

Atomic Rocket Games Presents a tale of War and Glory

The Martian Eagles

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A MINI CAMPAIGN SUPPLEMENT FOR
R. TALSORIAN GAMES'



Table Of Contents

Credits	1
Introduction	2
Background	3
Setting	4
Characters	7
Equipment	8

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"At Ease!"

"All right, men, before I say anything, the first thing you must know is that the following information has been classified Top Secret. You are not to discuss any of this with anyone who does not possess proper clearance. Doing so will be considered an Act Of Treason against your country. And I know none of you are traitors.

"You may be wondering what this is all about. Why there are Army GIs and Airmen, Navy Seamen and Submariners, and god help us, Marines. *Hoo-Rah!* Fair enough. Bit of history first.

"Give me slide 1."

"This man is Werner von Braun. He's a kraut egg-head, and their chief scientist in a secret German advanced propulsion division. Rockets and stuff. Really Buck-Rogers. The bright boys in our labs tell us that he's a really bright boy in their labs, but we had no idea how bright until recently. Now, as far as our people have been able to piece together, seems that Dr. von Braun here drank a bit too much at a party, didn't know when to shut up, and next thing he knew was blabbing about going to the moon in a rocket. And that got back to Herr Hitler. And the next thing our agents saw was The Fuhrer's secretaries buying every last damn dime store novel about space in Berlin.

"After the Germans annexed the Sudatenland, we saw that a lot of resources from the heavy industry of the Rhine valley was getting diverted to secured facilities in the conquered territories.

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Slide 2 please. And more material is moving from there to even more secure facilities located in Africa.

“Slide 3. Thank you. We think that the latest push into Africa by the Germans is part of all of this. They haven’t been conquering people, they’ve been after land, to build more of these big bases on it. The Brits have been keeping a pretty close eye on them, and have kept us in the loop. And their best conclusion is a real doozy.

“Men, it is the firm belief of the intelligence arms of Britain, France, and United States that the German Reich is preparing to launch a manned expedition off the Earth. But it gets better than that.

“Slide 4. Our guess is that their destination is not the Moon, but is in fact the Red Planet, Mars.”

“Now, like a lot of you, President Roosevelt didn’t believe it either. But we showed him the figures, the pictures, and some captured communiqués. It all points to the same thing. The Nazis are planning to conquer the Red Planet.

“And like you, Mr. Roosevelt didn’t see what that had to do with us. But a highly influential letter from Dr. Einstein pointed out that from an un-assailable base on the Moon or on Mars, no place in the world would ever be safe if Hitler’s reach should start to go beyond Africa and the Sudatenland.

“We have thus joined with the British in an expedition of our own. An expedition that you have been hand-picked to crew. Give me Slide 5.”

✂ *Introduction*

€ Background

On **March 19th 1943**, at 2:45 PM Greenwich mean time, the first shots were fired on a new front in the Second World War. Two radio guided missiles – fired from the German vessel *Raumadler* – impacted on the superstructure of the *USS Nevada*, nearly taking its guidance systems out of commission and breaching its hold. As the *Nevada's* cargo spilled, it launched a devastating counter attack: a spread of cannon fire and unguided rockets that wiped out much of the *Raumadler's* fuel reserve and sent several ships of the *Raumadler's* supply fleet down in flame. As injured as they were, the *Raumadler's* crew were able to escape their ship and make a landing in lifeboats near one of the sites where their remaining supply ships had landed. Similarly, the *Nevada's* crew was able to regain enough control to bring their battered ship to an emergency landing...

On the dry red surface of the planet Mars.

Now, both expeditions are dangerously low on critical supplies. Crash-landed and marooned in the most hostile environment mankind has ever faced, armed to the teeth with weapons both intentional and improvised, both sides know that if they are ever to return home, it can only be done by taking what they need from the other before Mars next moves into the right orbit. Human blood will soon be spilled on the red sands of Mars.

This is the story of those desperate battles, as ideologies and survival instincts fuel a violent struggle on the farthest battlefield of the greatest war of the 20th century. This is the story of the *Martian Eagles*.

M**artian Eagles** is a mini-campaign designed for the *Mekton Z* system, chronicling a an alternate history scenario where Germany and the Allied powers both launched rival expeditions to the planet Mars in the 1940s. In this alternate history, the space race was kicked off decades early due to an off-handed remark by a young Werner von Braun at a dinner party shortly after he assumed control of the German rocket program. A slightly drunken boast about sending men to the moon in rockets got back to Hitler himself, who became fascinated with the idea of setting up German colonies throughout the solar system.

Before the second world war had even started, the British started work on a rival space program, but had to turn to the Americans for help in order to finish in time to match the German expedition.

Both expeditions launched in 1942. Due to the distances involved in space travel, hostilities didn't begin until they reached Mars orbit.

"What you see before you is a scale drawing of the *USS Nevada*. She's currently under construction. And while she's named like a battle-ship, she won't be sailing any ocean on Earth. She's powered by a set of engines designed by a couple of our Egg Heads out in desert, don't even ask how they work. Weird stuff with Uranium, I don't understand it myself. But I've seen a test firing, and these things are powerful enough to make this thing fly, and fly fast. She's got a crew complement of over 300 men and women.

"Yes, I did say men and women. For weight reasons, it was decided to use female support personnel. And some of our Eggheads will also be female, Slide 6 please, like communications expert Lamar here. Keep it down boys. Remember to keep it respectful. Cause this trip is gonna take a lot of time."

"Give me Slide 7. The ship will launch in 10 months. You're all going to be undergoing intense training until then. The trip to Mars is estimated to take 6 more months, and the only reason we'll be able to pull that off is these new super-engines. Our current plan calls for us to stay on Mars for about a year, then return safely to Earth. We have the best people in the world working with the best tools in the world to make sure that happens. The big question, is about the German expedition.

"We don't know their launch date, but we do know that it will be before we go up. And what's more, we know that they're going up armed. Several spies gave their lives to give

you a look at this. Slide 8. This is the Raumswaffe Gerpanzer Kreigsroboter, the latest marvel of German military engineering. It's designed to be their main offensive punch on Mars. We're pretty sure it's a punch aimed right at us. But we aren't going in without some defense of our own. Give me Slide 9."

"These are called MarWaTs. Martian Walking Tanks. You can thank the British for that name. Most of them are being assembled there. Each one weighs about 90 tons, and carries the firepower of four heavy tanks. Now, both our MarWaTs and the German RGKs are too heavy to work on Earth, but Mars has about one third Earth Gravity on the surface. They should work like a charm there. You'll all get trained on the MarWaT's control harness, regardless of your actual position. We're going to need all the redundancy we can get for our people on this.

"Give me Slide 10. Tensions in Europe are running very high. This little side trip to Mars may do nothing, or it may change the world. That's not my problem. I've only got to train you yahoos up to the point where you stand a reasonable chance of coming back home alive. You've all been given a lot to absorb, so for now, start studying your reports. You're gonna be going somewhere nobody's every been.

"Dismissed!"

€ *Setting*

While most of the action in Martian Eagles takes place on the surface of the Red Planet, since all of the players are from Earth, it's a good idea to get an idea of what the Earth they've come from was like.

Earth:

The Earth of Martian Eagles is very much like our own world in the early 1940s, with the major exception that the second world war hasn't started yet due to the focus on space. Several parts of what would become WWII have broken out. The Germans and British have been skirmishing in Africa. The Germans have annexed the Sudatenland, and the Japanese Army is gearing up for a major campaign against China. Everyone is gearing up for war, but no one has dived straight into it. Yet.

One important thing to keep in mind is the level of technology. Though Martian Eagles does have some high-tech elements, for the most part, technology is about where it actually was in our world at that time. By our standards, a lot of it is familiar, but primitive. Nylon was only introduced in 1939. The miracle drug Penicillin exists, but has only recently come into use, and then only by the Americans. Most engineering is done with paper and a slide-rule. Radio is the main form of communication, and radio sets are large and heavy.

A GM running a Martian Eagles campaign can work with this technology level in one of two ways. First, a GM who really wants to strive for realism can do a bit of research and put some work into it could look into the exact technology of the era, and use the appropriate technology pervasively and consistently throughout the game. This can actually be pretty rewarding, as you can go so far as to build entire adventures around the realistic limitations of the technology of the era.

The second, and far easier option is for the GM and players to focus on a few "Hook" technologies, and use them consistently as plot points. A good example of this would be the differences in the Allied and German Mars suits and Space suits.

The American Space and Mars suits are more advanced than their German counterparts. The American suits use an early re-breather system based on the work of Jaques Custeau. Combined with superior artificial fibers such as Nylon and early plastics, the American Mars suits are much lighter and flexible than their German equivalents. They also have a longer operational span, as they carry several hours of compressed oxygen with them in tanks.

The German suits, by contrast, are built more like a suit of medieval plate armor. They are heavy, bulky, and rigid, though far more durable than the allied version. They also must spend most of their

time tethered to rover that holds the bulk of their oxygen supply. They only have about a 20 minute supply of oxygen when not hooked in.

Another technological difference that can play into many scenarios is the use of radar. Germans don't have Radar on their Mecha, but the Americans do. Radar may not be that useful in a daylight battle with Mars' closer horizon, but during the Martian night radar could allow American Marwats to fight and attack.

Mars:

There are no Martians in Martian Eagles. There are no lost civilizations, no hidden domed cities, and no ancient life hidden in underground caverns. Mars is as we know Mars today. A cold, dusty world, it's water locked in ice below the surface, it's atmosphere a thin wisp of carbon dioxide. It is a lifeless desert of alien beauty.

That's not to say that it's a boring place. It's a harsh and alien world, a place where man must battle with a strange and unearthly nature just to survive. A bit of research on the GM's part can pay off handsomely and add a sense of harsh realism to the Martian background. But even without the research, there are a few things to keep in mind.

First, Martian gravity is 1/3rd Earth gravity. Remember to keep that in mind when figuring out what characters can do. High leaps, long jumps, and carrying heavier weights are all possible. A rule of thumb would be to multiply such numbers by 3 to get the amount of weight carried or distance jumped.

The downside of the lighter Martian gravity is that without constant exercise characters may start to weaken physically as their bodies adjust to the Martian gravity.

While Mars does have a thin atmosphere, it's not enough to sustain human life. A person exposed to the atmosphere of Mars won't explode, but that person will die a pretty nasty death by asphyxiation. An unprotected human being could likely remain active for a few minutes at most, and death would follow in about 10 minutes. GMs should be willing to modify the amount of time a character could survive within reason for dramatic purposes.

Mars is also very cold. Though the temperature does vary, the highest temperature recorded by the Viking landers was -10 Celsius, or 14 degrees Fahrenheit, with a low of -90C (-130F). Aside from the potentially deadly effects this cold could have, these extremes of temperature will no doubt cause all kinds of technical issues and failures with equipment.

There's also the Martian dust. The fine dust of Mars will likely get into just about everything, causing endless technical nightmares for both side's maintenance and repair crews. It's also highly unlikely that either side will be prepared for it. Until protective measures against the dust can be improvised, machinery and weapons may have a tendency to seize up at the worst possible times.

Races and Realism:

Anyone who knows a bit about America and the American Army before and during the 2nd World War should know that it was a very different time, particularly in regards to race. It's a historical fact that much of the US and the Army was segregated racially. However, this doesn't necessarily mean that a player couldn't have a black or asian character in the game, you just have to find a way to justify it enough to stay loosely within the bounds of history.

As you may have noticed, the possibility for female personnel was slipped in due to weight considerations in the ship. A black airman from an early training experiment at Tuskegee, or a highly decorated US-born Japanese soldier, or a Native-American code talker, could all end up on the USS Nevada based on merit.

Famous People:

If you want to, you could use certain famous people from the era on the expeditions, as long as you remember to keep your focus on your players. Fighting alongside real-world war hero Audie Murphy, or engaging in a desert battle on Mars between Patton and Rommel could be lots of fun for your players.

That is, it could be a lot of fun as long as the GM remembers that the players are the heroes of the story. If the players are the ones at the spear point of one of Patton's brilliant strategies, or even if they get into heated arguments with General Patton himself, they can have fun work-

Mars is also known to have dust storms with high winds. This may be enough to scratch up the windows on mecha, imposing penalties to sight and combat.

The soil and dust of Mars is currently also believed to be mildly acidic. It's likely to be a constant irritant for everyone. "Dust rashes" could quickly become an ongoing complaint.

However, Mars isn't completely inhospitable. At the time of this writing, recent discoveries pointed the possibility of vast amounts of frozen water less than ten meters beneath the Martian surface. This could be a major boon to the survival of any Martian Expedition. Constant new discoveries by Martian probes are re-writing much of what we know about the red planet. Feel free to update your game with this new information. There are many surprising discoveries for expeditions to make.

€ **Characters**

Player characters are built using standard Mekton rules. Both Rookies and Pros are available. Extensive cross-training in simulators was given to all members of the Nevada's crew, allowing anyone in any position to buy some mecha skills. Mecha skills should be low both for the players and for their enemies at the start of the game, maxing out at a 4 for piloting, a 6 for ranged weapon skills, and a 2 for melee skills. It's strongly advised that the player characters are within 1-2 points of each or all of these maximums, though.

Players characters can be either American or British, and will most likely be affiliated with the armed forces of those two countries. Despite the rules for women in uniform in both armies at this time in history, Female PCs are possible. In order to save weight on the Nevada, women were selected to fill as many non-combat roles as possible. Most of the technicians and medical personnel on the Allied expedition are female. The social ramifications of that during a 3 1/2 year trip were staggering, but it fit the numbers the rocket scientists needed. In contrast, The German expedition is all male.

After the crash, it's assumed that the players will be put on Mecha detail because they're among the best pilots out of the surviving crew, and given battlefield promotions as necessary.

Officers:

Professionals can elect to become officers. Depending on the GM and the group, it might even be possible to have one or more of the group play as a member of the expedition's command staff. Keep in mind, however, that doing so will drastically limit that character's ability to engage in combat, go on patrols, or do other exciting things. GMs will have to decide on their own if they whether or not they're willing to allow a PC Captain or other command officer.

NPCs:

Rather than give you a bunch of pre-generated NPCs for the German and Allied command sides, it's recommended that the GM generate them himself to best suit the tone of each Martian Eagles Campaign. A grim and gritty campaign of survival and brutal attrition might need a heroic captain for the Nevada, a power-mad general in control of the soldiers, brutal enemies fighting for survival, and a tired ship's doctor to drive home the insanity of war. A noble-minded campaign of philosopher soldiers coming to their own existentialist awakening on an alien world might be better served with a wise engineer, a forward-looking captain, and a mixture of a few noble adversaries and a few brutal madmen for contrast.

ing with or conflicting with the NPC. If the players don't have to do anything whatsoever because even if they fail Patton's miraculous plan will win anyway thanks to the last minute intervention of Audie Murphy, Mecha Ace, they may feel like they don't even need to be there. That makes for a poor evening's game.

Don't be afraid to be unconventional. Heddy Lamar, a famous Hollywood glamour girl of the era, was also responsible for several brilliant ideas in radio frequency hopping and security. Maybe she ended up aboard the Nevada as part of the mostly female operations staff, providing a real-life glamour girl for male characters to fight over. Dr. Oppenheimer could be one of the men maintaining the Nevada's atomic rocket engines. Ed Wood Jr. could be one of the marines aboard the ship the characters fight alongside. The era is full of interesting personalities that could easily be added to the expedition.

Allied Equipment

The Allies did not come to the Red Planet completely unprepared. Listed below are the most valuable assets, next to their MaRWaTS, that the Allies have available to them.

Allied Mars Suit

The Allied Mars Suit benefits from several recent technological advances. Plastics such as Nylon and re-breather systems allow it to be lighter and more efficient than the comparable German design. The suit is made out of several layers of various materials with reinforced joints. It has an operational life of about 2 hours of use before its air supply runs out.

Allied Mars Suit Game Stats:

SP: 4, -1 Ref Penalty, 120 minute air supply. Cumulative 10% chance per 2 minutes of use after that of the air running out.

Allied Mars Rover

The Allied Mars rover is a lightweight all-terrain vehicle with a sealable interior. Normally the rover's interior is left un-pressurized, with up to 4 Mars suits connected to its air supply to extend the suits air supplies by several hours.

Allied Mars Rover Game Stats:

30hp structure, 15sp of armor. MA: 6, MV-2, 2 tons mass (Mars weight ~1 ton). Space for 3 passengers or up to 300kg of equipment. 1000km range. 1/5 scale

€ Equipment**Supply Limits:**

One important question each GM will need to ask to determine how a game of Martian Eagles will run is how much supplies does each side have of what? The set-up for the scenario leaves the whole question greatly variable. The atomic engines of the Nevada are strong enough to move thousands of tons of men and material through space, and the German fleet can be whatever size the GM wants it to be. At the same time, the damage done in the orbital battle before the crash can also be as extensive as the GM desires. Remember that changing the supply level will drastically change the motivations for the game, and the player's willingness to take risks with their equipment.

If the Allies only have five MaRWaTS but ample supplies of food, while the Germans have 20 RGKs and are starving because none of the German supply fleet landed successfully, then the players can expect German raids to steal supplies, and losing a single MaRWaTS could be a disaster. If both sides are relatively even and some of the German supply ships did make it down, then finding and capturing those ships becomes the best way to tip the balance of power.

Also think about manufacturing capacity. If one side is able to make more ammunition or spare parts while the other is stuck with what they've scrounged, this will also alter both side's approach to any conflict.

Hazardous environment rules:

Since no one knew exactly what to expect on Mars, much of the equipment both sides carried aren't ready for the harsh Martian environment. In particular, the thin gritty Martian dust will quickly grow to become a potential maintenance nightmare as it gets into any mechanical device used on the surface. As a general rule, malfunctions should be extremely common. Anytime a character is using a device with complex working parts, such as weapons or a mecha, and rolls a "1", there should be at least a 25% chance for the device to seize up due to the ever-present dust. If the device hasn't been maintained well, feel free to increase the probability of a malfunction.

You may want to avoid using malfunctions like this on Mars Suits to increase player survivability.

Mars-proofing equipment should be brought into the campaign in stages, with different pieces of equipment getting the treatment as improvised techniques improve. Feel free to introduce refinements and environmental protection over time, but don't magically do it all at once. Battlefield engineering is pretty rough and tumble in any era, and the more complex a device is, the harder it will be

to make Mars-worthy. Particularly important pieces of equipment like Mecha will receive a lot of attention, but it could still take some time to Mars-proof a MaRWaT's joints.

The Allies:

Everything the Allies have they brought with them aboard the USS Nevada. The Nevada is a massive ship powered by nuclear reactors that give it an incredible lift capacity. It launched into space carrying thousands of tons of men, material, and supplies. Unfortunately, that doesn't mean that Allies supplies are endless.

Sample Allied Weapons

Weapon Name	WA	Range	Damage	Shots	BV	Conc	Wt
M-1m Garand	+0	28/400	4D6	8	1	N	3.0
Colt 45 pistol	+1	15/100	3D6	7	1	J	1.5
Thompson SMG	-1	15/100	3D6	30	5	L	2.5
BAR	-1	28/400	5D6	20	3	N	5.0
Mk II Grenade	+0	Thrown	5D6/6m	1	na	P	0.25

M-1 Garand Rifle

Standard American battle-rifle, slightly modified for Mars use. Normally very reliable, it's a bit more troublesome on Mars due to it's open clip mechanism.

Colt 45 pistol

This sturdy, dependable, and powerful pistol has served as the standard American sidearm since the first World War.

Thompson SMG

Temperamental but extremely effective in close quarter battle, the Thompson sub-machine gun is often issued to officers or used in city (or ship) fighting.

Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR)

Very heavy and very powerful, the BAR is the closest thing in the American arsenal to an assault rifle. These are usually issued one per squad.

Mk II Fragmentation grenade

The classic "pineapple" grenade can cause greivous injury to anyone close to the blast. Shrapnel fragments that don't kill can still cause punctures in a Mars suit with potentially lethal consequences.

Allied Space Ship: The USS Nevada

The USS Nevada is a massive space vessel, capable of lifting thousands of tons into orbit using experimental atomic rocket engines. With this sort of brute-force approach, the Allies were able to concentrate their entire expedition in one ship and still launch a sizable force. The Nevada is also armed with a number of heavy cannons and explosive-tipped rockets. Whether these armaments are still serviceable could be a major strategic issue.

After the battle, the Nevada was crippled and had to make an emergency landing. Once down, several of the Nevada's massive atomic engines had to be taken off-line to avoid a melt-down, and it's engineers are very worried about it's shielding. The Nevada did manage to land safely, and may it be possible to repair her. Whether it's still a space vessel or a reactor melt-down waiting to happen won't be known until it tries to lift itself out of the Martian gravity well.