

## **The Vanguard for the Skyborne**

### **Setting**

The world of the Skyborne is a realm where technology and magic coexist. The land is divided into various kingdoms, each ruled by powerful leaders who harness the resources to maintain balance and order. The sky is filled with airships and mechanical wonders, while the ground is dotted with technological marvels and ancient ruins.

### **Overview**

The Skyborne faces a grave threat as a few nations have been seizing power and resources from others. Most notably, the Cipher of the Oracle, an ancient artifact that sustains the peace between nations, is now in peril. Dark forces seek to seize the Cipher for their nefarious purposes, plunging the realm into chaos. The fate of Skyborne rests in the hands of a group of brave Airmen, who must embark on a perilous quest to protect the Cipher and restore peace to the land.

### **Non-player Characters**

Dungeon Master (DM): The narrator and guide of the adventure, responsible for navigating the world, controlling non-player characters (NPCs), and adjudicating the rules of the game.

#### Gen Brown

- Role: Top brass of Skyborne, responsible for briefing and debriefing the players.
- Backstory: A decorated military leader with decades of experience. Known for his stern demeanor and unwavering dedication to the protection of Skyborne.
- Skills:
  - Leadership: 5
  - Strategic Planning: 4
  - Negotiation: 3

#### Maj Gen Stormwind

- Role: Remote mentor and guide for the players.
- Backstory: A veteran strategist who has seen countless battles. Uses their wealth of experience to advise the players, often predicting enemy moves and providing crucial intel.
- Skills:
  - Strategic Planning: 5
  - Operational Analysis: 4
  - Historical Knowledge: 3

#### Lt Col Gatekeeper

- Role: Mysterious elven sorcerer aiding the players.
- Backstory: An enigmatic figure with deep connections across the realms. Their knowledge of ancient lore and modern technology makes them invaluable.
- Skills:
  - Arcane Knowledge: 5
  - Information Gathering: 4

- Diplomacy: 3

Villain: Dragan, Leader of Dragon & Bear

- Role: Antagonist seeking the Cipher of the Oracle.
- Backstory: Once a respected leader, Dragan turned to dark ambitions, seeking ultimate power. He commands a vast network of spies and soldiers.
- Skills:
  - Combat Mastery: 5
  - Dark Magic: 4
  - Intimidation: 3

**Key Players (more players can be added as needed for size of group/unit)**

\*\*Please note that all key players can be changed/edited to match your organizations mission/skill sets.

Capt "MJ" Reynolds

- Role: Seasoned pilot and medic.
- Backstory: Known for his calm under pressure and quick thinking in emergencies. MJ is a reliable leader and a beacon of hope for his team.
- Skills:
  - Piloting: 4
  - First Aid: 5
  - Leadership: 4

MSgt "Ironclad" Thompson

- Role: Engineer and cyber warfare expert.
- Backstory: A robust figure who combines physical strength with technical expertise. Ironclad is always ready to solve problems on the fly.
- Skills:
  - Engineering: 4
  - Cyber Warfare: 4
  - Melee Combat: 3

SA "Shadowblade" Nightshade

- Role: Stealth agent and marksman.
- Backstory: A former spy with a deep understanding of international law and cultures. Shadowblade is known for his precision and silent approach.
- Skills:
  - Stealth: 5
  - Marksmanship: 4
  - Cultural Knowledge: 3

Lt Ramirez

- Role: Mission Ready Airman with adaptability skills.
- Backstory: Ramirez can quickly adapt to any situation, making him a versatile and invaluable team member.
- Skills:

- Logistics: 4
- Adaptability: 5
- Crisis Management: 3

#### Tech Sgt Thorin

- Role: Weapons master and navigator.
- Backstory: Thorin's expertise in weapons and navigation has saved the team multiple times. He is a steadfast and reliable presence in the group.
- Skills:
  - Weapons Mastery: 4
  - Navigation: 4
  - Terrain Knowledge: 3

#### SSgt “Wrench” Young

- Role: Maintenance technician and innovator.
- Backstory: Known for his ingenuity and quick repairs, Wrench ensures that the team's equipment is always in top shape.
- Skills:
  - Mechanical Repair: 5
  - Innovation: 4
  - Technical Analysis: 3

#### A1C Denton

- Role: Cyber Warfare journeyman.
- Backstory: A young prodigy in cyber warfare, Denton defends the vanguard’s cyberspace operations with his advanced skills.
- Skills:
  - Cyber Security: 4
  - Programming: 4
  - Network Defense: 3

### **Plot**

#### **Act 1: The Summoning**

##### *Introduction*

- The players are summoned by Gen Brown, the top brass of Skyborne. They are briefed on the dire situation: the Cipher of the Oracle is under threat from a group known as Dragon & Bear, who seek to harness its power for their agenda of control.

##### *Initial Mission*

- Tasked with protecting the Cipher, the players embark on their journey, starting with securing intelligence from a nearby allied kingdom that has recently suffered an attack.

##### *Encounter 1: The Ambush*

- As they travel, they are ambushed by agents of Dragon & Bear. The players must use their skills to defeat the attackers and gather clues about their adversaries' plans.

#### **Act 2: The Journey**

##### *Exploration and Challenges*

- The players journey across the world, facing challenges such as navigating ancient forests harboring unknown technology and climbing treacherous terrain with unchecked elements.

#### *Allies and Enemies*

- Along the way, they meet wise leaders who hold the key to unlocking ancient prophecies and cunning spies serving Dragon & Bear. They must discern friend from foe and gather the necessary knowledge to protect the Cipher.

#### *Encounter 2: The Betrayal*

- One of their supposed allies turns out to be a double agent. The players must navigate this betrayal and continue their quest while learning to be cautious and discerning in their interactions.

### **Act 3: The Climax**

#### *The Final Confrontation*

- The players reach a small, sweltering island where the Cipher of the Oracle resides. Here, they confront the leader of Dragon & Bear in a dramatic showdown.

#### *Showdown*

- Using teamwork and courage, they defeat the villain and secure the artifact. This battle tests all their skills and requires them to use everything they've learned throughout their journey.

### **Act 4: The Resolution**

#### *Return and Rewards*

- Having saved the Skyborne from destruction, the players are hailed as heroes throughout the land. Gen Brown bestows upon them the highest honors and rewards, thanking them for their bravery and sacrifice.

#### *Conclusion*

- The players return to their duties at home, knowing that they will always be remembered as the Vanguard of the Skyborne.

### **Example Scenarios**

\*\*Example Scenarios can be used in the game; however, each group/unit is encouraged to develop their own set of scenarios to match their mission/skill set.

*Cyber Warfare:* A player needs to hack into an enemy system.

- DC: 9
- Player rolls 2d6 and adds their Cyber Warfare skill points (3).

*Combat:* A player attacks an enemy with their melee weapon (Weapons Mastery).

- DC: 8 (enemy's defense)
- Player rolls 2d6 and adds their Weapons Mastery skill points (3).

*Environmental Hazard:* A player navigates through a treacherous mountain pass (Navigation).

- DC: 10
- Player rolls 2d6 and adds their Navigation skill points.

*Stealth Mission:* A player attempts to sneak past enemy guards (Stealth).

- DC: 7
- Player rolls 2d6 and adds their Stealth skill points.

*Piloting:* While flying over neutral airspace, the players are ambushed by enemy forces.

- Skill Checks: Stealth to avoid initial detection (DC 8), combat and/or weaponry to fend off attackers (DC 6) and Piloting to keep players in air and enroute (DC 8).
- Player rolls 2d6 and adds to their Stealth skill points and again to add to Combat and/or Weapon Mastery skill points.

*Negotiation/Diplomacy:* Players need to secure supplies and information from a powerful merchant guild.

- Skill Checks: Persuasion to negotiate favorable terms (Diplomacy - DC 8), Insight to detect any deceit (DC 10), and determine logistics to bring all new supplies & deliver any information gathered (Logistics - DC 6).
- Player(s) rolls 2d6 and adds to their diplomacy, information gathering and/or logistics skill points.

*Cyber Defense:* Players are navigating using GPS, which are being hacked to disable their navigation tools.

- Skill checks: Cyber defense (DC 8) to thwart hackers and Navigation (DC 6) to get back on route/hide their location from the adversary.
- Player(s) roll 2d6 and adds to their Cyber Defense skill point and again to add to Navigation skill points.

*Combat Encounter:*

- Players face a squad of enemy soldiers.
- DC for standard attacks: 6
- DC for difficult maneuvers (e.g., disarming an opponent): 10

*Environmental Hazard:*

- Players navigate a short-cut.
- DC for (Navigation) avoiding traps: 7
- DC for (Terrain Knowledge) finding a safe path: 9

*Social Interaction:*

- Players negotiate with a potential ally.
- DC for (Diplomacy) persuading the ally to assist: 8
- DC for uncovering hidden motives: 10

*Cyber Defense/Warfare*

- The players' communication systems are under cyber attack from enemy hackers, threatening to cut off their command and control capabilities.
- DC for Cyber Defense: 7
- DC for Cyber Warfare: 10

- Possible Outcomes:
  - Success: The players successfully fend off the cyber attack, maintain communication integrity, and potentially gain intel on the enemy's operations.
  - Failure: The players lose communication temporarily, face misinformation, or reveal their position to the enemy.

#### *First Aid and Crisis Management*

- During an intense battle, one of the players is severely injured and requires immediate first aid to survive.
- DC for (First Aid) assessing the injury: 4
- DC for (First Aid) fix or manage injury: 8 (using Medicine or Dexterity)
- DC for (Crisis Management/Leadership) to keep the team focused: 7
- Possible Outcomes:
  - Success: The injured player stabilizes, and the team remains cohesive and focused.
  - Failure: The injury worsens, potentially leading to character incapacitation or death, and the team's morale and focus are adversely affected.

#### *Cultural Knowledge & Adaptability*

- The players enter a realm with vastly different customs and need to secure the cooperation of the local leaders to continue their mission. \*Note the local population has sympathies toward Skyborne as well as the Dragon & Bear.
- DC for Cultural Knowledge: 7
- DC for (Diplomacy) adapting behavior and negotiating: 8
- DC for (Leadership) building rapport and trust: 10
- Possible Outcomes:
  - Success: The players earn the trust and support of the local leaders, gaining valuable allies and resources.
  - Failure: The players offend the locals, face hostility, or are denied critical support.

#### *Marksmanship & Innovation*

- The players are spot a small group of 4 high ranking Dragon & Bear leaders nearby, 2 of which are highly dangerous, within the forest holding advance technologies.
- DC for (Technical Analysis) utilizing surrounding tech to cloak your Skyborne unit: 9 (using Perception or Stealth)
- DC for (Marksmanship) executing precision shots: 7 (using Marksmanship or Dexterity) – may skip all together or repeat this roll up to 4x
- Possible Outcomes:
  - Success: The players successfully cloak their unit and get out of the area.
    - Potentially eliminating 1 or more of the high ranking D&B leaders
  - Failure: The players are spotted, suffering casualties, lose ground and/or are forced to retreat.
    - Potentially the unit has eliminated 1 or more high ranking D&B leaders.

### **Rules of the Game**

#### **1. Risk Identification**

- The DM introduces scenarios and encounters presenting potential risks to the players' mission, such as ambushes, environmental hazards, or equipment malfunctions.
  - Players are encouraged to actively identify and discuss potential risks before making decisions, utilizing their characters' skills and knowledge to assess the situation.
- 2. Risk Assessment**
    - Before taking any major action or decision, players evaluate second and third-order effects and identify any associated risks.
    - The DM provides information to help players assess risks, including factors like enemy strength, terrain conditions, and available resources.
    - Players may use their characters' abilities to gather additional information and make informed judgments.
  - 3. Risk Control**
    - Players devise and implement risk mitigation/acceptance strategies based on their assessments. This may involve planning routes to minimize exposure, allocating resources effectively, or establishing contingency plans.
    - The DM rewards creative and proactive risk management by providing advantages or bonuses to players who demonstrate foresight and preparedness.
  - 4. Consequences of Risk Management**
    - The outcome of players' decisions and actions is influenced by their effectiveness in recognizing and mitigating risks.
    - Successful risk management may lead to smoother progression, with fewer setbacks and obstacles.
    - Failure to adequately manage risks may result in adverse consequences, such as combat encounters, resource depletion, or mission failure.
    - Players learn from the outcomes of their efforts, gaining insight into the importance of careful planning and decision-making.
  - 5. Role of Leadership**
    - Leadership within the player group is emphasized as essential for effective risk management.
    - The character with the highest leadership skills or designated as the team leader coordinates risk assessments, strategic decisions, and ensures the team's safety and success.
    - Leadership abilities are tested through challenges like morale checks, conflict resolution, and collaboration with allies.

By integrating Risk Management principles into the gameplay mechanics and narrative structure, the D&D adventure reinforces the importance of careful planning, informed decision-making, and teamwork in military operations. Players learn to anticipate and mitigate risks effectively, preparing them for real-world scenarios where the safety and success of military assets and personnel are paramount.

## **Dice Mechanics**

### **Skill Checks, Combat, and Other Actions**

Players roll two 6-sided dice (2d6) for skill checks, combat, and other actions. The Dungeon Master (DM) sets the difficulty class (DC) for each action. Players can add their skill points to the roll to determine the outcome.

- Critical Success: Rolling a natural 12 on the 2d6.
- Success: Rolling a 2d6 result plus skill points meeting or exceeding the DC.
- Failure: Rolling a 2d6 result plus skill points below the DC.
- Critical Failure: Rolling a natural 2 on the 2d6.

### **Rolling and Results**

- Critical Success: If a player rolls a 12, they achieve an extraordinary success. The DM may provide additional benefits or bonuses beyond the initial task, reflecting the player's exceptional performance.
- Success: If the player's roll plus their skill points meet or exceed the DC, they succeed in their action. The outcome is as intended or expected.
- Failure: If the player's roll plus their skill points is below the DC, they fail the action. The DM describes the consequences, which may include complications or setbacks.
- Critical Failure: If a player rolls a 2, they suffer a critical failure. The DM imposes significant negative consequences, reflecting the player's poor performance.

### **Skill Points**

Each character starts with a set number of points in various skills, determined by their background and role (see player descriptions). Players can earn additional points through successful actions and risk management, which are determined by the DM. Points can be spent to enhance actions, gain bonuses, or unlock special abilities.

Characters will earn more points by successfully demonstrating appropriate risk management, i.e. risk identification, assessment, control, and use/role of supervision within the process, regardless of whether the action was successful. Successful actions will earn the respective character points, but if risk management is not appropriately utilized the DM can refrain from awarding points or reducing the number of points given.

Characters can challenge the DM on point reductions by explaining how risk management was used and why the character or team came to the decision to act as they did – within a maximum of 60 seconds. If the character respectfully and successfully demonstrates appropriate risk management for their level in that timeframe, the DM may award points.