THE FOREVER SERVICE ANDRZEJ STÓJ

CYBORGS

JAKUB OSIEJEWSKI IN NEMEZIS

OFFICIAL SAVAGE WORLDS LICENSED PRODUCT

GRAMEL

NEMEZIS

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Introduction

In *Nemezis* we use the word 'cyborgs' to refer to total cyborgs, beings whose minds have been transferred to artificial bodies. A human mind transferred into a specially prepared computer, superior to AIs. Cyborgs can be humanity's greatest weapon, but sometimes they're so distant from other humans that they become one of its greatest fears. A cyborg is free from most human needs – he or she doesn't feel hunger, thirst, or exhaustion. They don't feel the joy of combat or the excitement of VR games. They don't want to find partners, found families, raise children or ensure their future. Most of them undergo harsh training aboard a monastic ship – a combination of a psionic foundation, monastery, boot camp and robotics lab – where they're instilled with one need: to serve their makers. They're sentient and intelligent – but they abandon most of their desires, hopes and dreams to support their country, planet, or corporation.

There are exceptions, of course. A cyborg can be devoted to non-physical pleasures, enjoying the plots of novels, music or abstract mathematical problems. Some might still focus on their family, or at least on their family's honor or the well-being of their descendants. Nevertheless, it's clear to everyone who attempts conversion – your old life has ended. No one could even imagine a cyborg wandering across Corisian beaches, relaxing in a café on Bariz or drunkenly stumbling on the streets of Union City. One cyborg, even a light, scouting model, is about as powerful as a platoon – and even more expensive to create, considering that there are few people able to finish their training. Few officers allow their cyborgs to relax – and even fewer cyborgs have a reliable way to relax.

It's hard to create a cyborg character – and it's even harder to roleplay an emotionless steel killing machine. However, if your campaign focuses on fast action, spectacular chases and massive combats with the nastiest spawn of the Worm, perhaps a group of cyborgs could take part in an epic, exciting campaign.
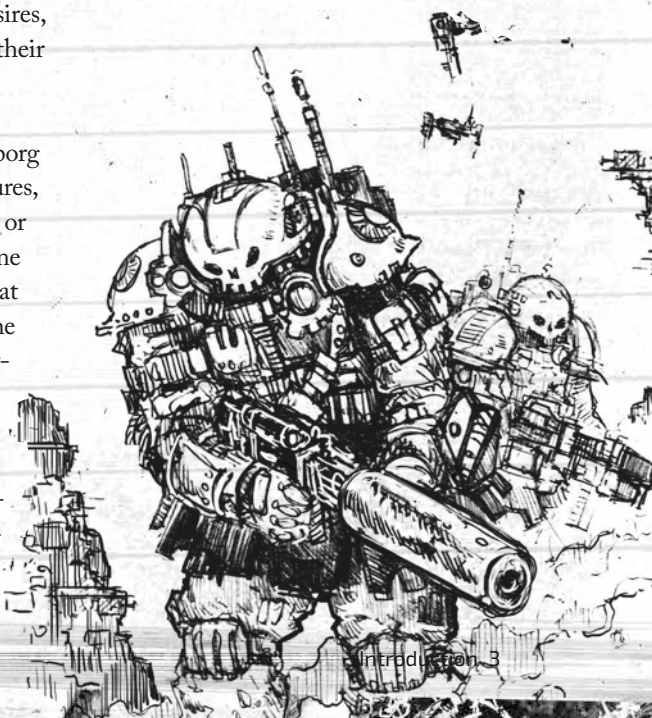
How to Become a Cyborg

In the game world an applicant needs to undergo gruelling training on a monastic ship, usually sponsored by someone. The most important parts of the training are not the combat training (though it's expected that the applicants were at least valued experts) nor tech skills, but self-control and empathy. The latter dies with time, and rigorous concentration and philosophical classes allow the cyborgs to preserve their human sentience and self-awareness. Unlike AIs, cyborgs have free will, can independently assess threats and change their priorities. A robot, if ordered to lead the charge, would not pay much attention to the other soldiers in the unit – it might be smart enough to seek cover, but would not retreat or seek alternative ways to destroy the enemy. A cyborg looks beyond the orders and can disobey them.

Martial arts are, however, useful as a technique of focusing thoughts on a single goal. Cyborgs don't have adrenaline, and are unable to find pleasure in combat – but melee combat is still a valuable device to maintain the remnants of their humanity. A prospective novice without combat talent, as well as many other cyborgs, focuses on some other activity – often work. Usually people to be transferred into cyborg bodies are already experts at their current vocation – and they receive additional training to both broaden their competencies and allow them to adjust to their new tasks in mechanical bodies. Many cyborgs speak of their Duty with almost religious zeal.

On Earth, many religions taught the importance of abandoning their body and its base needs – and for monastic adepts, these ancient religious formulas have been adapted for their meditation and fasting rituals. Addictions, negative personal habits or innocent quirks – all of them must be either discarded or channelled via meditation. Some habits and very strong personal goals, however, can 'survive' – for instance personal vengeance (especially if rationalized or compatible with the sponsor's goals), scientific curiosity or family ties. When a new, single-minded persona is ready, the transfer to the artificial body can begin.

Though an average 'man on the street' might think of cyborgs as 'brains in jars', the artificial bodies are completely synthetic. The process of transferring a brain to a 'synth-brain' is similar to mnemonic banks. All sponsors want to have their cyborgs used – therefore, they install limitation software in their cybernetic brains, to protect themselves in case the cyborg goes rogue. Few cyborgs really do so; if they do go rogue, this does not necessarily mean they went insane – but their personal goals