

# HEAVY GEAR

**Terra Nova** – a harsh but inhabitable world in the Helios system. It was the discovery of Tannhauser Gates, linked spatial anomalies allowing instantaneous travel thousands of light-years from the entry gate to the exit gate, that allowed humanity to colonise worlds outside of their home solar system. Eventually, however, popular opinion on Earth shifted away from continued funding of the colonies, and all support was withdrawn. All those who couldn't get on one of the last ships back to Earth from Terra Nova were stranded there, forced to fend for themselves. In true rugged pioneer fashion they did exactly that, and although they were very difficult times eventually a true civilisation was carved out. City-states were formed, and over time these banded together to form seven leagues – the **Northern Lights Confederacy**, the **United Mercantile Federation** and the **Western Frontier Protectorate** in the north, and the **Southern Republic**, the **Mekong Dominion**, the **Eastern Sun Emirates** and the **Humanist Alliance** in the south. Between North and South lies the **Badlands**, a wide band of inhospitable desert where few cities exist and only those hardy souls who place more importance in freedom than in comfort live. The only power centre in the Badlands was the city-state of **Peace River**, home of giant arms manufacturer **Paxton Arms**, which remained neutral and supplied weapons to anyone who could pay their price.

Separated by the Badlands and human nature being what it is, North and South began to distrust each other, having developed their own differing ways of life and value systems. They grouped into large power blocs (not always voluntarily) known as the polar confederations – the **Confederated Northern City-States** and the **Allied Southern Territories**, and began skirmishing and disliking each other more than ever. It was an accident during one such skirmish that caused the devastating **St. Vincent's War**, which raged across the planet ravaging the Badlands until the economies of both polar confederations collapsed. In the decades of rebuilding that followed, the conflict was one of spies and diplomacy, and after some time people could sense things were going to explode into warfare again – armies were expanded, politicians spouted nationalist rhetoric and anybody with any information or influence of value sold what they could and chose their sides in an era that came to be known as the **Judas Syndrome**. Things were reaching critical mass...



...when Earth came back – bigtime. Looking to reclaim the colonies abandoned hundreds of years previously, the **Colonial Expeditionary Force** made planetfall with an army of hundreds of thousands, many of whom were the previously-unseen **Genetically Recombined Experimental Legionnaires** – purpose-built supersoldiers. Faced with a common enemy North and South banded together to defend their planet and fought tenaciously, but against the CEF's GREs and hovertanks it was a losing battle. Apart from in space where Terra Novan hunter-killer drones destroyed enough CEF ships to force them out of orbit, the Terra Novans were being pushed back, until Peace River, which had shocked its fellow Terra Novans by remaining neutral, smashed into the rear of the CEF's lines with the rag-tag **Peace River Army** which it had been building and training in secret. Eventually the CEF were forced to sign the Treaty of Westphalia and head home, although the destruction of much of their fleet meant they had to leave a lot of their number on Terra Nova. Widely despised and mistrusted, most of these soldiers stuck together and built the city of **Port Arthur** in the Badlands.

That time became known as the **War of the Alliance**, and despite the widespread destruction many Terra Novans look on it as a golden age of interplanar co-operation. But the détente that followed quickly cooled as the power brokers of Terra Nova grew restless and greedy once again. Again, it was small skirmishes in the long-suffering Badlands that caused the situation to explode – whilst squabbling over control of **Rahnguard Oasis**, a Southern **MILICIA** unit attacked a Northern Guard unit on a holy day in the calendar of **Revisionism**, the primary religion of the North. Infuriated by this and egged on by the neo-conservative religious faction, the leadership of the **CNCS** declared war on the **AST**. Now Northern troops are pushing hard into the **Mekong Dominion** and remnants of the **Humanist Alliance**, border cities on both sides are being bombarded, assassinations

are happening all over the planet, **Peace River** and **Port Arthur** are trying to keep out of it and once again, as always, the **Badlands** is being trampled underfoot by the warring giants. And so our story begins...

