

# XCOM: THE BOARD GAME

## GAME OVERVIEW

### INTRODUCTION

*XCOM: The Board Game* is a real-time cooperative experience where players take control of the XCOM defense force and fight back against an alien invasion. Each player assumes a unique role within XCOM.

#### THE FOUR ROLES

Each player takes on a specific role with unique responsibilities.



The Commander is responsible for keeping track of the XCOM budget and deploying Interceptors to repel alien UFOs.



The Chief Scientist is responsible for researching technology and upgrading the XCOM forces.



The Central Officer is responsible for controlling the app and relaying important information to other players.



The Squad Leader is responsible for leading the XCOM forces on missions and defending the base.

The invasion is controlled by a free software application usable online and on most mobile devices. Players must work together, assigning Interceptors, deploying soldiers to missions, and researching advanced technology in order to overcome the invasion.

Each round begins with a real-time phase. In the real-time phase, players start the app and information is relayed about the alien invasion. UFOs appear over various continents, crisis cards are drawn from a crisis deck, and aliens assault the XCOM base. Players deploy soldiers to defend the base and go on missions, Interceptors to shoot down the UFOs, scientists to research technology, and satellites to collect intel and jam communications.

After resources are assigned, the real-time phase ends and each deployment is resolved with a push-your-luck dice mechanic. If UFOs are not removed from the board, they cause worldwide panic. As Interceptors and soldiers are defeated, players will have to build and recruit more of each in order to save humanity.

### USING THIS DOCUMENT

This document provides an overview of how to play *XCOM: The Board Game*. It is intended to provide a broad understanding of the game, and does not replace the rules or tutorial found in the *XCOM: The Board Game* software application found online at [www.fantasyflightgames.com](http://www.fantasyflightgames.com).

To learn how to play the game, players should use the tutorial found in the software application. The software also includes the setup steps used to prepare the game, as well as a reference section that covers all game situations in exhaustive detail.

# PLAYING THE GAME

XCOM: The Board Game is played over a series of game rounds. Each round consists of two phases that are resolved in the following order:

1. **Timed Phase:** During the timed phase, players will react to the various actions of the alien invasion and plan their counter strike.
2. **Resolution Phase:** During the resolution phase, players will resolve each of the tasks they assigned units to in an attempt to thwart the alien invasion.

At the end of each resolution phase, the app will ask the Central Officer to input the results from that round. The app will use this information to adapt to the players' tactics and prepare the actions of the next round.

Players continue resolving game rounds until they have won or lost the game.

## TIMED PHASE

During the timed phase, there are two types of actions: XCOM actions and alien actions. XCOM actions are presented in blue text displayed in a blue box. If time runs out for an XCOM action, the action ends and the player responsible for that action must immediately stop performing that action, even if it is incomplete.

Alien actions are presented in red text displayed in a red box. If time runs out for an alien action, the action does not automatically end, but there will be consequences (explained on page 3).

## COMMUNICATIONS INTERFACE

The Central Officer's responsibility is to control the software application and relay vital information to the players who have assumed the game's other roles.

The Central Officer's primary source of information is this app's communications interface (shown on left). The communications interface displays an action that players can perform, a timer that indicates how long players have to perform that action, a "DONE" button that the Central Officer taps after the action is completed, and a "Pause" button that he can tap if a player needs more time to complete an action.



- A. The current action. This displays the name of the action and the name and icon of the role responsible for performing the action. During a game of XCOM, you can tap this action to pause the game and view instructions about how to perform that action.
- B. The Timer. This indicates how much time players have to perform the current action. If time runs out, the action will immediately end or consequences will be applied (explained later).
- C. The "DONE" button. After the current action is completed, the Central Officer must tap this button to proceed to the next action.
- D. The "Pause" button. The Central Officer can tap this button to pause the timer if a player needs more time to complete an action. The amount of time that the game can be paused is finite on all but the easy difficulty setting. The pause button contains its own embedded timer which indicates how much pause time you have remaining.

## ACTIONS

The following sections give examples of different types of actions that can appear in the timed phase, and how they are resolved.

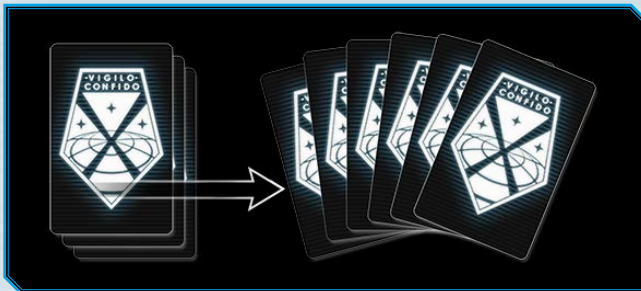
While most actions appear at different times during the timed phase, the first two actions always provide players with technology and credits, in that order.

### New Technology Available



Chief Scientist

The name and icon presented in purple indicates that it is the Chief Scientist's responsibility to perform the action. XCOM's scientists have uncovered new avenues to research. To resolve this action, the Chief Scientist draws a hand of six tech cards from the tech deck. Later actions will allow the Chief Scientist to research some of these cards.



The Chief Scientist can show other players cards in his or her hand at any time.

### XCOM Budget: 13 Credits



Commander

The continents supporting XCOM have provided additional funding. To resolve this action, the Commander takes the listed amount of credit tokens from the supply and forms the XCOM budget.

The Commander uses credits during the resolution phase to pay for all the units assigned to the board. Additionally, he or she can use excess credits to recruit and build new units. It is important for the Commander to manage XCOM's budget, making sure players do not exceed their available funding. A deficit at the end of the round has severe consequences.

### UFOs Detected!



Central Officer

This is an alien action. It is the Central Officer's responsibility to track the alien invasion. To resolve this action, the Central Officer places the UFOs in the same spaces on the board as they are displayed in the app.



In the above example case, he or she will have to place one UFO in North America and one UFO in South America. UFOs can appear in any of the six continents on the board as well as in orbit (the globe space).

Unlike XCOM actions, alien actions are MANDATORY and must be performed. When the timer reaches zero during an alien action, a blinking warning will appear along with the word "EXPIRED." The next action will not appear until players have completed the action and tapped "DONE." Expired alien actions reduce the amount of time players have to resolve the next action.

## Choose Mission

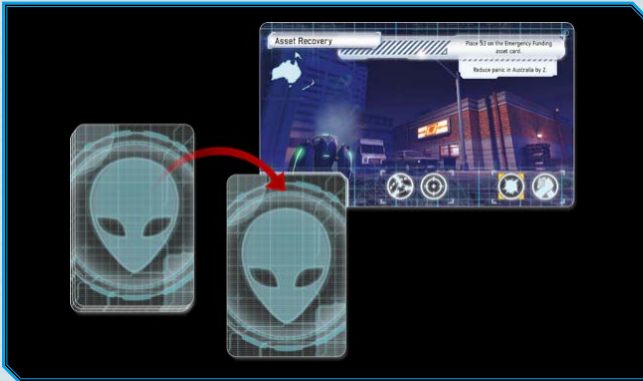


Squad Leader

Two continents are requesting military intervention. To resolve this action, the Squad Leader draws the top two cards from the mission deck and chooses one to place on the mission space. The other mission is discarded (create a space next to the mission deck for a discard pile).



Each mission card has three tasks presented along the bottom of the card as well as two rewards listed at the top right of the card. Each task on a mission card is either composed of one or more skill icons or has an empty blue frame which indicates that it is an enemy space. For each enemy space on a mission card, the Squad Leader draws the top card of the enemy deck without looking at it and places it **FACEDOWN** on the mission card so that it covers the blue frame.



## Crisis!

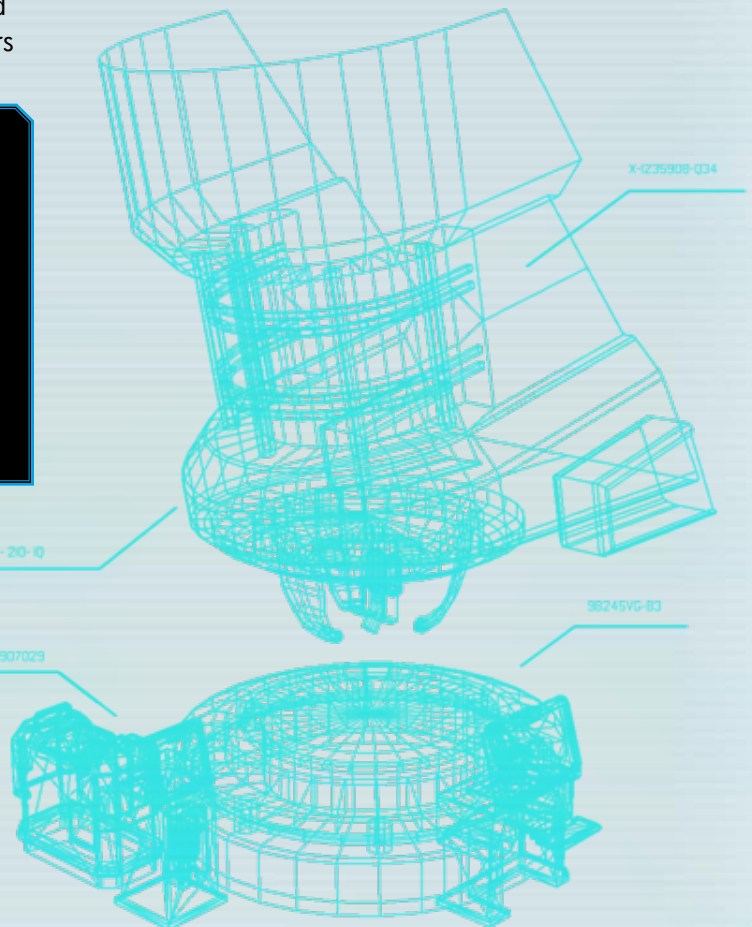


Commander

The Commander draws the top two cards of the crisis deck, chooses one to add faceup to the crisis pool, and discards the other (create a space next to the crisis deck for a discard pile). The Commander can ask other players for opinions when choosing between each one.



Crisis cards are open information and are not hidden when added to the crisis pool. Crises in the crisis pool are not resolved until the resolution phase.



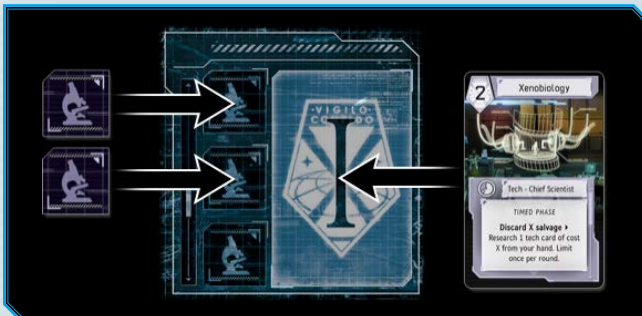
## Assign Research I



Chief Scientist

The Chief Scientist controls units that perform all research tasks for XCOM: scientists.

When this action appears, one XCOM lab is ready for research. This action allows the Chief Scientist to choose one of the six tech cards from his or her hand and place it on the research space listed by the app. The Chief Scientist also takes up to three scientists from his or her reserve and places them on the board next to the tech card.



During the resolution phase, scientists attempt to research the tech to which they are assigned (explained later). Each scientist increases the likelihood of researching the tech, and it is recommended to assign a number of scientists equal to the research cost of the tech (the number in the upper-left corner). However, each scientist assigned to research also costs one credit from the XCOM budget. It is important that the Chief Scientist manages the scientists so XCOM has the tech necessary to succeed without spending too much of XCOM's budget.

The Chief Scientist always has the option to assign one tech card to each of the three XCOM labs during each timed phase, but the order in which research is presented by the app is random.

## Enemy in the Base



Squad Leader

The aliens are launching an attack against the XCOM base. To resolve this action, the Squad Leader draws the top card of the enemy deck and places it faceup on an empty enemy space in the base.



During the resolution phase, each enemy placed here will damage the base if not stopped. This will be explained in detail later.



## Deploy Squad to Mission



Squad Leader

The Squad Leader commands the units that form humanity's frontline defense force: soldiers. Soldiers defend the XCOM base and undertake dangerous missions.

To resolve this action, the Squad Leader flips any enemy cards on the current mission faceup. Then he or she chooses up to four soldiers from their reserve cards and assigns them to the mission by placing them on the mission card.



It is important for the Squad Leader to deploy the best soldiers for each job. A mission cannot have more than four soldiers assigned to it, and each soldier that is assigned to a mission costs one credit from the XCOM budget.

Each soldier class has two skill icons that are printed on its corresponding reserve card. To assign a soldier to either a mission task or a base defense task during the resolution phase, both the soldier and the task must have at least one matching skill icon.



Some skill icons have a gold border around them; these are specialized skill icons. If both a soldier and a task have a matching specialized skill icon, the Squad Leader rolls one extra die when the task is resolved.



## Emergency Funding Available



Commander

The Commander has access to XCOM's reserve funds. This action allows the Commander to increase the XCOM budget for the round. To resolve this action, the Commander takes any number of credits from the "Emergency Funding" asset card and adds them to the XCOM budget.



After the credits on the "Emergency Funding" asset card are depleted, there are few ways replenish them. It is recommended that the Commander takes three or four credits from this action during the first round.

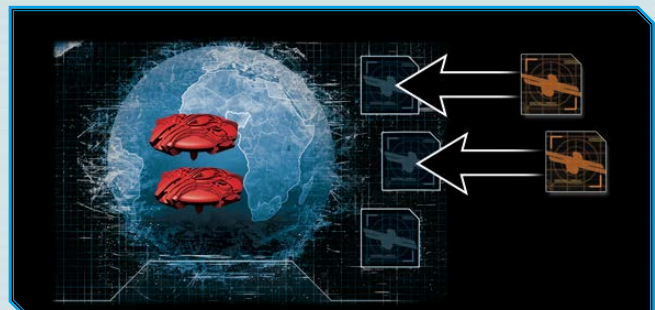
## Deploy Satellites



Central Officer

The Central Officer controls units that are integral to XCOM's communications network: satellites. It is important to make sure that UFOs in orbit do not destroy XCOM's communications network.

To resolve this action, the Central Officer takes up to three satellites from the reserve and assigns them to the satellite spaces next to orbit on the board. During the resolution phase, each satellite costs one credit from the XCOM budget and contributes one die to the orbital defense roll.



## Deploy Interceptors

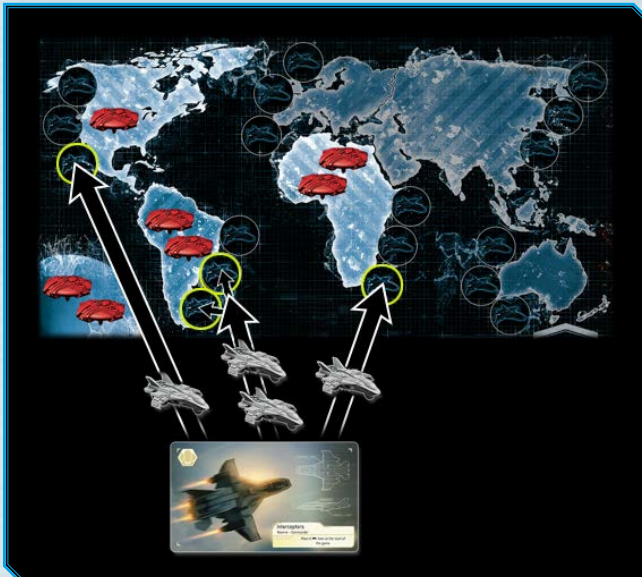


Commander

The Commander controls the units that neutralize UFOs before they can spread panic: Interceptors. Interceptors are deadly fighters that can engage and destroy UFOs.

To resolve this action, the Commander takes any number of Interceptors from his or her reserve and places them on any of the circular spaces next to the six continents. Up to three Interceptors can be assigned to each continent, and Interceptors cannot be assigned to orbit.

During the resolution phase, each Interceptor assigned to a continent costs one credit from the XCOM budget and attacks any UFOs in the continent it is defending.



## Defend the Base



Squad Leader

The Squad Leader has the opportunity to defend the XCOM base. To resolve this action, the Squad Leader takes any number of soldiers from his or her reserve and places them on the base defense space on the board.



The soldiers assigned to the XCOM base will attack the enemies there during the resolution phase. As with assigning soldiers to missions, the Squad Leader should note the skill icons needed to attack the enemies in the XCOM base and assign soldiers accordingly. Unlike missions, there is no limit to the number of soldiers that can be assigned to defend the base. Each soldier assigned to the base costs one credit from the XCOM budget during the resolution phase.

## ENDING TIMED PHASE



All Players

When this action appears, the timed phase is now ending. When playing a game with finite pause time, any excess pause time players have will be added here. This action provides all players with one final chance to use cards that have the ⌚ symbol before proceeding to the resolution phase.

For example, the Commander may want to train a soldier who was not assigned to the mission or the base by placing it on his Officer Training asset card. The Commander rolls one extra die when attempting a task for each elite soldier assigned to that task. See Resolve Base Defense page 11 and Resolve Mission on page 12.

## RESOLUTION PHASE

The resolution phase occurs each round after the timed phase. Unlike the timed phase, every resolution phase consists of the same steps which are resolved in the same order. After players have completed the resolution phase, a new timed phase begins.

All steps of the resolution phase are explained in the following sections.

### AUDIT THE BUDGET

To audit the budget, the Commander counts the number of satellites, soldiers, scientists, and Interceptors that are assigned to the board. Then he or she must spend one credit from the XCOM budget for each assigned unit.

If the number of credits spent is equal to or less than the amount of credits that the Commander gained during the timed phase, there is a budget surplus and players can proceed to the next step of the resolution phase. If the Commander has spent all of the XCOM budget and there are still units assigned to the board that have not been paid for, there is a budget deficit.

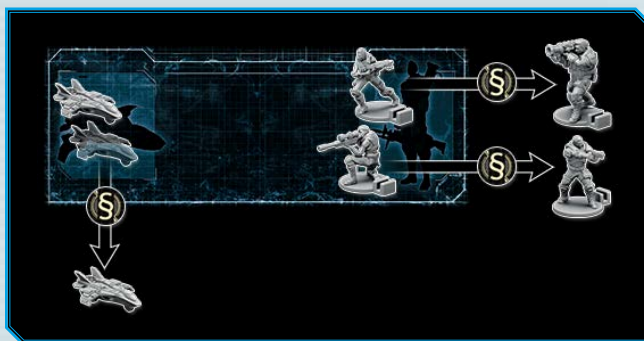


When there is a budget deficit, the Commander must increase the most-panicked continent one space on the panic track for each unit that was not paid for. If two continents are equally close to falling into panic, the Commander decides which one to advance.

### RECRUIT SOLDIERS AND BUILD INTERCEPTORS

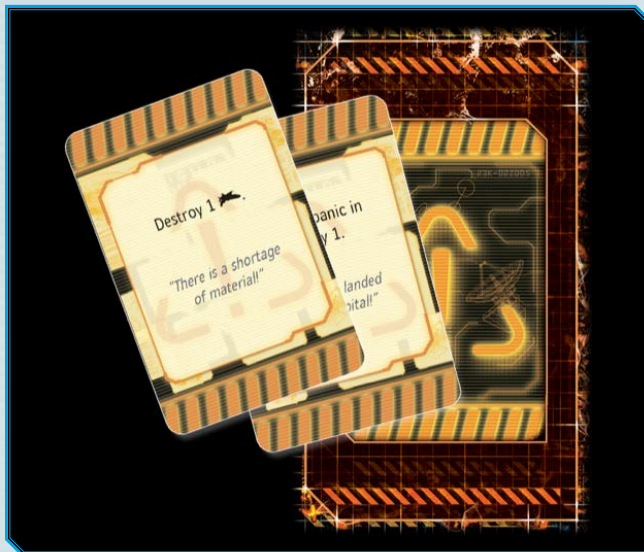
If there is a budget surplus, the Commander can spend any remaining credits in the XCOM budget to recruit soldiers and build Interceptors. Each soldier and Interceptor costs one credit. Recruited soldiers and built Interceptors are immediately taken from the recruitment pool and placed on their reserves.

Excess credits do not remain in the XCOM budget for the next round. If the Commander did not spend all of his or her credits after recruiting soldiers and building Interceptors, those credits are lost and returned to the supply.



### RESOLVE CRISES

Each crisis card in the crisis pool must be resolved. Starting with the top card and continuing downward, the Commander follows the instructions on each crisis card and then discards it.

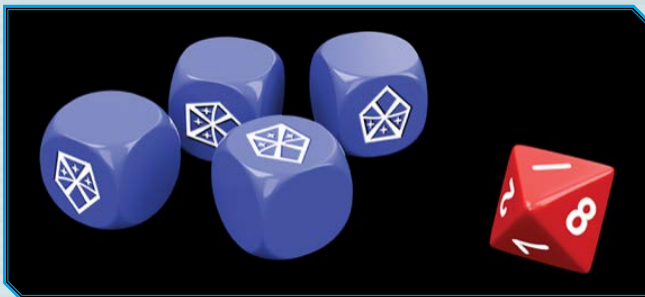




## RESOLVING TASKS

Throughout the resolution phase, each player will use his or her units to resolve tasks when instructed by the app. To resolve a task, a player simultaneously rolls one XCOM die for each unit (scientist, satellite, Interceptor, or soldier) he or she has assigned to that task along with the red alien die.

Each XCOM die has two success symbols (⚡) on it. A success has varying effects based on what type of task a player is resolving.



The alien die relates to the threat track found on the board. When resolving a task, if the result of the alien die is equal to or less than the current threat, the roll is a LOSS. A loss causes the player's units to be killed, destroyed, or exhausted depending on the unit's type, but players still resolve all successes from that roll. After a player has applied the effects of his or her roll, the Central Officer advances the threat marker by one step, increasing the risk of continuing to resolve that task.

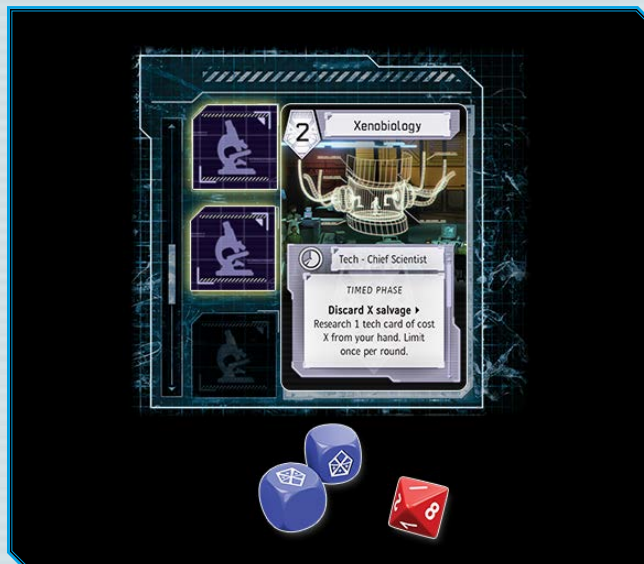


If a loss was not rolled, a player may choose to "push," allowing him or her to continue resolving the task. To do so, he or she rolls the dice, including the alien die, again. A player may continue to "push" until a loss is rolled or he or she chooses to stop.

If threat reaches "5," a player can continue to "push" without threat increasing further. Threat is reset to "1" before starting each new task.

## RESOLVE RESEARCH

Researching each tech card on the board is a task that the Chief Scientist resolves one at a time, starting with the tech card on the research "I" space and continuing to the research "II" and "III" spaces. Before resolving each research task, make sure threat is set to "1." To resolve the task, the Chief Scientist rolls one XCOM die for each scientist assigned to the specific task he or she is resolving along with the alien die.



For each success rolled, the Chief Scientist places one success token on the tech card. When the number of success tokens on the card equals the research cost of the card (located in the upper-left corner), the task is completed and the tech is researched—the Chief Scientist gives the tech card to the role (player) indicated on the card. That tech card is available to be used immediately.

If a loss is rolled, each scientist assigned to the task being resolved is flipped to its exhausted side. Exhausted scientists cannot be used to provide XCOM dice for future rolls during the current game round, and they cannot be used at all during the next game round.



If a task is not completed, any success tokens on a tech card remain on the board and the Chief Scientist can attempt to complete the task in subsequent rounds.

## RESOLVE ORBITAL DEFENSE

The globe space on the board is the orbital defense task. The Central Officer resets threat to "1" and rolls one XCOM die for each satellite assigned to orbit, along with the alien die.



For each success rolled, the Central Officer destroys one UFO in orbit, removing it from the board. If a loss is rolled, each satellite assigned to the task is flipped to its exhausted side. Exhausted satellites cannot be used to provide XCOM dice for future rolls during the current game round, and they cannot be used at all during the next game round.



After the task is resolved, each UFO that remains in orbit increases panic in the least-panicked continent by one. If there is a tie for the least-panicked continent, the Commander chooses which continent's panic is increased. Resolve the panic caused by each UFO one at a time.

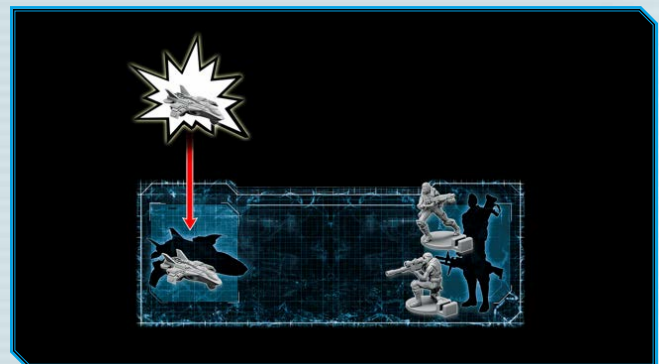


UFOs that remain in orbit can also scramble communications during the next timed phase, changing the order in which actions appear.

## RESOLVE GLOBAL DEFENSE

Each of the six continents is a distinct global defense task that the Commander resolves one at a time in the order of his or her choice. Threat is reset to "1" before each task. To resolve a global defense task, the Commander rolls one XCOM die for each Interceptor assigned to that continent, along with the alien die.

For each success rolled, the Commander destroys one UFO in that continent, removing it from the board. If a loss is rolled, each Interceptor assigned to the task is destroyed and placed in the recruitment pool (destroyed Interceptors can be rebuilt during a later round). Remember that whenever a loss is rolled, players still resolve successes for that roll.



After a task is resolved, each UFO remaining in that continent increases panic there by one.





## RESOLVE BASE DEFENSE

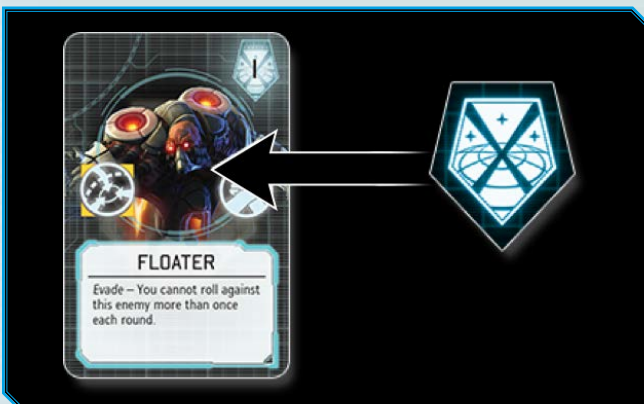
Each enemy in the base is a distinct task that the Squad Leader can resolve in any order. Threat starts at “1,” but unlike other tasks, it DOES NOT reset between each task while resolving base defense. To resolve the base defense tasks, the Squad Leader chooses and attacks one enemy at a time by assigning one or more soldiers to its skill icons. To assign a soldier to a skill icon on an enemy, the soldier must have the matching skill icon on its reserve card. There are four different skill icons. Each soldier type has two skill icons that can be used to match the skill icons on enemies.

Only one soldier can be assigned to each skill icon. Therefore, only one soldier can be assigned to an enemy with a single skill icon, and a maximum of two soldiers can be assigned to an enemy with two skill icons. Placing a soldier on a skill icon is not permanent; a soldier can be used to resolve any number of base defense tasks during the same round



After soldiers are assigned to an enemy, the Squad Leader rolls one XCOM die for each soldier, along with the alien die. If a soldier has a specialized (gold bordered) skill icon and is placed on a matching specialized skill icon on an enemy card, the Squad Leader rolls one additional die.

For each success rolled, the Squad Leader places one success token on the enemy card. When the number of successes equals the health of the enemy (the number in the upper-right corner of the enemy card), the enemy is killed.



When an enemy is killed, its card is flipped over and given to the Chief Scientist as salvage that can be used to pay for the effects of some of the Chief Scientist’s asset and tech cards.

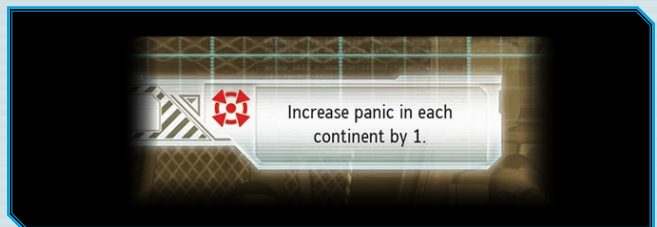
If a loss is rolled, each soldier assigned to the enemy is killed and placed in the recruitment pool (soldiers in the recruitment pool can be bought during a later round).

The Squad Leader can continue to resolve base defense tasks as many or as few times as he or she chooses (as long as there are still soldiers to assign and enemies to fight). Between each roll, the Squad Leader can switch which enemy he or she is attacking and reassign soldiers

After resolving the base defense tasks, the Squad Leader applies one damage to the base for each enemy in the base that has not been killed. Then he or she discards each enemy on the base (create a space next to the enemy deck for a discard pile).



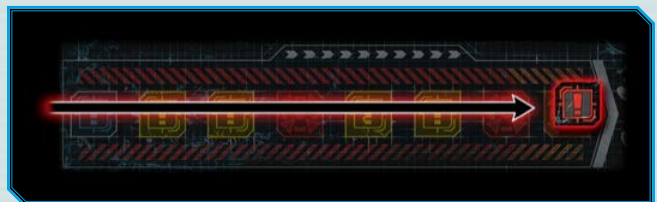
If the damage token advances to a red space on the damage track, resolve the critical damage effect on the invasion plan card.



Managing base damage is vital. If the base damage token advances to the orange space on the damage track, players lose the game!

## XCOM BASE DESTROYED

The app will ask if the XCOM base has been destroyed. If the XCOM base is destroyed, the players lose the game.





## RESOLVE MISSION

Each mission card contains three distinct tasks that the Squad Leader must complete from left to right. A task on a mission card consists of one to three skill icons or an enemy. The Squad Leader can resolve multiple mission tasks per round, but he or she cannot resolve a new mission task until the previous mission task is completed.

Before resolving the first mission task, the Central Officer sets the threat track to "1". Unlike most tasks, threat DOES NOT reset between mission tasks. Just like with base defense, only one soldier can be assigned to each skill icon for each task, and that soldier must have a skill icon on his reserve card that matches the skill icon to which he or she is assigned. Placing a soldier on a skill icon is not permanent; a soldier can be used to resolve any number of mission tasks during the same round.

For each soldier assigned to the task, the Squad Leader rolls one XCOM die, along with the alien die. If a soldier has a specialized (gold bordered) skill icon and is assigned to a matching specialized skill icon, the Squad Leader rolls one additional die. Likewise, the Squad Leader rolls one additional die for each elite soldier assigned to the task.

For each success rolled, the Squad Leader places one success token on the task. To complete a task with an enemy, the enemy must be killed. To complete a task without an enemy, only one success token is needed.

If a loss is rolled, each soldier assigned to that task is killed and placed in the recruitment pool. Other soldiers on the mission card are not killed and can still be used. When an enemy is killed, its card is flipped facedown and given to the Chief Scientist as salvage.

Between each roll, the Squad Leader can reassign different soldiers to the current task. If the Squad Leader completes all three mission tasks, he or she resolves the two mission rewards on the mission card before discarding it. Each soldier assigned to the mission is returned to its reserve.



If the mission is not completed, it remains in play along with any assigned soldiers. Additionally, each enemy and any success tokens on that enemy remain on the mission and can be resolved in subsequent rounds.

## END OF RESOLUTION PHASE

At the end of the resolution phase, cards and units are refreshed or returned to their reserves, the Central Officer inputs the round's results into the app, and the app prepares the next round's timed phase.

During the end of the resolution phase, players cannot use the effects of their asset and tech cards.

The following sections describe what happens during the end of the resolution phase.

## REFRESH UNITS AND CARDS

All exhausted cards are refreshed by being turned upright. All exhausted tokens that are in their reserve (not on the board) are refreshed by flipping them faceup.

Place all discarded enemy, tech, mission, and crisis cards on the bottom of their respective decks.



## RETURN UNITS TO THEIR RESERVES

All units assigned to a task or placed on a card are returned to their reserve except for soldiers assigned to the mission. Exhausted satellites and scientists are not refreshed when being returned to their reserve from the board. They remain exhausted and cannot be used during the next round.

## UFOS IN ORBIT

The app will ask how many UFOs are in orbit. If there are any UFOs in orbit, they will descend from orbit during the next timed phase.

In addition, UFOs in orbit have a chance to scramble XCOM communications, making timed phase actions appear out of sequence. If an XCOM action appears in a yellow box instead of a blue one, it has been scrambled by the UFOs in orbit. Keep the number of UFOs in orbit to a minimum to prevent the aliens from scrambling communications.

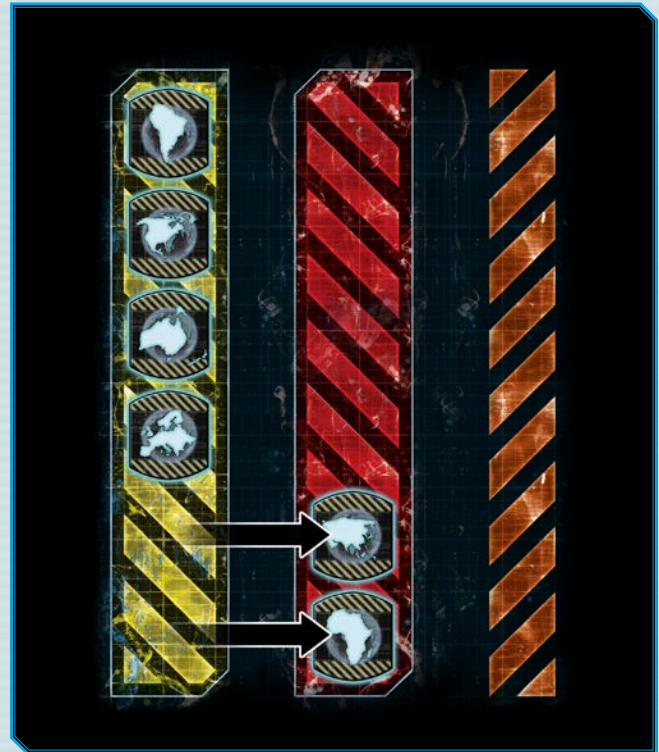


## MISSION COMPLETED

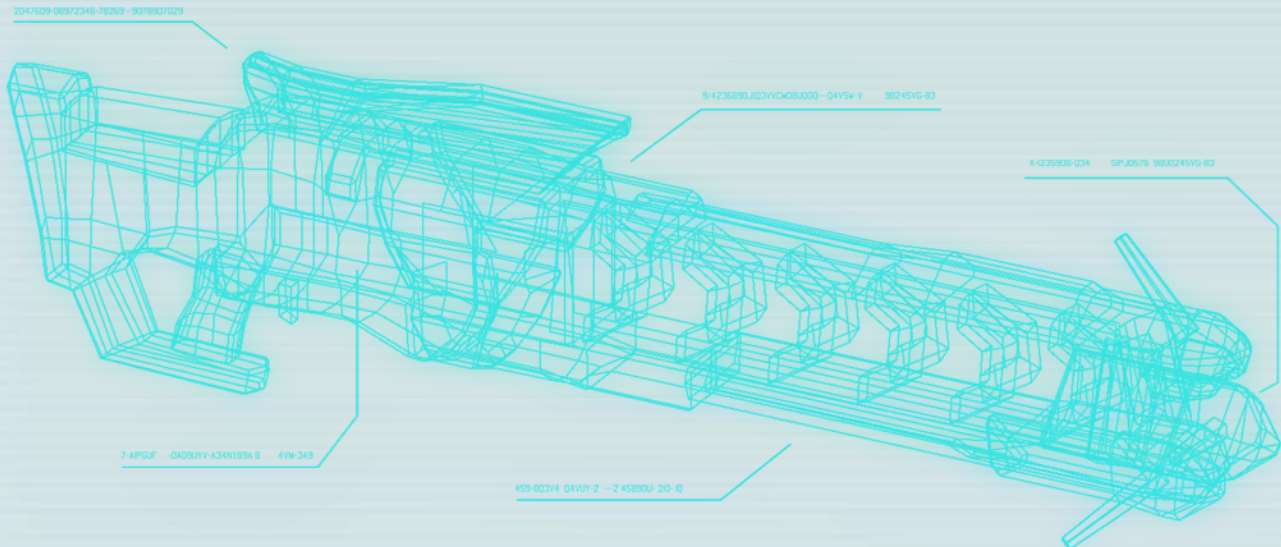
The app will ask if a mission was completed this round. Completing missions drives back the alien invasion. Each mission that is completed helps XCOM get closer to unlocking the final mission. Even if no missions are ever completed, the app will eventually unlock the final mission.

## INPUT PANIC LEVELS

The app will ask for the status of each continent's panic. The Central Officer will input each continent's panic by dragging its corresponding marker on screen to match its color on the panic track on the board.



Each continent that has increased to a red space on the panic track reduces the amount of funding that XCOM receives for as long as it remains in the red. A continent has fallen into panic if it reaches the orange space on the panic track. Each UFO in a panicked continent is moved to orbit. If two or more continents have fallen into panic, the players lose the game!



## WINNING AND LOSING

Players continue playing game rounds, until they have either completed the final mission, or have lost the game. Players do not win or lose the game until the app tells them that they have.

## FINAL MISSION

After a set number of rounds based on the invasion plan, the app will instruct the Squad Leader to unlock the final mission.



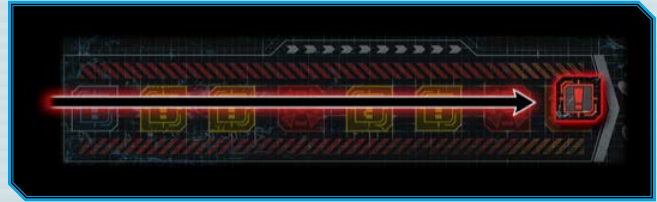
At that time, the Squad Leader flips the invasion plan card to its final mission side. Later during the round, he or she will be instructed to assign soldiers to the final mission. Like other missions, up to four soldiers can be assigned to the final mission.



The players win the game if the Squad Leader completes the final mission.

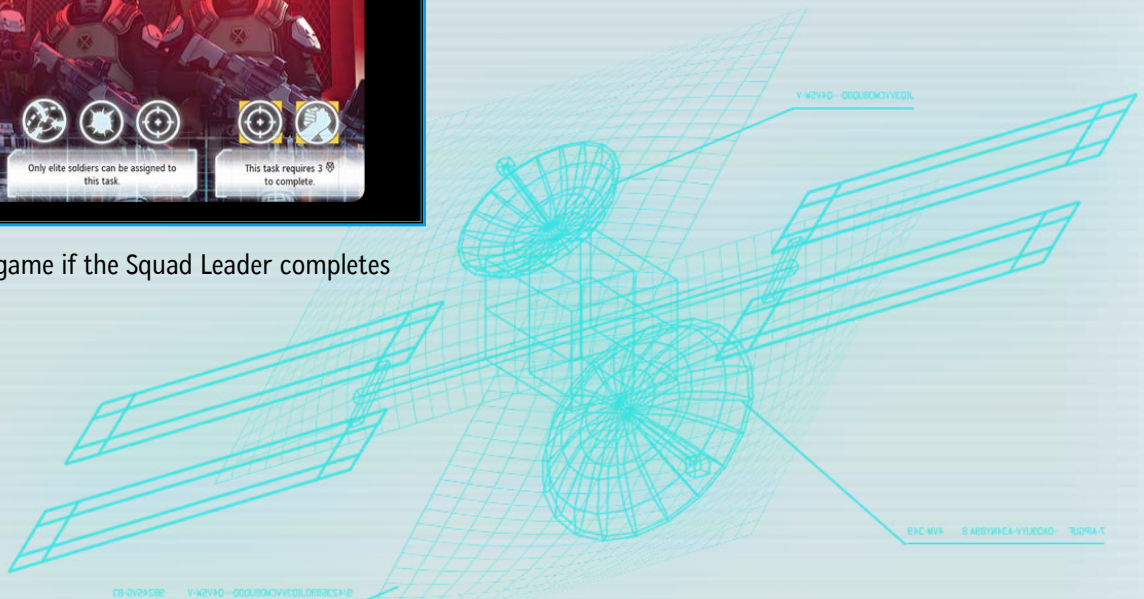
## BASE DESTRUCTION

The players lose the game if the XCOM base is destroyed. The XCOM base is destroyed if the base damage marker reaches the orange space of the base damage track.



## CONTINENTAL PANIC

The players lose the game if two or more continents fall into panic. A continent falls into panic if it reaches the orange space of the panic track.



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