Overwatch Forces

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The Overwatch Forces of Earth
The Synthetics and the Transhumans

During the Seven Hour War, the Combine deployed its apex military force—the **Overwatch Synthetic Arm**—to lead the invasion and rapid subjugation of Earth. This fleet consisted of highly advanced synthetic warforms engineered for swift, overwhelming warfare across multiple dimensions. These machines, many of which have since vanished, represented the zenith of Combine martial technology and acted as the spearhead of the invasion effort.

From 2004 through to 2008, this Synthetic Arm remained Earthside, acting as both occupation and enforcement. Synthetics were frequently seen roaming the wastelands, derelict cities, and unincorporated regions of Earth, executing search-and-capture operations on remaining human populations. Survivors were relocated to Combine-administered zones, where their identities were registered and their freedoms restructured. In the absence of fully trained human collaborators or domestic enforcers, these machines served as the de facto security force, coldly efficient and ruthlessly logical.

But the Synthetic presence was never meant to last.

As global occupation stabilized and compliance mechanisms were established, the Overwatch Synthetic Arm withdrew through interdimensional corridors, redeploying to more active warfronts across the multiverse. In their place came a new breed of enforcer: **the Overwatch Transhuman Arm**—humans, reconditioned and physically augmented to serve as the boots on Earth's soil.

This Transhuman program began its rollout around 2009–2010, with selected human candidates undergoing surgical and neurological augmentation. The result was a soldier more capable than baseline Civil Protection, yet more cost-effective and adaptable than fully synthetic units.

The early Transhuman force was divided into two main classes:

- **Grunts** were the bulk. Though indoctrinated and enhanced, many retained fragments of their humanity. Some were known to exhibit emotional responses—nervous chatter during tense patrols, off-script remarks during quiet deployments, or even subtle disobedience. Their behavior often drew the ire of **Dispatch**, the Overwatch's centralized military AI which monitored unit efficiency and enforced protocol.
- **Ordinals**, in contrast, were the next tier—leaders, squad tacticians, and field overseers. They were more thoroughly conditioned and emotionally neutral, better exemplifying the cold, obedient ideal the Combine sought. While not entirely devoid of human echoes, Ordinals showed less variance and operated with more calculated precision, often handling sensitive or high-priority missions.

As the occupation matured, additional specialized variants were introduced to the Transhuman Arm:

- **Suppressors** were heavy weapons specialists equipped with pulse miniguns and reinforced armor. Known for their unwavering discipline and intimidating orange visors, they acted as area denial units during escalated conflicts and resistance raids.
- **Chargers** were frontline shock troopers built for breaching and overwhelming entrenched positions. Wielding powerful pulse shotguns and using wrist-mounted hard-light shields, they served as unstoppable forces in close-quarters combat.
- **Spikewalls** acted as mobile guardians and escorts, often attached to Civil Protection units. Though more lightly armored than Chargers, they retained enhanced durability and were designed to move swiftly, offering rapid-response support in unstable zones or populated sectors.

By 2014, this balance between synthetic legacy and human adaptability defined the Overwatch's military presence on Earth. The remaining Synthetics served in support or in remote border zones, while the Transhuman Arm began to form the core of Combine military enforcement. Together, they projected a vision of total control—a convergence of machine logic and human resilience, forged in the crucible of submission.

The Overwatch Synthetic Arm: Occupation-Era Classes (Post-2008)

After the retreat of the primary Combine invasion fleet in 2008, only a fraction of the Synthetic Arm was left behind to aid in Earth's occupation. These remaining units, while formidable, represented a scaled-down force optimized for control and intimidation rather than open warfare. Their numbers were limited, and they were typically reserved for Citadel Cities, Sector Capitals, or conflict-heavy regions requiring hard deterrents and rapid pacification.

The known classes of the occupying Synthetic Arm include:

- **CLAW (Combat-Linked Aerial Watcher)**
  A heavily modified evolution of the civilian surveillance scanner. CLAWs were equipped with limited AI protocols, improved visual sensors, and compact ordinance deployment systems. Capable of laying proximity mines and emitting blinding flashes, they served as airborne harassers and support scouts during raids or manhunts.
- **STORM**
  Agile, humanoid synths with digitigrade legs and lightweight composite armor. Despite their speed and lean design, STORM units were brutal in close combat and proficient with mid-range energy rifles. Deployed for fast-response urban patrols, they were often the first synthetic force civilians encountered in crisis zones.
- **HAMMER**
  Towering and heavily armored, HAMMER units were elite enforcers of synthetic might. Eschewing conventional firearms, they were built around integrated energy-based weaponry: a shockwave hand cannon, volatile energy ball projectors, and a high-output beam cannon capable of melting armored vehicles or bunkers. Their presence was rare—but devastating when deployed.
- **NOMAD (Strider-Class Walker)**
  Iconic remnants of the Seven Hour War, NOMADs were towering tripod walkers outfitted with a slow-firing pulse cannon and a secondary dark energy beam weapon. When fully charged, this cannon could obliterate structures with surgical precision. Although sightings were rare in cities, they were known to patrol large-scale perimeters and suppress high-value resistance operations.
- **ANVIL**
  Massive quadruped synths used as mobile heavy weapons platforms. The standard ANVIL carried an underslung rotary pulse minigun and bore an armored frontal shield to protect allies and suppress enemy fire. Variants included the **ANVIL-M**, which traded its minigun for a mortar-like barrage system used in wide-area denial or siege suppression.
- **VIPER**
  Slender but heavily armed quadrupeds that acted as walking artillery pieces. With their integrated long-range pulse cannons and stabilized platforms, VIPERs offered overwatch for ANVIL deployments or long-distance bombardment capabilities. Their AI emphasized precision and coordination with other synths in urban and frontier operations.
- **STAR (Stalker-Tactical Autonomous Recon)**
  Known colloquially as "Hunters," these three-legged predator synths were feared for their animalistic behavior and psychological warfare. STARs thrived in dense woodland or suburban ruins, where cover and terrain gave them the upper hand. They often hunted in pairs or small packs, toying with targets before delivering lethal strikes. Notable for their use in counter-insurgency and search-and-destroy missions far from city centers.