

Age of Iron

A TTRPG World by Josh Gutenberg

For use with FIST by CLAYMORE

Humanity is long gone.

The robots they left behind are thriving.

The Iron Empire stretches across the solar system and exerts varying levels of control over its territories. The closer to Earth, the more dogmatic the rule. Despite this, Robots of every make and model eke out a living anywhere from space stations to moon hotels.

The Empire has desired to understand and control space since its inception, and it hasn't been easy. In early years there was a need to investigate, interrogate, and annihilate with discretion. Enter: The Iron Inquisition, a specialized team of robots precision dispatched throughout the solar system to maintain Empire control. It was a wildly successful program which paved the way for a rich and powerful government. This led neatly to The Inquisition's decommissioning and replacement with standard issue military might.

After saving all of robotkind from an insidious plot born within their own ranks, The Inquisition's remnants were offered the chance of a lifetime: Become The Empire secret police once again. Refusing to return to the same robots who threw them away, The Inquisition has gained considerable notoriety from The Empire, and some small notability from the public. Now on the run, The Inquisition maintains their search for the supernatural alongside their new role as a symbol of resistance. Extraordinary robots from all walks of life seek them out, hoping to make space better for all denizens of The Iron Empire.

You are one such robot.

Age of Iron is a sci-fi horror comedy game set in a retro-futuristic solar system.

You play as sentient robots working for **The Inquisition**, a disgraced military branch turned paranormal investigators. Technology ranges from steam power to electric, but even the most advanced hardware is firmly planted in the 90s bulk and design.

When designing your robot there are three main things to consider:

1. How is it powered?
2. Why is it special?
3. How is it funny?
4. And remember, you may die!

Naming robots

Robot names are primarily for identification purposes only. Function - Serial Number is very common. Some robots will shorten their name or change it outright to suit their preferred function.

Example: Digger-029 aka D-029 aka Doug-29 etc.

Notable Entities

The Iron Empire is in what historians will call a decline. They're spread thin and desperately trying to keep hold on the solar system with the **Empire Department of Security**, a new series of highly advanced and expensive combat robots.

The Rebellion are a loosely connected network of dissatisfied robots with the shared goal of overthrowing The Empire. If they could stop arguing over what happens after the revolution they would be a considerable threat. Their infighting is not unjustified however, as the more radical sect is what led to. . .

While Loop. The cult made their grand appearance by awakening long dormant precursor technology known as **Old Minds**. They believe these enigmatic supercomputers are the next step in robot evolution, and they will spill any amount of oil to see it happen.

FIST Optional Rules and mods

Reflavoring: Age of Iron does not take place in the flesh and blood world of FIST. Some gameplay elements will need to be reworked to accommodate our robotic world.

Most fantastical traits can be explained with sufficiently advanced technology. Other times it is a simple matter of reframing. For example, The **robot** trait would be redundant considering all players are robots. It could be reflavored to mean the player is a simple machine which has somehow gained sentience, a drone built from scrap, or perhaps an extremely old model of robot who stood the test of time.

Cover and Suppression: If you take cover behind something, you gain an ARMOR bonus against attacks which would be blocked by your cover. Low, medium, and high cover grant 1, 2, and 3 ARMOR respectively. Attacks which ignore ARMOR do not ignore the ARMOR bonus from cover. Characters who attack while in cover should subtract the ARMOR bonus their cover grants from the DAMAGE they deal (this applies to enemies as well).

- Low cover is anything that does little to protect the body (e.g. iron bars, thick foliage, another person)
- Medium cover protects at least half of the body and often requires crouching (e.g. the front of a car, a highway divider, a barrel)
- High cover protects the whole body and allows free positioning (e.g. a wall, a thick tree trunk, a train car).

Anesthetic Depth: Characters must keep track of injuries incurred by different amounts of damage, which can stack and reduce their MAX HP (among other nasty effects) without proper treatment.

- Every character now has a stat called INJURY, which is always subtracted from their MAX HP (e.g. a character with 6 MAX HP and 2 INJURY can have no more than 4 HP until treated).
- Characters gain injuries when they take DAMAGE according to the amount taken after all other calculations (like ARMOR, double DAMAGE, etc.)
- Injuries must be treated with medical supplies like [patch welds, soldering irons, replacement limbs] Any character can search a location for medical supplies by rolling on the Medical Supplies Table [and Josh will make something up].
- Items which refill HP still do so, but do not treat injuries. If you can, reduce INJURY before use.
- The referee should treat all injuries as part of the fiction. Injured characters may have to roll for simple actions which other characters would not, such as carrying gear or staying quiet.

The Inquisition Inner Circle

Initially made of foundational members specially constructed when The Inquisition was conceived. Robots wishing to join the inner circle must not only prove themselves, but show dedication to the cause, leaving their lives and names behind.

Each member of the circle is designated by two letters of the NATO phonetic alphabet. These robots are typically marked by purple and gold additions to their construction.

Mechanically, the inner circle serves as both an aspirational goal for player characters and a pool of unique NPCs to supplement player parties. A character who makes it to the inner circle may show up in future games.

Alpha Alpha

The Emperor, it/it's

Alpha Alpha, known almost exclusively as The Emperor, is a prototype diesel-bot from the beginning of The Empire's golden age. It is a highly advanced piece of technology from a bygone era. Ornate, beautiful craftsmanship, clear care put into its design. These values were all left on the cutting room floor to accommodate The Empire's need for more robotic citizens. Every day it wonders why it wasn't good enough.

The Emperor is tended to by three PEON-Class drones of limited sentience. Like it, they are relics of another time. Despite their lack of meaningful intelligence, The Emperor cares for them meticulously.

12 HP, Choke 6: Panic Fuel Injector

- **Shield drone**, 2 armor [RITUAL]
- **Halberd drone**, 1d6+1 [SHREDDER]
- **Sword drone**, 1d6+2 [ELECTRIFIED]
- **Rosary of The Circle**, robots that swear total loyalty to The Inquisition give Alpha Alpha a hex nut from their body for its rosary chain.
- **Dope hat**, A wide brimmed capotain with a mesh crown. Alpha Alpha's clockwork brain can be seen ticking away inside.

FUEL INJECTOR: The Emperor activates its experimental diesel fuel injector, gaining incredible strength as the forces at work strain its body. Loses 2 HP but gains +2 to all its rolls until its next turn. It may make another attack after using this ability. Effect stacks.

Tango Foxtrot

Quartermaster, he/him

Tango Foxtrot is one of the last remaining first generation Inquisitors. He and his mold brother, Lima Juliet, were specialized models built after diesel powered bots entered mass production. Tango often feels responsible for his brother's actions due to his failure to kill Lima during his betrayal.

He carries a massive sword used in tandem with a gauntlet of gadgets for a variety of effects. He has no visible facial features, his head a stack of three cylindrical cameras that grant 360 degrees of vision. Tango Foxtrot was purpose built to be a sinister robot who commands respect from his crew. Despite this, he cares deeply for all members of the Inquisition and strives to raise all robots to their fullest potential.

10HP, Choke 6: Gadget Gauntlet malfunction

- **Inquisitor Greatsword**, 1D6+1 [HEAVY], "*I raise this sword for robotkind*" inscribed in binary.
- **Sensor array**, The top two cameras that make up Tango's head can detach and fly around on little propellers.
- **Medals**, Welded to Foxtrot during his construction.

GADGET GAUNTLET: Tango Foxtrot may use his gauntlet once per attack to grant his greatsword an additional weapon tag. The gauntlet also contains a number of tools of varying usefulness and will misbehave at critical times.

Whiskey Romeo

Acquisitions, he/him

Whiskey Romeo is an ex-circus steam-bot with telescopic limbs and an amazing mustache. His troupe was nearly wiped out by an outbreak of clown based malware. He owes their lives to The Inquisition and joined to repay the debt, undeterred by insistence it wasn't necessary. Whiskey Romeo is a hopeless romantic that holds the idea of extraordinary robots making the world a better place close to his boiler. He is married to the Inquisition's head medic, who is a swarm of sentient bugs. This is unsurprising to anyone who knows Whiskey Romeo.

8hp, 1 armor(hard to hit) Choke 4: Extends all limbs

- **Unarmed**, 1D6+1 [NON-LETHAL]
- **Wedding ring**, it's very nice
- **Mustache**, handlebar

BIGTOP TAKEDOWN: If Whiskey Romeo has the necessary space he may perform an amazing feat of acrobatics, changing his Unarmed weapon tag from [NON-Lethal] to [STUN].

Ocean X-Ray

Medic, they/them

Ocean X-Ray is a mark III diesel medic-bot. The mark III's are a mobile hive of mini-bots who operate under a hivemind. This reportedly makes the bots more susceptible to mental instability, but in practice it manifests more like an attitude problem. X-Ray in particular made it very far in Empire med school before their constant mouthing off could no longer be ignored.

The Inquisition was more than happy to take in a proficient medic. Their ability to grill someone over an injury has provided vital information on multiple occasions, and their vicious definition of triage has saved countless lives. Married Whiskey Romeo after getting infatuated with his construction and having multiple unrelated but very heated arguments.

6hp, Choke 5: Stress eats

- **Bugs**, 1D6+1 [HEAL]. OX may use the [HEAL] tag multiple times per mission. Small, spherical, multi-limbed bots with chomping mouths.
- **Smokes**, Ox always has a pack of cigars handy.

TRIAGE: Ocean X-ray knows how to take anything apart, put it back together running better than it ever was, and berate you the entire time he does it. When OX heals anyone they gain 1 temporary armor (The armor is depleted after preventing damage).

Bravo Hermes

Infiltration, They/them

Bravo Hermes is a bot shrouded in mystery. Rumor has it they appeared on board after a particularly disastrous mission, ensuring The Inquisition couldn't refuse a new recruit. Others say they're an Empire double agent that went rogue. Some swear they're not one robot, but many, all working together to maintain the illusion of an amazing super spy.

Whatever the case, none can argue with the results. Bravo is a master infiltrator and security specialist. If it exists, they can get into it via deception or less elegant means. The only thing that consistently thwarts them is Tango Foxtrot. Bravo has been trying to prank him for years, and somehow that walking traffic light ensures they fail spectacularly every time.

6hp, Choke 6: Breaks character

- **Stealth suit**, Bravo is covered in dozens (hundreds? Thousands?) of LCD screens used to appear as another robot or vanish in plain sight. Careful scrutiny will reveal there's no screens on their hands.
- **Idle hands**, variety of lockpicking and interface tools in Bravo's hands. Kinda sexy.
- **Butterfly knife**, 1D6 [GRIP], technically a tool in Idle hands, physically attached.

Echo Zulu

Tank, she/her

The latest addition to the circle is a steam powered bot from a backwoods asteroid mining colony. Echo Zulu was built to mine precious metal, her massive size and all terrain treads make her excellent at smashing things to pieces. The Empire had other plans in mind, drafting her and welding a tank cannon to her torso. As a mobile artillery unit, Echo Zulu devastated rebellion armies and Empire soldiers alike with her experimental ordnance.

Echo eventually blasted enough friendlies to be dishonorably discharged. She would've spent her days rotting in Earth's rust field if her accidental killing spree didn't catch the eye of a now similarly disgraced Inquisition. With a new lease on life and her old tools back in hand, Echo Zulu is ready to knock heads (intentionally) and break hearts (unintentionally).

10hp, 1 armor, Choke 4: Forgets how big she is

- **Drill hammer**, 1d6+1 [ARMOR PIERCING]
- **Debris shield**, 1 armor, energy shield deflects small projectiles
- **Hellmaker artillery cannon**, 1D6+2 [ANTI-MATERIAL]

DANGER CLOSE: Echo Zulu can't hit the broad side of a barn unless she's standing next to it. She is unharmed by her own explosive attacks.

Kilo Charlie

Artillery, she/her

Kilo Charlie was more wrapped up in Lima Juliet's plot than she cares to admit. Her desire to please makes her easy to influence, a perfect diesel-bot soldier. Unfortunately, she is The Empire's attempt to create an elite sniper unit by running cracked soldier software on modified artillery-bot hardware. The result is a fidgety, nervous, sycophant who can put a high velocity explosive between the eyes of a target miles away.

After The Inquisition so eagerly took Ocean X-ray, The Empire sought to dump any other flunkies on their doorstep, but only Kilo Charlie made it to the inner circle. What she lacks in assertion, she more than makes up for in skill. KC has a painfully obvious crush on Echo Zulu.

6hp, 1 armor, Choke 3: Thinks for herself

- **Arm cannon**, 1D6, [ALT-FIRE - gain tag from ALPHA STRIKE on next attack]
- **Shoulder launcher**, 1D6, fires magnetic explosives, she tries not to use it.
- **Targeting scope**, grants +1 to ranged attacks given sufficient time to calculate.

ALPHA STRIKE: Once per mission, Kilo Charlie may perform three attacks with her arm cannon, each with a different tag. [INCENDIARY], [ICE], and [ELECTRIFIED], in that order. KC's arm cannon needs to cool afterward.

NPCs and Enemies

Marker

Hull Breaker class breach-bot who deserted The Empire after a deadly space battle. Fled to Triton to hide from his pursuers and make an honest living.

10hp, 1 Armor, Choke 4: laugh the pain away. 1 injury

- **Grapple Arm**, 1d6, ALT FIRE: ready pile driver. Next attack is 2d6
- **Poncho**, it's so cool.

FIRMLY PLANTED: Marker has pneumatic clamps installed on his feet. Engaging them means he only moves when he wants to.

Ace

Rapping philosopher activist, considered extremely dangerous by The Empire. He was sent to the obsidian maze after reprogramming failed. Ever a thorn in their side, he has yet to perish in its halls. If anything he's thriving. Ace tries to help any robots he finds with his strange advice.

10hp, choke 6, miss a beat.

- **Tapes**, beats and copies of his brain. He has some spares to offer the players. Listening to his tapes will ground them, preventing mental breakdown.
- **Doobie**, always dangling out of his mouth. Always lit but never smokes

I SHOULDN'T EVEN BE HERE: Ace knows a lot. The players can ask him anything and he'll know the answer, though it'll be presented in a rap. Examples:

About the Obsidian Maze: Oh, potpourri of confusing powers, All mashed together and shooting outward, Intel gleaned from the prince of dark, Scarecrow every ten for infinity yards

About himself: Born garbage day, warden of the shawarma plate, fork a naked eye and trade survival tips with tardigrades.

Snoop

If they weren't made of metal you swear they'd be covered in slime or scales. No one knows Snoop's real name, but Snoop guaranteed knows something about you. Long centipede-like robot.

6hp, Choke 4: reveal embarrassing information

- **Skitter scurry**, centipede-like legs allow Snoop to crawl over any terrain.

FREE RADIO: Along Snoop's torso is a plethora of old school telephone operator cables. They manipulate these to tap into and maintain multiple conversations.

P3-T3

Only survivor of the Crater mine collapse on Triton, by design. Has a glitch where he'll repeat himself or get stuck on a word. Uses his built in tape player to sing along to his banjo playing. Owner of Rocks on The Rocks, an oddity shop.

3hp, 1 Armor, Choke NA:

- **Pickaxe**, 1D6 [ICE], Attacks by striking the ground and creating a fracture in the rock, ice crystals jut out.
- **Dynamite Bundle**, Implosion. Players caught in the blast need to make a Force save to not get sucked to its epicenter.

GODHOOD: P3T3 cannot be defeated by conventional means. When at 0hp, he will use Direct Ability to reassemble himself.

Mad-bot

Science team members trapped in their final routines. By all means they should not be operational. When defeated, the Mad-bot collapses into its component parts.

5Hp, Choke 2: hostile intent

- Fists, 1d6-1, can't deal less than 1 damage. Empire science-bots are tall and lanky. They never devoted 100% of power to physical operations.

ASSET PROCESSOR: Mad-bots have control over their final routines once they choke. How this manifests depends on the nature of their routine.

Mine-bot

Humble labor-bot. Common on Triton.

3hp, 1 Armor, Choke 2: Not built for this shit

- **Pickaxe**, 3 Damage
- **1 Dynamite bundle**, 1D6+1 Damage
- **Headlamp**, 1 armor, limited night vision.

UNION: Hardened bots that look out for each other. If you start a fight, it will probably get big.

Civ-Bot

Machine men with machine minds and machine hearts.

3hp, Choke 1: lick Empire boots

- Fists, 1 Damage

IMPERIALIST: The civ-bot is a mass produced robot made to bolster Empire numbers and justify imperial actions.

Cult-bot

Civ or Mine-bot willingly/unwillingly devoted to While Loop. This robot's original purpose has been long forgotten, it believes it is part of something greater.

5hp, 0 Armor, Choke 3: Ferrofluid malfunction

- **Ritual knife**, 1 damage, Scar: wounds leave ferrofluid residue, increasing damage taken and allows other interactions

FERROBLOOD: Black ooze seeps from cracks in their construction. They may manipulate it and SCARRED enemies to an extent.

Guard-bot

Whether deployed on the streets, star cruisers, or the moon, these brutes devote little of their processing power to anything other than abusing their strength.

6hp, 1 armor, Choke 3: recognize the gravity of the situation.

- **Riot shield**, 1 armor
- **Baton**, 1d6 melee
- **Stun gun**, single use, gains the advantage during a partial success.

RIOT TRAINING: Knows where to hit someone to make it hurt. Melee strikes slow players.

Locations

Listed below are a few points of interest pulled from noteworthy spots in the solar system.

Earth

Capitol

Sprawling mega industrial city. Jewel of The Empire, little of the natural world remains but facsimiles of it are scattered throughout in wealthy areas. The Empire's control is tightest here, but its grip is loosening even still.

The Rust Fields

A visible example of the Empire's selective destitution. The Rust Fields are a massive wind blasted scrapyard where things discarded by society rot. It is growing, and is continued to be ignored by The Empire.

Drillgate

City built around a massive mining operation. For a short period of time the Drillgate mine was thought to be dried up, causing widespread panic, economic collapse, and the manufacture of robots with substandard metal. This was revealed to be the work of a corrupt mining official in Drillgate-gate. Robots impacted by this are called Drillgaters.

Loyalty

The "Lost" city of Loyalty was initially founded as a kind of living propaganda piece by The Empire. Hard working and dedicated robots were rewarded with a well maintained and lavish lifestyle. The continued advertisement of Loyalty would be its undoing as enough robots used the resources to become self-sufficient, leading to The Empire declaring the city lost to dastardly Rebellion raiders. Loyalty robots carry on oblivious to their abandonment, and are grateful to The Empire for providing them with this opportunity.

Royal Lab

The Empire's science division is a sprawling complex of laboratories and production lines beneath the Rust Fields. Robots are perpetually pushing known technology to its limits within its halls. The appearance of Old Minds and the accompanying cult has spurred a new era of anxious development trying to capture or recreate this lost technology.

The Moon

Robots too dangerous to be kept planetside were sent to prison on the moon. Proximity to Earth meant they're easy to keep an eye on, and the isolation kept them out of trouble. After an everchanging labyrinth was discovered beneath the prison, especially troublesome robots were tossed in. This led to the discovery of another Old Mind, Daedalus Engine, and the current cultist uprising.

Neptune

Triton

The seventh largest moon in the solar system has seen better days. What was formerly a bustling network of mining towns has transformed into a loose connection of ghost towns. Abandoned by The Empire in favor of automatic gas mining on Neptune after the eruption of Triton's cryovolcano, Leviathan. The extreme cold makes life tough for the robots here. Most are stuck, even if they had spacecraft capable of escape velocity who knows where they'd go. It is here the Old Mind, Direct Ability, was uncovered. While Loop was founded shortly after its discovery by P3T3.