

G U R P S<sup>®</sup>

# Funny New Guys

## Technomancer in Vietnam

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AN e23 ADVENTURE AND  
SOURCEBOOK for GURPS<sup>®</sup>  
from STEVE JACKSON GAMES  
FOR 3 TO 6 PLAYERS

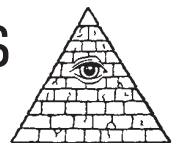


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American involvement in Indochina is a complex and difficult story to tell. The mere mention of Vietnam inspires strong emotions and bitter debate. Not since the Civil War have Americans been so divided politically. Just like the Civil War, its effects still ripple through the nation's subconscious. My interest in the war comes from the numerous veterans I have known through the years. Their stories create a living history that makes the rice paddies and jungles quite vivid.

What if high magic and the heavy firepower of the 20th century existed side by side? In David L. Pulver's *GURPS Technomancer*, they do, and the nature of war changes forever. In this book, players enter the forbidden territory of "Indian Country" and roleplay the experience of Vietnam . . . with a twist. Dragons, fighter jets, magic carpets, and zombie legions support the fight over the fate of Vietnam.

"Funny New Guys" is an adventure supplement where you fight the war on the intimate terms of an infantry soldier. You are the grunts that slog through rice paddies, contend with ambushes, and win the hearts and minds of locals. It isn't easy, but if you live to tell about your experiences, you just might get promoted and go home to the states.

# About the Author

Ed Wisniewski graduated from Illinois State University and works as a web developer for a major candy company. He has been writing since he was a teenager and lives in Joliet, IL. His work is featured in the Steve Jackson products *Liber Reliquarium*, *GURPS Monsters*, and *GURPS Villains*, and he is the author of the *Goblins* adventure "Gentleman Johnson's Fishmart" featured in *The Best of Pyramid Volume One*.

# Dedication

This book is dedicated to two Vietnam veterans who had a profound influence on my life. Sergeant Major David Ogle and Lieutenant Colonel Richard Weidner, thank you.



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The *GURPS Technomancer* web page is at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/Technomancer/](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/Technomancer/).

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# 1. Strange Days In the Jungle

## Attack on Fire Base 23

*The VC always attacked at night, and at Fire Base 23 the situation was looking grim for the young lieutenant. Enemy sappers, covered with axle grease to sneak through the wires, were tossing grenades into bunkers and using satchel charges against the howitzers that supported I-corps. Soldiers were running about frantically trying to shoot the enemy in the dark and ended up shooting each other. The smell of explosives and burning fuel was overpowering. The lieutenant, clad in his trousers and a flak jacket, fiddled for his pistol and then ran to the other hooches looking for others who hadn't lost their head during the ambush.*

*"Howdy sir," said a raggedy Coyote man covered in dirt. It was Hank the wiry Texan and radio operator. "Got any company?"*

*"No, we need to find a radio and get a dust off. Charley is all over this camp," Said the lieutenant.*

*"What about the HQ?"*

*"No good, too hot."*

*"Damn, then we will have to try over by the .50 cal."*

*"Let's do it."*

*Fires were burning now, and the other troops at the base could begin to distinguish friend from foe. The lieutenant was scared, but knew that a call to battalion could mean the difference between life and death. While running, he kept chanting his good luck spell and prayed it would work. Both the lieutenant and the coyote man made a dash for the relative safety of the bunker and its .50-caliber. Gunfire followed their footsteps as they made their way to the pile of sandbags.*

*The lieutenant dove into the emplacement. The VC had killed both of the crew in the early moments of the attack and some of the wounds still oozed blood. Hank was checking the action of the machine gun and getting ready to fire. The lieutenant pulled at the receiver of the radio and saw that the cord had been cut.*

*"Damn it!" he cursed.*

*VC started to approach the sandbags and gunfire sailed over their heads. Hank was blazing away with the machine gun to keep them pinned down, but they kept advancing. The lieutenant pulled his pistol and began firing in a desperate attempt to help out. This was it . . . they were going to die, but not without a fight. Neither the spell nor the prayer would be answered tonight.*

*"Somethin's wrong!" shouted Hank. "Can you feel it?"*

*The muggy night had turned bitterly cold and the lieutenant could see his breath. The gunfire stopped, and in the distance, low moaning could be heard over the sound of exploding ammunition. The moaning grew louder as it got closer and the shambling figures of Vietnamese started trudging through the barbed wire of the fire base. Both Hank and the lieutenant stared in shock – they were zombies. The VC ripped into them with gunfire and they kept advancing. Arms, legs, and heads blew off and they kept advancing. When they closed with the VC sappers, they clawed at them with their hands and slashed at them with bayonets. Moaning as they went, the zombies were slaughtering the VC. The effect was horrifying and those who survived the first assault ran in terror. The lieutenant and Hank looked around, wondering if they would be next.*

*"Stand down all clear!" came a voice from the distance.*

*"Negative! There are still enemy in the wire," shouted the lieutenant.*

*"Stand down, they are allies."*

*"Says who?"*

*"Says me, First Sergeant Otto Nasumbaum, 13th Necromantic Operations Group."*

*"Zombies, they sent zombies to save us!"*

*"Naw, we were in the neighborhood when we saw the attack and decided to give you folks a hand."*

*Two things ruled the night in Vietnam. The Viet Cong and the "Z companies" of the 13th NOG.*

# Tone and Technomancer

The soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who served in Vietnam have written plenty of books about their experiences. The war has been the topic of numerous movies, television shows, and even video games. This adventure provides a different twist to the legacy.

The world of *GURPS Technomancer* is just like our world except that technology and magic work together. This makes the unknown territory of Vietnam more dangerous because curses, spells, and magical creatures complement guerilla warfare.

Fortunately, servicemen aren't completely helpless. The Americans have the best enchantments that money can buy and death that can rain down from the sky in the form of napalm or dragon's breath.

## Historical Accuracy

World history remained unchanged before 1945 and the Trinity Hellstorm. After the forces of magic were unleashed, many of the historical events that we recognize still take place in the *Technomancer* world but with some notable differences. President Kennedy is still assassinated, but the sniper uses a magic bullet. The civil rights movement also encompasses the rights of chimeras (p. 9).

In spite of these similarities, some major differences also exist, the largest being our involvement in Vietnam. According to the *GURPS Technomancer* canon, America wins the war in Vietnam thanks to a combination of ruthless tactics, magic, and technological superiority. This necessitates taking some liberties with the history of the conflict.

Three key strategies altered the outcome of the war. First, instead of pursuing "peace with honor," Richard Nixon escalates the war to unknown levels – "hot pursuit" invasions, and successful raids into Cambodia, Laos, and North Vietnam that cut off the Ho Chi Minh trail. Second, the army deploys "Z companies" – the enemy dead transformed into zombies and then forced to fight their former allies. North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops would rather surrender than die and return as reanimated corpses. Finally, the widespread use of depleted necronium created wide swaths of famine and dead mana in North Vietnam. These factors led to the peace treaty

## CAMPAIGN TONE

Tastes vary. So a GM has many ways to portray the fighting in Vietnam. The following are just a few of the options:

### Dark

War is a terrible experience. The horror, gore, and frustration of combat take center stage. Players always feel a sense of anxiety about what is going to happen next. Weapons jam, promised reinforcements do not arrive, and the threat of death constantly hangs in the air. Death is not confined to combat either – players succumb to attacks by wild animals and mystical curses cast by the enemy.

The GM is encouraged to place most of the action at night and play up the spooky elements of the jungle. The enemy should be shrouded in mystery. They appear out of nowhere to attack and then vanish without a trace. An enemy booby trap could kill instantly or maim a soldier allowing him to die in agony while his buddies struggle to beat back an ambush.

A dark campaign depends on the worst always happening and happening with distressing frequency.

### Realistic

A soldier's life is not always hard combat and daily struggle for survival. Brief moments of terror are often separated by long periods of boredom. This campaign type allows the players to experience the routine of being a combat soldier. The hazards of patrolling are balanced by guard duty or playing poker with your squad at the base.

Adventures and sessions often focus on the characters' social interaction. A squad member's death can alter relationships and a promotion can have repercussions. Magic should be treated like any other weapon in the Army. The power of sorcery is just one tool for defeating the enemy. A well-aimed mortar round can do more good than a fireball. Players should learn that brute force trumps magical powers on many occasions.

The best approach balances the fantastic elements of the *Technomancer* world with the mundane. In one game, the players might look for VC ammunition dumps near the base, and on another occasion, they may scrounge up a few steaks and a case of beer for the going away party of a buddy.

(Continued on the next page . . .)

## TONE (CONT.)

### Silly

Young men, not far removed from adolescence, often fight wars. Add explosives to the equation and you have a recipe for laughs. Count on the strange, bizarre, and unexpected happening on a daily basis. The dangers of combat still exist but with the ever-present chance for something funny or weird happening.

In this world, the Viet Cong miss on their first shot during ambushes. Explosions throw people around and knock them on their behinds but rarely prove fatal. These scenarios always use running gags like a lieutenant who can't keep his fly buttoned or a sergeant who spills hot coffee on himself whenever shooting starts. The players can also use gallows humor to make light of the tragic events around them.

A silly campaign may be the most difficult to run but it can be rewarding. A spell at the camp backfires and the latrine spews forth a demon. A NPC deals with a mental problem by blowing things up at random. The Viet Cong infiltrate the camp and steal a case of cigarettes, causing the first sergeant to send a combat patrol to get them back. If it is absurd or silly, give it a try.

### Blended

Perhaps the best campaign type, this combines all of the above approaches. After a grueling combat patrol, send the players on a scrounging expedition for a case of beer. A player dealing with trench foot could get involved in a poker game to take his mind off his predicament. A new CO taking charge of the company might force the players to become a spit and polish outfit.

The key is balance. When things get too silly, force the players to confront reality. If a character gets killed and things become too dark, lighten the mood with something odd and unexpected.

Many Vietnam veterans not only recall the terror they experienced but also the funny things that happened along the way. Allow the players to experience the same thing.

of 1974 and the subsequent collapse of the Communists in 1975.

Many places and names in Vietnam remain the same, but thanks to magic and different tactics the outcome differs.

## Using Funny New Guys as a One Shot Adventure

Players looking for an introduction to *Technomancer* will find a friend in *Funny New Guys*. Flying carpets, fireballs, teleportation, and magical engines first gained acceptance in the combat laboratory that was Vietnam. The world of high adventure and magic was less than 20 years old. The first chimeras had just reached military draft age. Military tactics had just started to incorporate magic. Using Vietnam, GMs can slowly introduce concepts that are often taken for granted in a “modern-day” *Technomancer* setting.

*Funny New Guys* also gives the players a chance to pit high magic against heavy firepower. Interesting situations develop when a powerful mage is on the business end of a mortar attack or a machine gun. By the same token, the Viet Cong have problems with flesh and plastic golems wandering their tunnels looking for blood.

## Using Funny New Guys as a Campaign

Everything needed to create an ongoing campaign is in this book. Plenty of interesting roleplaying opportunities exist. A combat squad develops a special bond that a GM can foster. Additionally, players might want to explore the moral and emotional toll that war can take on an individual. The daily grind of avoiding ambushes and killing the enemy can create plenty of hours of thoughtful play.

Issues of prejudice can also surface in a *Funny New Guys* campaign. Vietnam was the first war that tested the Defense Department's policy of racially integrated combat forces – including chimeras. When black and white soldiers try to adjust to living and working together with magical creatures, the formation of an efficient combat team can be difficult.

For less cerebral adventures, *Funny New Guys* allows plenty of chances for combat and blowing things up. A firefight can happen any time for a combat soldier in Vietnam. Fearless communists often launched ambushes on allied patrols and conducted hit and run raids on fire bases. Soldiers typically spend their time reacting to enemy aggression instead of taking the fight to the enemy. However, this does not mean the enemy is never engaged.



## WHAT YOU WILL NEED

*Funny New Guys* requires a few more resources than a typical *GURPS* sourcebook. The following items should be on-hand for background and reference with this adventure. The first four are required reading.

***GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition:*** The core rules.

***GURPS Compendium I:*** Players looking for detailed rules for character creation can look here.

***GURPS Magic:*** Necessary for understanding the mechanics of the magic system and full descriptions of the spells in the *Technomancer* world.

***GURPS Technomancer:*** The book that spawned this adventure and an introduction to *Technomancer* canon. Of particular interest will be the history and rules for chimera players.

Those looking for further background can consult the following books:

***GURPS High-Tech:*** Rules and information on the weapons and equipment players will need to wander Vietnam's jungles.

***GURPS Grimoire:*** More advanced magic rules and additional spells.

***GURPS Special Ops:*** Discussion of the elite units that fought in Vietnam, weapons used by covert forces, and opposing forces including a typical Viet Cong troop.

Many local commanders set up special combat teams specifically to attack. Snipers and "recon" teams were trained for aggressive action against the Viet Cong. These characters should satisfy even the most bloodthirsty players.

Finally, people playing *Funny New Guys* should not worry about character survival. If a player loses a character in combat the campaign does not have to grind to a halt. The player simply generates a new character to portray his replacement fresh from the states. This mimics the nature of the fighting in Vietnam where the only constant was the war. The men who fought it changed daily.

# 2. Rumors and Realities of War

## Going to Vietnam

Soldiers arrived in Vietnam for a variety of reasons. Some were career military people doing their job. Others were enthusiastic volunteers seeking adventure and a chance to fight communism. Still others were conscripts wanting only to come home alive. Each of these groups was caught up in the conflict in Southeast Asia and, while despite their different reasons for fighting, all went through similar training. This section helps PCs generate and equip characters and provides background for how they fit in the game world.

### Draft Figures for Vietnam

According to the Selective Service, over 1.7 million people were drafted between 1964 and when the draft was repealed in 1973. According to the 1960 census, roughly 20 percent of the population was changelings. Of that two percent were mages with no congenital defects. Not counting volunteers, this means some 340,000 changelings and mages served in the armed forces during Vietnam. Here is a break down of actual draft figures during the war.

1964 – 112,386  
1965 – 230,991  
1966 – 382,010  
1967 – 228,263  
1968 – 296,406  
1969 – 283,586  
1970 – 162,746  
1971 – 94,092  
1972 – 49,514  
1973 – 646

1974 – Draft ended. The military becomes a volunteer force.

## The Draft and Classification

### The Draft

The military draft during the 1960s was managed by local draft boards composed of prominent community members. They received guidelines from the federal government detailing how many people were needed and then selected eligible candidates from recent high school graduates. By law, every male between the ages of 18 and 25 registered, so the process involved sorting through all the records and picking people to join. This sounds simple, but it required a complex calculus to insure that favoritism or patronage didn't influence the draft. The drafting of Elvis Presley is an example of how this system worked. The rock singer put his career on hold while completing his tour of duty.

In an effort to make the draft selection process fairer, a lottery was instituted. The birthdays of the year were mixed in a barrel and the numbers 1 to 365 were mixed in another. A birthday would be drawn from a barrel and matched with a number from the other barrel. If your birthday and the number 20 were drawn, you were among the twentieth group of people between the age of 19 and 20 to get drafted. A low number guarantee a person would be drafted, while a number above 200 meant a person could make other plans. The lottery was a grim spectacle, and between 1968 and 1973 television carried it live.

A draftee had 60 days to report for duty once he received notice from the local draft board. Often he couldn't choose his service and was given an assignment in a low-skill position. Marine and Army draftees wound up in the infantry, while sailors mopped decks and airmen did clerical work. Draftees were "processed" at central locations in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. If the draftee was suitable for service, he was shipped off to basic training. If he failed the testing because of a physical ailment, he



was sent back home with a designation 4-F: unsuitable for service. Terms of service lasted as little as two years and as long as four depending on the circumstances. Once the term expired, the draftee could re-enlist in the armed forces or return to civilian life with all the benefits that come from being a veteran.

## Enlisting

Young men with a strong sense of duty or a desire for adventure often enlisted in the armed forces. Many reasons for joining the military are the same as today. Enlistees chose their branch of military service, what type of training they would receive, and how long their hitch was. Often, young men would enlist to avoid the draft and the loss of those choices. Enlistment lasted anywhere from two to five years. After the term ended, the soldier could re-enlist or return to civilian life

## Civilians and Volunteers

Volunteers poured into Vietnam once the war effort started. Many belonged to the USO and Red Cross. The Red Cross women, known affectionately as “Doughnut Dollies,” served food and traveled from fire base to fire base providing company for the troops. Civilians working for the CIA, Agriculture

Department, and Health Department also worked in Vietnam to help improve the “infrastructure” of South Vietnam. Civilians from private companies also spent time in Vietnam making sure that business continued in the middle of the war zone.

## Mages and Chimeras in the Army

The number of chimeras becoming draft age created a special problem for the draft boards of the early 1960s. Ignoring them would create resentment, but the army didn’t know how to train the draftees once they were selected. These first draftees went through training with the other troops and then given barracks duty in the United States. These early chimeras were quickly transitioned to Project Griffin to test the validity of magical combat units.

Once chimeras proved effective in combat, all male chimeras were allowed into any occupational specialty in the service. Pentagon and Presidential policy mandated that there would be no racial discrimination in the ranks. Chimeras were considered no different than Asian- and African-Americans to the armed forces. By 1965, the time of major escalation in Vietnam, chimeras formed a significant part of the regular army.

## Project Griffin

The implied superiority of Soviet magery after 1960’s U2 incident put Kennedy into office by a narrow margin in 1961. Communist leader Nikita Khrushchev’s threat to sponsor all “national wars of liberation” further aggravated the relations between two countries. The young president ordered his staff to investigate ways to counter these threats. This initiative created the Navy SEALs and Army Green Berets, and also began Project Griffin.

The top secret program originated as a series of research papers compiled by Major Henry Blaylock at the Army Staff college, and quickly made their way up the chain of command to the president. After Blaylock’s graduation, he was promoted and put in charge of the covert project, codenamed Griffin, which studied the feasibility of chimera troops and the integration of magic into the Army order of battle. The only trouble with the project was that the chimeras

born in the United States were not old enough to serve in the Army. Making matters worse, no serious testing program could determine if someone had magical ability. Faced with these challenges, Blaylock put together guidelines for testing magical aptitude.

The now famous spell gap speech (p. 23), combined with chimeras becoming draft age in 1962, kicked Project Griffin into high gear. Blaylock concluded that integrated units of mages and chimeras on the battlefield could succeed. These units, aided by magical items like wands of protection, flying carpets, and wizard eyeglasses, could make a significant difference. With this information, Blaylock recommended the creation of a detachment of one regiment to practice combat magic and integrate chimeras into the army. That unit became known as 502nd Infantry Regiment, the 101st Spellborne division.

# Training

Every soldier who fought in Vietnam received a great deal of training in modern warfare. They shot accurately, performed first aid on injured comrades, and followed orders. During Vietnam, this training process was complicated by conscripts entering and leaving the service at a regular rate, and a “rotation” system that prevented soldiers from spending more than 13 months in Vietnam at any given stretch.

In *GURPS*, character templates represent a soldier’s training. These templates, with the exception of Basic Training, are optional guidelines that help speed up character design. Character templates have no point discount and should be used as *suggestions* on how to design a character. All technical skills are TL 7

## Advanced Infantry Training

13 points

Completed by many infantry soldiers before going to Vietnam, this character template reflects the skills required in order to graduate from training.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** Military Rank 0 [0].

**Skills:** Guns: Shotgun or Pistol (P/E) DX [1]; Guns: Light Assault Rifle (P/E) DX+2 [3]; Sign Language (Military) (M/A) IQ [2]; Fast-Draw: Magazine (P/E) DX [1]; Throwing: Grenade (P/H) DX-1 [2]; Orienteering (M/A) IQ [2]; Spear: Bayonet on Rifle (P/A) DX [2].

## Artillery 32 points

These big guns dish out the heavy firepower. The troops working in artillery spent most of their time confined to fire bases, but at a moment’s notice they manned their guns to help out the grunts in the field.

**Attributes:** ST 11 [10]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** 3 levels Extra Fatigue [9].

**Skills:** Gunner: Howitzer (P/A) DX+1 [4] or Gunner: Heavy Mortar (P/A) DX+1 [4]; Forward Observer (M/A) IQ [2]; Cartography (M/A) IQ [2]; Camouflage: Specialty Gun (M/E) IQ+5 [1].

## Basic Training 5 points

Every soldier in the armed forces remembers basic training. Basic training covers the fundamentals that every fighter needs to understand before entering combat. It also provides a chance for the

military to teach the customs and traditions of being a soldier, instill discipline in the new recruit, and get them physically fit. Any soldier should have the following character template.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 11 [10].

**Advantages:** Military Rank 0 [0].

**Disadvantages:** Duty: Military Service (Employer 12 or less) [-10].

**Skills:** Savoir-Faire (Military) (M/E) IQ [1]; Guns: Light Assault Rifle (P/E) DX [1]; First-Aid (M/E) IQ [1]; Running (P/H, HT) HT-1 [2].

## Corpsman 14 points

Where combat takes place, soldiers will get wounded. A Corpsman travels with soldiers to keep them alive until they can be evacuated to better medical facilities.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** Military Rank Level 1 [5].

**Disadvantages:** Sense of Duty: Help Wounded [-10].

**Skills:** Guns: Pistol (P/E) DX [1]; Sign Language (Military) (M/A) IQ [2]; Throwing: Grenade (P/H) DX-1 [2]; First Aid (M/E) IQ+4 [8]; Physician (M/H) IQ-1 [2]; Diagnosis (M/H) IQ [4].

## Doctor 63 points

Two types of doctors served in Vietnam. Some doctors stayed in the rear areas with the luxuries of modern equipment and clean surroundings, while others worked in the field triaging casualties and keeping people alive until they could be evacuated to hospital ships or the major hospitals in Saigon. This template reflects those doctors in the field who got their uniforms dirty.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** Military Rank Level 3 [15]; +2 Reputation among all soldiers [5].

**Disadvantages:** Sense of Duty: Help Wounded [-10].

**Skills:** Guns: Pistol (P/E) DX [1]; First-Aid (M/E) IQ+4 [8]; Physician (M/H) IQ+3 [10]; Diagnosis (M/H) IQ [4]; Pharmacy (M/H) IQ [4]; Surgery (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]; Triage (M/A) IQ [2].

## Engineer 15 points

During war, structures often need to be built or blown up. Engineers are tasked to do both and do it while being shot at by the enemy.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

**Skills:** Guns: Pistol (P/E) DX [1]; Sign Language (Military) (M/A) IQ [2]; Throwing: Grenade (P/H) DX-1 [2]; Engineer: Construction (M/H) IQ+1 [6]; Driving: Construction Equipment (P/H) DX [2]; Demolition (M/A) IQ [2].

## EOD 58 points

One of every ten bombs dropped does not explode. This is a problem, especially when an army plans to advance across an area which has just been bombed. The EOD or Explosives Ordinance Disposal troops have the job of disabling these weapons so that others do not die by an unintended explosion. They also have the jobs of disarming booby traps and acting as impromptu demolitions experts when the situation warranted.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 11 [10]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** Strong Will +2 [8], Common Sense [10].

**Disadvantages:** Careful [-1].

**Skills:** Black Powder Explosives (P/A) DX [2]; Chemistry (M/H) IQ-1 [2]; Demolition (M/A) IQ+3 [8]; Electronics (M/A) IQ [2]; Guns: Pistol or Shotgun or SMG (P/E) DX [1]; Improvised Explosives (P/A) DX [2]; Traps (M/A) IQ+1 [4].

## Grenadier 20 points

These individuals reflect the heavy-weapon troops found in every squad. They receive additional training and can be counted on to provide extra fire-power when necessary.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** 2 levels Extra Fatigue [6].

**Skills:** Gunner: Light Machine Gun (P/A) DX+1 [4], or Gunner: Grenade Launcher (P/A) DX+1 [4]; Sign Language (Military) (M/A) IQ [2]; Throwing: Grenade (P/H) DX-1 [2]; Orienteering (M/A) IQ [2].

## Mechanic 7 points

An army is only as good as the people keeping it moving. A good mechanic is worth his weight in gold and a valuable member of any army.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

**Skills:** Mechanic (M/A) IQ [4] with a specialty in one of the following three areas: Helicopter, Tank,

or Small Vehicle maintenance; Armoury (M/A) IQ [2]; Scrounging (M/E) IQ [1].

## Mortar Man 39 points

Sometimes long-range artillery is not possible, so soldiers count on portable mortars to provide fire support during combat. These troops spend most of their time lugging around their heavy equipment and are ready to fire at any time.

**Attributes:** ST 12 [20]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** Fit [5].

**Skills:** Gunner: Mortar (P/A) DX+1 [4]; Sign Language (Military) (M/A) IQ [2]; Throwing: Grenade (P/H) DX-1 [2]; Orienteering (M/A) IQ [2]; Forward Observer (M/A) IQ [2]; Cartography (M/A) IQ [2].

## NCO 27 points

Noncommissioned officers are people who get their hands dirty during combat. They are the sergeants who make the officers' orders a reality and who enforce order in the ranks. Since inexperienced lieutenants had a short life expectancy in Vietnam, it was often up to the sergeants to take charge.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** Military Rank Level 1 [5]; Reputation: +1 among enlisted people [2]; Composed [5].

**Skills:** Guns: Pistol (P/E) DX+1 [2]; Leadership (M/A) IQ [2]; Tactics (M/H) IQ [4]; Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ [2]; Intimidation (M/A) IQ [2]; Camouflage (M/E) IQ [1]; Detect Lies (M/H) IQ-1 [2].

## Nurse 41 points

Many women serving in Vietnam were nurses or Red Cross volunteers. This template reflects the nurses that served on medical fire bases outside of Saigon and Da Nang. While they did not see much combat, they suffered through numerous artillery bombardments and took care of the dead and wounded they saw daily.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** Military Rank Level 3 [15]; +2 Reputation among all soldiers [5].

**Skills:** Guns: Pistol (P/E) DX [1]; First Aid (M/E) IQ+4 [8]; Physician (M/H) IQ [4]; Diagnosis (M/H) IQ [4]; Pharmacy (M/H) IQ [4].

## Officer 35 points

Officers came in all sorts of shapes and sizes in Vietnam. Some were crass careerists “punching their ticket” before returning to the states for promotion, while others inspired loyalty and sacrifice in their troops thanks to strong leadership. Different types of mental disadvantages reflect the differences. This template reflects all the skills that most officers had in the field. A rookie lieutenant will have just these skills while a more seasoned officer will have more.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** Military Rank Level 3 [15] or better.

**Skills:** Guns: Pistol (P/E) DX+2 [3]; Leadership (M/A) IQ-1 [1]; Tactics (M/H) IQ [4]; Camouflage (M/E) IQ [1]; Administration (M/A) IQ+2 [6]; Detect Lies (M/H) IQ-1 [2]; First Aid (M/E) IQ [1]; Orienteering (M/A) IQ [2].

## Pilots 31 points

Vietnam placed a strong emphasis on “air mobility.” Troops traveled by helicopter and magic carpet instead of on foot or by truck. This meant that pilots became more common and necessary for the operation of the army. This template reflects the two main types of pilots that infantry had contact with: the helicopter pilot and the rug pilot.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** Military Rank Level 3 [15].

**Skills:** Guns: Pistol (P/E) DX+1 [2]; Leadership (M/A) IQ [2]; Piloting: Helicopter (P/A) DX +1 [4] or Piloting: Rug (P/A) DX+1 [4]; SIGNIT Collection IQ-1 (M/H) [2]; Survival: Jungle IQ (M/A) IQ [2]; Gunner: Light Machine Gun (P/A) DX [2]; Gunner: Unguided Missiles (P/A) DX [2].

## Quartermaster 16 points

Troops do more than just fight. Someone needs to deliver the mail, feed the troops, and keep the ammunition coming. These logistical troops supply the sinews of war.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 11 [10]; HT 10 [0].

**Disadvantages:** Reputation -1 among combat troops [-2].

**Skills:** Administration (M/A) IQ [2]; Cooking (M/E) IQ+1 [2] or Armoury (M/A) IQ [2] or Mechanic (M/A) IQ [2]; Scrounging (M/E) IQ+2 [4].

## Tanker 12 points

Vietnam was not the classic “tank battlefield” of the 20th century, but tanks still played an important role in the Central Highlands and as improvised howitzers for fire bases. This template represents the basic skills of a typical tank crewman in Vietnam.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

**Skills:** Guns: Pistol (P/E) DX [1]; Sign Language (Military) (M/A) IQ [2]; Gunner: Large Bore Tank Gun (P/A) DX [2]; Gunner: Large Caliber Machine Gun (P/A) DX [2]; Driving: Tank (P/A) DX [2]; Mechanic (M/A) IQ [2]; Camouflage: Specialty Tank IQ+5 [1].

## Special Forces Training

Steve Jackson Games has already produced a fine book on Special Forces training and troops entitled *GURPS Special Ops*. It is not necessary to duplicate that information in this adventure. However, two new Special Forces troops exist in a *Funny New Guys* campaign of which players and GMs should be aware. The first is the 13th Necromantic Operations Group, magical troops roaming the countryside bringing terror to the communists. The other is a more traditional military unit known as the 101st Spellborne Division.

## 13th Necromantic Operations Group “Black Berets” 171 or 197 points

Disliked by much of the “regular army,” the 13th Necromantic Operations group began as a research paper at the Army staff college in the late 1950s and grew to a regiment-sized Special Forces unit who push the limits of magic and military doctrine. These troops served with distinction and controversy in Vietnam until disbanded in 1974.

**Attributes:** ST 12 [20]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 11 [10]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** Magery [15]; Reputation among Viet Cong and North Vietnamese +2 [4]; Fit [5]; One Level of Hard to Kill [5]; Military Rank Level 1 [5] or better.

**Disadvantages:** Poor Reputation among regular army (freaks and necrophiles) -2 [-4]; Sense of Duty: to Fellow 13th NOG troops [-10]; Odious

Personal Habit: Likes to Socialize only with fellow NOG troops [-10].

**Skills:** Administration (M/A) IQ [2]; Armoury (M/A) IQ [2]; Brawling (P/E) DX+3 [8]; Camouflage (M/E) IQ+1 [2]; Climbing (P/A) DX [2]; Demolition (M/A) IQ [2]; Driving: Wheeled Vehicle (P/A) DX [2]; Driving: Tracked Vehicle (P/A) DX [2]; Electronics Operations (M/A) IQ [2]; Engineer (M/H) IQ-1 [2]; First Aid (M/E) IQ+2 [4]; Forward Observer (M/A) IQ [2]; Guns: Anti-Tank Weapons (P/E) DX [1]; Guns: Assault Rifle (P/E) DX+3 [8]; Guns: Grenade Launcher (P/E) DX+1 [2]; Guns: Machine Gun (P/E) DX+1 [2]; Guns: Pistol (P/E) DX+1 [2]; Guns: Sniper Rifle (P/E) DX+1 [2]; Intelligence Analysis (M/A) IQ [2]; Interrogation (M/A) IQ+1 [4]; Jumping (P/E) DX [1]; Knife (P/E) DX+1 [2]; Leadership (M/A) IQ+1 [4]; Necromantic Biological and Chemical Warfare (M/A) IQ [2]; No-Landing Extraction (P/A) DX[2]; Orienteering (M/A) IQ+3 [8]; Parachuting (P/E) DX+1 [2]; Spear: Bayonet on Rifle (P/A) DX [2]; Stealth (P/A) DX+1 [4]; Survival: Jungle (M/A) IQ+1 [4]; Swimming (P/E) DX+1 [2]; Tactics (M/H) IQ [4]; Thrown Weapon: Grenade (P/E) DX+2 [4]; Traps (M/A) IQ+1 [4]

#### **Spells:**

All operatives have the following spell package – 21 points.

Lend Health (M/H) IQ [4]; Sense Life (M/H) IQ [4]; Sense Foes (M/H) IQ [4]; Sense Emotion (M/H) IQ [4]; Truthsayer (M/H) IQ [4]; Spell Throwing (P/E) DX [1].

All operatives after 1966 have the following additional spells – 26 points.

Magery Level 2 [10]; Death Vision (M/H) IQ-1 [2]; Summon Sprit (M/H) IQ-1 [2]; Zombie (M/H) IQ [4]; Control Zombie (M/H) IQ [4]; Lean Health (M/H) IQ [4].

## **101st Spellborne Division 83 points**

Nicknamed “Eagle’s Claws,” the 101st began the 1960s as a light infantry paratrooper division. By the end of the war, the division fully integrated high magic with modern firepower. Each trooper used magic items or modern firearms, and some used both. The division had better relations with the “regular army,” but was still viewed as an oddity. While considered “Airborne” troops, these soldiers did not

wear the maroon beret of Paratroops, but adopted the headgear of regular soldiers.

**Attributes:** ST 11 [10]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 11 [10]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** Fit [5].

**Disadvantages:** Poor Reputation among regular army “oddballs” -1 [-2].

**Skills:** Armoury (M/A) IQ-1 [1]; Brawling (P/E) DX+3 [8]; Camouflage (M/E) IQ+1 [2]; First Aid (M/E) IQ [1]; Guns: Anti-Tank Weapons (P/E) DX [1]; Guns: Assault Rifle (P/E) DX+3 [8]; Guns: Grenade Launcher (P/E) DX+1 [2]; Guns: Machine Gun (P/E) DX+1 [2]; Jumping (P/E) DX [1]; Knife (P/E) DX+1 [2]; Orienteering (M/A) IQ [2]; Parachuting (P/E) DX+1 [2]; Savoir-Faire (Military) (M/E) [1]; Spear: Bayonet on Rifle (P/A) DX [2]; Stealth (P/A) DX+1 [4]; Tactics (M/H) IQ [4]; Thrown Weapon: Grenade (P/E) DX+2 [4]; Traps (M/A) IQ [2]; Spell Throwing (P/E) DX [1].

## **On the Job Training**

Troops in the field commonly took up new skills and cross-trained. The military encouraged this practice. Since much of the fighting in Vietnam was so different from the combat for which many of the troops trained, many skills were learned after entering “Indian Country.” These templates are only offered to characters in the country for at least six months.

### **Sniper and Pathfinder 48 points**

These professionals acted as “point-men” and snipers for units on a regular basis. Usually, they were volunteers who were not killed right away, or expert shots impressed into service by company or battalion commanders. These soldiers were commonly sent out in one- or two-man missions to kill enemy commanders.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

**Advantages:** +2 Reputation among all soldiers [5].

**Disadvantages:** Loner [-5].

**Skills:** Guns: Assault Rifle (P/E) DX+3 [8]; Guns: Sniper Rifle (P/E) DX+4 [16]; Tracking (M/A) IQ+2 [6]; Stealth (P/A) DX+2 [8]; Camouflage (M/E) IQ+2 [4]; Survival: Jungle (M/A) IQ+2 [6].

# A Brief History of the 13th Necromantic Operations Group

Vietnam changed the rules of warfare in the 20th century. Conventional doctrines like movement and firepower were replaced by propaganda and harassing the enemy on the battlefield to overwhelm him. For officers who fought in World War II, it was a frustrating experience. As the war dragged, it became obvious that the war was not going to be won conventionally, and pressure began to build to either win or get out. This was when the doctrine of spell supremacy came into being.

Major Arthur “Black Death” Guftison first proposed the idea after returning to Washington from a tour of duty in Vietnam. Guftison was an early member of the 1st Necromantic Operations Detachment and his experiences had inspired a dark vision. The communists used every tactic they could to terrorize the local population. Something needed to be done to terrorize the VC. The major had worked with the 1st NOG as a liaison with conventional units and as an intelligence officer. Since many of the VC were indoctrinated at an early age and genuinely believed that they were fighting the good fight against the Americans, something was needed to shake up their worldview.

Shortly before Nixon took over the war effort, the 1st NOD was used as shock troops and as a commando force. Spellcasting was mostly used for communications spells and finding the enemy. The army, noting the effectiveness of the 1st NOD, authorized its increase to regiment-size and renamed it the 13th Necromantic Operations Group. Guftison felt that the 13th NOG needed to perform a more sinister duty. The “hells rangers” would conduct more “black” operations using magic to create illusions, engineer gruesome and painful ways to kill the enemy, interrogate prisoners, and most controversially, reanimate the dead to fight instead of American GIs. This brief was submitted to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on June 1966, and by October, the first “Z companies” were being raised from enemy dead in

Vietnam. Guftison received a promotion and command of one of the first units.

The “Z companies” terrified the VC and the North Vietnamese army. The shambling troops at first only carried bayonets and machetes. Later, the undead troops were given primitive rifles. Zombies could take numerous hits from rifle fire and still advance because they were already dead and possessed no fear. During the fighting of Lam Som 769, a “Z company” was overrun by a North Vietnamese tank battalion. The zombies and their controller were destroyed to the last man but the action tied up the tanks long enough for South Vietnamese dragons to come and exact revenge. Enemy troops became frightened of death because they didn’t want to be found by the Americans and transformed into Zombies. It had a crushing effect on morale and slowly began to break the communist will to fight.

Spells defeated the enemy in other ways. Strange patches of fog would conceal troop movements. VC and NVA officers would have terrible dreams with illusions concocted by the CIA. Illusions and telepathy routinely tortured prisoners. Finally, special six-man teams, known as spooks, infiltrated the military staff of the North Vietnamese army using invisibility and shape-changing spells. By the end of the war, magic could do what guns, tanks, and bombs could not – destroy the will of the communists and win the war in Vietnam.

At the war’s end, Guftison was promoted to General by a grateful Nixon and became the commander of the 13<sup>th</sup> NOG until revelations of the “Z companies” became public in 1974 and the unit was disbanded. The officer retired to his family home in Kansas where he contracted ambulatory necrotic plague in 1979. The FBI spent two years searching for him before destroying his zombie form in 1981. The Major had poetically suffered the same fate of many of the undead he commanded.

## Translator 10 points

Some soldiers developed a natural affinity for the Vietnamese language. They became important assets to the army by aiding in interrogations and intelligence gathering.

**Attributes:** ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 10 [0].

**Skills:** Language: Vietnamese (M/H) IQ [4]; Hidden Lore: Vietnamese Customs (M/H) IQ [4]; Interrogation (M/A) IQ [2].

# Processing

At the height of the Vietnam War, over a quarter million troops were in the field with over fifty thousand coming and going to the combat zone at any time. To handle this logistical nightmare, all troops going to Vietnam were “processed.” This procedure made sure that troops were accounted for coming and going into the country. All troops were given health exams to make sure that they did not have venereal disease, or other illnesses that would prevent them from fighting. The military collected next of kin information and provided a final orientation of the dos and don’ts of being in Vietnam. Once processing was completed, troops were flown to Los Angeles and then to Hawaii for the final leg of their journey to Vietnam. Once in Hawaii, troops went through another round of processing and then were sent via plane to Okinawa for the final journey to either Saigon or Da Nang

## Arrival in Vietnam

Saigon was the clearinghouse for many troops that fought in the delta river valleys of the South. Da Nang was the destination for troops fighting near the demilitarized zone in the North. The troops would disembark from the planes and go through another round of medical tests. They would also visit the local quartermaster to sign for a weapon.

At this point, a soldier spent time having a hot meal or waiting. Many troops that came to Vietnam did not know where they were going to be assigned. A soldier knew which division they were fighting with, but specific unit assignments were difficult to discover. This was a typical situation because incoming troops were often replacing battlefield casualties or troops being rotated home. A clerk at the division headquarters would determine who had lost the most

troops the previous week and then assign the troops presently being processed to fill those gaps. An officer would sign off on the decision and the soldier was sent out to the field to report to duty.

## Unit Assignment

Soldiers were either trucked or flown to their units to replace people ending their tour of duty or being sent home for burial. Many trucks and buses in Vietnam were covered with chicken wire to prevent angry locals or VC from throwing grenades into vehicles. In the early years of the conflict, troops would drive about the countryside without fear of a direct attack. During the Tet offensive, communists attacked the airports as troops arrived, forcing the newly processed soldiers into fighting. By the end of the war, moving replacements to the front was a dangerous routine where the safety of the troops depended on the cooperation of the enemy.

A new replacement was often sent to a regimental or battalion headquarters just beyond the “main action.” Usually, they would speak to a duty sergeant and a personnel officer who would take the orders from Saigon or Da Nang and then assign the soldier to a particular combat unit. The headquarters troops processed the information and reminded the new soldiers that they would be in Vietnam for 13 months unless they were wounded or killed. From there, the new replacements would receive orders to report to a particular company commander or officer for mustering and final assignment to the unit which would be their home for the duration.

## Mustering

The final step in the process of getting to Vietnam was called “Mustering.” A soldier is driven or flown from headquarters to their assignment. Many troops in Vietnam served on fire bases, but some went to field hospitals, air fields, and to work in villages and cities. Once there, a soldier reported to the commanding officer to turn over their orders from headquarters.

Usually, the commanding officer was busy running his unit, so the duty often fell to the company first sergeant or the executive officer. From there, the replacement was given a brief tour of base, and then turned over to his unit. In as little as 48 hours, a soldier went from the comfort of the United States to the jungles of Vietnam. They became Funny New Guys – counting the days before they return home.

# Vietnam and the World of Technomancer

Vietnam was the first example of asymmetrical warfare. The American army had more firepower but the Vietnamese were determined to win at any cost. Willing to accept losses no western army would stomach, the Vietnamese eventually won the war. In the world of *Technomancer*, the American government inflicted a level of violence on the communists that eventually broke them. The history of Vietnam remained the same as it was before the Trinity event, but with the forces of magic unleashed, the war in Indochina became more vicious and weird.

## The French Period

American involvement in Vietnam traced directly to efforts by France to establish a worldwide network of colonies. England had numerous colonies, from India and Hong Kong in the east to Canada and the Caribbean to the west. In order for France to remain a world power, it became vital for it to found and settle colonies. The raw materials could support the growth of industry, while extending the reach of the French people and the influence of the Catholic Church. The kingdoms of Vietnam became a natural choice.

French missionaries were active in the country as early as 1627. Alexandre de Rhodes made the first translations of the Vietnamese language to a western alphabet. The missionaries not only taught the local natives to read and write but also spread the influence of the church. Though this influence antagonized the Vietnamese rulers – mostly landlords and the nobility – they owed a grudging allegiance. Despite tensions, the missionaries were allowed to stay in the region.

By 1772, social and political events took place that forced the French into a more aggressive approach in the region. A protracted civil war, which divided the country for two centuries, overthrew the most powerful clan in Vietnam, the Nguyen. Nguyen Anh, a member of that clan and pretender to the Vietnamese throne, made repeated diplomatic efforts to gain French assistance. His efforts were thwarted

by revolution in France and political intrigue at home. Finally, with the help of French missionaries, Nguyen Anh became the emperor of Vietnam and changed his name to Gia Long in 1802. Vietnam's destiny was now tied with France for the next 150 years.

In the aftermath of the Opium Wars, the French fleet made Vietnam its permanent port of call in 1843. The nation's rubber, lumber, and opium helped support the French economy. The new colony was rife with trouble for the French. The local landowners were insubordinate to the French, and relations strained as more native Vietnamese converted to Christianity. Finally, the local mandarins revolted against the French in the city of Da Nang, and the first battle of Vietnam took place. Amid the unrest, Tu Duc became the new emperor of Vietnam in 1847. Duc was a cranky and difficult person who hated Catholics. His harsh rule became a pretext for further French military involvement in Vietnam.

French troops invaded the city of Saigon in 1861. The following year emperor Duc was forced to sign a treaty with the invaders granting them broad religious, economic, and political freedom. France became the *de facto* ruler of Vietnam. Over the next 40 years, France extended its reach into other areas of Indochina. By the turn of the century, the nations that became Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam were all united into one colony under French rule.

Ho Chi Minh was born in French-controlled Vietnam in an area known as the central highlands. Ho was a bright student and wanted to become a lawyer. Since there wasn't any formal law education in Vietnam, Ho left the country and traveled to France. Like many other communists, Ho quickly fell into the leftist movements of Western Europe. While Ho and many other future revolutionaries were getting educated in France, political events swept Europe into World War I. Facing a manpower shortage, France mobilized labor battalions of Vietnamese troops to aid the war effort in Europe. Ho, convinced that these "native people" deserved independence just like the other subject nations of Europe, petitioned President Woodrow Wilson to ask for Vietnam's independence. His petition was politely ignored. France would continue to rule Vietnam. This final rebuff convinced Ho to join the French communist party in 1920.

Ho continued to gather support for his cause in Europe and in Asia for the next 20 years. He became an agent for the Soviet Union and helped form the fledgling Indochinese communist party. The young



# What Is a Funny New Guy?

The troops referred to life and death in Vietnam as being in “Indian Country” while back home was “the world.” Considering that many soldiers had never experienced tropical conditions or fought in a jungle, this description accurately represented the perception of the ordinary grunt. This alien world did have rules besides “kill or be killed.” The life of a combat solider jumped from boredom to terror in a matter of seconds. During down time, a combat solider fit into a pecking order and had to complete chores. The jobs depended on where they were stationed and how long they were in the country.

## Funny New Guys

Once in Vietnam, a new solider was often called a FNG or “Funny New Guy.” These green troops often learned by trial and error how to survive in the jungle. They also didn’t earn the respect, trust, and friendship of fellow troops until they survived a couple weeks in the jungle. The highest rates of causality in Vietnam came from this group of soldiers. New guys often spent time doing jobs that the more seasoned troops felt were beneath them. Numerous latrines were cleaned and extra packs of ammo carried by Funny New Guys. This treatment usually ceased after a solider endured his first firefight or a new batch of replacements arrived from the states.

## Short Timers

If you survived the first eight weeks of your tour, you were referred to as a Short Timer. Troops with this much experience knew the basics of getting out of trouble in the jungle and could count on themselves and others in fire-fight. The learning curve in Vietnam was steep. A simple error in judgment or missed opportunity on patrol meant death. This makes short-timers the backbone of the troops in the field.

Often the Funny New Guys went through a hazing process after surviving combat or reaching their second month. The troops in the Special Forces often gave bloodied troops a combat knife with the Special Forces logo

while members of the 101st liked to give impromptu baths with fire buckets. Short Timers in the 13th NOG received a piece of amber with a leather thong for good luck. All 13th NOG Operatives wore the decoration through a buttonhole on their uniform, hoping luck would follow them around.

## Old Hands

Troops who had served more than one tour of duty in Vietnam were collectively known as Old Hands. Often, the military granted promotions in exchange for an additional tour of duty. Among the sergeant and officer ranks, Old Hands were highly respected. Some Old Hands were jaded by their war experiences, tending to be nihilistic about their duties, while others wanted to share the lessons they learned on the battlefield with their troops. Special Forces troops also volunteered for multiple tours. Once he left Vietnam, a solider received a tour back to the states for as little as six months before rotating back into combat.

## Homecoming Queens

The standard tour of duty in Vietnam lasted 13 months. At the end of that period, troops either rotated back to the states for discharge or other duty in Asia. People close to the end of their tour were called “Homecoming Queens.” These troops were overly cautious because they didn’t want to get killed during their last few weeks of duty. This created resentment as Old Hands had to take up the slack for both the FNGs who could get people killed and Homecoming Queens who had incentive not to fight.

This scheme looked good on paper to the officials at the Pentagon because it avoided long deployments in the field. Additionally, it rotated officers and enlisted men in Vietnam to spread out the combat experience. In reality, once a soldier became capable of fighting in the jungle and had the skills to fight the enemy, they were sent home often never to return.

*(Continued on the next page . . .)*

## FUNNY NEW GUY? (CONT.) Officers

Unlike the enlisted people serving in Vietnam, officers only served a six-month hitch. The rationale, according to the Pentagon, was to provide more officers a chance at combat experience. The line troops knew differently and resented the special treatment. Combat experience also meant faster promotion so officers clamored for the experience to “get their ticket punched,” so they could advance. This “ticket punching” created even more resentment, as officers spending less time in the field were making life and death decisions over seasoned troops.

Many officers seeing the kind of conflict this situation created in the ranks often volunteered to serve another six months and rotate out with their troops. This meant the quality of officers in the field fluctuated widely from inexperienced desk jockeys “getting their ticket punched” to experienced combat leaders who could inspire others in the most dire situations.

revolutionary was still afraid to return to his native land because French officials were becoming more ruthless in their repression of nationalist leaders. It would take a miracle to remove the French from power. Instead, World War II happened and the Japanese conquered the French in Vietnam.

Japan and its militarist government had been fighting in Asia since the invasion of Manchuria in 1934, but as World War II gained momentum, the Japanese found themselves in charge of large areas on conquered Asian territory. In Vietnam, an overwhelming Japanese force defeated the French in 1940. Instead of trying to consolidate their gains, the Japanese concentrated on extending their military control of the region. Faced with this logistical and political problem, the Japanese allowed French authorities loyal to the Vichy government to continue running Vietnam. Instead of answering to Paris, the generals and wealthy landowners of the region now answered to Tokyo.

The French military defeat gave hope to Ho and other Vietnamese nationalists who witnessed the defeat of a European army by an Asian nation. However, the collaboration between Vietnam’s

French colonial authorities and the Japanese made the prospects of a free and independent Vietnam more remote. The Japanese slogan “Asia for Asiatics,” became a hollow promise as French governors continued with business as usual while Japan overran the continent.

Smuggling himself into Vietnam, Ho created the “Vietminh.” The Vietminh became a political organization and an army dedicated to removing the French from Vietnam and establishing a free and independent nation. Supplied and trained by both the communist Chinese and the American OSS forces in the region, the Vietminh made life difficult for the Japanese in Vietnam. As the war continued, the Vietminh disrupted Japanese supply lines and carried out terror campaigns against the French authorities in the region.

With their war effort failing, Japan made an offer to the Vietminh. If the Japanese placed a French-educated Emperor named Bao Dai in control, Vietnam could become an independent nation with Japanese protection. The Vietminh were insulted by the offer, but accepted it. Once the Japanese withdrew from the region, Bao Dai abdicated his brief reign and turned over all power to the Vietminh.

During this period of chaos at the end of the war, the Trinity event took place. The atomic bomb tests of the Manhattan project unleashed a huge wave of magical energy and fallout. For two thousand miles around the blast site, mana-active fallout rained down on the United States, Canada, and Latin America. In an instant, the forces of magic were released and the Western Hemisphere went from a low-mana to a normal-mana zone.

The Trinity event did not immediately have any effect on Vietnam. No mana-active radiation landed on Southeast Asia. The increase in overall mana was not perceived by anyone in the region, except for the Montagnard natives (p. 22). No chimera births were reported, and the communists did not invest much credence in mystical concepts like magic. The communists were interested in other concerns. By September 1945, Ho founded the Independent Democratic Republic of Vietnam. This small part of the world was no longer a French colony, but it would take 30 more years of war before it became a free nation.

Once the shooting stopped in World War II, French forces, with the help of British troops, reoccupied the country. The French wished to continue running the country as if nothing had happened. The Vietminh knew better and began to oppose the French, espe-

cially in the northern sections of the country. Initially, the French had a difficult time with the battle-hardened Vietminh, and once America withdrew its OSS support, the French were evenly matched with Ho's armies.

While minor skirmishes took place, the French and Vietnamese tried to hammer out a peace deal in Paris. Neither side negotiated in good faith and the talks quickly fell apart. The situation was further aggravated by the actions of French Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu, who hoped to restore Bao Dai to the Vietnamese throne. D'Argenlieu broke a Vietminh siege of Hanoi and began using artillery against Ho's troops. War was now inevitable, and the Vietminh faded out of Hanoi to fight the French in the countryside. This became the start of the First Indochina war.

The war with the French in many ways foreshadowed the American involvement 20 years later. The French did not have enough troops or loyal natives to occupy the entire country while the Vietminh did not have the firepower or troops to fight a protracted military campaign. The result of this equation was a series of ambushes by the Vietminh against isolated French units. The French responded with long sweeps of the countryside looking for guerrilla troops, and by holding the major cities. Many French troops were members of the French Foreign Legion, veterans from World War II, and elite paratrooper units. Unfortunately, these troops weren't prepared for the war the Vietminh fought.

The Vietminh didn't wear uniforms that were easy to identify. The enemy intermingled with the local population and often used them as fronts for their guerilla campaigns. Children and women were drafted into the fight and booby traps made the countryside a death march for the unwary French. There were no frontlines or secure areas for troops to unwind. A soldier could die just as easily in Saigon as in the Northern jungles. This frustrated French commanders for the entire course of the war. The Vietminh picked the tone and course of the war. Not everything went well for the communists – in 1952, Ho's main general Vo Nguyen Giap tried to fight a "conventional style" battle in the Red River Valley and was defeated easily by the French. The war was becoming an ugly exercise in attrition.

During the first Indochina war, the hell storm at Zhukov 3 was created by the Soviet Union in 1949. This nuclear explosion created an area of fallout eight times the size of the explosion at Trinity, covering the Antarctic and the southern pacific. Vietnam

## VIETNAM TIMELINE ACCORDING TO TECHNOMANCER

The following timeline is the official history of the Vietnam War according to *GURPS Technomancer*.

- 1962 Kennedy Spell Gap speech
- 1963 101st Airborne renamed the 101st Spellborne
- 1964 Military officially begins testing for magery
- 1965 9th Marine Expeditionary brigade becomes the first combat unit to deploy to Vietnam.
- 1966 The United States begins full deployment to Vietnam
- 1967 Present Day for a *Funny New Guys* Campaign
- 1968 Tet offensive. Flying carpet troops deployed LUC-1 (p. 36) bring terror to the Viet Cong.
- 1970 Golems, necronium dust, and spirit weapons begin to destroy the communists. Widespread reanimation of corpses. Huge anti-war protests break out during this period of the war.
- 1971 Allied troops start to push back the Communists. Black Operations and wizards are credited for the upcoming victory.
- 1974 North Vietnam sues for peace and a treaty is signed. Prisoners are exchanged and stories of Cuban and Soviet mystical violation in POW camps made public. The 13th NOG forced to disband.
- 1975 North Vietnam collapses due to food riots and the aftermath of war.
- 1982 Vietnam Veterans memorial is dedicated in Washington . . . the event sparks bitter protest from the Agrarian Conspiracy and other groups that opposed the war.

received the fallout via the spring monsoons. In the peasant villages, the locals usually killed the chimera births. The communists had a more complicated reaction. Mage-born children were spared while the "changelings" often were the victims of infanticide. Magic would become a tool for use in the proletarian revolution against the French.



In spite of the nature of the war, Vietminh forces doubled in strength from 1946 to 1953 and the French continued to lose more land to Ho's forces. The war, already seven years long, needed a decisive action by one side or the other to bring it to a swift conclusion. Henri Navarre, the new commander of the French forces, came up with a daring plan. Navarre placed a large French force, augmented with Thai troops, in the center of the main area of Vietminh activity hoping to draw the Vietminh into a conventional battle. Then French military superiority would smash the attackers. The trap was set at an abandoned airfield known as Dien Bien Phu.

Things went poorly from the start for the French. The commanders underestimated the Vietminh and didn't take enough time to prepare proper defenses for the attack. They also assumed that the enemy would not have heavy artillery and anti-aircraft guns. The Vietminh threw 27 divisions at the French on March 13, 1954. It quickly became apparent that the French were outgunned, outmanned, and outmaneuvered.

By March 16, the Thai troops had deserted the battlefield leaving the French flanks exposed. As the battle wore on, French supply planes and bombers were shot out of the sky by batteries of anti-aircraft guns on loan from the Communist Chinese. The Vietminh hammered the compound and even prevented the French from evacuating their wounded, further undermining their morale. After almost two long months of battle, the French commander Christian de Castries surrendered his forces at Dien Bien Phu. Navarre's gamble had failed.

The wake of Dien Bien Phu spurred an overwhelming demand by the French public to bring home the troops. The Fourth Republic founded after World War II was falling apart and military defeat by the Vietminh further sped up the process. The new Fifth Republic acted quickly and negotiated with the Vietminh. On July 20, 1954, the French reached an agreement with the rebels. The agreement divided colonial Vietnam into four nations: Cambodia, Laos, a communist North Vietnam, and a democratic South Vietnam. The agreement was supposed to last two years followed by a nationwide referendum in Vietnam to decide the fate of the nation. Confident that the nation would be reunited peacefully by election, the Vietminh agreed to the deal.

But the peace deal created an immediate problem. The north had most of Vietnam's industrial production while the south was the breadbasket of the region. In order for both nations to survive, they

would have to rely on outside aid. Ho and the communist north turned to the Soviet Union while the south turned to the United States. Since neither side was part of the French peace agreement of 1954, both felt they did not have to abide by its rules.

## America's Concerns

The time between the French and American combat role in Vietnam was marked by numerous missed opportunities for stability in the region. The central figures during this period were South Vietnam's Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem and Ho Chi Minh in the North. Ho was a careful and deliberate revolutionary, interested in rebuilding his country in the aftermath of the war with the French. Diem was busy consolidating political support for himself and courting favor from America.

The biggest challenge for Ho was the shortage of rice. A blight in 1945 led to the starvation of two million Vietnamese and the process was repeating itself ten years later. It took emergency aid from the Soviet Union and rice from Burma to avoid disaster. This prompted land reform policies. Those policies quickly spiraled out of control and became "people's committees" which executed undesirables and seized land in order to help "the peasants." No one was spared, intellectuals, landowners, and even loyal Vietminh officers were tried and executed. The situation led to a rebellion by the northern Nghe An province against the Hanoi government. The communists brutally put down the rebellion, but Ho felt it necessary to officially apologize, saying, "mistakes were made," regarding land reform.

Diem was not faring better in the south. Three military factions did not recognize Diem's regime. One faction, the Binh Xuyen, received overt aid from the French government. The Binh Xuyen also used strange mystical powers on Diem's troops. In April 1956, Diem ordered his troops to attack the Binh Xuyen, who were conducting military maneuvers in Saigon and the countryside. By May, the fighting had ended and what was left of the factions disappeared into the Mekong delta to resurface years later as Viet Cong guerrillas. In the wake of this military victory, Diem began a program of repression to root out Vietminh veterans, communists, and other threats to his regime. By the end of the decade, virtually all of the old Vietminh cells had been smashed and many of Diem's rivals were dead or in prison. This cruelty created resentment that eventually aided both the communists and mutinous officers.

# The Montagnards

Descended from aboriginal tribes from Polynesia, the Montagnard tribes of Vietnam's central highlands have been at the center of conflict in the region. First encountered by French missionaries, the tribes were untouched by Western or Vietnamese culture. The name Montagnard means "mountain people" in French and their aboriginal customs and easy adoption of Christianity put them in direct conflict with the communists.

As America became involved in the war, special forces teams recruited and trained entire tribes of Montagnard natives, nicknamed "yards" to help fight the communists. Promised a Montagnard state, the locals quickly took up the cause and joined the fighting, creating Civilian Irregular Defense Units (CIDU).

These units became the eyes and ears of the Special Forces. Using their native skills and American weapons, the Montagnards helped fight the Viet Cong on their own turf. It was common for special forces teams of four to 10 "A-Teams" to command hundreds of Montagnards roaming the countryside looking for the enemy.

As the tide of battle turned, the Montagnards spearheaded invasions of Laos and North Vietnam. When the communists finally collapsed in 1975, Montagnard tribal elders attended the formal surrender along with members of the Saigon government and the Ford administration.

## Magic and Mysticism

The Montagnard tribes of Vietnam were heavily Christianized by the start of American involvement in Vietnam. However, the effects of the Zhukov 3 event began to alter their practices. Before the arrival of the French missionaries, the Montagnards practiced a brand of animism, believing in spirits that were present and active in the natural world. This practice included animal sacrifice and blood rituals. As the mana level increased and magery spread among the newborn, the Montagnards melded their Christian beliefs with their pagan past.

Animal sacrifice and blood rituals were eschewed for direct communication with the spirit world. Magic was seen as a gift from Christ to help lead the Montagnard people against the oppression of communism. Changeling and chimera births were viewed as good omens, and Montagnard mystics learned to master nature spells.

Use the following rules for Montagnard characters. First, any changeling will not have a social stigma attached to them. The most common types of changeling in the Montagnard culture are "Cat People" and "Snake People." Rules for these two new species can be found on pp. T53-55. Next, any Montagnard spellcaster must specialize and learn only one college of spells. The One College Only disadvantage is on p. M104. Finally, Montagnards during this period did not speak English as a native language. There is only a 10% chance that one will know how to speak French; the remainder will know their native tribal language, which is a Mental/Hard skill for any Westerner to learn.

## The Montagnards after the War

After the Vietnam war, the Montagnards established a "Dega State" in the Vietnamese central highlands and continued to practice magic and their tribal customs. This semi-autonomous state is tolerated by the Saigon government and has protection from the American State Department. It is common for Thaumaturgy students and neo-pagans to visit the "Dega State" as a way to see tribal culture assimilate magic and modern technology simultaneously.

Those that decided to emigrate to the United States settled in North Carolina to be close to the Special Forces troops they fought with. Montagnards are very loyal to the friends they met during the war. Since North Carolina has the largest population of current and former special forces troops in the United States, the largest ethnic population of Montagnards outside of Vietnam has settled there.

Diem devoted most of his American aid toward bolstering his military and the Saigon police – little went to improving the country’s infrastructure, land reform, or education. This further undermined his credibility as a leader and made his American advisors uncomfortable.

Patience wore thin in both Hanoi and Washington, D.C. Ho knew that Diem was the only credible leader in the south without communist ties. Efforts would have to be made to remove him. Those efforts included sponsoring rebel units in the south that the Diem regime mockingly called the “Viet Cong.” The name stuck. The Viet Cong were a loose collection of North Vietnamese cadres, Vietminh veterans, and survivors of Diem’s earlier crackdowns. Conscripts from the north and disaffected young people from the south filled out the ranks. Beginning in the late 1950s, the Viet Cong began a slow terror campaign in the south.

Diem’s unwillingness to make reforms, combined with his corrupt government and his inability to fight the communists, frustrated his American advisors and helped fuel dissent among his officers. As the pressure grew, Diem became more sheltered and relied more on his immediate family for advice while ignoring American advisors. The cycle of distrust grew until it became apparent to the Kennedy administration that Diem had to go. The new ambassador from Washington D.C., Henry Cabot Lodge, informed the generals of the Saigon government that, if they launched a coup, the United States would not get in the way unless the rebels did not enjoy the support of the people. Diem was even offered a chance to leave the country with his family, which he refused. In 1963, a group of mutinous officers rebelled against Diem. After several attempts at escape, Diem turned himself over to the rebels. A few days later, photos were released of Diem, executed in gangland fashion by the new junta. America’s concerns became worse as General Nguyen Khan took control of the South Vietnamese government, and America was drawn into the escalating violence in the region.

## The Spell Gap Speech

While things were deteriorating in Vietnam, the United States was becoming distracted by events elsewhere in the world. In 1960, the Soviets had shot down an American U-2 spy plane. Claiming that they used magic to detect and track the “undetachable” spy plane, the Soviet leadership demanded the United

States respect its national airspace. Furthermore, the Russians threatened subsequent violations could lead to a war where communism’s natural magical superiority would be used to “bury” the United States.

By putting a satellite and a cosmonaut in orbit before the Americans, the Soviet threat of a “missile gap” became compounded with a “spell gap.” This presented a complicated political problem for the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations. Embracing magical powers would alienate strong conservative movements in the South that opposed civil rights, including the rights of “changelings.” Balancing this, the Southwest states’ influence grew – they not only embraced the use of magic, but also pushed its practical applications to new levels. Finally, changelings were starting to become old enough for the military draft, and the armed forces did not have a plan to integrate them into the military.

The situation came to a head when the first changeling from New Mexico attempted to join the United States Military Academy in 1962. During graduation ceremonies at the Naval Academy, John Kennedy asked the nation to accept the “God-given psychic talents granted our nation in its hour of need, which to some may seem just like magic, but which America’s scientists are now beginning to understand.” With the formation of the Green Berets and the successful tests of dragon troops, Kennedy gave orders to the Pentagon to test the effectiveness of changeling troops and integrate them into the armed forces. This was the birth of Project Griffin (p. 9).

Meanwhile, events in Southeast Asia gained momentum. In the aftermath of Diem’s murder at the hands of his own generals, the Saigon government changed hands on several occasions between military and civilian governments. During this period of political instability, the Viet Cong received orders from Hanoi to step up their efforts to take over. The situation for American combat advisors and Washington was grim.

## The Final Straw and the March to War

President Johnson placed General William Westmoreland in command of the American troops in Vietnam. He agreed to increase aid to the South Vietnamese government and train an additional 50,000 troops for the South Vietnamese army.

During this period, the South Vietnamese were launching secret raids against the north as part of OPLAN 34A. This combined air, land, and sea

approach was retaliation for the southern Viet Cong attacks. The three-part plan combined terrorist actions by ARVN and Chinese mercenaries, Laotian bombers flown by American and Thai pilots, and American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin. When these destroyers were attacked, President Johnson and Congress committed combat troops to Vietnam.

Carefully worded, the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was a declaration of war without officially being a declaration of war. It gave the President of the United States broad powers to fight the war, but it didn't clearly define what American goals were in Vietnam. The resolution satisfied China and Russia. It promised that American combat troops would

only support the Saigon regime and not widen the war into other nations. President Johnson became the commander in chief of America's army in Vietnam.

American planes began bombing the north while the Viet Cong stepped up attacks in the south. General Westmoreland, lacking confidence in the ARVN forces to protect vital airbases, had American Marines take over the responsibility. On March 8, 1965, the 9th Marine Expeditionary brigade landed at China Beach outside Da Nang. Instead of the Viet Cong, they were greeted by curious locals, Special Forces advisors, and Air Force personnel drinking beer and waving signs of welcome. It would be one



## UNEASY RELATIONS WITH THE 13TH NOG

The 101st Spellborne and the 13th NOG had similar backgrounds, but an uneasy relationship with each other. The 13th NOG, born from the experimental 1st Necromantic Operations Detachment, was the first unit in the Army to embrace magic. The members of the 13th NOG often referred to themselves as “operators” instead of soldiers. The 13th NOG had a reputation of bucking the chain of command, and spent most of its time partnered with the CIA performing covert operations. The unit had some of the most advanced magical equipment in the military, and a NOG operator tended to associate only with other NOG members. This generated some resentment from other units in Vietnam.

Meanwhile, the 101st attempted to be the best infantry unit in Vietnam and worked within the chain of the command. The unit made itself available for a number of missions, and offered to help others in times of crisis. The Eagle's Claws also had a very mechanistic view of how magic should be used on the battlefield. Many of the 101st were not “mages” proper; they relied on enchanted items like flying carpets and wands to perform their duties. Members of the 101st were trained to use a rifle before attempting to cast a difficult curse. Magic was always a tool for the correct situa-

tion and never for its own sake. This pragmatic approach prevented some mishaps that befell NOG operators out in the field.

The Eagle's Claws also had trouble with the 13th NOG's fascination with necromancy and death magic. Combat was stressful enough without having to worry about undead, ghosts, skull spirits, and demons wandering the battlefield. The 101st also documented several occasions where spells cast by 13th NOG operators backfired horribly, killing not only the caster but other friendly troops in the area. The tactic of creating “Z companies” further strained relations between the 101st and the 13th NOG.

To counter these professional differences and better coordinate efforts, the Magical Operations Command was established in 1967. Answering directly to General Westmoreland, the MOC provided missions to the 13th NOG while the 101st conducted its operations outside Chi Lai. The Spellborne was also tasked with providing rescue operations and flying carpet support to the 13th NOG.

The two units respected each other, but their differing philosophies concerning magic and the conduct of the war eventually led to the dissolution of the 13th NOG in 1974.



of many surreal moments during the war.

Other combat units, including the 101st Spellborne Division and the 1st Infantry Division, quickly followed. Within weeks, the combat troops switched from guarding airfields to patrolling the surrounding countryside and conducting “search and destroy” missions to flush out communist units. The *Funny New Guys* campaigns take place in the summer of 1967. The troops are just learning how to fight in Vietnam.

## The 101st Spellborne

The 101st had already made a name for itself during the D-Day invasion and the Battle of the Bulge. During the conflict in Vietnam, the division would transform itself from a group of courageous paratroopers to a magical shock force riding into battle aboard flying carpets.

The 101st began as a paratrooper unit to counter German airborne operations. The unit earned two Medals of Honor, 47 Distinguished Service Crosses, 516 Silver Stars, and 6,977 Bronze Stars by 1945.

Between 1945 and 1956, the unit was activated and deactivated three times to train other units to fight in Korea. After the Korean conflict settled down, the 101st remained intact to test new concepts in parachute design and helicopter assault. More the size of a regiment than a full division, the 101st were the first soldiers to test flying carpets as a means of transport for troops around a battlefield.

The real transformation of the 101st from an airborne regiment to a “spellborne” division began in 1958. A young Henry Blaylock (p. 9) theorized that the army should combine technology with paranormal powers and mystical troops on the battlefield. Local draft boards normally rejected changelings or mages as being mentally deficient or unable to handle the stresses of combat. Blaylock argued that chimeras could be soldiers, and pointed to Soviet efforts in Europe using Cuban troops. The proposal was politely accepted and Blaylock graduated from the Army Staff college. Many predicted he would be passed over for any future promotion.

The article quietly circulated and came to the attention of William Westmoreland, then in charge of training at Fort Bragg and the head of the CIA. Immediately, Blaylock received the endorsement of

## DRAGONS OVER HANOI

Vietnam featured the first use of dragons as combat soldiers. Created by the research scientists of Project Fafnir (p. T59), these magical beasts made an immediate impact on the battlefield. Dragons were intelligent and could operate independently like an ordinary infantryman, but with the firepower of an attack bomber. Each squadron or pen of dragons was stationed at an army or marine air base. A pen usually comprised four to eight dragons, commanded by an officer with pilot and dragon training skills.

The mission of a dragon in Vietnam was similar to that of Marine Aviation. A dragon was to provide close air support to the troopers on the ground. This meant dragons breathed fire at, strafed, and terrorized the Viet Cong whenever they had a chance. Commanders on the ground could radio for air strikes, and depending on the situation, division or corps commanders would send dragons or planes to perform the mission.

### Here Be Dragons

Marines and Army troopers loved the dragons, and some units, particularly the 13th NOG and the 1st Marine Division, wouldn't operate in the field unless there were dragons within radio range. The first pens of dragons operated out of the airfields in Da Nang and Saigon in 1966. By 1967, a pen of dragons was stationed at the airfield at Pleiku. It was here that a group of North Vietnamese special ops soldiers and KGB agents kidnapped a clutch of eggs that eventually became the Red Dragons of the communist world. By 1970, there were 15 pens of dragons around Vietnam.

The most famous of these bases was the Khe Sahn dragon pen, the home of the 12th Firebrand Squadron. The 12th logged more combat time in the skies over Hanoi than any other aviation unit in the Allied forces. First activated in 1969, the unit flew daily combat missions to Hanoi, destroying anti-aircraft batteries and terrorizing the city until the armistice in 1974. Players looking for an interesting diversion may want to play the members of the 12th as they dodge flak, rampage through the streets, and attempt to survive another day.

*(Continued on the next page . . .)*

the military command, and in 1960, was promoted to lieutenant colonel. He was placed in charge of an experimental unit of enlisted changelings and mages. For the next two years, the unit was attached to the 101st as the 502nd strike regiment, and developed tactics for combined operations with magic and modern firepower. These exercises were collectively known as Project Griffin (p. 9). More traditional commanders scorned the unit, but its worth made it officially part of the 101st in 1963. Blaylock was promoted to colonel and given command of the new regiment.

The 101st soon became home to many of the army's changelings. When faced with the possibility of serving in a unit without any changelings, young men from Trinity's shadow often opted toward enlisting to become members of the 101st. The volunteers often endured harsh training and prejudice within the Army, and being among other changelings was a source of strength. As the 101st became a full-strength division, the esprit de corps increased as the troops and the officers became more confident using magic on the battlefield. The unit was nicknamed the "Eagle's Claws."

## Eagle's Claws to Chicken Men - What the 101st Did in Vietnam

The 101st had three primary missions in Vietnam. First, they helped protect airfields around the town of An Khe. Second, they conducted search and destroy missions in the Song Con Valley northwest of An Khe, using tactics perfected during Project Griffin. Finally, the 101st was the most combat-ready Army division in 1966 when President Johnson gave the orders to deploy. The 101st immediately sent two regiments to Vietnam: the 327th Infantry and the 501st Infantry.

Along with the official reasons for sending the 101st, there were ulterior motives among the army brass. The commanders of the 13th Necromantic Operations Group had created much ill will with the "regular army" at the Pentagon. Often, 13th NOG commanders would communicate their needs with the White House, the CIA, or the civilian members of

### DRAGONS OVER HANOI (CONT.)

#### 'Typical Combat Dragon'

All dragons that fought in Vietnam fit the racial template for a Blue Dragon (see p. T57). Each dragon soldier is treated as a Warrant officer (Military Rank +3) and has a strong duty to the U.S. military. All dragons at this time were employed by the armed forces, so this duty is mandatory.

In exchange for this duty, all military dragons are issued a Barret Dragonfang .50 BMG, a FritzDrake helmet for protection, and a magical collar that acted as a radio. The collar was of particular importance to dragons because it acted like a soldier's dog tags. The collar had the dragon's name, rank, and serial number, the insignia of every unit he fought with, and a crystal charm that could magically communicate with other dragons in his unit and controllers with a similar item.

The stats for the Dragonfang .50 BMG are as follows: Damage 9d+2, SS 15, Acc 6, 1/2Dam 670, Max 3780, Wt. 30lbs., ROF 10\*, Shots

30+1 ST 25, Rcl -3. A loaded magazine is 10 lbs.

The stats for the FritzDrake helmet are: PD 4, DR 5 and it protects areas 3-4 (brain).

#### Yellow Dragons

As an act of good will, President Nixon sold the Saigon government a clutch of ten eggs in 1969. These Dragons did not see any actual combat, but in 1983, they participated in a coup by mutinous officers. The coup was put down and all the dragons were killed except for two, who fled into the Cambodian countryside.

These dragons are affectionately referred to as "Yellow Dragons," and the Saigon government has a one million dollar bounty on these creatures or their offspring. Modern day "dragon hunters" often vanish in the Cambodian jungles when they attempt to collect the bounty.

Yellow dragons are exactly the same as Blue Dragons with two exceptions: they have the disadvantage Glory Hound (-15), and have a powerful enemy in the Saigon government (-30).

the Defense Department instead of following the chain of command. The mystical and necromantic trappings of the 13th NOG also alienated the generals. This animosity naturally carried over to the 101st, as they saw the unit “corrupted” by changelings.

By June 1966, the 101st had silenced many of its critics. Communist operations were halted in the Song Con Valley and the division moved to Dak To, a base that supported South Vietnamese forces (ARVN) and a Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG). On June 6th, the 24th North Vietnamese Regiment surrounded the ARVN and CIDG forces. The 502nd Infantry Regiment of the 101st provided rescue, and the communists nearly overran the base. Only artillery strikes on their own position and reinforcements from the 327th Infantry saved the day. The action proved that the 101st would do anything to win on the battlefield.

No one doubted the courage and the ability of the 101st. As a reward, the Army ordered all other units

to adopt a subdued black and green shoulder insignia that blended in with their camouflage uniforms. The 101st would keep their vivid black, gold, and white patches with the “screaming eagle,” magic wand, and the bold lettering “Airborne.” Since the Vietnamese had never seen an eagle, they referred to the soldiers of the 101st as “Chicken Men.” Communist leaders respected the ability of the Chicken Men and attempted to avoid contact with them.

By the summer of 1967, the 101st was placed under the supervision of the newly formed Magical Operations Command and moved to Chi Lai. Their mission was primarily firefighting. If a South Vietnamese or American unit got into trouble, the rapid reaction force of helicopter and carpet-borne Airborne troops from the 101st flew to the rescue. In addition to its primary mission, the 101st also conducted search and destroy patrols.



# 3. Life in Indian Country

A soldier in Vietnam spent most of his time away from civilization, either patrolling for the enemy or guarding fire bases against enemy attack. Fire bases were semi-permanent camps where troops lived. Often, these bases were close to villages or areas of enemy activity, putting them under constant threat of attack from the communists. Often no open roads led to the outposts, so supplies arrived by helicopter.

For a soldier, the routine of a fire base was determined by the arrival and departure of the choppers. The day began at sunrise when the squad assigned to guard duty gets relieved. The American and the unit flags are raised over the base during a brief ceremony performed to salute them. Often done with full knowledge the enemy was watching, morning colors drove the communists crazy. The ceremony was brief by necessity – incoming rounds followed it.

Then soldiers ate breakfast. Meals at fire bases were a mixed bag. Some days a trooper enjoyed steak and canned vegetables. When supplies were late, a soldier relied on the best freeze-dried food the army could buy. It was not a gourmet experience. Cooks

depended on the army supply system and the goodwill of local villagers who often provided fresh poultry, eggs, and vegetables in exchange for jobs at the fire base.

After morning colors and a meal, the morning chopper arrived. The helicopters had the large capacity and firepower required to supply a fire base. The choppers provided mail and supplies for the base. Between the morning chopper and lunch, the troops busied themselves with routine duties. The officers received orders from headquarters and then attempted to make them a reality, sending units out on patrol or conducting combat operations.

An afternoon chopper brought more supplies and fresh replacements sometime after lunch, in addition to performing other duties. It transported homeward-bound soldiers from the base, USO workers or Red Cross Volunteers to provide entertainment, or battalion or regimental commanders for inspections.

As darkness settled, the last chopper left and the troopers were left to fend for themselves.



# Living Arrangements

The fire base was a step up from camping in the wilderness, but far below being stationed at a barracks. The base was under constant threat from the enemy and exposed to extremes of heat, humidity, and rain. Improvisation and ingenuity allowed soldiers to transform these places into the launch pads for many of the military operations in Vietnam.

Soldiers usually set up fire bases on hillsides or elevated terrain near villages. Engineers and pathfinders scouted these territories and began the process of clearing away the jungle. The trees were cut down and the stumps pulled from the ground. Helicopters removed the lumber and airlifted equipment and supplies to the new base. The ground was leveled and trenches were dug around the base perimeter. Makeshift dugouts acted as living quarters for the troops. The soldiers dubbed these dugouts “hooches.” Once the basic construction of the fire base was completed, a company or more was airlifted to the outpost to add the finishing touches. The new tenants strung barbed wire, filled sandbags, and positioned artillery.

Each hooch accommodated up to 10 men. A company had roughly 15 to 20 hooches scattered around the base. Officers and senior sergeants had their own quarters, while squads shared the same hooch. Each base had a basic field hospital staffed by corpsmen, and a helicopter pad for rugs and choppers. Artillery pieces were scattered about the camp to prevent a lucky shot from knocking them all out. The mess hall was either a tent or shack built above ground. Latrines were also scattered about the camp. To avoid outbreaks of cholera and swarms of flies, the latrines consisted of aboveground outhouses with half drums of diesel fuel receiving the human waste. Each day, Funny New Guys or soldiers being punished removed the drums and set them on fire. It was the least enjoyable duty at the camp.

Sometimes, a fire base was only accessible by helicopter or rug. Usually, trails led from the base to the major patrol areas and local villages. Bombs and artillery destroyed much of the vegetation around a fire base. What explosions did not kill, herbicides provided by the Pentagon did.

All fire bases had names. At first, the fire base had a number designation such as YD 885135, which often referred to its coordinates on a map. For ease of

reference, officers in regimental and divisional command named the camps. Names often came from historical events in the army’s history, women’s first names, or mascots within the division. Thus, fire bases were nicknamed “Eagle,” “Cindy,” or “Bastogne.” Some bases were constructed so quickly, divisions did not have time to name them, so they were labeled with numbers. In the span of a week, Fire Base 23 became the home of a company and an artillery battery.

## Military Duties

The main reason troops fought in Vietnam was to support the Saigon government of the South and to force the war on the communists. This meant the troops had specific missions while stationed at fire bases.

### Combat Patrols

The main use of a fire base was as a forward staging area for troops to conduct combat patrols. These patrols consisted of infantry teams searching for the enemy beyond the visual range of the fire base. While searching for the communists, the troops were sometimes ambushed or bombarded with artillery. Sometimes, combat patrols set the ambushes for the enemy. Small or large units, from four-man fire teams to entire platoons, patrolled the countryside for the enemy.

Troops would often walk an area and only encounter booby traps and land mines. Sometimes, the Viet Cong or the North Vietnamese ambushed the American troops and kicked off protracted fights. Artillery from the fire base, if in range, would rain down on the area. Air strikes would be called in and reinforcements from other fire bases would join the fight. Many combat actions in Vietnam happened this way as two groups of hostile troops stumbled into each other.

Usually a combat mission had a specific purpose. Commanders often sent patrols to check out certain trails where they suspected enemy activity. Villages where the Viet Cong took shelter were swept in an effort to capture enemy guerillas. When intelligence was good enough, patrols knocked out enemy camps or troop concentrations.

Patrols operated in the daylight because commanders felt nighttime patrols put their troops at

## PLACES EVERY GRUNT SHOULD KNOW

For the soldier living on a fire base, certain places took on particular importance. The most important places were the machine guns and trenches that defend the base. Additionally, ammunition was a vital commodity in combat, so soldiers always knew the location of the ammunition dump. The ammunition dump was also the farthest point from all of the hooches on the base.

Some creature comforts of civilization were important landmarks at the fire base. Soldiers were familiar with the location of latrines and showers. Both structures were above ground with little cover, so hygienic activity took place during the day.

The underground hospital area was near the base headquarters. The underground location afforded some protection, and its cooler temperature could mean the difference between life and death. The “sick bay” was often staffed by corpsman, but, if the base was large enough,

army surgeons supervised the treatment of the wounded.

The headquarters, often a tin or wooden shack partially buried to protect it from mortar attack, was home for the commanding officers and their staff. On a fire base, the headquarters acted as the courthouse, town hall, and media center for the entire base. This was also the only building on a fire base where a common soldier was not welcome. Enlisted men who did not work in headquarters needed permission from an officer to enter. The privilege was rarely given.

The final spot that every soldier knew was the mess hall. The tent where the soldiers ate also acted as an informal social center. Soldiers could be found there at all times of day smoking, drinking coffee, gossiping, and complaining about the food. Meals were not served after dark, but hot coffee was always available for troops dealing with long nights on watch.

unnecessary risk. Patrols sent out in the morning or early afternoon were expected to return to the fire base at night. If a patrol was going to be late, it often notified the fire base to evacuate them by chopper or rug. It was rare for a patrol to “camp out” overnight before returning to the base. This inspired a dark joke among the troops that the Americans ruled the day in Vietnam but the Viet Cong owned the night.

## Artillery and Fire Support

Combat patrols and fire bases provided a secure area for artillery. The big guns were affectionately called the “Kings of Battle,” because they dished out a disproportionate amount of destruction. Guns ranged in size from the reliable eight-pound cannons of World War II to the 155mm behemoths that required 10-man crews.

The gun crews mostly stayed on base, keeping the guns in working order. When the call came, they scrambled from their hooches, positioned their guns, and fired. This round-the-clock mission forced the gunners to grab sleep when they could. The artillerymen, when not working on the guns, also acted as the base’s maintenance staff – fixing fortifications and trying to provide some of the creature comforts of civilization.

Artillery crews had two primary missions. The first was fire support for combat patrols. When a combat patrol needed extra firepower, the artillery from the base placed as many shells as they could on the enemy. The other job was called harassment and interdiction fire. At regular intervals, the battery would lob shells at designated spots to harass the enemy moving through the countryside. These missions made the commanders at Regiment or Division feel good, but they rarely had any effect on the battlefield.

## Guard Duty

While one third of a fire base was on combat patrol, the remaining two thirds either rested or served on guard duty. Guard duty meant manning crew-mounted machine guns, patrolling inside the barbed wire to make sure the Viet Cong didn’t sneak into the camp, or standing lookout. It was a boring task but necessary, because the Viet Cong attempted to destroy any fire base they could. A poorly guarded fire base was doomed to be overrun.

A guard shift usually lasted anywhere from four to eight hours. They were not allowed to smoke on duty and carried a loaded weapon. A shot from any rifle at the base put everyone on alert and sent troops running to the sand bags and trenches around the perimeter. Guards were often the first victims of an enemy mortar attack or infiltration.

# Common Hazards in Vietnam

Vietnam provided plenty of other ways to die besides combat. This section details some of the other hazards that soldiers in Vietnam faced.

## Heat and Humidity

Each character in Vietnam will cope with the heat and humidity in his own way. The median temperature in Vietnam year round is roughly between 75° and 86°F. In other circumstances, this is pleasant early summer weather, but in Vietnam these temperatures, combined with humidity, wracked the bodies of American troops. The rules for the toll heat takes on the human body are outlined in the *Basic Set*, p. 130.

Humidity increases the relative temperature of the human body by preventing heat from dissipating efficiently. The National Weather Service's measure for this phenomenon is called the *heat index* (see *Temperatures in Vietnam*). By using the heat index, we can get the relative temperature that day and calculate its effects on characters.

*For example: Harvey is the point man for his patrol. A storm blew through the previous night and soaked the fire base. The humidity is 70% and the temperature is 85°F. Consulting the heat index chart, this becomes a relative temperature of 96°. Harvey has a health of 11 and light encumbrance. This gives Harvey a skill roll of 10 to resist the effects of heat. After marching through the jungle cutting trails, Harvey loses three fatigue points. Harvey now rolls for the effects of heat on the body. Harvey's basic skill is 10. The temperature creates an additional penalty to the heat roll of -1 making his target 9. Harvey rolls an 11 and loses an additional point of fatigue. If Harvey knows what is good for him, he had better take a rest.*

Characters can recover lost fatigue through sleep and rest. However, sleeping in effective temperatures greater than 80°F only grants half-recovery.

## Booby Traps

Booby traps killed or maimed a disproportionate number of troops in Vietnam. The Viet Cong became experts at using unexploded bombs, trash, and native materials to create plenty of ways to kill the enemy. These booby traps were a constant source of anxiety for troops in the field. The traps tended to fall into two major categories: explosive and nonexplosive.

## TEMPERATURES IN VIETNAM

Vietnam is a warm and wet country. The monsoon season spans May through September, with daily rainstorms, flashfloods, and mudslides. October through December is more tolerable, providing moderate temperatures and less rain. January through March is foggy, and a constant blanket of drizzle covers the northern part of the country. For an American soldier, it is not a pleasant camping experience.

Here is a seasonal breakdown of the high and low temperatures:

Monsoon Season (May to September): 92°F/76°F

Travel Season (October to December): 88°F/71°F

Winter (January to April): 80°F/66°F

### The Heat Index Chart

The following heat index chart comes directly from the National Weather service. Players and GMs should use it to determine the physical exhaustion created by the temperatures in Vietnam.

°F	90%	80%	70%	60%	50%	40%
80	85	84	82	81	80	79
85	101	96	92	90	86	84
90	121	113	105	99	94	90
95	–	133	122	113	105	98
100	–	–	142	129	118	109
105	–	–	–	148	133	121
110	–	–	–	–	–	135

Please go to the National Weather Service website for more information:  
[www.crh.noaa.gov/pub/heat.htm](http://www.crh.noaa.gov/pub/heat.htm).

## Explosives

Explosive traps were constructed from homemade gunpowder, or the remnants of unexploded bombs and explosives from other communist countries. Most traps were primitive in nature and activated by tripwires or pressure plates. The more sophisticated traps were triggered by alarm clocks acting as timing devices. These traps were relatively easy to avoid or disarm; if you find one, add a +2 to your Traps or EOD skill. Finding a camouflaged booby trap was a much more difficult proposition. Subtract two from your perception roll to find a booby trap. This reflects the clever ways the Viet Cong hide their traps.



### A Typical Explosive Charge

Most booby traps had the explosive power of a pound of TNT. This translates into 6d2 damage. The blast affects the entire body of the person caught in the center. All damage is considered torso. If a person is one hex away from the blast, they could lose a limb. Roll a hit location. If that limb suffers twice its crippling damage, it is blown off. The player will now have the crippled disadvantage.

### The Frag

The Viet Cong often scrounged the bodies of dead ARVN soldiers for American grenades and explosives. Troops referred to these weapons as frags. Treat them like a grenade attack. A standard Mk68 grenade does 5d + 2 damage, plus an additional 2d of fragmentation damage.

### The Bouncing Betty

Soldiers feared this booby trap the most in Vietnam. The trap launched a grenade out of the ground that exploded at waist height. The target suffers 5d + 2 damage to his legs, vitals, and groin. People adjacent to the target suffer 2d of fragmentation damage.

### Other Kinds of Traps

Nonexplosive traps encompassed everything from primitive pit traps to complicated contraptions that impaled or crushed allied troops. The GM is encour-

aged to come up with all sorts of fiendish constructions. Use common sense; traps made from stone or anything with complex mechanical parts will be rare. Most traps were constructed from earth, bamboo, wood, and rope.

### Pungi Stakes

Simple but effective, this was a shallow pit covered with earth or branches. If the victim fell through the camouflage, they impaled their foot or other body part on bamboo stakes covered with human excrement. The wound became infected, and if not treated, could result in amputation. Soldiers taking at least one point of impaling damage must roll HT+1 to avoid an infection.

### Pendulum traps

A soldier stumbled across a trip wire and a large weighted log swung from a tree to bash them in the head or chest. If the soldier makes a successful perception roll and a successful dodge, they avoid the trap. Otherwise they suffer 3d crushing damage to the head or torso.

## Trench Foot

Vietnam was a wet country, and the principal agricultural product was rice. Troops spent much of their time slogging through the jungle or the flooded rice paddies. This meant that a soldier on patrol had wet feet. The chronic exposure to moisture led to a condition known as trench foot.

For every four hours a player spends without changing socks on patrol, they make a health roll. If they fail the roll, the effects of trench foot set in. A player with trench foot takes 1d-3 damage to his feet



and temporarily has the disadvantage Low Pain Threshold. The player will also spend most of his time complaining about his feet.

Cure trench foot by keeping your feet dry for a week and allowing them to heal. A cure disease spell can also treat trench foot quickly.

## Insects and Malaria

Malaria is a problem in any jungle climate. Transported by mosquitoes, the disease has crippled entire armies in the field. During Vietnam, advanced medical research allowed soldiers to take pills that killed the microorganisms that caused malaria. Troops who take these pills only roll once per month

at HT+5. A failure means that you are infected with malaria.

Malaria is a debilitating disease that festers in the blood and can destroy a person's kidneys if left untreated. On a failed malaria roll, a player will suffer chills and shivering followed by fever, headaches, and vomiting. The player's HT is halved as he struggles with the disease. For each day the disease remains untreated, the player must make a HT roll. On a failure, he loses an additional point of health until death. Malaria is treated with bed rest, antibiotics, and avoiding further infection. Recovery from a successfully treated case of malaria will take two to five weeks. Due to the difficult nature of a malaria

## Vietnam Bestiary

Vietnam has wide stretches of countryside without urban development. Most areas have dense forests and are home to many wild animals. While encounters with these creatures are uncommon, they still could provide plenty of challenge to troops out on patrol.

### The Python

A large constricting snake wandering the jungle. These creatures feed off eggs, birds, and small mammals. They are not poisonous and attack by crushing their victims. They attack soldiers who are either sleeping in the jungle or are wounded. It was a common prank to place one of these snakes in someone's bunk to give them a fright. Complete rules for the python can be found on p. B143.

### The "Green Snake"

This generic poisonous snake populates the jungles of Vietnam. Most snakes are tree dwelling and not commonly encountered. Still, snakes sometimes bite troops during patrols.

Anyone bitten by one of these snakes must make a HT roll at -3 each day for three days. A failed roll means the venom does 1d damage. A critical failure leads to death. Modifiers to the HT roll: +1 if the venom is sucked out (on a successful first aid roll), and +2 if anti-venom is used during treatment. Most fire bases do not have anti-venom, so poisoned troops are evacuated to a hospital for treatment. Snakebites usually do not warrant sending a soldier home early, so bitten soldiers often rotate back into combat.

**Attributes:** ST 5-10; DX 12; IQ 3; HT 15/4-10.

Speed: 3 or 4; Weight: 5 to 15 lbs.

Size: varies.

**Skills:** Does 1d-2 biting damage plus the effects of venom.

### The Leopards

These big cats are often confused with tigers and panthers. To the soldier in the field facing these creatures, the long dark tail and fur pattern that makes it a different species is a purely academic concern. Ranging in weight from 66 to 199 lbs., leopards hunt in trees where they can avoid scavengers and other big cats.

Primarily hunting at night, the leopard usually grabs its victim from above by the neck and drags it into the canopy to die by suffocation or spinal injury. The powerful neck and jaw muscles make it able to lift a creature three times its size off the ground. Leopards will not attack humans unless they are very hungry or if their young are threatened. An encounter with a leopard is often good for a fright check before the cat runs away.

**Attributes:** ST 17-24; DX 14; IQ 4; HT 15/20-25.

Speed: 8 (in short bursts); Weight: 66 to 199 lbs.

Size: 2 hexes.

**Advantages:** PD 1; DR 1.

**Skills:** Have the equivalent of Night Vision, and a climbing skill of 14. Does 1d+1 cutting damage from claws and 2d+1 biting damage.

infection, a cure disease spell will be at minus one to effective skill.

The final disadvantage to malaria is that a patient once cured of the disease can still have a “relapse.” A malaria relapse happens if a player makes a health roll and suffers critical failure. Vestiges of the parasites that caused the original infection in the liver start to grow and trigger the disease again. A character must undergo continuous treatment for malaria his entire life to avoid these relapses.

## Weapons of War

Vietnam was a cornucopia of modern firepower. This section is a brief summary of weapons you might find on the battlefield.

### Small Arms

The military was in transition during the 1960s. Using research obtained from the Korean War about the behavior of troops in combat, the military began to change its thinking about its weapons. Pistols and rifles, with large-caliber ammunition and long-range accuracy were phased out for weapons that were lighter and had increased rates of fire.

The harbinger of this change was the shift from the M-14 rifle to the M-16. The M-14 was the standard infantry rifle in the army since 1957 until it ended its military production run in 1964. The M-14 was three pounds heavier than the M-16 and fired the NATO standard 7.62 round. It had a 20 round magazine and fired semi-automatically. In contrast, the M-16 fired semi-automatically or on full automatic. Magazines were made in 20, 30 or fifty round capacities and the smaller 5.56mm ammo was lighter to carry compared to the M-14. The M-14 had better range, stopping power, and accuracy – advantages that were offset by nature of combat in Vietnam. What mattered to the troops in the field was a large

quantity of bullets at close range forcing the enemy to keep his head down. The M-16 fulfilled this role perfectly and has remained the mainstay of the U.S. Armed forces ever since.

Another important weapon during the war was the .45 Colt pistol. The M1911A1 remained the sidearm of the American soldier. The weapon had not changed since its adoption in World War I. The high stopping power combined with its reliability kept it in the American arsenal. The pistols were issued to all officers and high-ranking sergeants. With the Colt pistol and its .45-caliber ammunition commonly used, the Thompson submachine gun was also popular with American troops. The Thompson was not official military issue, but a surplus of the weapons appeared on the Vietnamese black market and American troops purchased them to supplement their firepower. Since the Thompson used the same ammo as the Colt, most commanders did not object to their soldiers using the weapon. The Thomson machine gun came with a 20- or 30-round magazine and was used by troops guarding airfields or riding swift boats in the Mekong Delta.

The communist forces in Vietnam had a diverse array of weapons. Many of their small arms were captured from French and American forces. Chinese and Warsaw pact allies provided what could not be scrounged from the enemy. Well-supplied Viet Cong units and North Vietnamese Army formations carried the AK-47 rifle or its Chinese equivalent, the Simonov SKS. The weapon was light, had a high rate of fire, and was reliable. The statistics for both weapons are exactly the same.

The pistol of choice for the communist forces was the TT33 7.62mm automatic pistol. A favorite of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese army officers, the Chinese-manufactured weapon had similar characteristics to the Colt .45 but chambered a 7.62mm round.

### The M-14 Combat Rifle and the M-21 Sniper Rifle

The following are the statistics for the M14 combat rifle as taken from p. HT115. The M14 was a sniper rifle before 1969 and was a favorite of U.S. Marines who felt the M16 was an unreliable weapon.

The M21 was the sniper version of the M-14 and was used by snipers and pathfinders in Vietnam from 1969 to the end of the war. The M21 came with a flash suppressor and a 3× to 9× scope.

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Malf</i>	<i>Dmg</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Acc</i>	<i>1/2D</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Wt.</i>	<i>RoF</i>	<i>Shots</i>	<i>ST</i>	<i>Rcl</i>	<i>TL</i>
M14 .308 1959 US	Crit	7d	14	11	1000	4655	11	11	20+1	11	-3	6
M21 .308 1959 US	Crit	7d	14	11	1000	4655	11	3	20+1 or 5+1	11	-3	6

# Heavy Weapons

Both the communists and the Allies used heavy weapons to support themselves in the field. Machine guns, grenade launchers, and anti-tank weapons were all employed in close quarters and with deadly accuracy.

The allies used the M79 grenade launcher with three principal types of rounds. The first round was the HE round, which does 2d+2 of damage plus an additional 2d of fragments. The second type of round was a buckshot round that contained 27 00 buckshot and fired like a large shotgun round. This round does 7d worth of damage, and follows all the rules of standard shotgun shells. Finally, the M79 fired smoke rounds. A smoke round does 1d of concussion damage and generates a cloud of smoke with a two-hex radius that blocks line of site.

The machine gun for American troops was the M-60. Often taken on patrol, the weapon could provide a curtain of fire when the situation became desperate. For more static positions, U.S. forces counted on the Browning .30-caliber machine gun and the .50-caliber machine gun. These weapons needed more than one soldier to operate and could only be used on tripods.

Vietnam also saw the introduction of the light anti-tank weapon, or LAW rocket. The LAW was used almost exclusively as a bunker buster or for attacking entrenched enemies. The weapon could be easily carried by a soldier. This meant that a squad could have up to 10 LAW rockets. In reality, these weapons were used more sparingly, issued to every other man in a squad.

The communists did not have a match for the LAW rocket until the debut of the RPG-7 rocket launcher in 1967. The weapon now synonymous with third world armies was used against troops, armored vehicles, fortifications, and even helicopters. Unlike the LAW, the RPG could be reloaded and became a favorite ambush weapon of the Viet Cong.

Most machine guns for the communists were Russian or Chinese knock-offs of the Type 24 Maxim machine gun. The Type 24s were not very portable and used only in defensive positions.

## Artillery

America had a tremendous variety of artillery at its disposal. The three primary types of weapons were the eight-pound gun, the 105mm howitzer, and the 155mm howitzer. Each of these weapons required a crew that was stationed at the fire base, but when called upon, they could quickly deliver enough

fire power to force the communists to retreat into the jungle. Players and GMs are encouraged to read the rules for artillery fire in pp. HT71-78.

Artillery could not travel everywhere, so troops in the field relied on man-portable mortars. The mortar of choice in Vietnam was the M29 81mm mortar. For operations of a company of troops or greater, the M29 provided the necessary firepower and range to beat back most attacks from long range. For smaller operations and the communists, the 60mm M2 mortar came into play. Smaller and lighter than the M29, the M2 could be fired without its base plate. This made it perfect for hit-and-run type operations.

The communists also relied on captured and obsolete American 75mm recoilless rifles. These weapons, scrounged from the French during the first Indochina war, made life miserable for the allies.

# Vehicles

Two major types of vehicles dominated the skies over Vietnam: the helicopters of the more traditional military units and the magic carpets of the 101st Spellborn. This section will describe the general characteristics of these craft for roleplaying.

## Choppers

Helicopters were the best means of transportation used in Vietnam. They could carry tons of cargo, haul squads of troops, and carry more firepower than a World War II tank. The only disadvantage was the noise they made while in flight. The sound of choppers struck fear into the Viet Cong; until the introduction of the RPG, the only effective weapon the communists had against helicopters was their rifles. Choppers also warned the communists to retreat if they felt they could not dictate the battle. The following are general descriptions of two of the most common choppers used in Vietnam.

### UH-1 "Huey"

The Huey was the most widely used helicopter in Vietnam. By January 1968, 2,217 of the aircraft were in service. The Huey was used for both combat and non-combat roles in country. Models were used to evacuate casualties, transport supplies, and carry troops into combat. Other models were transformed into gunships, packing heavy firepower to ferret out the enemy.

The Huey had a crew of four: two pilots and two door gunners. It could safely transport an additional 12 troops and could reach top speeds of 110 mph. A

single tank of fuel gave the helicopter a range of 293 miles. The medical version of the chopper had space for six stretchers and a corpsman. The medical version was not armed and was emblazoned with a Red Cross.

The Huey gunship packed a deadly arsenal. The doors of the craft each had an M60 machine gun placed on bungee cables and fired by the crew. Outside the cabin the craft had two M-6 weapon pods. These pods often had four M60 machine guns mounted to fire forward. Other combinations included a .30-caliber machine gun married to a rocket pod with nine or seventeen 2.75-inch rockets.

## CH47-”Chinook”

If the Huey was the pick-up truck of the Vietnam helicopter fleet, then the Chinook was the bus, tractor trailer, and tow truck. The Chinook has a crew of two pilots. It could accommodate up to 33 seats for troops or 22 litters for wounded. It had a maximum speed of 195 mph and could travel 300 miles on a single tank of fuel.

Compared with the Huey, the Chinook is lightly armed. The helicopter mounted a single 7.62mm machine gun by the rear door of the aircraft to provide fire for the troops leaving or entering the vehicle. What made the Chinook indispensable was its lifting capacity. A single Chinook could lift up to 20,000 lbs. It often transported artillery pieces and recovered other helicopters that were shot down. By January 1968, Chinooks were active in Vietnam.

## Carpets

Magic carpets did not gain widespread use in the war until after 1968. Prior to the escalation of the war, magic carpets, or “rugs” as the troops called them, were issued to special troops like the 101st Spellborne and the 13th NOG. Troops would quietly ride their carpets into battle and then roll them up and carry them as they marched through the jungle.

Rugs were quiet and stealthy, but had several disadvantages. First, unless given additional enchantments, they provided little protection to the troops riding them. Until the issue of Kevlar and missile-shielded carpets in 1967, troops were killed and wounded as the communists fired

bullets at them from the ground. Second, compared to a helicopter, the only weapons a rug could carry were those in the hands of the people riding it. This meant that anything more powerful than an M60 machine gun was out of the question. Finally, rugs had a limited carrying capacity. A Huey could transport an entire squad in one trip; it would take three LUC-1s each with a trained pilot to do the same task.

The three most commonly used rugs used by troops in Vietnam are the “Lucky,” the “Persian,” and the “Dust Bunny.”

### LUC-1 “Lucky”

This was the first military issue rug with a missile shield spell. The rug covers six hexes and can accommodate four people including the pilot. It has a power of 15 and a top speed of 30 mph. The rug itself has a PD 2 and a DR 8 versus bullets. When not flying it weighs 39 lbs.

### UC-23 “Persian”

The Persian was the heavy-duty rug designed to carry as many troops as possible. The carpet covered 16 hexes with a power of 17 and a top speed of 34 mph. The Persian included a missile shield spell and seating for 14 people including the pilot. Like the Lucky, it was made from Kevlar and had a PD 2 and a DR 8 versus bullets. The carpets were decorated with Middle Eastern themes and gave off a faint odor of incense when flown. When not being used, it weighs 49 lbs.

### AC-05 “Dust Bunny”

The Dust Bunny began as an experiment by Thaumaturgy students at the university of New Mexico. ROTC cadets brought it to Vietnam and it became the premiere reconnaissance rug. The rugs were not Kevlar, but did have a missile shield spell on them. Covering only four hexes, what distinguished this carpet was that it was powerful and fast with a top speed of 36 mph and a power of 18. The Dust Bunny also had an Illusion Disguise spell which when activated could conceal the carpet in enemy territory. The carpet was usually decorated with rabbit motifs or other popular cartoon characters. It can seat two people including the pilot, and when not in use weighs 12 lbs.



# 4. The Men from “Fox” Company



Company F, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division is the home for the players in a *Funny New Guys* adventure. Known as the “Fighting Foxes,” the company lives at Fire Base 23 on hill number 562 along route 6C near the villages of Plei Hodrong Thoung and Plei Ya Bo. The Special Forces camp at Plei Me is roughly 10 miles to the south, and the Air Field at Pleiku is 23 miles northeast.

The fire base is on a hill overlooking route 6C and faces westward toward Cambodia. It supports a battery of three 105mm howitzers, a small squadron of flying carpets, and the men of Company F. Some traffic can reach the base by jeep, but most supplies are provided by helicopter. Unlike most of the 101st,

which moved to Chi Lai in 1967, “Fox” company was ordered to stay at Fire Base 23 and stand watch over the Ho Chi Minh trail just beyond the Cambodian border. If Plei Me was attacked or another fire base needed help, Fox company could provide reinforcements.

For ordinary grunts, fire base “two-three” is just another hot and humid outpost in the jungle with little contact with the rest of the world. Contact with the enemy is sporadic and consists of half-hearted rocket or mortar attacks. A combat patrol ranging in size from two squads to a platoon

leaves the base every day. Injuries from booby traps are low, and the entire base has adapted to its situation with a grim professionalism. The company has lost four lieutenants to combat and traps in the last six months. This rapid turn over in leadership has placed greater importance on the sergeants who keep the company in fighting shape.

When the players arrive in Vietnam, they are sent through processing and assigned to Fox company. According to the clerks at the division headquarters in Chi Lai, heavy fighting has broken out in the area and they are being sent as replacements. After a two-hour helicopter ride from Chi Lai to Pleiku, they take a brief hop to the fire base and their new life in Indian Country.

# Old Men, Ticket Punchers, and Common Grunts

The following five characters will change the daily lives of the players. Four represent immediate superiors while the fifth is a fellow grunt counting the days before he returns to the states.

## Captain Dale Muncie, Fox Company Commander

138 points

Born 1939; Age 28; 5'11" 170 lbs. "Dish soap" blond hair cut in military fashion, brown eyes, and a perpetual five o'clock shadow.

Captain Muncie joined the armed forces as a graduate from New York City College in 1960. In the seven years since becoming an officer, he has worked his way up the ranks in a slow and steady fashion, becoming a platoon leader in the 101st Spellborne during the early Project Griffin days. When the division was rotated to Vietnam, Muncie was asked to stay behind to assist the training of new recruits and officers. The young and ambitious officer did not like it but he stayed home, kept his mouth shut, and did his job.

As veterans returned home from Vietnam in late-1966, Muncie requested reassignment from the training battalion to a command post. He was rewarded for his patience with a promotion to captain and a combat command over Fox company.

Captain Muncie is a typical officer in Vietnam. He tries to do his job to his best ability and not get his men killed. In spite of his military career, he tries to keep in touch with his urban collegiate past. He is a jazz fan and can argue for hours about his favorite performers, particularly David Brubeck. He occasionally reads a "contemporary" novel and keeps a pipe with him as a "pacifier" because he thinks they make him look more distinguished.

Though he may fancy himself a sophisticated Jazz hound, Captain Muncie is all business when running the Fox company. He isn't tolerant of pranks and trusts the advice of his senior noncommissioned officers. Muncie is aware how he handles himself in Vietnam might affect his remaining career so he is overly aggressive in trying to find and kill the communists in his sector. This overconfidence has created mixed feelings in the ranks. The troops respect Muncie for his firm but fair hand and his willingness to kick butt and take names with the VC.

Unfortunately, some junior NCOs think he is using the command to pad his resume before going back to the states.

**ST** 12 [20]; **DX** 11 [10]; **IQ** 12 [20]; **HT** 11 [10].

Speed 5.50; Move 5

Dodge 5; Parry 5 (Rifle Bayonet).

**Advantages:** Military Rank +4 [20]; Fit [5]; Voice [10].

**Disadvantages:** Military Duty [-10]; Sense of Duty to Men [-10]; Overconfidence [-10]; Poor Reputation -2 (Non-traditional army unit, Regular army types 10 or less).

**Quirks:** Sleepy Drinker; Enjoys riding on carpets; Dislikes: Tunnels and Being underground; Fond of Jazz music; Does not smoke but has a pipe and keeps it handy (calls it his pacifier). [-5]

**Skills:** Administration-14 [6]; Armoury-11 [1]; Bard-13 [4]; Brawling-14 [8]; Camouflage-13 [1]; Detect Lies-11 [2]; First Aid-12 [1]; Guns: Anti-Tank Weapons-11 [1]; Guns: Assault Rifle-14 [8]; Guns: Grenade Launcher-12 [2]; Guns: Machine Gun-12 [2]; Guns: Pistol-15 [16]; Knife-12 [2]; Leadership-12 [2]; Orienteering-12 [2]; Parachuting-12 [2]; Spear: Bayonet on Rifle-11 [2]; Tactics-12 [4]; Thrown Weapon: Grenade-13 [4]; Traps-12 [2]; Trivia: Jazz Music-12 [2]; Stealth-12 [4].

**Spells:** Spell Throwing-11 [2].

**Languages:** English (Native)-12 [0].

## 1st Sergeant Larry Otis

116 points

Born 1932; Age 35; 5'8" 185 lbs. An African-American with close-cropped hair and hazel eyes. A cup of coffee can usually be found within arm's reach.

Larry Otis was too young to fight World War II, so when he turned 17, he enlisted in the Army and became a paratrooper in Korea. The young soldier was decorated for bravery twice. Enjoying the recognition, he decided to remain in the Army.

Otis moved through the ranks as a paratrooper, drifting between the 82nd Airborne and the 101st Spellborn. When the unit was assigned to Vietnam, Otis was among the first to go. Spending most of his time in country at Battalion HQ, Otis did not see

much action. Returning to the states, the sergeant was granted a promotion in exchange for another tour in Vietnam. Now, Larry is the company 1st sergeant for Fox Company.

Larry is an experienced noncommissioned officer and knows when to defer to authority and when to bend the rules to get things done. His experience and common sense help prevent superior officers from making deadly mistakes.

Currently, he has a good working relationship with Captain Muncie, who asks the right questions and is firm with the men. He enjoys his authority and tries to be a father figure to the young soldiers, because he remembers the terror he felt when he first began fighting in Korea.

If the first sergeant has any failing, it is his temper. Otis does not like disrespect toward himself or any other African-American soldiers, and has punished people for being less enlightened than he is. His temper is also reflected in his fighting style, which finishes his enemy with his combat knife or bayonet. The other troops refer to the sergeant as “Mr. Hardcore,” and that moniker suits Larry just fine.

**ST** 12 [20]; **DX** 11 [10]; **IQ** 11 [10]; **HT** 12 [20].

Speed 5.75; Move 5

Dodge 5; Parry 6 (Rifle Bayonet).

**Advantages:** Military Rank +2 [10]; Fit [5]; Common Sense [10]; Composed [5]; Reputation +2 (Experienced Old Hand, All enlisted men 10 or less); Reputation: +1 (Experienced NCO, All officers +1).

**Disadvantages:** Military Duty [-10]; Bad Temper [-10]; Trademark (leaves behind playing cards) [-5]; Poor Reputation -2 (Non-traditional army unit, Regular army types 10 or less).

**Quirks:** Thinks he can play poker; Talks about baseball trivia; Keeps a pet lizard in his hooch; Always has a cup of coffee nearby; Likes to call all young enlisted people “son.” [-5]

**Skills:** Armoury-11 [1]; Brawling-14 [8]; Camouflage-13 [1]; Detect Lies-10 [2]; Fast-Talk-11 [2]; First Aid-12 [1]; Gambling (default)-6 [0]; Guns: Anti-Tank Weapons-11 [1]; Guns: Assault Rifle-14 [8]; Guns: Grenade Launcher-12 [2]; Guns: Machine Gun-12 [2]; Intimidation-11 [2]; Knife-13 [4]; Leadership-11 [2]; Orienteering-12 [2]; Parachuting-12 [2]; Spear: Bayonet on Rifle-12 [4]; Stealth-12 [4]; Tactics-12 [4]; Thrown Weapon: Grenade-13 [4]; Traps-12 [2]; Trivia: Baseball Facts (pre-1967)-11 [2]; Stealth-12 [4].

**Spells:** Spell Throwing-11 [2].

**Languages:** English (Native)-11 [0].

## Staff Sergeant Tim “Timmy” Kapecki

**120 points**

Born 1943; Age 24; 5’9” 165 lbs. A scrappy boyish-looking soldier with unkempt short brown hair.

“Timmy” Kapecki grew up in the steel mill town of Gary, Indiana, and for as long as he could remember, he wanted to be someplace else. This made him an easy target for military recruitment, and he signed up in 1963. The young soldier learned his craft as machine gunner and point man for his infantry squad. As he matured, Timmy slowly moved up the ranks and became a squad leader with a rank of sergeant. By 1966, the young soldier was sent to Vietnam. When he returned from his tour, Timmy reenlisted and was granted another promotion in exchange for another tour of Vietnam.

Kapecki is a different man today than the infantry squad leader who first set foot in country in 1966. He has developed a drinking problem, and still feels gravely responsible for the death of his point man and grenadier from a VC ambush. His lighthearted attitude about being a soldier has been replaced with a grim composure fueled by alcohol.

The platoon knows that Timmy likes to drink, but doesn’t care because he never patrols while intoxicated and does his best to keep casualties to a minimum. Additionally, Timmy is a crack shot. When he walks point with a shotgun, he is the Viet Cong’s worst nightmare. The sergeant also has the reputation of getting his platoon leaders wounded and sent home. Two stepped on landmines; another fell victim to a booby trap. This constant overturn has made Timmy the only steady leadership for the platoon in the last six months.

As 2nd Lieutenant Henderson learns the ropes and Captain Muncie shows more concern about Timmy’s drinking, the dynamic is shifting. The third platoon is still “Timmy’s Boys,” but like everything in Vietnam, everything could change instantly.

**ST** 11 [10]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 11 [10]; **HT** 13 [30].

Speed 6.25; Move 6

Dodge 6; Parry 6 (Rifle Bayonet).

**Advantages:** Awareness [15]; Composed [5]; Fit [5]; Military Rank +1 [5].

**Disadvantages:** Military Duty [-10]; Alcoholism [-15]; Addiction: Tobacco [-5]; Poor Reputation -2 (Non-traditional army unit, Regular army types 10 or less).

**Quirks:** Drinks Beer to satisfy cravings; Protective of FNGs; Has a pro football team pin on his

booney hat; Listens to “Doors tapes over and over; Likes to steal cigarettes from communist prisoners or the dead. [-5]

**Skills:** Area of Knowledge: Trails around fire base -11 [1]; Armoury-11 [1]; Brawling-15 [8]; Camouflage-12 [1]; Detect Lies-11 [2]; First Aid-11 [1]; Fast-Talk-11; Guns: Anti-Tank Weapons-12 [1]; Guns: Assault Rifle-15 [8]; Guns: Grenade Launcher-12 [2]; Guns: Machine Gun-13 [2]; Guns: Shotgun-14 [2]; Knife-13 [2]; Leadership-11 [2]; Orienteering-11 [2]; Parachuting-13 [2]; Spear: Bayonet on Rifle- 12 [2]; Tactics-11 [4]; Thrown Weapon: Grenade-14 [4]; Traps-11 [2]; Stealth-12 [4].

**Spells:** Spell Throwing-12 [2].

**Languages:** English (Native)-12 [0].

## 2nd Lieutenant David Henderson

**120 points**

Born 1945; Age 22; 5’9” 162 lbs. A young, eager-looking man with black hair in a military flattop cut.

David’s father served in the 101st Airborne during World War II and fought in Korea with the 82nd Airborne. While in Korea, David’s father was seriously wounded and forced to leave the service. Filled with stories of courage and adventure from his father, David enrolled at the United States Military Academy at West Point. His graduation was the proudest moment of his and his father’s lives.

Like many West Point graduates during the Vietnam War, David was given hasty training and then sent into the jungle. West Point seems like years ago to a young lieutenant learning how to be a combat officer.

Lieutenant Henderson always craved acceptance from his father and from fellow cadets at the Point. At Fire Base 23, he does just about anything to earn the respect and acceptance of his troops. He trusts the advice of Staff Sergeant Kapecki, when he is sober or on patrol, and tries to play down his military training at West Point. This approach has had mixed results but, so far, no one has been killed or seriously wounded.

Unfortunately, habits learned over a lifetime are hard to suppress. Lieutenant Henderson jumps whenever Captain Muncie calls and keeps his uniform and hooch in tiptop shape. This behavior has led the troops to unfairly label Henderson a brown nose. The young lieutenant also has a budding relationship with a Red Cross volunteer back at battalion headquarters. The young woman appreciates the attention from the

officer, but neither has let their feelings interfere with their duties.

**ST** 11 [10]; **DX** 11 [10]; **IQ** 11 [10]; **HT** 13 [30].

Speed 6; Move 6

Dodge 6; Parry 6 (Rifle Bayonet).

**Advantages:** Fit [5]; Military Rank +3 [15].

**Disadvantages:** Military Duty [-10]; Post Combat Shakes [-5]; Poor Reputation -2 (Non-traditional army unit, Regular army types 10 or less).

**Quirks:** Secret: West Point Graduate; Attempts to fit in with troops, sometimes with comical effect; Perceived as a brown nose to the captain by the men; Tape records messages home to family, Has crush on Red Cross volunteer back at Battalion HQ. [-5]

**Skills:** Administration-13 [6]; Armoury-11 [1]; Brawling-14 [8]; Camouflage-11 [1]; Detect Lies-10 [2]; Engineering: Construction-13 [6]; First Aid-11 [1]; Fast-Talk-11; Guns: Anti-Tank Weapons-12 [1]; Guns: Assault Rifle-14 [8]; Guns: Grenade Launcher-12 [2]; Guns: Machine Gun-13 [2]; Guns: Pistol-13 [2]; Knife-13 [2]; Leadership-11 [2]; Orienteering-11 [2]; Parachuting-11 [2]; Spear: Bayonet on Rifle- 12 [2]; Tactics-11 [4]; Thrown Weapon: Grenade-13 [4]; Traps-11 [2]; Stealth-12 [4].

**Spells:** Spell Throwing-11 [2].

**Languages:** English (native)-11 [0].

## Corporal Earnest “Fluffy” Faran

**100 points**

Born 1947; Age 20; 5’9” 162 lbs. A fox-person chimera with tight reddish fur. Does not attempt to conceal his nature and has cut a hole into his trousers to accommodate his tail.

“Fluffy” was born in the aftermath of the Trinity event as a “Fox Person.” Earnest grew up in western Texas with other chimera children. He still experienced prejudice and teasing, but the companionship of other chimeras and the support of his parents helped the young man survive adolescence with few problems.

When Earnest graduated from high school, he enlisted into the Army to become a member of the 101st Spellborn, the home to other chimeras in the army. He has found that other chimeras are not a protection from bullets. While the army is better than the outside world, it is still rife with prejudice against chimeras. Now, Corporal Faran is counting the days until his tour expires and he returns to his native Texas.



Earnest compensates for his chimera nature and the social prejudice against it by playing harmless pranks on people who bother him. He once left a spider in the platoon sergeant's bunk. Naturally, Timmy rewarded the fox man by putting him on latrine duty. Earnest likes gambling and bets on professional boxing. One night, on a trip to Pleiku, he won over \$3,000 playing dice.

Faran is a deadly shot with a sniper rifle and his chimera abilities make him a natural choice to walk point. Since he has taken over point duties, no one has died. The captain noticed his abilities and has sent the young soldier on special projects to find and kill VC tax collectors and officers.

The new responsibilities have given the young soldier some juice with the other troops and the respect of the NCOs. Faran has found companionship with his fellow soldiers, but became a killer to win their respect. This contradiction is unsettling to him.

**ST** 11 [10]; **DX** 11 [10]; **IQ** 11 [10]; **HT** 12/11 [20].  
Speed 5.75; Move 5  
Dodge 5; Parry 5 (Rifle Bayonet).

**Advantages:** Acute Hearing +2 [4]\* Acute Taste and Smell +3 [6]\*; Fur [0]\*; Fit [5]; Sharp Teeth [5]\*; Speak with Animals (Canines and Foxes -30%) [11]\*; Ultrahearing [5]\*; Knack: Perfect Illusion Disguise (as Human) [10]\*; Military Rank +0 [0].

**Disadvantages:** Dependency (Mana, Common, Constantly) [-25]\*; Reduced Hit Points-1 [-5]\*; Social Stigma (Minority group) [-10]\*; Vulnerability (2d from silver and DN) [-10]\*; Military Duty [-10]; Addiction: Tobacco [-5]; Poor Reputation -2 (Non-traditional army unit, Regular army types 10 or less).

**Quirks:** Prefers to walk point; Snores in his sleep; Follows and bets on pro-Boxing; Does not use knack to hide chimera nature; Has a reputation as being a prankster among the other enlisted men. [-5]

**Skills:** Armoury-11 [1]; Brawling-13 [8]; Camouflage-11 [1]; First Aid-11 [1]; Fast-Talk-11; Gambling (Specialty: Boxing)-11/16 [2]; Guns: Anti-Tank Weapons-11 [1]; Guns: Assault Rifle-13 [8]; Guns: Grenade Launcher-11 [2]; Guns: Machine Gun-11 [2]; Guns: Sniper Rifle-15 [16]; Knife-12 [2]; Leadership-11 [2]; Orienteering-11 [2]; Parachuting-11 [2]; Stealth-13 [4]; Spear: Bayonet on Rifle- 11 [2]; Survival: Jungle- 12 [4]; Tracking-13 [6]; Tactics-11 [4]; Thrown Weapon: Grenade-13 [4]; Traps-11 [2]; Stealth-13 [4].

**Spells:** Spell Throwing-11 [2].

**Languages:** English (Native)-11 [0].

\* Items are part of the Racial Package from being a "Fox Person" - 9 points.

## The Mission of Fox Company

Fox company and Fire Base 23 cast a large shadow across the surrounding countryside. The base is one of the last major outposts before the Cambodian border and has several roles. The roles can be broken into three major categories: military, research, and public affairs with the villagers.

### The Military Role

Being one of the last bases before the border means Fire Base 23 is a watchtower overlooking the Ho Chi Minh trail. If there are significant signs of Viet Cong activity, the local commander can order air strikes and artillery to disrupt it. If the enemy forms in major concentrations, the local commander can attack them.

The base's close proximity to the Special Forces base at Plei Me provides accessible reinforcements when necessary. Many soldiers aid and assist the "operators" out in the field. It is common for the

101st Spellborne to come to the rescue of an ambushed patrol or a unit cut off from friendly units. Fire Base 23 is uniquely situated to provide this rescue service.

Fox company patrols along the Ho Chi Minh trail and chases Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops back across the border with Cambodia. According to the rules of engagement from Washington, American troops should not go any farther west than the Cambodian border. In reality, patrols routinely cross over to snoop on the enemy. Units as small as a sniper team or a squad have blundered across the border and then found their way back. The fire base is the staging area for these politely disobedient acts of reconnaissance.

### The Research Role

The 101st Spellborne is the first combat division to integrate magic with military equipment.

Although perfected at Ft. Benning, Georgia, these tactics are constantly being reviewed in the field. Fire Base 23 works as a huge laboratory, testing the effectiveness of different spells, magic items, and weapons in combat. Fox company is part of that experiment.

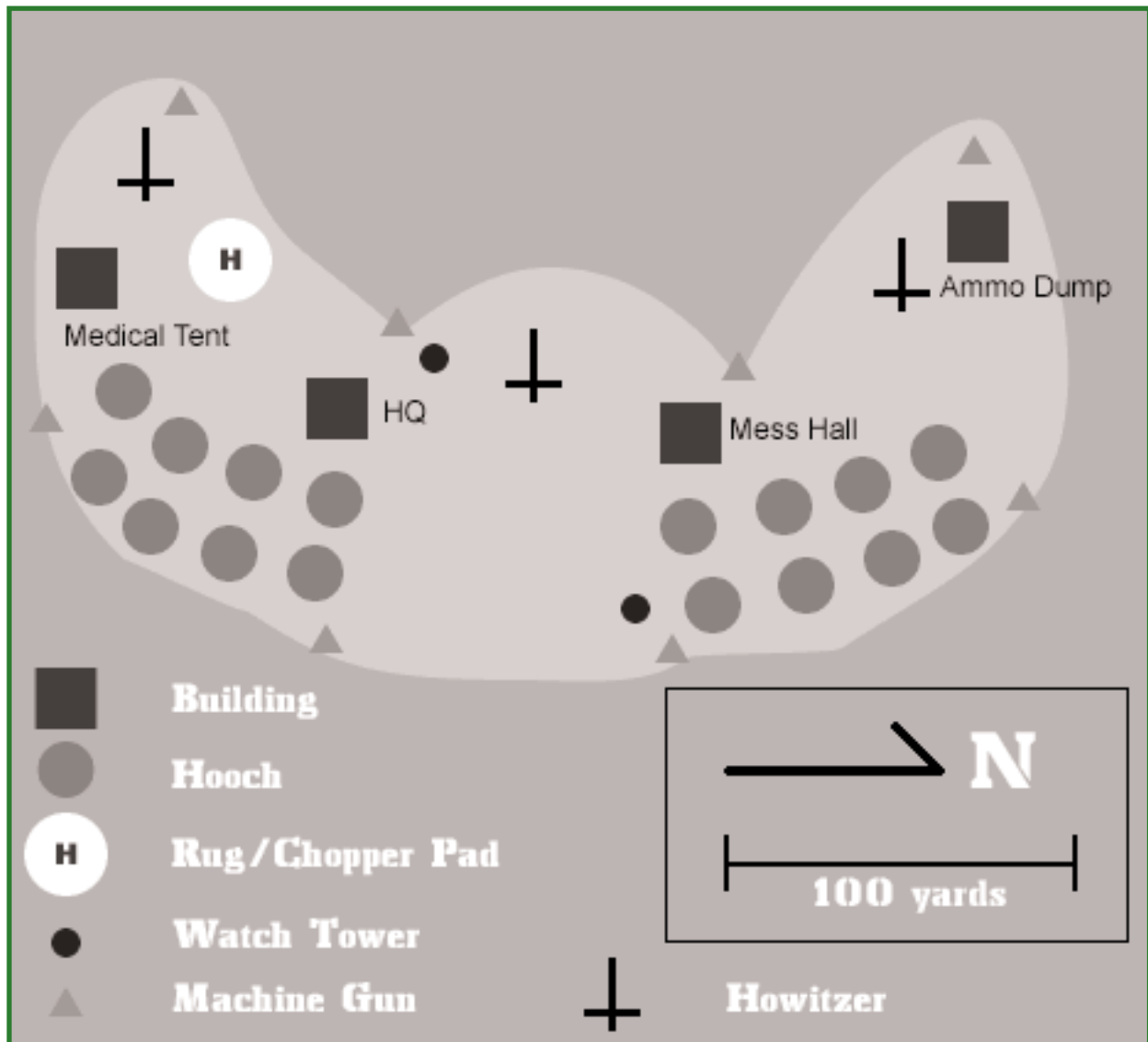
The company applies the tactics of patrolling to magic carpets. The Fox company uses twice as many magic carpets as any other unit in the 101st. At present, the company can move half of its members by rug in a silent but deadly fashion. The Dust Bunny model has proven particularly effective in finding the enemy, and a single Persian can lift an entire squad into battle.

The company is discovering that stealth requires the carpets, but helicopters provide the necessary firepower to suppress the enemy when the shooting starts. Also, flying a carpet at night without night vision goggles can be deadly.

## Relations With the Locals

The troops from Fire Base 23 have the most contact with the villagers from Plei Ya Bo. Half a mile west, the local villagers provide information, fresh pigs, hashish, and the occasional case of beer for the troops. Whenever a Viet Cong tax collector stops by the village, the soldiers at the base are the first to be notified. This has fostered a symbiotic relationship between the troops and the locals. Neither side fully trusts the other, but it is working for the moment.

The principle economy of the village depends on keeping the soldiers happy, so locals offer to do laundry and clean around the base. This job falls to the younger, often teenage, women of the village. The troops consider these villagers little threat and targets for possible liaisons. Captain Muncie frowns on any kind of fraternization between the troops and the



local girls. He even transferred a sergeant back to battalion headquarters because a village elder complained that his daughter was receiving unwanted advances. This has forced the entire company to be very discrete when dealing with the “help,” because no one wants to be transferred or disciplined for being “ungentlemanly.”

The locals do not like that the American base even exist, but they also don’t support the Saigon government and their alternating policies of taxation, neglect, and repression. The Viet Cong are no better, collecting taxes, conscripting young men against their will, and stealing food. Fire Base 23 represents a form of protection from the Viet Cong and a chance to be left alone by the Saigon government. To the village elders, this is the best situation possible in the middle of a war zone.

## Becoming One of “Timmy’s Boys”

When players first arrive at Fire Base 23, they notice the overwhelming odor of cordite and explosives. The trees to the west and south of the fire base are blown to bits and some are still on fire.

When asked, the helicopter pilot tells the players “Yeah! It was pretty nuts last night. Charlie fired a few more RPGs into the base than usual.”

Stepping off the chopper, the new soldiers have orders to report to the base commander for their new assignments. A busy soldier motions in the general direction of the command post and tells the players to hurry. It seems that the Viet Cong attack helicopters that linger too long at the landing pad.

Making their way to the command post, the PCs observe troops showering, cleaning their weapons, and lounging around. They also observe troops along the perimeter repairing barbed wire and standing guard.

When the players reach the command post, they are greeted by a sign with the following message:

*Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry  
Command Post*

*“Home of the Fighting Foxes”*

*Capt. Muncie Base Commander*

Upon entering the tent, they notice several enlistees people pecking at typewriters. The room is thick

with cigarette smoke. A map of the surrounding countryside occupies one side of the tent while an American flag hangs on another. A rug with an eagle motif covers the dirt floor and the smell of stale coffee is coming from a neglected pot simmering over a can of sterno.

An officer idly chats with a clerk doing paperwork and off in the corner Captain Muncie talks on a radio. He notices the players look lost inside the command center and approaches them once he finishes his call.

“It looks like you people are the new replacements,” he says. “Good to have you aboard. I am Captain Muncie, the commander here. As you can see, we have been a little busy, so don’t worry about the dust. First Sergeant Otis will give you a tour of the base and take you to your unit. I am putting all of you in the 3rd platoon. Lieutenant Henderson is the CO and Staff Sergeant Kapecki is the squad sergeant. Welcome to the ‘two-three’ and the Fighting Foxes, gentlemen.”

After his brief welcome, the Captain removes a pipe from his pocket and clenches it between his teeth. After a brief wait, 1st Sergeant Otis enters the tent and beckons the players outside.

“Alright, no need to loiter in the CP, get moving!”

Sergeant Otis is much older than the other troops on the base. He also looks like he should have the most stripes on his arm of anybody.

“It’s nice to see that you replacements are paying attention,” he says gruffly as they exit the tent. “I’m 1st Sergeant Otis. Captain Muncie – the fella with the pipe – he is the skipper here. Consider him your father. What he says goes. I’m like your momma. If you misbehave, I’m going to be the one who spansks you.”

“The first thing you people are going to do is remove your rank insignia,” the sergeant continues. “Seems that Charlie likes killing officers and sergeants so we are going to make it difficult for him to tell the difference. This is one of the captain’s standing orders, so when you get back to your hooch make sure you update your uniform. As you spend more time here at the base, you will be able to tell who is your superior and who is goofing on you. If you people follow me, I will show you around the base.”

The players receive a tour of the base, courtesy of the sergeant. He points out the areas of importance: the latrines, the mess hall, the showers, the location of the .50-caliber machine guns, and the ammunition dump. On the walk back from the ammunition dump, the players stop before a series of hooches covered in sandbags. Inside several troops lounge around a

homemade picnic table, smoking. A few more hang laundry out to dry. Otis barks at one of the lounging troops to fetch the lieutenant or platoon sergeant and then turns to the players.

“I am sure being out here in Indian Country is pretty overwhelming,” he says, “However, if you learn from the older hands, follow orders, and don’t try to be heroic, you will make it home in one piece. Got any problems, don’t bother the captain. Come to me and I’ll see if I can work it out. Wait here and the person in charge will take you to your bunks. Carry on.”

When Otis leaves a raggedy looking trooper with eyes red from drinking wanders over to the players.

“I see you have met Mr. Hardcore,” he says. “I’m the platoon sergeant, my buddies call me Tim, but you can call me Sergeant Kapecki for the time being. Grab your stuff. I’ll take you to your hooch.”

So begins the first official day at Fire Base 23 and Vietnam.

## Menial Duties

Soldiers in a combat zone have plenty of menial duties. The players are not exceptions. Each day, they should clean their weapons and their sleeping area, perform guard duty, and perform other duties as assigned by their superiors.

Since the players are Funny New Guys, they are assigned to the tasks the rest of the platoon does not want to do. They clean the latrines and haul trash to be burned. They run errands for their squad leader, Staff Sergeant Kapecki, or the Lieutenant.

## The Pecking Order

Unless the players have the advantage of military rank, the pecking order in a combat platoon is determined by how much experience a person has in Indian Country. The longer a soldier serves at the fire base, the more “juice” he has with his fellow troops. Between two soldiers with similar ranks but differing levels of experience, the one with more experience will command more respect.

Military rank is the multiplier to a soldier’s juice. This means that Staff Sergeant Kapecki, who already has a tour of duty under his belt, is usually obeyed by any soldier below him. The combination of formal rank and the informal juice obtained from experience combine to create the command structure at the base.

Players should have a military rank of zero and be considered Funny New Guys when they arrive on the base. This translates into a temporary -2 for all reaction rolls from fellow troops on the base. New troops

often died in the first four weeks of duty. Many soldiers psychologically compensated for this by ignoring Funny New Guys until they had proven themselves by surviving in battle. Once the players make it through their first four weeks they lose this reaction roll penalty.

Lieutenants command platoons. This command is usually a lieutenant’s first after initial training, so, depending on the individual, the quality of leadership can be very good or awful. Rookie lieutenants are often killed or wounded, so troops tend to treat them with respect, but don’t expect them to last very long. Second in line to the lieutenant is the platoon sergeant. He is an experienced enlisted person who takes command if the Lieutenant dies. Under the platoon sergeant are the squad leaders. These people hold the rank of sergeant and are responsible for the 10 or so regular troopers in their command. A platoon usually has three squads.

The third platoon of Fox company has not been gentle on platoon leaders. Three lieutenants have been wounded in the last six months. The present platoon leader has been in charge for less than a month. Staff Sergeant Kapecki provided the only stable leadership the unit had during this period. So the platoon has been nicknamed “Timmy’s Boys.” Troops from other platoons on the base often ask, “Aren’t you one of Timmy’s Boys?” as another way of saying, “You are a member of third platoon.” This kind of informality is common and Captain Muncie even uses the phrase from time to time.

Players start as the bottom of the barrel. Making friends will be difficult. They will spend most of their time being bullied and ordered around by higher-ranking and more-experienced troops. This subtle form of hazing takes place while the soldiers attempt to fight a war.

# Just Another Combat Patrol

Once the players learn the joys of cleaning latrines and being a Funny New Guy on the fire base they get to experience their first combat patrol. The mood around the base has been tense for the last three days, because the nightly rocket attacks have increased in intensity.

Captain Muncie leaves the task of “easing the situation” up to the third platoon.

## THE M-16 JAMMING IN VIETNAM

The M-16 rifle was the product of extensive research and development. When Defense Secretary Robert MacNamara saw the potential of the weapon, he pushed to have the weapon become the standard long rifle in the armed forces. This insistence was resisted by many of the officers in the Pentagon because there had never been this kind of change during a major conflict. MacNamara was insistent and threatened several officers' careers if the M-16 was not put into production and issued to the troops in the field.

The generals responsible for arming the troops felt the basic M-16 design needed some changes to make it more reliable. MacNamara thought this was stalling and pushed for the weapon's issue without the design changes. The weapon manufacturer, Colt, told the defense department that the weapon was low maintenance and did not need regular cleaning. They didn't consider the Vietnamese environment.

During 1966 and early 1967, stories began to surface about M-16 weapons jamming during

battle with the Viet Cong. There were even some incidents where the weapon blew up in the soldiers' hands. The reports failed to mention that many M-16s were never cleaned by the troops. U.S. Marines openly defied orders and continued to use the M-14 in the field because they did not trust the M-16. A series of congressional hearings followed. By the summer of 1967, new regulations required troops to clean their weapons. The Army also issued the M-16-A1 that incorporated the changes originally proposed by the Pentagon generals. Since then the M16-A1 has been the standard long rifle of the American Armed forces.

To simulate the unreliable nature of the M-16 in Vietnam, change the malfunction number from a critical failure to 16. If the soldier does not clean his weapon, then the number falls to 15. By 1967, many of the problems with M-16s were cleared up and the weapons malfunction number becomes a critical failure. After this point in a campaign, soldiers are adequately warned. If a soldier does not keep his weapon clean, the malfunction number becomes a 16.

Lieutenant Henderson unsurely addresses the players and the platoon.

"Uh, well the captain wanted me to talk to you about what we have to do," he says hesitantly. "The enemy is using rockets and RPGs to shell the base and the captain and battalion S-2 suspect that there might be an ammunition dump or VC camp close by causing all the trouble.

"We are supposed to go past route 6 and head southwest about five clicks and see if we can find anything. If we don't, we return back to the base."

With that, Henderson ends his briefing, and the first and third squads get ready for their combat patrol. The second squad remains behind on guard duty. Both Lieutenant Henderson and the Staff Sergeant will be going out on this patrol.

## The Stress of Combat Patrols

On a combat patrol, soldiers take a long hike through the wilderness while carrying weapons, ammunition, and the bare necessities. This duty is rotated through the three platoons of Fox company,

because it is a stressful experience. Several factors make a combat patrol hard on the players.

The dominant factor influencing patrols is the oppressive heat and humidity. GMs should tell players when they lose fatigue from heat exhaustion and should use the optional heat index rules to simulate these effects (p. 31). They should also consult the fatigue expenditure rules on p. B134 to keep the players uncomfortable. If done correctly, players should be concerned about fatigue lost during the patrol.

Next GMs should keep the players on edge by creating false alarms and red herrings. A rustle in the grass could just be the wind, or maybe a spooked rabbit. What looks like the cover of a trap might be a harmless pile of leaves. When the players are lulled into a sense of complacency, the danger becomes real and bad things happen. GMs can simulate this by writing down the perception rolls of the players and then secretly rolling them. On a success, tell them that they see, hear, or smell something that deserves their attention. Then the players make another roll publicly to see if they discover if it is a threat or not. This should drive the players to distraction and make them distrust everything.

Players also have to contend with booby traps, land mines, unexploded shells, and bombs. These were the biggest killers of soldiers in Vietnam. The most harrowing experience involves a mine explosion when players are least expecting it. This forces the players to deal with the casualty while wondering if they have blundered into a minefield. Countless hours of tense roleplaying can pass while players slowly feel their way out of danger.

Finally, the enemy is waiting for a chance to take on the Americans. Usually, the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese shot from tree lines or concealed positions. This makes them hard to spot and when the Americans fire back they can vanish back into the local terrain. Players should not see the enemy that is shooting at them. Instead they should respond to muzzle flashes and sounds. This means that players are automatically at a -3 to hit, in addition to range and size penalties. The characters should not know if their weapons hit or what kind of damage they did. The GM should keep track of all damage.

All of these factors should combine to make players very glad to be back at Fire Base 23 at the day's end.

### Rain and Combat

Soldiers in Vietnam often contended with heavy rain. Troops conducted patrols in the rain, lived in the rain and fought in the rain. Treat fighting in the rain as a general -3 to all vision rolls and a -3 combat modifier. This simulates the visibility problems fighting in the rain, and the problem individuals have with depth perception. In addition, reduce the malfunction number for all weapons by one level. Fighting in the rain and mud takes a greater toll on the human body. Increase the fatigue earned in combat by one.

## Making the Players Sweat While on Patrol

When the players patrol for the first time, the stepped up rocket attacks create an additional sense of urgency. Both the platoon sergeant and the lieutenant are along and the humidity is an uncomfortable 70%.

"Be careful guys," says Kapecki. "We lost the last lieutenant in this field,"

Henderson is noticeably uncomfortable and tells the men to keep moving.

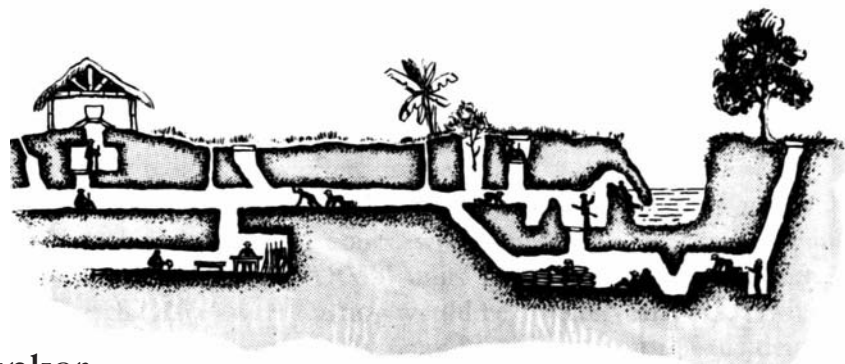
All eyes of the patrol are on "Fluffy" as he sniffs at the air and cranes his paranormal ears for some kind of clue. The GM rolls the dice and shakes his head mournfully telling one of the players they have found something. Out of the corner of their eye, they see something metallic. If they decide to investigate, they discover the object is a grenade. The entire platoon comes to a stop as they decide what to do about the danger.

Both Henderson and Kapecki reach the players and ask about what is going on. When the players tell them, Henderson orders another squad to investigate. They cautiously creep up on the object and then one of the soldiers exclaims.

"Jesus Christ!!! It's a fragment."

The other soldiers relax and get up off the ground. A few grim chuckles come from the more seasoned troops and the lieutenant mops his brow in relief. Kapecki retrieves the suspicious piece of metal and gives it to the players.

"This is a fragment left over from one of Charlie's homemade grenades," he says. "It's harmless. But at least you are paying attention. I'd rather you FNGs make rookie mistakes like this than sleepwalking. It means that you don't want to get killed. That's a pretty good start. Hang on to this . . . it's a souvenir."



A Vietnamese Bunker

After the lesson, the patrol takes a brief rest and then heads back to the fire base. When the players return, all they have to show for their efforts is fatigue loss, a few frayed nerves, and a piece of metal.

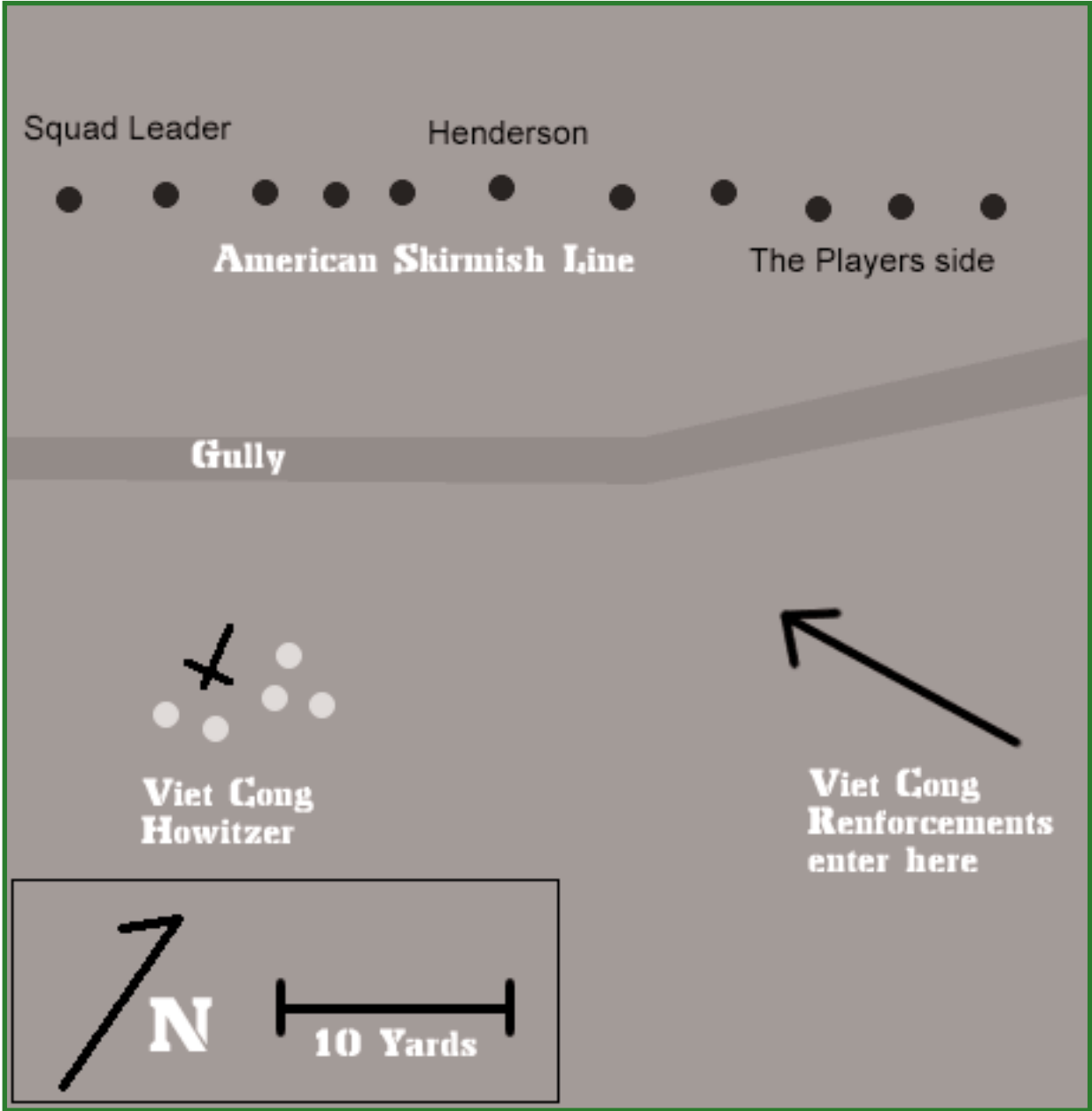
# A Bad Day on Patrol

After the players return from their first patrol, the mood on the base is still tense. The VC or the ammunition dump has not been found. Fortunately, neither the players nor the rest for the platoon were killed or

wounded. Captain Muncie decides to send two patrols out a day, one in the morning and another in the afternoon. Each patrol is about a squad in size and continues to look southwest of route 6 to find the enemy ammunition dump or VC camp. The players will have another patrol in three days.

# What the VC Are Doing

The Viet Cong would like Fire Base 23 to go away. The U.S. surveillance of the Ho Chi Minh trail has made smuggling artillery pieces and heavy equipment impossible, curtailing reinforcing the struggle farther south. An assault on the Plei Me



## TYPICAL VC FORCES

There is no such thing as a typical Viet Cong trooper. However, a GM looking to save time can use the following template to generate VC troops for battle. These three “generic” types of Viet Cong encompass most necessary player encounters.

### Troopers

The basic soldiers of the Viet Cong. They can be hardened guerilla fighters or conscripts thrown into the fray.

**Attributes:** ST 10-12, DX 10-13, IQ 10-12, HT 11-14.

**Advantages:** Fit.

**Disadvantages:** Duty: Military Service (Employer, 14 or less).

**Skills:** Guns: Light Assault Rifle (P/E), First-Aid (M/E), Survival: Jungle (M/A), Spear: Bayonet on Rifle (P/A).

### Officers

Though the leadership of the Viet Cong ranges from poor to excellent, all officers are committed to the expulsion of American forces from Vietnam.

**Attributes:** ST 11-13, DX 10-13, IQ 10-12, HT 11-14.

**Advantages:** Fit, Charisma +2.

**Disadvantages:** Duty: Military Service (Employer 14 or less).

**Skills:** Guns: Light Assault Rifle (P/E), Guns: Pistol (P/E), First-Aid (M/E), Survival: Jungle (M/A), Spear: Bayonet on Rifle (P/A), Tactics (Specialty: Guerrilla) (M/H).

### Commissars

Any unit company-size or larger will have a Commissar. They are the secret police and political education officers of the Viet Cong. They are the ones that make sure each soldier and officer in the field knows and obeys the “party line.” They are highly loyal and fanatical about their mission.

**Attributes:** ST 11-13, DX 10-13, IQ 10-12, HT 11-14.

**Advantages:** Fit, Voice.

**Disadvantages:** Duty: Military Service (Employer 14 or less), Fanatic: Communist.

**Skills:** Bard (M/A), Guns: Light Assault Rifle (P/E), Guns: Pistol (P/E), First-Aid (M/E), Leadership (M/A), Survival: Jungle (M/A), Spear: Bayonet on Rifle (P/A), Trivia: Communist Dogma (M/A).

Special Forces base would be a disaster, so Fire Base 23 is the next target of opportunity.

To accomplish this task, the VC have been smuggling rockets, RPGs, and mortars within firing distance of the base. Each night, they shell the base hoping to draw out the Americans. The tactic has not worked, so they are setting more booby traps and placing heavier artillery within striking range. They want to slowly lay siege to the base until the Americans blunder into a trap or abandon the location.

So far only a company of Viet Cong are engaging in this activity, but as more equipment and firepower arrive, so do more troops.

## A Meeting Engagement

The players blunder into a battle with Viet Cong engineers and artillerymen setting up a Soviet cannon

outside the base. The characters’ patrol will have been complicated by rain, which inhibits “Fluffy’s” heightened senses.

The battle will quickly draw the other Viet Cong in the area and force the captain to send in another platoon. When everything is over, the Viet Cong sneak back across the Cambodian border and the potential siege of the fire base is stopped.

## The Firefight

Lieutenant Henderson and the first squad go out on patrol. As new members of the first squad, the players are along for the adventure. They slowly make their way out into the jungle, passing route 6. When they are farther along, anyone with a critical success on their perception roll will notice footprints in the mud and tracks that resemble a wagon. Henderson stops the patrol, tells the troops to spread out, and move forward slowly in a skirmish line.



A few more meters down the trail, the PCs hear shots fired and race to the sound. Another member of the squad is blasting away with his M-16 into a group of shadows farther out in the jungle and red tracer bullets are racing past him. They have found the enemy and the enemy was expecting company.

The players are in a firefight with approximately 20 Viet Cong troops armed with rifles, grenades, and machine guns. As the battle continues, five more Viet Cong jump into the battle trying to flank the desperate players. The lieutenant calls for help from the base. The captain tells him to hold his position – help is on its way.

Incoming artillery whistles in over the rain and the explosions cause the Viet Cong to halt their offensive. Henderson orders a grenadier in the squad to shell the area of greatest enemy fire and then lay smoke to obscure their position. The grenade and smoke just make the Viet Cong more determined as the fighting picks up in intensity.

Players see their first Viet Cong soldiers up close when three of them burst through the smoke. As the players try to beat off the attack, the lieutenant uses his pistol to take down some of the Viet Cong. Some of the players' fellow squad members are wounded and the situation begins to appear very bad.

## Dust-Off and Rescue

As the players struggle for their lives more gunfire is heard, but instead of coming from the enemy it is raining down from above. Muncie and the entire second platoon are riding on Persian rugs to save the day. Everyone riding a carpet enjoyed the protection of the missile shield spell, so they fire away without fear of injury as long as they stay on the carpet.

As the carpets circle, laying down a curtain of lead for the first squad, the Viet Cong begin to break. Seeing the situation turning in his favor, Henderson shouts, "Follow me!" and begins an advance toward the enemy. Traveling 20 more yards, the squad discovers a Soviet-made howitzer, a few crates of ammunition, plenty of RPGs, and enemy dead.

## Aftermath

Once the shooting quiets down, Muncie lands his rug and attempts to survey the situation. The first squad, third platoon has killed 12 of the enemy, captured an enemy artillery piece, and stocks of ammunition. One soldier is killed and three others are wounded, including Henderson with a bullet gash

### Typical Allied Gear

The allies in Vietnam had the best equipment money could buy. The allies had so much equipment that their soldiers often left most of it at the fire base while on patrol.

Allies usually just took harnesses made of canvas and nylon to carry ammunition, equipment, and water. Uniforms were olive drab or tiger stripe combat utilities with "boonie hats" which resembled floppy fishing hats that provided protection from the sun. All soldiers in the field were issued an M-16 rifle, while officers packed the Colt .45 pistol. Troops in a support role were often issued a grenade launcher or machine gun to carry instead of their rifle.

The steel helmet and the flak jacket fell out of vogue among troops in Vietnam. In the hot, humid weather, the flak jacket (p B211) usually gave troops an extra level of encumbrance and increased the effective temperature by an extra 10 degrees. This meant troops, when patrolling through the jungle, did not wear flak jackets. Likewise, the steel helmet was hot, and troops tended to shun its use in the field – but not with the same frequency as the flak jacket.

### Typical VC Gear

The Communist Chinese or the Soviet Union supplied most of the Viet Cong's gear. Anything else was scavenged from the battlefield or stolen from the enemy. A typical Viet Cong trooper wore black "pajamas," which were comfortable in the jungle and provided protection from the elements. Instead of harnesses to carry equipment, the Viet Cong relied on bandoleers to transport ammunition and food.

Troops carried the AK-47 assault rifle. Officers used the tokarev pistol. Poorly equipped units would often have leftover French assault weapons and equipment. All Viet Cong carried rice and water to consume while on the trail. For longer patrols, the troops relied on canvas backpacks to transport personal effects, clothing, and bedrolls.

across his face. The Captain orders the wounded quickly evacuated to the base and other carpets to fly low above the forest and try to find the retreating Viet Cong.

## Post-Combat Issues

In the aftermath of the battle, several things will happen. All the soldiers wounded will receive the Purple Heart. A Purple Heart grants a +1 reaction bonus from other troops. The cost of this advantage can be paid for by experience, or a disadvantage related to the injury. A chopper flies the seriously wounded back to the Pleiku air base for further treatment. The dead are sent to Saigon for preparation and the trip back home.

Henderson will receive the Bronze Star for his actions in the Jungle and the squad leader will receive a commendation medal. The players will have to pack the gear of the troops sent home by injury or death. The players will also have to cope with the missing members of the squad. They are no longer Funny New Guys because they have combat experience. Now they will have to help the next batch of soldiers as they journey to Fire Base 23 and become replacement troops in the "Fighting Foxes."

Henderson is suffering from a bad case of post-combat shakes and has vomited on himself. The Captain orders him back to the base for medical care and turns to the players.

"Well men," he says, "Looks like you found the enemy."

"Yes sir," says the squad sergeant covered in mud and leaves.

"I'm sure your buddies back at the base will be glad to know they will sleep better tonight. Good work. Now take a rest and let second platoon finish the job."

Once the wounded are evacuated, the players fly by rug back to the fire base. They learn about the fate of their wounded squad members and describe their experiences to the others. They should be dirty, exhausted, and glad to be alive. Too bad they have 50 more weeks before they get a chance to return home. They are no longer Funny New Guys, now they are bloodied troops of the "Fighting Foxes."



# Bibliography

Many books, movies, and television shows can provide inspiration for GMs and players who want to simulate the Vietnam experience:

## Books

Dunstan, Simon. *Vietnam Choppers: Helicopters in Battle 1950 – 1975* (Osprey Publishing, 2003). A great source of background material with everything you ever wanted to know about helicopters. People looking for real world performance characteristics for **GURPS Vehicles** will like this volume. Also included are stories about the personalities who flew in Vietnam.

Karnow, Stanley. *Vietnam: A History*, (Penguin, 1984). With a clear and objective eye, Karnow traces the roots of the conflict in Vietnam back to the middle ages. He illustrates both the successes and the failures of the American war effort and provides detailed accounts of what leaders in Washington and Hanoi attempted to accomplish. Required reading for anyone that wants to know more about this period of history.

Moore, Harold G., and Joseph L. Galloway. *We Were Soliders Once . . . and Young*, (Random House, 1992). Galloway and Moore recall the first major clash between American Air Cavalry and the North Vietnamese Army in 1965. With keen attention to detail and harrowing examples, the authors give the reader a "you were there" experience.

Parish, John A. *Twelve, Twenty and Five*, (Bantam Books Inc., 1989). A lesser-known memoir about the war from the perspective of a doctor drafted into the Army to become a combat surgeon. Parish describes his training, life on a medical fire base, and interactions with the local villagers. He writes candidly about the stresses combat doctors face and the soldiers they care for.

## Movies

*Apocalypse Now*, D: Francis Ford Coppola, (1979). Required viewing for anyone running a dark campaign. The movie follows Martin Sheen as he

travels up a river to find and kill a renegade Special Forces Colonel (Marlon Brando). Along the way, Sheen's character encounters everything wrong and perverse about the war in Vietnam from widespread drug use to the indiscriminate killing of civilians.

*The Boys in Company C*, D: Sidney J. Furie (1978). While many people wanted to forget the war in Vietnam, this film was an unpleasant reminder about what it was like to get drafted and sent to fight. The film follows one draftee from Marine Corps basic training at Paris Island to the jungles. Along the way we learn about the marines' relationships with each other and the South Vietnamese.

*Hamburger Hill*, D: John Irvin, (1987). The film covers the capture of Ap Bia Mountain. The film is violent and unforgiving in its depiction of the battle and its impact on the 101st Airborne Division. The story also highlights the racial conflicts between the soldiers, the influence of the anti-war movement on troops, and the tactical errors made by commanders.

*Platoon*, D: Oliver Stone, (1986). Those looking for a more realistic portrayal of the fighting in Vietnam should watch this Oscar-winner about a soldier attempting to survive near the Cambodian border. The depictions of the more mundane aspects of being a

grunt and the detailed relationships of the sergeants who run the platoon make this a great movie.

## Television

*China Beach*, ABC (1988 to 1991). Starring Dana Delany, the series depicts life at a military hospital in Vietnam. Focusing on the lives of the nurses, Red Cross volunteers, and other women around the base, the series attempted to be both realistic and a night time soap opera. The results are mixed, but Delany's portrayal as an army nurse should be used as an archetype in any campaign.

*Tour of Duty*, CBS (1987 to 1990). Following one unit of soldiers from 1967 to 1970, the series touches many themes and events of the war. Unfortunately, the series tended to gloss over many complicated issues faced by the soldiers because they could not be accurately depicted on television.

## Games

*Recon and Advanced Recon* (1982, 1983, 1986). First published by Role Playing Games, Inc. and then Palladium Books, Recon offered a fictionalized account of the fighting in Indo-China. Each book brims with detail and numerous adventure ideas.

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