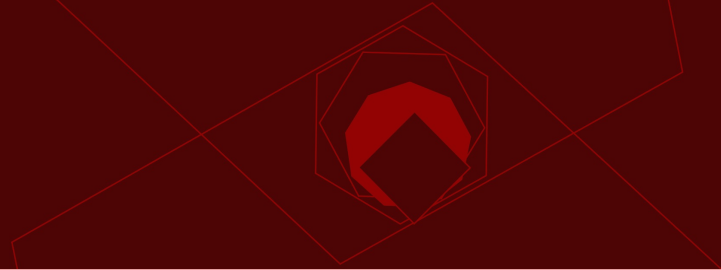
# The Partisan

A Supply Drop Playbook By Lawson  
Coleman

For Austin Ramsay's Beam Saber



# Credits & Required Texts



***This playbook was made on the unceded traditional territories of the Matsqui, Kwantlen, Katzie, and Semiahmoo First Nations.***

The Partisan Designed & Written by: Lawson Coleman  
Playtested by: Juno Coleman

The Partisan is an in-development playbook, and the design & layout in this PDF is subject to change for any multitude of reasons. Some Abilities or gear may be imbalanced, and your mileage may vary.

If you have feedback on the partisan, you can give me your thoughts through itch.io ratings, comments, or through the partisan V0.3 survey, which will go live the weekend after v0.35's release.

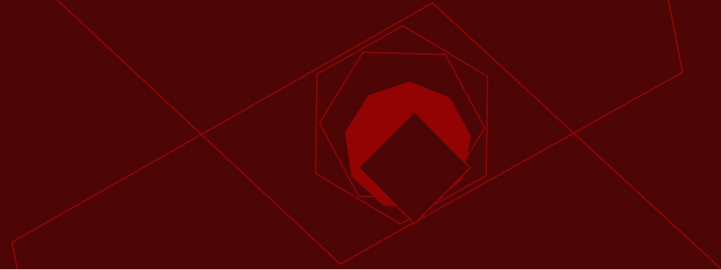
If you are interested in following updates on the Partisan (and other things I make), you can follow me on twitter [@TheLawsonC!](https://twitter.com/TheLawsonC)

The Game Mechanics listed in this playbook require a copy of Beam Saber by Austin Ramsay, which can be found here: [Beam Saber by Austin Ramsay](#)

Thank you to Austin for Designing & Writing such an awesome game, and for cultivating a creative & positive culture around the beam saber community. I've had a great time running beam saber, and designing for it has been a refreshing exercise.

Beam Saber is a Forged in the Dark Game, which is based on Blades in the Dark (found at <http://www.bladesinthedark.com/>), product of One Seven Design, developed and authored by John Harper, and licensed for our use under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>).

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# Touchstones

Solid Snake(Metal gear solid), Shinji Ikari(Neon Genesis Evangelion), Fourteen Fifteen, Hadrian, and The Figure in Bismuth(Friends at the Table), The Master Chief(Halo), Anakin Skywalker/Darth Vader(Star Wars), Jack Cooper & BT(Titanfall 2), James Bond, Agent 47(HITMAN)

## Partisan end of mission XP Trigger:

Mark XP if you addressed a challenge with Authority or Intuition

# Vehicle Gear

**Banners, Flags And Regalia(1 Load):** A collection of Stunning Decorations on your Vehicle that inspire most allies and intimidate most enemies of your Handler's faction.

**A Fine Signature Melee Weapon(1 Load):** A Unique Handheld Vehicle weapon, such as a Psionic Dagger, Laser Greatsword, or a Corrosive Halberd.

**Artillery Targeting System(1 Load, 1 use per mission):** Onboard systems for marking a location from which to call in a bombing run, artillery strike, or an orbital bombardment from a distant location, so long as your handler has access to it.

**Fine Onboard Processing Systems(1 Load):** A High-tech system for Interpreting and presenting battlefield data and information on the fly, complete with a Unique AI personality.



# Starting Build

+1 Sway, +1 Battle,  
+1 Bombard,  
Voice in your ear

Play The Partisan if...

You are interested in exploring your pilot's relationship to power & leadership, or if you are interested in exploring a particular faction's internal politics. If you enjoy being given tough dilemmas from the GM. You enjoy playing the double agent, or the ever-loyal specialist.

## Pilot Gear

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**A Fine Revolver(1 Load):** A Reliable Sidearm that can deal with lightly armored targets with ease.

**A symbol of your station(1 Load):** A badge, Identification, icon, artefact, tattoo, or other indicator that can be shown to members of your handler's faction to assuage doubts in loyalty or clearance.

**A Bribe(1 Load, once per mission):** The assets needed for a standard bribe of materiel or personnel, paid for by your handler.

**A Fine Long-Range Transmitter & Receiver(0 Load):** A high-quality device necessary for sending and receiving encrypted data and live comms(audio and visual) over distances greater than a few towns. Your Handler can contact you through this.

**Your own Custom Vehicle(0 Load):** The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.



# Starting Ability

**Voice in your ear:** You have a *handler* -- your own personal direct superior. Your handler is connected to a faction which may or may not be your squad's patron. Take +1d on a type of action that represents the essential nature of that faction. They will call on you to serve: mark xp whenever you directly struggle from obeying your handler's orders.



**For The GM:** Discuss with the Player using this playbook about the faction the handler is from, and about *the handler themselves*. Both of these are going to be important parts of their character mechanically (and likely narratively as well). *You don't need a perfect blueprint laid out from the jump, but a fairly clear sketch/palette should be laid out ahead of time.* Is the story here about intrigue & mystery? Service to a Great Cause? Power dynamics, institutional hierarchy and empire? Something different altogether?

**Additionally, speak with them about what boundaries they have regarding power dynamics & consent in the narrative regarding this playbook.** The text of this playbook implies a level of leverage & institutional power that the handler has over the Partisan, but that doesn't necessarily have to be the case, or those sorts of narrative & mechanical consequences don't have to come up.

If the player using this playbook sets boundaries around how the Handler uses their power over the Partisan, *do not undercut them*. If your or your player's first instinct is that there is no boundary (and that you can "just play"), that likely isn't true and there's probably an assumed boundary, which should be spoken about explicitly to avoid a mismatch during play, which can be a deeply unpleasant experience for the whole table.



# Starting Ability

**Voice in your ear:** You have a handler -- your own personal direct superior. Your handler is connected to a faction which may or may not be your squad's patron. Take +1d on a type of action that represents the essential nature of that faction. They will call on you to serve: mark xp whenever you directly struggle from obeying your handler's orders.



## For The GM(Cont'd):

Like any gm-facing mechanic, the handler should be another tool in your storytelling & gameplay live-balancing kit. A mission needs a little bit more challenge, or a complication? The handler can always issue a difficult order to the partisan through their Fine Long range Transmitter and Receiver. (There are examples near the end of this playbook.)

Though personally, so far I've found that I prefer giving a side objective after the squad gets the mission, but before preparation for it begins.(again, examples in a table near the end of the playbook.) Some of the best missions I've run are ones where the pilots have their own agendas to follow in addition to the main objective, and I find this to be a nice way to hand a secondary objective to a player.



# Partisan Abilities

## **Keep your friends close, and...:**

When you command, consort, cut loose with, or sway a perceived enemy, threat, or competitor to your handler or their faction, you learn one of the following: a vulnerability to their superiors, a useful secret, a piece of knowledge about your handler or their faction.



**For The GM:** Be specific about the medium through which the information is given. Is it a tip from the handler? Is it a data drive, with stolen information? Is it a pamphlet, a keyphrase, or instructions? Try to find something flavourful & specific for the partisan to follow up on.

**Pick This Ability If:** You are interested in espionage and mystery, and unravelling conspiracies.

**Using This Ability:** During missions, this Ability can open up new narrative opportunities and routes to your objective. During downtime, it can be used to discover new information, perhaps even lay the ground for a new mission.



# Partisan Abilities

**Champion:** You heal an amount of stress equal to your squad's tier +1 when you complete a mission that furthers the goals of your handler's faction. You cannot overindulge from stress healed from this ability.



**For The GM:** If your player takes this Ability, try to have the handler offer side objectives and missions to the Partisan and their squad. If the Handler's faction is not the squad's patron, try to find side objectives just for the partisan. Find hidden documents, hit a secondary target, etc.

**Pick This Ability If:** You want your Handler to give you missions and side objectives, or if you want another way to heal stress.

**Using This Ability:** Try to push yourself even harder than usual with stress, especially in later sessions when your squad's tier has grown. This Ability also pairs especially well with [Zealous](#), which helps with how much stress you use as well.



# Partisan Abilities

**Zealous:** When you take a desperate action in service of your handler's direct orders, take +1d. resisting the consequences of these actions costs half as many stress or quirks.



**For The GM:** Try to have the handler offer more dangerous side-objectives and direct orders, if it makes sense. If the partisan starts to really lean on this Ability, you can have the handler try to “reel them in”, if they're the sort to do that sort of thing.

**Pick This Ability If:** You want to roleplay a character who would readily sacrifice their life for their handler's cause, or if you want more mechanical incentive to follow your handler's orders.

**Using This Ability:** Remember that you can always exchange position for effect, and vice versa if you're looking to take advantage of this Ability often. However, it's worth remembering that you're also putting yourself in a position to resist or otherwise deal with a desperate consequence.



# Partisan Abilities

**Sponsored ride:** Your vehicle is insured for by your handler's faction. When it is destroyed, you receive a replacement vehicle at the end of the next mission. Whenever you receive your “free” replacement, roll an extra entanglement.



**For The GM:** Ask Yourself and the Partisan what this new vehicle could be. Is it the same Load/Scale as the previous vehicle? Are its Quirks the same? Do upgrades carry over? This should be something discussed between both parties out of character, probably even before this Ability sees any sort of use. You don't want a situation where expectations are mismatched, leading to frustration for either or both of you.

**Pick this Ability if:** You are reckless with your vehicle, and want to rely on your handler's resources to bankroll the cost.

**Using This Ability:** Think about how your character treats their vehicle. Are they disposable tools? Are you pushing the vehicle to its absolute limits in service of your goals? Are you just trying to bleed your handler's wallet? Or are you just glad to know that there's a backup vehicle, should you need it?



# Partisan Abilities

**Call in a favor:** Once per mission, you can call in a favor from your handler. They can provide you with one of the following: *backup from a cohort they have access to, a key piece of intel, or a dead drop with a piece of gear.* The quality, scale, and tier of anything gained from this Ability is determined by the tier of your handler's own squad.



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**For The GM:** What does the “handler’s own squad” mean? Is it the Partisan’s squad? The organisation or bureau within their faction that they(the handler) represent? At the very least, you should figure out what tier & hold it has so you have a rough idea of what sort of weight the handler can throw around.

**Pick This Ability if:** You want support from your Handler during missions, or if you want to feel connected to your handler’s faction in a more material way.

**Using This Ability:** When you use this Ability, consider what sort of power the handler has in the established fiction. Are they a spymaster? A general? A Guerilla Sergeant? How much resources do they have access to? That probably effects what they can provide, and what sort of actions you want to lean on for this Ability. If you aren’t sure, you can always discuss with your GM.



# Partisan Abilities

**Advocate:** Mark Xp at the end of a mission if your actions increased the public's perception of your handler's faction. When you convince a character to fight for your handlers' factions' cause, gain increased effect on your next action.



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**For The GM:** Have a conversation with the player about what “increased the public’s perception” means. Is it necessarily positive? Is it reinforcing a reputation through terror? Being a poster child for the faction? This is something that should be figured out for what feels best for your group.

**Pick this Ability if:** You want another source of XP, or if your character aspires to be the face of their handler’s faction on the battlefield.

**Using This Ability:** As mentioned in the For The GM section above, the interpretation of this Ability can vary. Depending on your case, try to find ways to represent your handler’s faction. Interact with civilians, make your mech visible on the battlefield, and stick flags in the ground.



# Partisan Abilities

**Requisitions:** Once per downtime, gain +1d when collecting from a region controlled by your handler's faction, and ignore any entanglements as a result of this action. Your handler will deal with it.



**For The GM:** Make sure that the handler's faction has at least one region that they have control or influence over. Depending on the tone of your game, I recommend letting the partisan use this Ability on regions not controlled by the handler's faction, if there is some justification for the faction being able to exert some control to get resources from a particular region.

**Pick this Ability if:** You want your character to use your handler's institutional power for their own gain, or if you already collect often during downtime.

**Using This Ability:** Describe how you use your handler's influence to get what you want without consequence. Are you strong-arming farmers? Requisitioning weapons from a military installation connected to the handler? How do you imagine the handler dealing with any potential fallout?



# Partisan Abilities

**Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

**Using This Ability:** The Partisan could really take Abilities out of any playbook, depending on your character's specific flavour and skillset, as well as what elements you're interested in. Here's some guidance on what you might want to take from the beam saber core rulebook (though Abilities from other supply drops could be awesome too!)

Is your partisan focused on intrigue, secrets, and subterfuge? Taking a Ability out of Envoy, Infiltrator, Empath, or hacker might be appropriate.

Is your Partisan's story about power & being a part of a faction's hierarchy? Bureaucrat or Officer Abilities could be worth dipping into.

Or is your Partisan more a skilled operative who is lead by a handler? Abilities from Ace, Soldier, Technician, or Scout could help specify what those skills are.



## Example Gather Information Questions

- What Faction do they belong to?
- What is their rank?
- Does my handler know something about [X]?
- Who Can be convinced to do [X]?
- What can I leverage to achieve my personal objective?
- What is the security level here?
- What's really going on here?

## Example Starting Beliefs

- I can Convince them to fight for my cause.
- They're a threat to my handler's goals. I need to deal with that.
- I think they doubt my loyalties. I will show them otherwise.
- They don't understand what it is I stand for.

# Running The Handler: A Few Words of Advice

First off, there's advice earlier in this playbook about using the handler as a gameplay tool, and about discussing safety re:the Handler and power dynamics on pages 3 and 4.

Okay, so here's what I can impart from my experience running the handler in playtests and my home game(your mileage may vary):

The handler, if run well, can be a great tool for setting the tone of the game. **Here's a few examples of character & personality "dials" you can pull on & adjust to suit your game, in discussion with whoever is playing the Partisan:**

- *How much the handler surveils the Partisan's actions in downtime & missions*
- *How harsh consequences for disobeying orders are*
- *The amount of direct orders given during missions, and what kind*
- *How much stake the handler has in the Partisan's survival*
- *The amount of institutional power the Handler has in comparison to the Partisan, formally or informally*
- *How formally the handler acts off-duty*

The Handler can also be played by anyone at the table, not just the GM. you may want to run this way for all sorts of reasons: perhaps to give other people at the table a bit more control of the story, or to save the GM some work. It's worth noting a few things if you do go down this road, for the GM: You can't keep secrets about the handler, and their plans should be open to whoever is playing them. Dramatic Irony is good! Don't be afraid to let go of a dramatic reveal or two. Here's a few hypothetical ways this could be done, to get your mind running:

- *The handler is played by everyone at the table, orders given during missions are like collateral die.*
- *The handler is played by another player at the table, in addition to their pilot.*
- *The handler is played by whoever is playing the partisan(though beware the trap of talking to yourself for a whole scene).*
- *The handler is played by someone without a pilot. They may not be interested in the complexity of pilot rules, or they may not have the energy to play a "full" character. (this is a good way to get people unfamiliar with TTRPGs into your game!)*

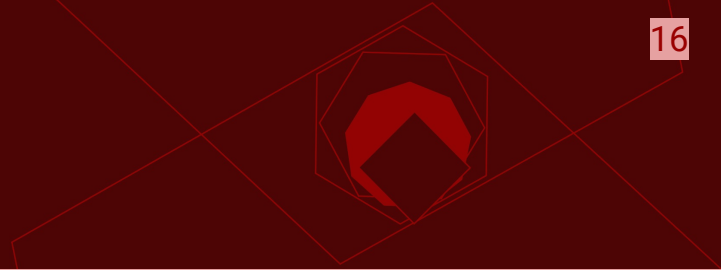
# Example Partisan Allies And Rivals

# Example Partisan Handlers

d6	Example Allies & Rivals
1	Agent Higs, your handler's most experienced operative.
2	Euterpe, a weathered deserter
3	Diederik, a shady informant
4	Aeolus, a wavering soldier
5	Commander Silverton, a Commander from an enemy faction.
6	Roll twice. First result is their background, second is their current life.

d6	Example Handlers
1	CENSU, an obfuscated Algorithm
2	Adelhard, a proud Noble & Knight
3	Corporate assistant Harlow, an exhausted Beaucrocat
4	The Whispered Magister, a mysterious shadow broker
5	Hierophant Vitruvius, an influential clergyman
6	A pair of handlers, roll again twice

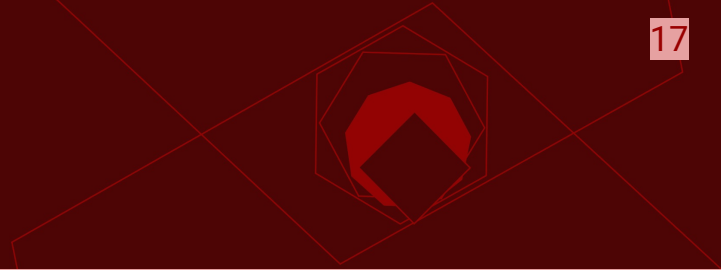
# Example Handler Orders



d6	Example Directions from a Handler
1	Partisan. Provide the coordinates for [Battlefield Location or target] immediately.
2	Partisan, move towards this position.
3	Abandon this method, Partisan. Do [X] instead.
4	Scan the local area and transmit the data to me, Partisan.
5	Partisan, I order you to eliminate that target.
6	Partisan, could you provide me with the make & manufacture of that vehicle?

d6	Example Side-objectives
1	During your mission, a certain pilot will be deployed by the enemy. Capture them, and bring them to me unharmed.
2	When you get through with this mission, be prepared to provide a full debrief on the events of the mission.
3	When your squad gets ahold of the data, replace it with a fake and send it to me instead.
4	I will provide you with a device. While you are within the facility, plant it on a terminal.
5	During your mission, cut off the enemy's communications network by _____
6	During your mission, there will be an experimental vehicle deployed by the enemy. Defeat it, and bring its wreckage to me.

# Example Starting Handler Relationships



d6	Example Starting Handler Relationships 1
1	<b>Professional:</b> They Give you orders, and you follow them.
2	<b>Tense:</b> You have a history of breaking orders. They've been directed to reel you in.
3	<b>Fraternal:</b> The two of you have a bond forged in the heat of battle. Your careers have diverged since, but that bond persists.
4	<b>Sacred:</b> You have sworn a holy oath to your handler. You are proudly honor-bound to it.
5	<b>Carceral:</b> Your handler is your Jailer. You must obey their orders to commute your sentence.
6	<b>Hostile:</b> You don't like your handler, and they despise you. However, you have your uses.

d6	Example Starting Handler Relationships 2
1	<b>Secretive:</b> You have never seen your handler's face, and you do not know their name. You receive clandestine orders indirectly through letters, codephrases, and contacts.
2	<b>Indebted:</b> You owe your life to your handler. Your servitude to them is in repaying of this debt.
3	<b>Inspired:</b> Your handler brought you to the side of the revolution, and their skills have gotten you this far.
4	<b>Familiar:</b> Your handler is your parent/sibling/child. How you feel about their position is up to you, but you have promised to follow their orders.
5	<b>Jealous:</b> You are not your handler's only operative. Your relationship with your peers is often strained, which is exacerbated by the way your handler pits you against each other.
6	<b>Cathartic:</b> You stepped into the war to escape your trauma. Your handler seeks to turn that pain into a tool.

# The Scrapyard

***The Following pages contain playtest content that is more half-baked, unpolished, and imbalanced than the rest of the playbook.*** In the future, it may include cut content or new stuff that I want to show to you for feedback, but don't feel confident enough about to add to the "real" playbook. Use at your own (and your group's) discretion & peril.



# Partisan Abilities

**Bosses' Favourite:** Gain the Sponsor Squad Upgrade. Your Sponsor is your handler.

**For The GM:** Think about what this shift means fictionally, as well as mechanically.

**Pick this Ability if:** You want your handler to be relevant to the whole squad, or if you want to boost your squad's tier increase rate.

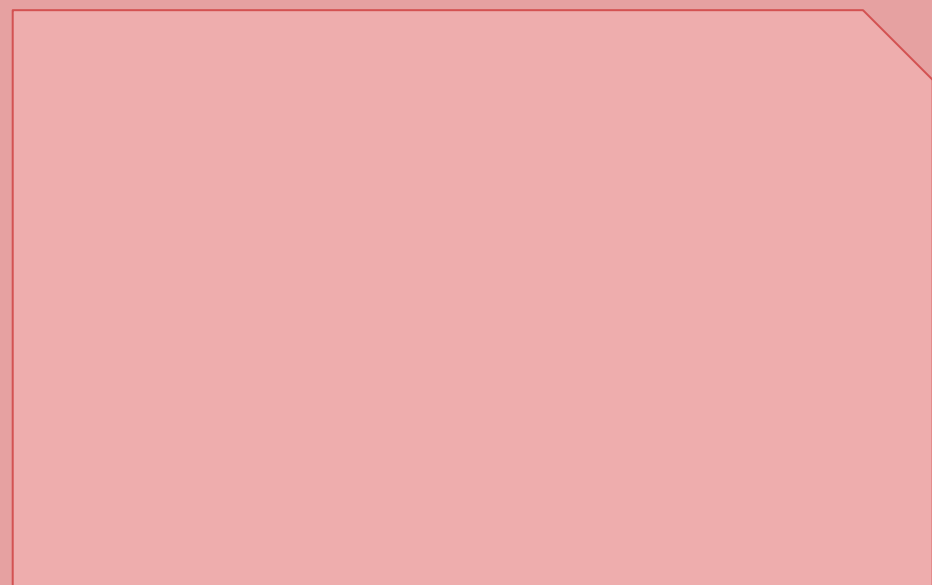
**Using This Ability:** Though your handler is now your squad's sponsor, they are not your squadmates' direct superior in the same way they are for you. Think about how your Partisan may react to this shift! Do they resent it? Are they excited to see the squad work more towards their handler's goals?





# Partisan Abilities

**An eye for loyalty:** You can always tell what someone's sentiment towards your handler's faction is, given that you converse with them.



# Scrapyard: Zenith Abilities

*Zenith Abilities are Unique Moves that you can gain when you spend at least one drive clock, after taking at least one scar.* They provide an extra degree of power compared to other playbook or veteran abilities. Zenith abilities can only be from your playbook, and **Each pilot can have only one zenith ability.**

This section of the scrapyard lists out some potential Zenith Abilities for the Partisan.



# Partisan Zenith Abilities

**Delegation:** You Gain a specialist cohort and a fire team cohort from your handler's faction(though they are loyal to you first). Their Qualities are equal to your squad's tier + 1. In addition, these cohorts gain any benefits that you do from your other partisan abilities, as applicable.





# Partisan Zenith Abilities

**Those Were Direct Orders!:** Up to three times per mission, you can gain +2d on taking a course of action that flies in the face of your handler's orders. Take +1d on your next entanglement roll for each time you do this. When you face professional consequences from breaking orders, mark XP.





# Partisan Zenith Abilities

**Bankrolled:** Your Squad's Tier counts as the same as your handler's own squad for determining the quality of your gear and cohorts. In addition, gain the sponsor squad upgrade. Your sponsor is your handler.





# Partisan Zenith Abilities

**Defector:** You have betrayed your previous handler's faction, taking what you can with you to their enemy. Gain a new handler from another faction, losing your current one. Gain 2 FOB upgrades, 12 supply points, and a new Rival: Your Old Handler. Change your Voice in your ear action to a different action that reflects your new patronage.



# Scrapyard: Downtime Activities

This section lays out some prospective Partisan-specific downtime actions. As written at the top of the scrapyard, these ideas are in need of some serious iteration still. Discuss with your group before using them.

If you have any feedback, feel free to email me @ [lawsoncoleman.bc@gmail.com](mailto:lawsoncoleman.bc@gmail.com), or by tweeting at me @TheLawsonC



# Partisan Downtime Activities

**Investigate Loyalties(A):** Roll Command, Consort, or Sway as appropriate to inquire into a cohort or pilot's faction alignment.

*(1-3: You know their squad's patron faction, if any. 4/5: You also know their direct superiors, if any. 6+: You also know any of their secret sympathies or benefactors, if any.)*

If you pass this information on to your handler, gain +1 trust with their squad.

You can spend 1 personnel to increase the result by 1 level, or for **+1d to the Investigate Loyalties Roll.**



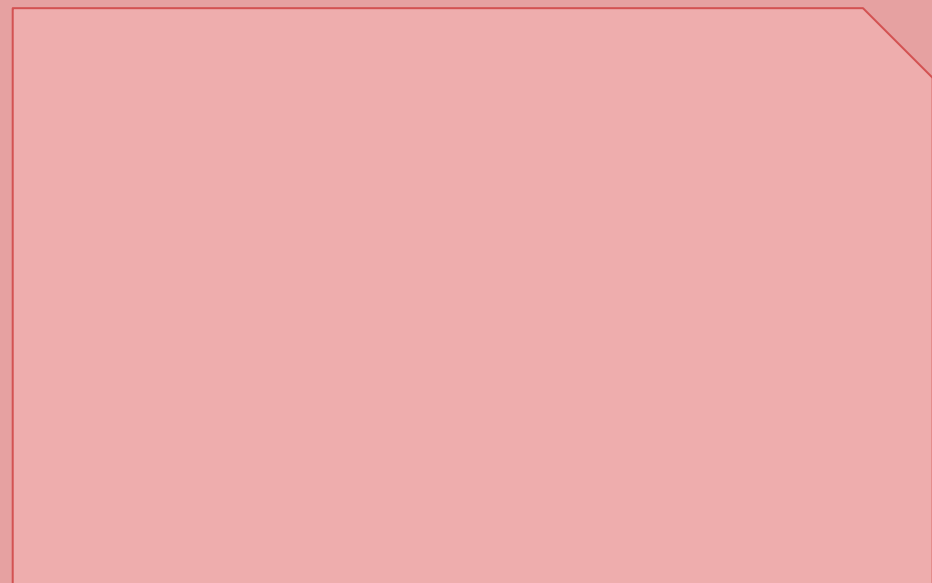
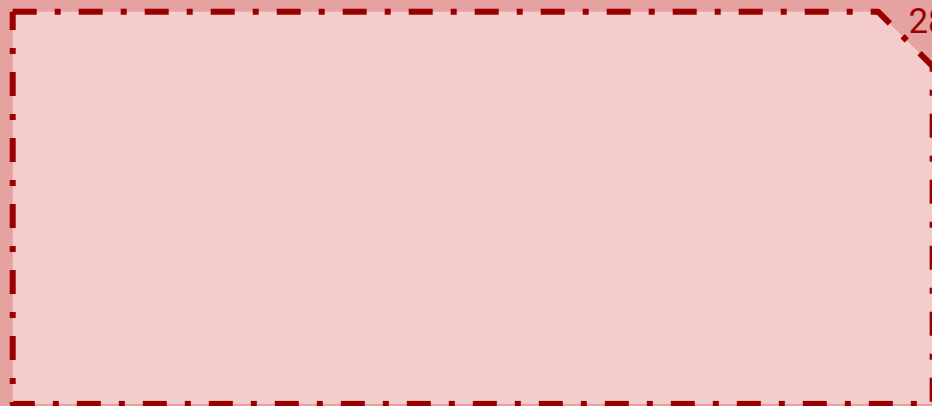


# Partisan Downtime Activities

**Investigate Loyalties(B):** Roll Consort, Study or survey as appropriate to inquire into the general position towards a particular faction in a region. *(1-3: You learn the general disposition towards the faction in the area. 4/5: You also learn the faction's history in the area, if any. 6+: You also learn of those who may directly oppose or support the faction in the area, if any.)*

If you pass this information on to your handler, gain +1 trust with their squad.

You can spend 1 personnel to increase the result by **1 level**, or for **+1d to the Investigate Loyalties Roll**.





# Partisan Downtime Activities

**Hit the Pavement:** Roll Consort or Sway as appropriate to recruit civilians from a region to your handler's faction.

*(1-3: You draw sympathy for your faction, but gain no commitment. 4/5: You recruit a few to your handler's faction. Gain a new contact: a military recruit. 6+: You recruit a particularly skilled mercenary or soldier. You gain a new temporary specialist cohort. They will join you on your next mission, and then will be transferred your handler's squad.)*

You can spend 1 personnel to increase the result by 1 level, or for **+1d to the Hit the Pavement Roll.**



# Scrapyard: Gear

This section lays out a few playtest pieces of gear that the partisan can take. Wording and balance subject to change.

# Pilot Gear

**A Fine Uniform(0 Load, 2 if carried as a secondary outfit):** A beautiful formal uniform, that makes your clearance level and allegiance to your handler's faction clear to everyone.

**A Set of Tracking Devices(1 Load per 3 uses):** A package of small, durable trackers that stick to people and vehicles.

**A Cool Hat(0 Load):** A stylish hat, perfect for any occasion. However, it is always just a little bit too cold to be comfortable.

**Propaganda leaflets(1 Load):** A stack of papers you can hand out, with information and images meant to convince the reader to a position.

