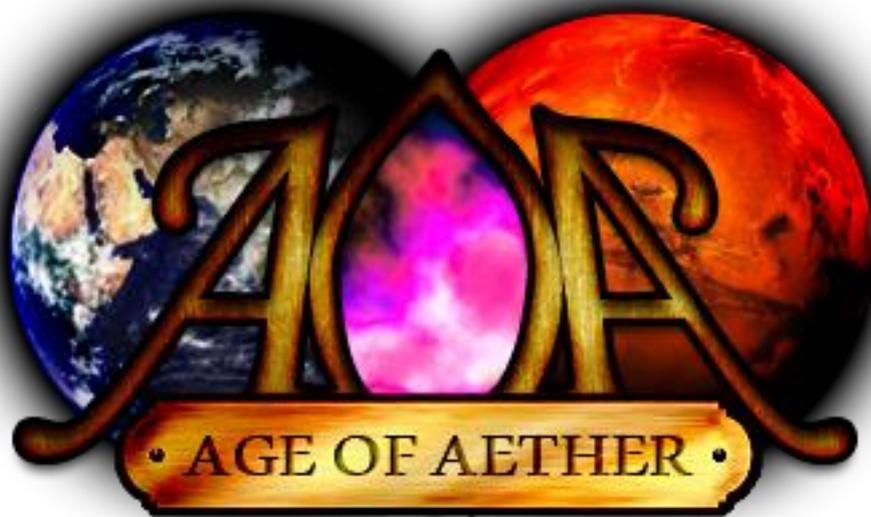
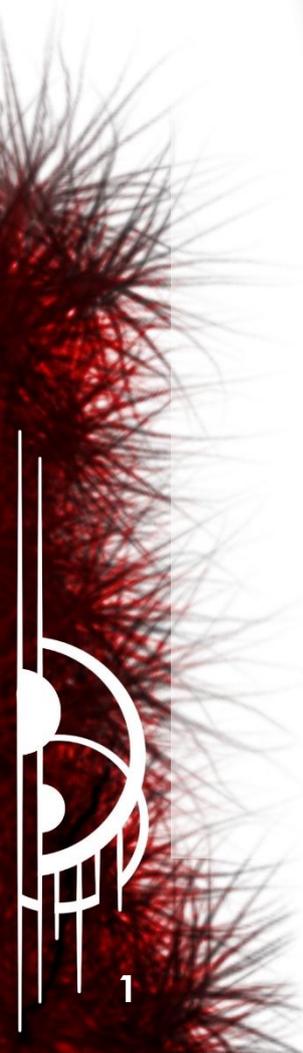


Age of Aether

Core Rules Document



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Introduction

Age of Aether (AoA) is a science fantasy Live Action Role-Playing game (LARP) based on the concepts of H. G. Wells' novel, "War of the Worlds". Drawing on influences from the steampunk, science fiction and fantasy genres, AoA is a truly unique role-playing experience that will take you into an alternative history of the 19th Century world.

Players assume the roles of members and associates of a worldwide organisation known as The Reputable Intrepid Adventurers Club (or T.R.I.A.C.) during an interplanetary war with Mars. For the second time in a century, the Martians have sent their war machines to Earth, hell bent on taking the world for their own.

T.R.I.A.C. is an association that draws the greatest minds and adventurers from many of the world's remaining nations that have banded together to aid in the war effort in any way they can. Some combat the Martian threat directly as soldiers and investigators. Others gather precious resources create new and interesting inventions and research into the biology and technology of the Martian foe. Still others use their skills in the medical and pharmacological arts to aid in the fight. Finally there are those humans who have been changed by the Martian invasion and now possess the ability to use strange powers, the Resonants.

Humanity, however, is not alone. Alongside them are a number of alien races, freed from the Martian invaders. They too have something to gain, something to fight for and something to lose.

The fate of the planet rests on a knife edge. Only you and your fellow extraordinary colleagues can push back the threat and win the war for Earth's survival...

A Big Thank You

Over the years, the members of this club have been involved in many different systems that have pushed the boundaries of Live Roleplaying and have truly been innovators of the hobby. As a result, we have decided, when creating this project, to pool our combined experience of these games. We have borrowed themes and mechanics from them to enhance the experience for our players and continue the awesome work that has been done by others. We have merged them with new ideas and themes of our own to create what we hope is a unique and enjoyable game. We would like to say a big thank you to all the organisers who have influenced us as a group and helped us to shape our system and world and also the logistics behind the game. Special mention should go to the teams that run Shadow Wars, Bladelands, The Vale, Dark Tempus, Letting off Steam, the Lorien Trust, Future's End and Empire. These systems more than any other have shaped the way that we have designed our games mechanics and would like to take this opportunity to applaud the fantastic work that went in to creating such immersive game worlds and rule sets. So with that said, we hope you enjoy our game as much as we have enjoyed writing it.

Rules of the Game

There are a number of rules that dictate how AoA should be played. This document will outline the main core rules in regards to game play and character creation. There are additional documents, (hereafter referred to as Appendices and Gazettes) that contain additional rules and information about specific aspects of the game, such as crafting and Nation information.

Referees

Referees in Age of Aether will be IC characters in the gaming area. For the most part they will be playing the role of either ambassadors of the nations of Earth or TRIAC Officers. Ambassadors, although dressed in different styles will always have an armband to denote their status as a ref. At all other times refs will be dressed as TRIAC officers. These officers will be dressed in Black suits, waistcoats, dresses or other such attire and will sport the TRIAC emblem on their clothing, and a second emblem on an armband.

Your Character

When you play AoA, you will assume the role of a member or associate of T.R.I.A.C. When you are playing the game, you will live, eat, drink, and think as that character. Your limits are set only by the skills you select when you create your character and your own personal ability. We ask you to make your best effort to remain In-Character (IC) as much as possible. We want this to be an immersive and enjoyable experience for all and the more you are IC the better this experience is for everyone.

Your Equipment – Costumes, Weapons and Phys Reps

The game is set in the late 19th Century (1872 to be exact), 2 years after the second Martian invasion. As such, the game will draw from the aesthetics of that period. As there are a number of nations within the game, there is a great deal of diversity available for costume and set dressing styles. From Wild West cowboys and the great British butlers, to eastern Geishas and grizzled Prussian infantrymen, the choice of archetype is almost endless. The game, however, is set in an alternate world, where technology is more advanced, so costumes, weapons, and phys reps can (and we hope, will) take on a variety of styles including of course, steampunk.

Where possible, any equipment you use should be considered "LARP-safe". Melee style weapons must be standard LARP-safe weapons and will be checked to ensure they are safe for use. Guns are represented by flintlock cap guns, or Nerf®-style dart blasters. These types of weapons are not permissible during melee combat. Avoid sharp, precious or fragile objects about your person, especially if you engage in combat.

We understand that Nerf®-style dart blasters come in a wonderful array of types and these differing types of gun have varying power levels. To make sure that a level of safety is observed we will be enforcing a policy that can be broken down to simply:

No firing mechanism modifications (such as spring/flywheel mods) are permitted. Modifications such as air restrictor removal, are permitted if the weapon can be demonstrated to be safe.

This has been decided after extensive research into the topic by ourselves and other LARP organisations that we are closely affiliated with. We have a weapon check procedure for Nerf®-style dart blasters in the same way we have a procedure for latex weaponry and if a gun is considered to be unsafe then we reserve the right to ask it is removed from the gaming arena.

All darts will be provided by the game team to track quantities and aid recovery of lost darts. We ask that players take great care with inspecting the darts that they use and as with LARP arrows, be aware of any damage to the heads or sponge bodies of the darts. Please make sure that you only use the darts that your blasters can fire as using wrong darts can damage both the projectiles and the blasters themselves.

We are happy for you to bring along gadgets and gizmos for set dressing and to enhance your role play experience. Some items will have an in-game mechanic and will need such "phys reps" to be used. Be imaginative with your creations, but please remember the style of game we are aiming for. If you are unsure of whether a prop is appropriate, please feel free to contact the game team who will be happy to discuss it with you.

You will also be issued with an IC character pass that will contain your character details and information. This set of papers is a totally IC document that can be stolen, forged and destroyed. Please do not be alarmed if this happens, it is part of the game and there are skills within the game to allow forgeries to be made and also skills that allow these forgeries to be recognised. If this happens to you we will have the means to provide you with a new set of documents.

Alongside your pass, this wallet will be where you keep any IC licences for items that you make or acquire. These licences will have a code on them that relates to a code on the item in question written onto a small brass tag. We will keep a log of these and if an item is stolen the licence is a way for us to confirm if the item is real or not. It also allows us to avoid adding laminated cards to items and keep things as immersive as possible. We will also be using a specific ref call, "Papers Please" to allow our refs to IC check your papers to determine if anything is amiss or to confirm that items are actually real or have been stolen and as a way to again keep the immersion going. Only a Ref has the right to use this call and expect you to produce your papers.

Combat

We want combat to feel heroic, but also scary. Getting shot or stabbed hurts, and there are many casualties in war. However, this is a contact game and there are certain rules in place to make sure that everyone remains as safe as possible.

During melee combat, blows must be pulled sufficiently so as to not cause harm. Fast, repeated blows (sometimes referred to as "drum-rolling" or "feather dusting") are also not acceptable.

Guns may not be used in melee combat. You must drop or suitably secure the weapon before engaging in melee combat as striking or blocking with the weapon poses a real risk and can be extremely dangerous.

There are three types of powered gun in game; Gauss, Aether and Martian. Gauss guns are any Nerf®-style dart blaster that must be manually cocked between shots. Aether and Martian guns are any Nerf®-style dart blasters that have any form of rapid-fire function. Only standard and elite darts should be used, MEGA darts are considered to be Martian technology and, as such, not available at the start of the game. **These weapons do not need to be charged at the Aetheric Compiler.**

All Gauss, Aether and Martian weapons and instruments *that have an in game call* need to be powered to function. This is achieved by charging the internal battery at the Aetheric Compiler which costs Warbonds or specific resources for 6, 12 or 48 hour charge periods. Prices for charging weapons and instrument will be posted by TRIAC at the beginning of the event and will vary based on the economic climate and world events.

Any item bought with Warbonds (apart from implants) will come with an appropriate charge included.

Do not grapple, tackle or stage-fight without consent of the persons involved. We operate an affirmative consent policy. If any of the persons involved in any such action do not give clear and affirmative consent, you must not engage in any of these actions with them.

Wounds, Healing and Death

AoA uses a global hits system. This means that regardless of where you are hit, and with what type of weapon, you will always lose one hit from your total hits, unless specified otherwise by the use of a combat vocal or "call". Every character has 3 global hits and a bleed time of 3 minutes as standard. Armour and skills can increase your hits and bleed time.

When you are reduced to zero hits, you receive a wound and start to bleed to death. If your wound is not healed by the time your bleed time reaches zero, your character dies. A character with the Doctor skill is required to heal a wounded character and takes a certain amount of time to do. While you are being healed, your bleed time stops until the wound is healed or the healing process is interrupted.

Whilst a doctor is required to heal a wound, every character has the ability to hold a wound and pause another character's bleed time. To hold a wound, you must place two hands upon the wounded character and inform them you are holding their wound. As long as both hands remain holding the wound, the bleed time will remain paused.

Once healed, you will be restored to your standard number of hits and your bleed time will reset.

Armour

Age of Aether is a global hits system. Armour grants additional hits and added benefits to the wearer. These additional hits must be removed before a blow can be considered to have struck the body. The minimum requirement for a character to be considered armoured is for the torso and two other locations to be visibly armoured. The phys reps for metal armour include any armour that has a metallic appearance, such as PE, Plate, Chainmail, etc.

There are some calls that penetrate or destroy armour. Please see the Common Calls and Effects Section of this document for more information.



Character Creation

To be selected as a member or associate of T.R.I.A.C. means that you are particularly skilled in your areas of expertise. During Character Creation, you have the opportunity to choose your character's home nation, race, skills and starting equipment.

Choose a Race

There are currently three playable races in game; Humans, Hyrcanians and Reptids.

Humans

T.R.I.A.C. is currently comprised of only human members. Human characters may be from any of the six major nations; the Commonwealth of Britannia, the Prussian Hegemony, the Imperial Eastern Union, the Federated American Union, the Russian Collective and the Arctic Concord.

Humans are the most adaptable and diverse of the races allowing them to access many skills.

Hyrcanians

Hyrcanians are humanoid creatures with features closely associated with the feline species of the Earth. They are an alien race that have been, for the most part, accepted into the human society. Although only associates of T.R.I.A.C., they often accompany the expeditions, where their social prowess and combat skill is often invaluable to the success of the expedition.

Hyrcanians have a minimum phys rep and are currently a restricted race with specific templates. If you wish to play a Hyrcanian, please contact a Referee.

Reptids

Reptids are humanoid creatures with features closely associated with the reptilian species of the Earth. They are an alien race that have been, for the most part, accepted into human society. Although only associates of T.R.I.A.C., they often accompany the expeditions as support for the T.R.I.A.C. members, ensuring the machinery and technology that keeps everyone safe continues to function.

Reptids have a minimum phys rep and are currently a restricted race with specific templates. If you wish to play a Reptid, please contact a Referee.

Choose a Nation

There are currently four unrestricted playable Nations in game; the Commonwealth of Britannia, the Prussian Hegemony, the Imperial Eastern Union, and the Federated American Union. The Russian Collective and the Arctic Concord are restricted nations, so only a limited number of characters will be initially permitted at the beginning of the game. If you wish to play a character from these nations, please contact a referee.

Commonwealth of Britannia

*Primary Technology Type: **Gauss (Offensive)***

*Ambassadors: **Captain Marcus Alexander & Sir Edmond Wigglesworth III***

When London was destroyed during the first war, it took the lives of the majority of the royal family and the leading figures of the British Empire with it. The remaining heads of state were in no way capable of controlling the vast amount of territory and logistics necessary to control and sustain the Empire. Slowly, but surely, the tide of war swept across the British territories and the once great power collapsed amidst the conflict.

For the remainder of the war, the British held on and fought across the globe, losing slowly alongside the other nations as the Martians steadily exterminated the human race. When the first war ended and the invaders perished to a disease or virus unknown, the British began to resurrect their shattered lands and looked to home first. They began to rebuild London and the other destroyed cities of mainland. The old Empire however was lost forever and only a few colonies and protectorates remained.

Out of these ashes the new Commonwealth of Britannia was born. Under the leadership of a new ruler and Lord Protector, Duke Henry Cavendish III, the beleaguered nation slowly began its climb back to power. Cavendish, although not of royal blood, was the highest ranking member of the nobility left and was a soldier in the first war to boot. The Duke was at Waterloo, and stood with the forces of humanity at the end of the war. He saw the final days of the conflict and was there when the Martians finally fell.

Duke Henry was a good, strong leader and has steered the commonwealth through the resource wars of 1818 and into the age of exploration where he pushed the Britannia to the forefront of expeditions to delve into the Martian landscapes. In 1833, the Duke was the first signatory of the freedom movement that gave Hyrcanians and Reptids rights and citizenship and has been a fair and honest ruler throughout the period between the two wars.

The strength of the British has always been its navy. In this age of war and conflict this fact is no different. The mighty warships and carrier fleets of the Commonwealth range out from their homeland to support and fight wherever they are needed. The leadership of the commonwealth is now in the hands of the most powerful military body post invasion, the Admiralty. This organisation, headed by the current Duke is the most powerful force in the nation and leads with an iron fist.

When the T.R.I.A.C was formed the Admiralty instantly saw the worth of the organisation and fervently supported both the creation of the organisation and the push to a universal currency. When the invaders returned, the Commonwealth pledged everything to push back the threat once again. The gauss powered navy of the nation was at the forefront of the fight. Britannic infantry expeditionary forces armed with gauss and aether weapons hold the line against the forces of the red planet.

Incidents of espionage between the Commonwealth and the Prussian Hegemony have left relations between these two powers strained at best. No violence has erupted between the two but the powers are not the greatest of allies. The relationship between the British and the Americans is a much healthier one. The island of Britannia is not the only stronghold of British rule. On the other side of the world on the continent of Australia, the Royalist Australian Protectorate stands separate from the Commonwealth. Here, the last remaining members of the royal family survive, holding themselves sovereign and independent of the Admiralty and its rulership. Though not in open conflict with the Commonwealth, it is well known that animosity exists between the two splinters of the old British Empire. The R.A.P has, for many years built up its air forces to the point that they work alongside its armies to protect the borders of Australia and its surrounding islands, ready to push back and destroy any threat from alien incursion. The hulking, twin-decked Victoria Class Aether Zeppelins are an imposing sight to see as they move at the centre of any fleet formation of Royal Australian forces.

The Prussian Hegemony

*Primary Technology Type: **Aether (Offensive)***

*Ambassador: **Dr Richtig von Scheißkerl***

After the destruction wrought upon Europe by the first Martian war, the countries of this broken continent were shattered remnants of their former glory. 1817 saw the rise of the Prussian Hegemony as the dominant power of mainland Europe. It gathered unto itself, the battered and dispossessed nations surrounding them and formed a new state. The Prussians were now under the command of Kaiser Fredrick Leberecht von Blucher, son of Marshal Gebhard Leberecht von Blucher, who led the Prussian forces alongside Napoleon against the Martians at Waterloo.

The nation is hardened by battle and its black clad soldiers are some of the best in the world. Many of the military are veterans and these stalwart men and women trained the remaining army, creating a force that became an inspiration in the rebuilding of Europe. The air forces of this proud nation patrol the skies of Europe defending it against the threat of airborne attack. Giant Kaiser Class sky fortresses fly slowly over the beleaguered landscapes of the continent their flight decks full of fighter planes ready to be launched to put down Martian incursions. Battalions of Prussian land forces slowly but surely returned order to a region that was once a force to be reckoned with.

In 1837, Prussian aether scientists unlocked the secrets of advanced aether tech allowing the new so called "Resonant", or attuned humans, to access a wide variety of powers, allowing them to charge aether devices without the need of batteries or external power. The Hegemony rejoiced in their success and, for a short time, became the leaders in this technology. This came to an end shortly after when spies, allegedly from the Commonwealth of Britannia, stole the technology and released it for great financial gain, to the other nations of the world. The relations between the two nations became strained from that point on with both nations becoming cold and disliked by the other.

In the years between the wars, the Prussians grew and prospered under Kaiser Fredrick and by the time the Martians once again land in the infected zones, the mighty Prussian military marched out in force to defend the fatherland and the Hegemony. Giant tanks and advanced weaponry took the fight to the

enemy while aether powered zeppelins reigned down fire from above. This time the forces of Europe would be ready and would stand beside the rest of the world's defenders to repulse the invaders.

The Hegemony recognised the T.R.I.A.C and has its citizens in the organisation from its inception in 1849 and by now it's extraordinary agents were in a position to help the war effort by adding their experience and skills to the on-going secret war being fought alongside the armies of the world to throw back the Martians and reclaim the earth for humanity.

The Federated American Union

*Primary Technology Type: **Martian (Offensive)***

*Ambassador: **James A Longstreet***

In 1816, whilst the rest of the world was reeling from the near destruction of the planet, the nation that was once the United States looked out at the shattered lands that they still controlled and realised that things would never be the same again. The Northern states were all but obliterated during the war and it now remained for the South to take the country forward. General Robert E. Lee took control of the presidency from the steps of the new capital building in Gettysburg on 15th June 1816. The 17th President declared a new state and proclaimed that the remaining states and lands would now be grouped under a new name, The Federated American Union.

In the next few years, Lee realised that the world would soon look to the new resources and opportunities available in this post war world. He knew that to remain as a power in the political theatre, the F.A.U must make the most of the new technological possibilities that had presented themselves in the wake of war. With no real opposition, the forces of the Union ranged out to gather as much of the Martian wreckage as they could. Left unhindered by the problems of competing nations, the like of which was happening in contested Europe, Lee's union was able to gather quickly and efficiently. Within a decade, the state had accumulated the largest stockpile of the alien alloy that came to be known as Red Steel. With the other resources, Aether crystals and Martian weed, the Red Steel was transferred to a huge research complex in the Nevada desert where testing began on the salvaged tech to attempt to retro-engineer the Martian equipment for human use. It remained beyond the grasp of human scientists as to how to miniaturise the weaponry and tech. Although great strides were made, with heat rays being tested and used at the facility, the power drain for even a few shots demanded batteries that could only be carried by a team of horses. This technology became primarily used to mount on emplacements and in vast Independence class land ships that patrolled the edges of the Martian wasteland. To this day, as far as is known by the nations of the world, it has not been possible to reduce the power consumption or size of these weapons to man portable levels.

Relations with the other major nations of the planet in the years between invasions are mixed. The alleged theft by agents of the Imperial Eastern Union, of Martian blueprints and research, threw the relationship between the two nations into turmoil. Embassies in both nations were closed down and at one point it seemed that a war was inevitable. At the eleventh hour, tempers were cooled and the two sides stopped their posturing. The reason this change in foreign policy came about is to this day unknown but many say that if a war had erupted between these two the world would not have been in a position to mount a defence when the invaders from the red planet once again were seen streaking towards us through the stars.

As the Martians landed once more the F.A.U took its place on the battle lines of Earth to repel the enemy. The dirigibles and land ships of the nation stood sentinel at the edges of the landing zones waiting to repel the forces of Mars once again, this time they would be prepared and would not be found wanting.

The Imperial Eastern Union

*Primary Technology Type: **Aether (Defensive)***

*Ambassador: **Princess Sakura Akita***

When the Martians invaded earth the east was hit by some of the most devastating attacks. In the opening stages Japan lost over three quarters of its populace and those who survived fled to the protection of the Empress Sakuramachi. She appointed her most trusted general, Katsomoto to become her shogun and tasked him to gather 2000 of his best samurai. The empress could see her lands were lost and rather than watch her people die slowly in the aftermath of the war, she decided to retreat across the narrow sea to Imperial China, looking for salvation in the lands of Japans ancient enemy.

When the empress and her people landed on the shores of eastern China they could see the land had fared no better. Everywhere, the red weed had taken hold leaving many routes cut off. After two nights the camp was awoken by the thundering of hooves. The Mongols of the Eastern Steppes were also fleeing west. The Great Khan, great grandson of Genghis himself agreed to take the empress and her people with them. So the horde of two nations grew bigger and fled ever west.

Every settlement they passed was in ruins, red weed everywhere and the stench of war in their nostrils. After months of travelling they came to the last vestige of civilisation the Golden City of Shanghai. Its towering walls enclosed the city and the golden palace could be seen beckoning the horde to safety. The gilded gates opened and the Empress and Khan were invited into the city to meet the leader of the Qing Dynasty, Emperor Tongzhi.

A year later the empress was due to marry Emperor Tongzhi. But the plans of the empress and the Khan was set and the Emperor was assassinated the night before the ceremony. The next morning, the Empress and the great Khan married. Shanghai was renamed the City of Pearls and they opened its doors to the rest of the East, gathering the broken peoples together in a new Imperial Eastern union. The couple ruled with a simple set of principles. The people of the East must not falter and fall into obscurity. They must act in all things as the proud progeny of a group of races that once were the forefathers of technology and civilisation. He urged them to have pride in themselves and defend their nation with ferocity and honour. He raised the great Eastern defence force and placed armies at the edges of the Unions borders with the other nations and the red zones. Nothing would threaten the lands of the East again, nothing more of their great heritage would be destroyed.

The Union, alongside the other new nations of Earth, began a great period of exploration in 1838 into the red zones that now cover the globe. It was discovered early that the environment is toxic to humans and prolonged exposure to the red weed caused terrible illness that eventually led to death and in some cases much worse. To combat this the Union began an extensive research and development program into protective technologies and soon became the front runner in armour and infection prevention research. This huge leap of scientific advancement allowed the IEU to truly become a world power as their technology was sold to other nations across the globe.

This total focus on defensive tech had, however led to the nation falling behind in other more offensive research and this led to its rulers needing to become more creative in its need to acquire new weapon designs. Over the next decades many patented arms and ammunition arrived within the borders of the nation and what was being produced served the needs of the state and kept it from falling to far behind the rest of the world. Many other nations have decried the IEU and accused them of stealing proprietary technology. The FAU particularly were up in arms when the plans for a number of personal weapons and other small hand held items of Martian tech suddenly started to be manufactured in the union. Nothing could be proved however and trust between the two nations has been strained ever since

The Union is now a force of undeniable strength in the world and if the Martians are to be repulsed from the planet a second time it is a certainty that the armies and tech of the IEU will have to be involved in any victory there is to be had.

The Russian Collective

*Primary Technology Type: **Martian (Defensive)***

*Ambassador: **Viscountessa Anastasia Nemerov***

Since 1814, the forces of the Russian Collective have been ensconced behind their Wall of Iron, separated from the outside world, hostile to any contact from the rest of Earth's nations. Only the Arctic Concord have had direct confrontation with them, first in 1834, in the northern seas as their navies clashed in a series of brutal conflicts over territory and border disputes.

Even in 1849 when the T.R.I.A.C. brought the nations of the world together to unify them for the betterment of the planet, the Russians refused to attend and no ambassador was sent to the meeting from beyond the wall. By 1851 the forces of the Collective were clashing with other nations of the world and still the wall remained a curtain of silence, impenetrable to all intrusion. Those who sent agents in to gain intelligence found they soon lost contact with their agents and nothing was gained from their endeavours.

When the Collective began to move to annex land beyond the Wall of Iron in 1850, the world was on the brink of war once more. Naval and land engagements escalated between all member states and the Collective. Vast Tsar Class sky ships clashed with any forces that drifted into Russian territory, destroying them indiscriminately. It was only when T.R.I.A.C. stepped in to mediate the disputes that war was averted. A demilitarised zone was set down beyond the Wall and war was avoided by the smallest of margins.

With the battle for the fate of humanity in full swing, with second Martian war well into its 2nd year, the forces of the Collective still remain largely absent from the battlefields of Earth. Collective forces are seen patrolling the demilitarised borders beyond the Wall of Iron and vast, hulking sky ships float in the clouds above the wall itself, daring any intrusion to be attempted. The naval forces of the nation still probe and tease the edges of the Arctic Concord's borders in the North but with no real assertiveness and more for show than anything else. Still little is known about the world beyond the wall, but now the Collective are sending T.R.I.A.C. sanctioned ambassadors out into the world, it surely cannot be long until the world discovers more about this secretive and closed nation. For now, most information that comes from the interior is garbled nonsense that falls into the realm of fantasy. Rumours of vast tracts of Martian red zone are reported to exist and those agents that return have done so with their minds broken. They speak of the horrors of the land behind the wall but as of the present no one has been able to make any sense of the babblings of these poor unfortunate souls.

One thing is certain in this uncertain world however. Now that the Collective ambassadors are out in the world, it is only a matter of time before the secrets of the Russian nation are discovered by some enterprising investigator keen to make a name for themselves. That is however, if they can avoid the perils that come with doing so.

The Arctic Concord

*Primary Technology Type: **Aether (Implant)***

*Ambassador: **Sir Henry Fitzroy Lancing***

In 1823, when Sir Henry Fitzroy Lancing spoke up against the rampant and unchecked spread of new Martian technology that was sweeping the planet, he was taking the first steps in the creation of a new nation. When his fears were put down and scoffed at by his peers and those in government, he and his fellow likeminded academics decided that they had but one choice available to them. Gathering his supporters from amongst the world's most brilliant and innovative scientists and engineers, Sir Henry announced his intention to step away from the scientific arms race that was, in his opinion, set to be the downfall of the human race. On the 13th April 1823, these notable men of letters vanished from the public eye. It was assumed that they had gone into hiding and simply retired from public life, leaving their work unfinished and setting the advancement of technology back decades.

For over ten years nothing was heard from these men and women and the world moved on a pace with their advance towards scientific perfection and understanding. Then, in the spring of 1834, word arrived in the world's capitals that the forces of the secretive and mysterious Imperial Russian Collective had been observed to be engaged in naval and aerial conflict with a new force never before seen or heard from. Over the course of months, intelligence was returned that suggested that this new force stemmed from the Arctic Circle where it was discovered that until now, was thought lost, Sir Henry Fitzroy Lancing had created a new kind of nation. Called the Arctic Concord, this collection of the keenest minds academia could offer had built a haven under the ice they called Concordia. Lancing soon contacted the earth's nations, explaining that The Concord was an independent state that was dedicated to the governed and monitored application of new technology and was not interested in the politics of the world. The aggression with Russia was explained as a defence of their borders and would continue while the Collective kept its forces at their door.

Over the next forty years the Concord was involved in many a decision, always being invited to attend summits and give opinion on world events. In the 1850's it was noted that the Concord became more active in the Martian Red Zones, gathering large amounts of material and resource for projects that they remained tight lipped about. It was remarked by those that did encounter them however, that their

technology was deemed to be "of a sufficient quality and design that has not been witnessed by this scientific community."

In 1869, Sir Henry left Concordia to travel to a world summit called by the Concord to warn the combined nations of a second Martian invasion that would arrive within a year. The Concord advised that this was a certainty and the mobilisation of the forces of Earth should begin immediately. He proposed T.R.I.A.C be given the responsibility for organising the world's covert war and the Concord advised that at this time they would take a more active role in the war effort but from a standpoint of scientific and academic support as the nation was not martial in its design, having only enough forces at its disposal to defend Concordia.

To date the Concord remains, for the most part, separate at the top of the world, using ambassadors to communicate with the planet. Only the Russian Conclave is more secretive and these two nations continue to have their differences...

The Royal Australian Protectorate

*Primary Technology Type: **Gauss (Defensive)***

*Ambassador: **Princess Katherine of Australia***

In order to understand the Protectorate you must remember that it is the last vestige of an Empire that once spanned the world. The Martian invasion shattered that dream and left Great Britain teetering on the edge of annihilation. The royal family were dead and gone and out of the ashes a new power rose in the Admiralty and all vestiges of a sovereign empire vanished.

Then in 1837 the news arrived that some royal blood still remained and in the colony of Australia a young Queen Victoria still reigned over the continent and held the love and admiration of her people. It is rumoured that the young Queen, then just a princess and babe in arms, walked from the outback years before with her parents and into glory. The family had been on a visit to Australia when their ship was destroyed by the invaders as they attacked the planet. Years later they were guided out of the wastelands by native aborigines. They had accepted the family and the young babe would grow to bring all the disparate people of the continent together with one goal. Survival.

When the Admiralty heard of this colony of separatists, convicts and savages who now claimed Royal sovereignty they refuted the claim and refused to recognise the young monarchs' reign. With the depleted forces of both nations in no state to war against one another, an uneasy calm settled on the situation. The only contested land between the two nations was the Island of Madagascar and a treaty was drawn up that separated the Island into two halves.

Where the Commonwealth is primarily a naval power due to the need to protect its shores, the Protectorate has focused on air power and it's so called air armada is one of the biggest in the world, rivalled only by the federated American Union. Its Victoria class sky fortresses are only matched by the gargantuan Skyjacks of the FAU and the Tsar Class sky ships of the Russian Collective. They fly over the nation's holdings at home and abroad, their bellies filled with smaller craft and sky marines that defend against all enemies both foreign and domestic.

Victoria herself has managed to bring together a nation of colonists, natives and convicts. She has shown herself to be a worthy leader and a loved one at that. Reports are, that her age is not apparent from her appearance and that she is a vision of youth and strength. She is not afraid of hard work and prefers fashion more applicable to the climate and nature of her country rather than the high fashion of her royal ancestry. From the town of New London, north of Sydney, the Queen rules her nation from a small residence which could hardly be called a palace if placed in contract with those back in England. Her parliament governs the everyday affairs of the Protectorate and the air armada and its Commodores see to the defence of the realm.

Choose your Skills

There are five predetermined classes in the game; Boffin, Resonant, Practitioner, Soldier and Investigator. Each class has three skill trees, each with three levels. There are also a number of General Skills to choose from. You have 6 points with which to buy skills, each skill costing one point. Classes and Skills are covered in the Classes Appendix.

Boffin

Boffins are the brains of TRIAC. They are the inventors and scientists that task themselves with the creation of the weapons and contraptions that allow the organisation to take the war to the Martians and emerge triumphant. They are forever creating new inventions and pushing the boundaries of the new science, looking for that one design that will turn the tide and win the day.

Resonant

Resonants are the product of human physiology that has been exposed to the new elements and environments of the Martian invaders. Since the first war humanity has been displaying the ability to harness the powers of their minds and certain individuals have become attuned to the resonant frequencies that allow them to use and utilise implant technology to generate effects and abilities with the powers of their mind.

Resonant skills can only be selected at character generation.

Practitioner

In every war the unsung heroes are the doctors and medics that wait for the carnage to be over before their job begins. They and others like them are the practitioners of TRIAC and it is to them that the soldiers owe their greatest allegiance. Without their skills, there would be much fewer of their ranks and their expertise in both alien and human anatomy has allowed TRIAC to increase the longevity of their members and associates in the conflict. It is the practitioners that create the pharmacological wonders from the new resources that allow human and alien to push themselves to even greater feats of endurance in the name of victory.

Soldier

In every war there are warriors. The soldier is the professional fighter, the mercenary, the bravo and the gunslinger. All of these and more are in the soldier's purview. It is these brave and stalwart individuals that form the iron spine of TRIAC and it is their expertise with firearms and melee weapons that allows the club to push forward, secure in the knowledge that they have an armed and armoured force with which to facilitate their goals and missions in the field. Backed by the practitioners' skills and the boffins' weapons and armour the soldiers march towards victory against the foe.

Investigator

As with all wars there are the clandestine and the secret situations that can only be performed by those individuals with a penchant for the shadows and those that understand the dark underbelly of our world. These investigators can take many proficiencies. The assassins, the detectives the scouts and the infiltrators. All of these professions are the investigators lot. It is these shadowy individuals who gather intelligence and eliminate problems so that TRIAC can do its job for the sake of the world.

Class Types

There are two character types, Pure Classes and Cross Classes, which determine how you spend your points.

Pure Class

Pure Classes require all 6 points to be spent in only one Class and on General Skills. You can buy up to level two in any skill tree. You will be granted a Pure Class bonus, depending on the class you choose.

Example: You wish to play a Practitioner as a Pure Class. You spend 2 points On Doctor, and 2 points on Pharmacy (both Practitioner Skills). You spend your final 2 points on Hardy and Wherewithal (both General Skills). As all your points were spent on only Practitioner and General Skills, you qualify for the Practitioner Pure Class Bonus.

Cross Class

Cross Classes allow you to spend your 6 points in two different Classes and on General Skill. You must choose one Class as your Primary and the other as your Secondary.

In your Primary Class, you can buy any skill up to level two. In your secondary class, you can buy any first level skill.

Example: You wish to play a Combat Medic style character. This would be considered a Cross Class of Practitioner and Soldier. You wish to be more combat orientated, so you choose Soldier as your Primary Class and spend 2 points on Combat (Guns), 1 Point on Combat (Melee), and 1 point in Adrenaline. In addition, you spend 1 point on Doctor and Pharmacy (Practitioner Skills), totalling 6 points. You do not qualify for a Pure Class Bonus as you have bought skills from two Classes.

Free Skills

There are some things that do not require a skill to use. Everyone has the ability to perform certain actions, as long as the actions are performed with the appropriate phys rep.

Flintlocks – Everyone has the ability to use a flintlock pistol or rifle. To use a flintlock, you must be able to see the torso of the target and the cap must go off. If the cap does not go off, the gun misfires. You must clearly indicate to the target that they have been shot.

Daggers – Everyone has the ability to use daggers and other melee weapons that are 18" or less in length to strike an opponent.

Bows – Everyone has the ability to use a bow or crossbow. Bows and crossbows are archaic earth technology and, much the same as flintlocks, they can only ever do one point of damage. Players may bring as many arrows as they please and are considered to be able to make their own for the purposes of continuity.

Stemming Wounds – Everyone has the ability to pause another person's bleed time by placing two hands upon the wounded person as though holding a wound. The bleed time is paused for the duration, but will continue if the wound is no longer being held.

Technology – Everyone has the ability to use certain types of technology. While some technology may only be used by someone with specific skills (e.g. guns), there are many forms of "mundane" technology that can be used by the general populace. Unless a blueprint or item specifies a particular skill requirement, it may be used by anyone.

Resource Gathering – The world is filled with many resources and useful items, some of which are easily collected. Anything that looks unusual and does not have a coloured ribbon attached may be collected by any character. Anything with a ribbon needs either Pharmer or Scrounger to harvest but can be seen by all characters as unusual or strange in the environment.

Choose your Equipment

Most items you come across in-game are free to purchase and generally easy to acquire. These are considered "mundane" and include such items as flintlocks, simple melee weapons and mundane technology; generally anything that has no addition mechanical effect. Other items such as guns, specialist armour and devices, cost war bonds, the in-character currency.

Every new character has 1500 War bonds to spend on their starting equipment. Any money not spent during character creation is lost. Equipment and their costs can be found in the Equipment Appendix.

Develop your Character

At this point, your character is almost complete. All that is left to do now is to develop your character into their final form. Choose a name, and write a character background, identifying any traits or flaws your character may have and how living in this new, war torn world has moulded him or her into the person they are...

Advancing your Character

The skills you start with are not the limit of your characters ability. Over time you can receive training to learn new skills or develop old ones. Training requires War bonds, which you can earn by completing missions and expeditions. You can only learn one skill in between events, although you can pay for

training in advance if you have the ability. Skill costs vary depending on whether you are a Pure or Cross class and are outlined in the Advancement Appendix, which also covers downtime actions.

There are exceptional and extraordinary people in the world that are at the very pinnacle of their respective fields of knowledge. These individuals have reached the zenith of their accomplishments and have published entries in scientific and military journals. It is eminently possible that player characters may also be able to reach these heady heights of knowledge and after enough role-play and effort is put in and a paper is written on their chosen field of expertise, they may be published and receive masters letters after their names and new in game skills or advantages. To begin this process of advancement a player must first have level 3 in his or her chosen skill path.

Note: *Players with dyslexia or other learning difficulties should not feel that this area of advancement is unavailable to them based on the writing of an in game document and need only speak to the game team who will find a way to facilitate this and help with the process.*

Common Calls and Effects

There are a number of calls and effects used in Age of Aether to portray certain effect and fulfil certain requirements to ensure the game runs correctly. Some calls are considered to be In-Character, others are not. We have attempted to limit the number of calls in game. Calls may be added to the game at any time to reflect the nature of invention and progress we hope to capture in game. These will be demonstrated In Character.

General and Safety

Time In

The game has begun, or is resuming after a temporary halt in gameplay. Players should endeavour to remain In Character during this time.

Time Freeze

The game has temporarily paused. Players should immediately halt what they are doing, remain where they are and close their eyes until instructed otherwise.

Time Faff

This call will be used to stall the players if an encounter is not yet ready for them. Players should remain In Character, but should not progress further until instructed.

Time Out

The game has ended or paused for an extended period of time due to the current circumstances.

Man Down!

This call is to be used to signify that an out of character safety concern is present, for example, an out of character injury. Play IMMEDIATELY stops, and players should await further instructions from a referee.

A note on Flintlocks and Snap Traps

AOA uses cap firing flintlocks to represent old earth technology. These firearms will only ever hit for 1 point of damage and will be stopped by metal armour and above. They can never have a call attached to them and the cap must go off. The torso of the victim must be visible to the shooter and the shooter must clearly identify the target.

Snap traps are used to represent traps in the environment and also traps laid by characters with the gamekeeper skill. As these are also cap firing they will also only ever do 1 point of damage unless a ref is present and makes an additional call. If you set off a trap consider yourself to have taken 1 global hit unless otherwise notified by a ref.

Combat and Roleplaying Effects

"Papers Please"

This is an IC/OC call that will be used by a ref if they want to look at your character ID or any item licences you hold. If you are challenged by a ref with this call please provide the necessary paperwork for them to inspect. We have added this to stop immersion breaking OC moments and to keep the flow

of the game running. Only consider this a mandatory action if it is a ref asking you. REFs are any Macifaria Games staff playing either TRIAC agents or Ambassadors.

“Special”

This call will be used if something unusual or unknown has happened. Freeze where you are as if in a TIME FREEZE situation and await Referee input.

Resist

Resist signifies a temporary or short term resistance to a specific call.

All in the sound of my voice, [CALL]

The specified effect affects everyone within earshot, to a range of approximately 30 feet. If in doubt, take the effect.

All that stand before me, [CALL]

The specified effect affects everyone standing in front of the origin if the call, to a range of approximately 30 feet. If in doubt, take the effect.

No Effect

This signifies an immunity or long-term resistance to a specific call.

Disease

The effect is not always immediate and a briefing will be provided by a referee.

Venom

The target becomes sick and lethargic until the venom is cured. If the venom is not cured by the next day, the target will die.

Dodge

The user may dodge a single, melee attack.

Physical Effects

All of the following calls do a minimum of 1 point of damage, regardless of whether the call has an effect or not, unless otherwise specified. These calls cannot be resisted by Resonants with the *Willpower* skill.

Disarm

If the item, or the arm holding the item is struck, it must be dropped immediately. The item may be reclaimed at any time.

Magnetise

The designated item must be dropped to the floor and cannot be reclaimed for 10 seconds.

Through

Bypasses Leather and Metal armour, reducing you to one global hit.

Shiv

If the target is unconscious, incapacitated or unaware, the attacker may shiv his opponent, (or patient) using a weapon of 18” or less and reduce him or her to zero hits and start the bleed count. This blow bypasses Leather and Metal armour.

Sever

Bypasses Leather and Metal armour, reducing you to one global hit. If the blow strikes a limb, it is removed from the body and can no longer be used.

Knockback

Knocks the target back two strides.

Strikedown

Knocks the target back two strides and to the ground for 3 seconds.

Crush

Does a single point of damage and renders a location unusable for 10 seconds. A blow to the head or torso causes a **Stun** effect

Stun

The target is disoriented and may not perform any offensive or defensive actions for 10 seconds

Paralyse

The target cannot move, act or defend themselves in any way for 10 seconds

Shatter

Destroys the affected item, removing any benefits gained from the item (including armour)

Execute

Instantly reduces the bleed count of a downed person to 15 seconds. This is a learned skill and cannot be performed unless taught how to do so.

Fatal

Bypasses all armour and reduces the target to zero global hits.

Ray Effects

Rays are ranged effects limited to 30 feet and do not require a physical dart to use. ALL ray effects have a 15 second cool down, per item. Rays cannot be resisted by Resonants with the **Willpower** skill.

Aether Ray

Destroys all armour worn by the target.

Heat Ray

Destroys all armour worn by the target and reduces the target to zero global hits.

Mind Effects

All of the following calls do not do any physical damage and may be resisted by Resonants with the **Willpower** skill.

Fear

Target runs away for 10 seconds.

Terror

Target runs away for 10 seconds and falls unconscious until awoken.

Petrify

Target runs away for 10 seconds and suffers a heart attack, reducing global hits to zero.

Command

The target will perform the next simple instruction given (e.g. "Sit", "Stand", "Dance") for 10 seconds

Obey

The target will perform the next complex instruction given (e.g. "Kill your allies") for 10 seconds. The target cannot be instructed to kill themselves.

Charm

The target will become friendly and truthful for 15 minutes.

Dominate

The target will perform any and all instructions given to them for 15 minutes.

Sleep

Target fall unconscious until woken. If used as a poison, it will only affect you once your armour has been bypassed.

Confusion

The target suffers intense confusion for 10 seconds. They will be unable to use any skills or abilities for the duration. If used as a poison, it will only affect you once your armour has been bypassed.

Further Rules

Skill Certificates

Some skills and disciplines have additional information that is necessary for you to excel at your job. These skills (Lock Picking, Gamekeeper, Scavenger, Pharmer, Forgery, Antiquity, Resource Information and Boffin Recipe Sheets), have certificates that can be collected from various TRIAC officers and RHI employees after time in. These sheets are IC documents that explain the aforementioned workings of the skill and provide any details and in-game mechanics that are linked to them. Please have your papers ready to show you are qualified in the skill in question to collect your credentials.

Ribbons

As part of the in-game mechanics for a number of skills, you may encounter coloured ribbons attached to items and structures within the game area. These colours will be stated in your skill certificates but they are listed here so that non-skilled players may identify the types of skills required:

- Locks – White Ribbon
- Gamekeeper - Yellow Ribbon
- Pharmer – Green Ribbon
- Scrounger – Blue Ribbon
- Strong Arm – Silver Ribbon
- Antiquity – Gold Ribbon

Additional games rules and information may be found in the game Appendices, or upon request from one of the game referees.

Updates

20 December 2016

- Page 6 Updated Information – Combat section updated to clarify which items require charging by the Aetheric Compiler to function
- Page 17 Updated Information – “Dodge” updated to clarify when it can be used
Updated Information – “Shiv” updated to include appropriate weapon sizes
- Page 18 Information Added – New Effects “Fatal” and “Execute” added to Physical Effects

30 July 2016

- Page 5 Updated Information – Darts will now be provided by the game team.
- Page 6 Information Removed – Removed reference to Gauss Batteries
- Page 15 Information Added – New Skill “Resource Gathering” added to Free Skills
- Page 16 Information Updated – “Safety, Safety, Safety” changed to “Man Down!”
Information Updated – Paragraph updated to clarify the use of Flintlocks
- Page 18 Information Updated – Stun description clarified
Information Added – New Effect “Paralyse” added to Physical Effects
Information Added – New Sections “Skill Certificates” and “Ribbons” added