



# SUPPRESSION AND OVERWATCH

Last issue we took a look at the first of the three Advanced Combat Maneuvers (ACM) in MERC5. This article we tackle the other two: Suppression and Overwatch. While they function similarly, they have distinctly different purposes and outcomes. Suppression and Overwatch are ACMs associated with combat. They are reflexive in that their activation is directly tied to observing an enemy's action.

Interestingly, MERC5 has separated what typically is one action in other games. Mr. Shotton's (the game designer) reasoning seems plausible, "Covering fire, or suppression isn't a targeted action. It isn't intended to injure or kill the enemy; it is used to help your allies move from cover to cover and outflank the enemy. It is used to scare the enemy and keep them behind cover, unable to lay fire on your mates moving into position." Regardless if that is the case, Suppression certainly works that way in MERC5.

## SUPPRESSION

Suppression is the act of keeping a target under fire, unable to act. This ACM does not require any dice rolling from the suppressor, only the target. Suppression interacts with the Courage stat of each target (conveniently located in the center table on every MERC5 card).

As implied earlier, Suppression doesn't inflict damage. It only makes enemy's actions more difficult to perform or impossible if the Courage check is failed. In fact, the Suppression ACM requires no action from the activated player at all. He need only say the activated MERC5 is on Suppression and he is done. The act of suppressing carries over until that MERC5 next Initiative activation, when he must declare his next action.

Seems easy enough, but there are two important caveats. The first, and most important, is that not all weapons can be used for Suppression. Any weapon that has Load, Aim, or Load & Aim cannot be used for Suppression. The second has to do with the suppressor's line of sight: an action cannot be suppressed if the start of the action is out of LOS.

### ACM TRIGGERS

*Most action will force a Suppression or Overwatch reaction. However, there are some that do not:*

- Snap to Cover
- Going on Suppression or Overwatch
- Declaring a Bound (though the subsequent Move will be subject to Suppression)
- Hold

## OVERWATCH

Overwatch is the other side of the coin, if you will. Overwatch's sole function is to inflict damage, and lots of it. It is the act of firing for damage on targets who perform an action in the overwatching model's LOS. Unlike Suppression, it does not prevent a target's original action from taking place. It instead seeks to punish that action with lethal force.

Most importantly, MERC5' Overwatch isn't a one and done action. Like Suppression, Overwatch carries over until the activation of the miniature. Every action in the Overwatch triggers a reactive attack.

In gamer terms, the Heavy Assault class has suddenly become a very scary individual. Any weapons that use a diagram (like the Heavy weapon templates) target and roll against all targets in the diagram every time Overwatch is activated.

If our CCC Heavy has three targets in his template and is on Overwatch, then when those target activate and perform an action our Heavy will roll three dice against each of them every time. This is very devastating and helped us understand why the Firing Numbers on the big guns are so high. Up to this point, we couldn't help but feel the MERC5 with heavy weapons were too weak and ineffective.

Thankfully, Overwatch has the same limitations built into the mechanic as Suppression. Weapons using Load, Aim, or Load & Aim cannot be used to Overwatch. And, the action must be visible at the start of the target's activation.



## CHAIN OF OCCURRENCE

The ACMs have very specific rules and because of that there is a very specific order they must take place when they are in play. This is called the Chain of Occurrence. It dictates which ACM has precedence over the table top in relation to other actions taking place.

### 1. SUPPRESSION

### 2A. OVERWATCH

### 2B. ORIGINAL ACTION

In a string of actions with one or more ACMs, it is vitally important to reference the Chain of Occurrence.

Suppression always happens first.

Suppression can never be suppressed or overwatched in anyway. If the target of an Overwatch or Original Action fails his Courage check that action is over.

Overwatch and the Original Action are treated like a simultaneous action in terms of the effects of the attacks. It is suggested the players deal with the Overwatch first just to make the bookkeeping easier.

Overwatch can be suppressed and overwatched.

Dueling Overwatches don't continually bounce back and forth in an infinity of bullets. They only each occur once.

Remember, the effects of the Original Action and Overwatch happen simultaneously. It is impossible for the result of the Overwatch to prevent the Original Action (though it might not matter)

