

Palladium Books® Presents:

THE

RIFTER®

Your Guide to the Megaverse®



January, 2004 Issue

Palladium Fantasy®

Yin-Sloth Jungles™ Conversions*

Ninjas & Superspies™

Psi-Stalker Vampires

Q&A

Rifts®

Fiction, News & More

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Some parents may find the violence, magic and supernatural elements of the games inappropriate for young readers/players. We suggest parental discretion.

Please note that none of us at Palladium Books® condone or encourage the occult, the practice of magic, the use of drugs, or violence.



The Rifter® Number 25

Your guide to the Palladium Megaverse®!

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RIFTER #25

Sourcebook and guide to the Palladium Megaverse®

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Based on the RPG rules, characters,
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Special Thanks to all our contributors, writers and artists - and a special welcome on board to the artists and writers making their debut in this issue. Our apologies to anybody who got accidentally left out or their name misspelled.

Contents - The Rifter® #25 - January, 2004

Page 6 - Art

Brandon C. Clark of Drunken Style Studio was just playing around with this illustration. He's been experimenting with different effects, toning and art techniques on paper and with the computer. When Kevin Siembieda saw this illustration he wanted it for The Rifter® even though it was unfinished. We hope you like this Page Six artwork as much as he did. You can see more of Brandon's artwork along with Mark Dudley and other DSS artists elsewhere in this issue as well as *Chaos Earth™: Creatures of Chaos* and *Rifts® China Two*. These talented gentlemen just keep getting better and better.

Page 7 - From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

The boss reflects a bit on the past, where Palladium's going and his take on his place in the gaming business. A promising future lays ahead.

Page 8 - Palladium News

Issues #1-13 of The Rifter® are soon to be discontinued, Erick Wujcik has hung his hat at Palladium Books for a little while. Palladium may be moving down the street, Rifts® China One is finally at the printers, recent releases and other stuff is part of this issue's news.

Palladium hopes to make the *Origins® Game Expo* the place for Palladium fans to gather, meet, game and have fun. Check it out on page 9.

Page 10 — Coming Attractions

Rifts® China One is at the printers. It has a ton 'o good stuff in it and work is in progress on China 2, Powers Unlimited™ Two (for **HU2**), Beyond the Supernatural™ 2, the Rifts® Dimension Builder and several other titles. Big things are brewing at Palladium Books, and you can catch a glimpse of what's to come right here.

Page 14 - Ninjas & Superspies™ (or Heroes Unlimited™) Guns for Hire

Optional rules, skills, Skill Programs and ideas by John C. Philpott for running modern day military campaigns using Ninjas & Superspies™ and adaptable to Heroes Unlimited™. John's stint in the military helps give him a unique perspective and an attention to detail. Includes a wide range of new and modified Skill Programs, Real World Special Forces Units, and other material for those looking for more realistic military-style campaigns.

Artwork by Brian & Allan Manning.

Page 40 - The Palladium Fantasy RPG® The Lost Art of Golemancy

Sonny Rice presents optional rules and tables that expand on the Golem as a monster and villain, presenting unique features and characteristics, bizarre traits and self-awareness.

Artwork by Apollo Okamura.

Page 45 - Palladium Fantasy RPG® The Fires of Korath, Part One

Michael Long has gone all out to provide us with an epic fantasy adventure involving the dreaded Old Ones, ancient artifacts, dragons, gods and intrigue. The adventure carries characters across land and sea, to ancient ruins, hidden temples, and places of danger where they must face Frost Giants, Will-o-the-Wisps, monsters, sorcerers and numerous obstacles and enemies - some lurking in the shadows where they least expect them. Best suited for mid- to high-range characters with the hearts of lions and the cunning of vipers.

Artwork by Kent Buries. Maps by Michael Long and cleaned up by Wayne Smith.

Page 67 - Rifts® Entrhralld (Psionics)

Optional source material by Levi Johnstone as he presents several new psionic powers and psychic character classes for the Rifts Earth setting. We've been told one can never have enough psionic powers, so fans should have fun with abilities like Shared Perception, Hypnotic Control, Enhance Reflexes and Alter Memory. New optional characters include the *Entrhralld, Intuitive Warrior, Kinetic Master* and *Telepath*.

Artwork is by Mark Dudley and Brandon C. Clark of Drunken Style Studio.

Page 83 - Rifts® Phase World® The Hammer of the Forge

Chapter 25 of James M.G. Cannon's epic saga. This chapter has more surprises.

Artwork by Apollo Okamura.

Page 89 - Rifts® Phage World

Mark Hall presents Psi-Stalkers turned into vampires by a mysterious virus. Characters the author sees as more subtle, menacing and different than the traditional vampire. You be the judge. Optional characters and rules.

Artwork by Apollo Okamura.



Rodney Stott, Shawn Merrow and Kevin Siembieda tackle a diverse selection of questions about magic before diving into Second Edition Fantasy conversions for "Lost Magic" and the **Yin-Sloth Jungles**. Most of the material consists of spells found in earlier printings and editions of the Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing game that, for one reason or another, got left out of the latest edition. Well, they're back. Enjoy. Next issue, conversions for Yin-Sloth Jungles continue.

Page 94 - The Rifter® Super-Subscription Offer

It's subscription renewal time for **The Rifter®**, and due to popular demand, we're making another unbeatable subscription offer as an incentive for long-time subscribers to renew and new folks to subscribe for the first time ever. Hey, if you enjoy **The Rifter®**, why take the chance of missing a single issue? Subscribe to make sure your collection is complete. This offer is worth your while - check it out.

No BTS Preview

Space limitations and timing prevented us from offering the sneak preview to the new **Beyond the Supernatural 2™** role-playing game. The good news is the game, in its entirety, should be hitting store shelves sometime in March. Watch for it, you won't be disappointed.

The theme for issue 25

Adventure and magic are the themes of this issue with material for character creation and gaming for *Ninjas & Superspies™*, *Palladium Fantasy®* and *Rifts®*. There is plenty of material here for building adventures, introducing new powers, O.C.C.s and villains into existing campaigns to take them into new directions or to offer a few surprises, as well as a fleshed out fantasy adventure.

The Cover

The cover is artist, Apollo Okamura's experiment in a computer generated color rendering. People who ordered Palladium's Collector's Super Grab Bag got a sneak peak at it. but here it is in glorious color. Not bad for one of Apollo's first attempts at color. You can be sure to see more of his black and white and color work gracing the pages and covers of future Palladium products.

Optional and Unofficial Rules & Source Material

Please note that most of the material presented in **The Rifter®** is "**unofficial**" or "optional" rules and source material.

They are alternative ideas, homespun adventures and material mostly created by fellow gamers and fans like you, the reader. Things one can *elect* to include in one's own campaign or simply enjoy reading about. They are not "official" to the main games or world settings.

As for optional tables and adventures, if they sound cool or fun, use them. If they sound funky, too high-powered or inap-

propriate for your game, modify them or ignore them completely.

All the material in **The Rifter®** has been included for two reasons: One, because we thought it was imaginative and fun, and two, we thought it would stimulate your imagination with fun ideas and concepts that you can use (if you want to), or which might inspire you to create your own wonders.

www.palladiumbooks.com - Palladium Online

Coming Next Issue

The Rifter™ #26

- Part Two of Fires of Korath for *Palladium Fantasy®*.
- Material for *Nightbane®* and/or *Heroes Unlimited™*.
- Material for *Beyond the Supernatural™*.
- Material for *Systems Failure™*.
- More material for *Rifts®*, including a closer look at *mutants*.
- Questions and Answers.
- The next chapter of *The Hammer of the Forge™*.
- The latest news and developments at Palladium Books.
- Source material for the entire Palladium Megaverse®.
- New contributors and fun. So please join us.

Palladium Books® role-playing games...
infinite possibilities, limited only by
your imagination™

Palladium's games are found
in stores everywhere



EEC

From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

I can't believe it's 2004.

I started Palladium back in 1980, though our first product (*The Mechanoid Invasion*) didn't hit the store shelves (ill fall of 1981. That makes us . . . what 23 or 24 years old depending on how you look at it. Heck, even *The Rifter*® is six years old!

Palladium Books and *Steve Jackson Games* are among the tiny few role-playing game companies that haven't gone out of business, changed hands, or been bought and sold to return under new management. Looking back, I'm proud of that accomplishment, and plan to be around for many years to come. To top it off, for close to twenty years Palladium Books has been consistently ranked among the top five RPG companies in the world. Not bad for a 24 year old kid with an overactive imagination and three grand in his pocket. Of course, I've had a lot of help and encouragement along the way - my Mom and Dad, the Defilers (my original gaming group), Alex Marciniszyn and Erick Wujcik all played a key role in giving me the courage to even *start* Palladium Books. Since then, I've been living a dream.

There have been good, great and downright amazing times over the last 24 years. The boom of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles®, the fun of Robotch® and the thrill-ride that has been Rifts®. Of course, there has been a fair share of hard work, frustration, disappointment and heartache, but all in all, it's been fun, and the future looks brighter than ever.

With every passing week, the Rifts® Movie seems closer to reality. It's nice to get a call from Hollywood to answer questions about how magic works in Rifts®, and it's a kick to get a Christmas basket from Jerry Bruckheimer (actually, the "basket" was more like a treasure chest; a nod to the 300 million dollar success of *Pirates of the Caribbean* - only *Finding Nemo* has grossed more worldwide). A little weird (and a bit scary) to think these giants in the film industry will be breathing life into Rifts® over the next few years.

Other things are quietly percolating at Palladium too. We may finally be moving down the street in another month or two, we're exploring other exciting mainstream opportunities and I've got a zillion ideas inside my head screaming to come out. The potential movie, licenses and other stuff *outside* the world of role-playing (none of which I can tell you about yet) are all wonderful, but there are a ton of things I want to do *in* role-play-

ing. Beyond the Supernatural™ Two is one of my pet projects that I think will surprise and please gamers. I want to do more with Chaos Earth™ and Mechanoid® Space is another one of my pet projects, but there are a lot of other exciting RPG ideas in the works. It's been fun working with Erick Wujcik again (recently returned from a year in China), he's always full of life and brimming with enthusiasm. I've got Todd Yoho working on Rifts® Dinosaur Swamp (Florida/Louisiana world book), Pat Nowak is back with a truckload of ideas, and Carmen Bellaire is pounding out what is shaping up to be a weird and fun science fiction setting that may be a stand-alone game or part of Rifts® or HU2. And those are just some of the things simmering at Palladium Books.

A lot of folks in this industry are quick to tell new people that you can't make money in role-playing, and unless you love it and are willing to suffer the slings and arrows of rejection and tribulation, it will eat you alive. That statement has always annoyed me. After all, isn't that true of any industry? Less than 5% of people in most industries, especially in the entertainment biz, make the "big money," but who's to say a bright gamer with a new idea can't be one of those lucky few? Sure, writing and/or publishing games is a lot of hard work, more than many folks are prepared to handle, and there is definitely its share of sacrifice, but you know what, that's life. Of course, I'm one of those guys who believes if you really do love your work, then you're already richer than most of the poor slobbs forced to make a living at a job they loathe.

All I know for certain is I'm sure glad I've been living my dream, and continue to live that dream. I've also been lucky enough to help some other people find their dreams along the way. From my point of view, it doesn't get better than that.

I love role-playing games, and I'm glad to be writing this to other people who love them just as much as I do. Stick around and all of us at Palladium will try to carry you to new worlds of adventure and endless hours of unparalleled imagination and fun.

Happy New Year from all of us at Palladium Books.

- Kevin Siembieda, January 2004

Palladium News

By Kevin Siembieda (the guy who should know)

Palladium on the Move, Literally

There is a good chance that Palladium will be moved into its new address by the end of February or March. The facility is newer and gives Palladium the flexibility to grow and expand over the next five years that the old building did not.

This is still a combination office and warehouse, and it is only down the street (the same street) as the old office. Telephone numbers, fax line, e-mail address, etc., should all remain the same, only the physical address will be different - more on that next issue.

X-Mas Grab Bags a Holiday Hit

Once again the X-Mas Grab Bags were a huge hit. Palladium started the Grab Bags 5-6 years ago as a way to say thanks to our fans. The first go at it was so warmly received that we made an annual event. This year was a little different with the addition of the Collectors' Super Grab Bag (this year only) in which the grab bag included a couple of limited edition items and an original piece of artwork worth \$50-\$150. The luckiest collectors snagged some amazing items, including a few full page illustrations by artists Kevin Long, Ramon Perez and Kevin Siembieda, as well as original Robotech animation cells, art by Breaux, Buries, Martin, Okamura, Williams and others, but one lucky stiff got the original John Zeleznek painting from the third *Rifts* novel.

Of course, we tried to make all the Grab Bags special, and hope we were able to put a little extra Christmas joy into everyone's holiday. I think the staff gets as excited as Santa's elves over this Palladium tradition, though they do sometimes groan about signing thousands of books, especially that Ramon Perez guys who only signed a couple hundred.

As for those of you who missed out this year... Christmas is only 11 months away so start saving our cash and thinking about what you want. Ho, ho, ho.

The Rifter® Special Subscription Offer

Palladium is offering, for a limited time, a super-whammy, special subscription offer to **The Rifter**®. It's just another way of saying thanks, and to generate more interest in **The Rifter**® sourcebook series.

Part of the incentive offer is a free "gift," your choice of one of the following: *Rifts® China One*, *Rifts® Anvil Galaxy™*, *Warlords of Russia* (a good companion book to *Rifts China 1 & 2*), *HU2 Gramercy Island™*, *Aliens Unlimited Galaxy Guide™* or Erick Wujcik's original *Mystic China*. We thought we'd offer the **Heroes Unlimited™** sourcebooks in honor of the RPG's 20th Anniversary.

Also

Last chance to get The Rifter® #1-13



As
of

February 27, issues #1-13 will be discontinued and taken out of stock! We'll try to keep a case or two of each for the annual X-Mas Grab Bag, but other than that, issues numbers 1-13 are **GONE!**

Note: Issues 4, 8 and 21 are already out of print, and issues number 1, 2, 3, 5, 10 and 11 are low. As current issues of **The Rifter**® (# 14-present) go out of print, they will be discontinued.

Erick Wujcik's Palladium Pit-Stop

For those of you who didn't know, Erick Wujcik has spent the last year living in China, where he was teaching Game Design as an Associate Professor at Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He went on to Australia to do a couple of guest lectures before returning home (his past October. Erick and I go waaaaay back, even before his wonderful design work and writing for Palladium on the original **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness RPG** and several TMNT sourcebooks, not to mention **Ninjas & Superspies**, **Mystic China** and the **After the Bomb RPG**. Erick has also been a pioneer in "diceless gaming" and published the popular **Amber Diceless RPG**.

Erick currently finds himself in a period of transition as he ponders what his next move will be. In the interim, he's set up shop at Palladium Books, using one of the offices for his personal business and contributing to the company with his ideas and contagious enthusiasm. Erick's life-long interest, and first-hand experience, in China got him to volunteer in contributing to the two **Rifts® China** books. What started out as minor involvement turned into co-authorship of the first China title as well as causing some delays as he and I took the book in some different directions. As you read this, **Rifts® China One: The Yama Kings** is at the printers and should hit store shelves by the end of January. **Rifts® China Two: Heroes of the Celestial Court** should be following close on its heels with an end of February or March release.

Rifts® Movie News

The excitement builds but the veil of secrecy remains firmly entrenched.

Meanwhile, Palladium is exploring other opportunities in the mainstream that will make fans do somersaults when they hear the news. Only . . . urn . . . we can't tell you about them yet either.

Man, this "veil of secrecy" garbage, sucks.



Origins Game Expo 2004 may be the place for Palladium Fans

Palladium Books is looking into making **Origins**, in downtown Columbus, Ohio, the ultimate hang out for Palladium fans from around the country.

Why Origins? Because it is big, but not so big that Palladium Books and its fans will get lost. It's big, but not so big that the show is no longer run or that gamers have to wait 3-5 hours in the registration line. It's also close to Palladium's Michigan home base and the Origins folks appear to be very accommodating.

I, Kevin Siembieda, even plan to run 2-3 games (12 people per game, one or two *Palladium Fantasy*® and one *Rifts*® *China* and/or a *Rifts*® *Chaos Earth*).

Erick Wujcik (if he's in town), Carmen Bellaire, Roger Cartier, Todd Yoho, and several other Palladium staffers and freelancers hope to run Palladium RPG events too.

Ramon Perez and a few other Palladium artists should be at the show along with Wayne Smith, Steve Sheiring and other Palladium folk to sign autographs and chit-chat.

We'll have a booth with one or two convention specials, the latest news on all the goings-on at Palladium, and (with a little luck) a major new game product release.

That's our plan, anyway. We still have a bunch of stuff to work out with the Origins people.

For the latest convention news and updates check-out Palladium's website (www.palladiumbooks.com) as well as the Origins website (www.originsgames.com) and pre-registration information. We'll have more info in **The Rifter**® 26 too.

Yeah, let's make this summer simmer, Palladium style.

Origins 2004 - June 24, 25, 26 & 27 - Columbus, Ohio. Contact: 303-635-2223 for more information or check out the convention website at www.originsgames.com.

Recent Releases

Back in print...

Rifts® World Book 5: Triax & the NGR - retail price \$21.95 - 224 pages. The New German Republic's army and Triax's best creations, plus the Gargoyle Empire and great artwork all wait for you in this best selling supplement.

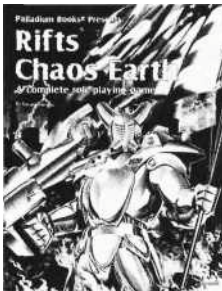
Rifts® World Book 8: Rifts® Japan - a longtime fan favorite. Retail price \$21.95 - 224 pages. This book is a great companion to *Rifts® China 1 & 2* and is packed with tech, magic and monsters, including cyborg dragons, Ninja, Samurai, and Japanese demons.

Rifts® World Book 16: Federation of Magic - retail price \$17.95 - 160 pages. 32 new pages of 109 PA updates and more information on the City of Dweomer.

Rifts® Game Master Guide - retail price \$26.95 - 352 pages. All skills, psionic powers, experience tables, and hundreds of weapons, vehicles, body armor, equipment and maps collected from *Rifts® World Books 1-23*, *Siege on Tolkeen 1-6* and *Sourcebooks 1-4* into one massive reference book. And

Rifts® Book of Magic - retail price \$26.95 - 352 pages. More than 850 magic spells, plus magic tattoos, Techno-Wizard devices and vehicles, herbs, rune weapons, Spulgorth Bio-Wizard devices, and more gathered from (the pages of *Rifts® World Books 1-23*, *Siege on Tolkeen 1-4* and *Sourcebooks 1-4* into one massive reference book. And more. For use with the *Rifts® RPG series* and *Rifts® Chaos Earth™ series*.

And don't forget about **Rifts® Conversion Book One "Revised"** and **Rifts® Dark Conversions** for use with the *Rifts® RPG series* and *Rifts® Chaos Earth™ series*, as well as guidelines for converting Rifts® characters to S.D.C. based games.



Rifts® Chaos Earth™

A new, ongoing series about the origins of Rifts Earth, starting with the Great Cataclysm. This is the ultimate prequel and pure fun. Don't miss the excitement over Palladium's hottest new RPG series.

Recent Releases - Available Now

Rifts® Chaos Earth™ RPG & Sourcebooks 1 & 2 - \$17.95 RPG; \$10.95 sourcebook.

Rifts® World Book 16: Federation of Magic™ -\$17.95 - back in print.

Rifts® World Book Five: Triax & The NGR™ - \$21.95 - back in print.

Rifts® World Book 8: Rifts® Japan - \$21.95 - back in print.

January 13 - The Rifter® #25 - \$9.95 - 96 pages. January 23 - Rifts® China One: The Yama Kings™ -\$17.95-160 pages.

February, 2004

February 2 - Powers Unlimited Two - \$13.95 - 96 pages.

February 23 - Rifts® China Two: Heroes of the Celestial Court - \$17.95 - 160 pages. This title may get bumped into March or swapped out with something like the *Rifts® Dimension Builder*.

March, 2004

March 9 - Rifts® Dimension Builder™ - rules for creating one's own dimensions and alien worlds - March or April (tentative).

March 22 - Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG, 2nd Edition Mission

March 29 - Rifts® *Chaos Earth*™: NEMA™ Book One

April, 2004

April 6 - The Rifter® #26 - \$9.95 - 96 pages.

April 19 - Beyond the Supernatural™ Sourcebook: Tome Grottesque (monsters & the supernatural)

April 29 - Rifts® Dimension Book 7: United Worlds of Warlock™ (for Phase World®)

May, 2004

May 14 - Rifts® Mercenaries Two: Merctown - \$17.95 - 160 pages.

A Palladium Fantasy RPG® title and/or Beyond the Supernatural™ title will probably be added to this month's releases.

Note: Palladium may slip in an extra title here and there.

Other titles slated for 2004

These books are planned for 2004 but not yet scheduled with a specific release date. Not listed in any particular order.

Rifts® Mercenaries Three

Rifts® Dinosaur Swamp™ (Florida & the Southeast)

Rifts® Africa Two: The Legacy of the Four Horsemen™

Rifts® Dragons & Cods™

Rifts® Australia Two



Coming Soon



Warning: We have reason to believe 2004 is going to be a crazy year for Palladium Books - good crazy, but insane nonetheless.

That means our release schedule may hold strong for a few months at a time and be torn asunder other months. We regret that, but there are a lot of positive changes taking place now that will put us in a stronger position in the future. In addition, there are likely to be new demands on the time of Palladium's chief architect, writer and game designer, Kevin Siembieda. Obviously, having to go to the West Coast or spending a few weeks hammering out licensing deals or handling approvals *will* interfere with his work load and force books to be late. The move to a new building in January or February may cause delays in the schedule almost immediately (it takes a bit of work and time to move 20,000 square feet). That said, we hope to keep business and releases flowing as smoothly and close to schedule as possible.

We just ask our fans to be patient and know that the quality of our products will *not* suffer for any of this.

Rifts® Adventure Sourcebook Five Rifts®
Adventure Sourcebook Six Palladium
Fantasy®: Book of Magic (items ters™
Palladium Fantasy®: Mysteries of Magic™
Palladium Fantasy®: Land of the Damned™
Mechanoid® Space RPG (summer) BTS-2:
Arcanum (Magic, spells and artifacts) Plus
more out of print books back in stock.



Rifts® World Book 24: Rifts® China One: The Yania Kings

First, I want to apologize to the many fans who were hoping to buy **Rifts® China One** and **Two** for Christmas gifts. We just couldn't get them done on the timetable we had originally planned. There were lots of reasons for the delays, but the bottom line is we wanted to make both of these long-anticipated books the *very best*. We want to make the two **Rifts® China** books truly epic and fun. The delay and extra time devoted to the two **Rifts® China** books may also affect the release date for the **Beyond the Supernatural RPG** and a couple other titles, but we'll see what we can do.

Rifts® World Book 24: Rifts® China is going to be epic! We brought in Erick Wujcik for his expertise to help bring Rifts China and the Yama Kings to life, and we think it will pay off. Rifts China is different than any place on **Earth**. **One in four** people is a demon or other supernatural being. Eleven Hells are part of the landscape, and the book is filled with one wild idea after another - all drawn from Chinese mythology and **history**.

Rifts® China One sets the stage as a demon and monster infested hell hole where humans live in terror or accept one of the Yama Kings as their lord and master. The only havens from the madness are dragon strongholds, sacred lands and places the Celestial Court hides from the Yama Kings.

- The Yama Kings bring 11 different planes of Hell to Earth, making China one of the weirdest places on the planet.
- The Yama Kings' Minions: Demon legions and armies of
 - More than 20 Chinese Demons, and the Yama Kings themselves.
 - The Fox Spirit and five demonic Goblins - Chinese spirits of evil and mischief.
 - The Chinese Vampire and four savage ghosts.
 - More than 20 Demonic Curses.
 - Dragonlands, sacred mountains, and weapons of magic.
 - The setting, conflicts and key people and locations.
 - Written by Kevin Siembieda and Erick Wujcik.
 - Cover by John Zeleznik.
- **Art** by Buries, Dubisch, Okamura, Drunken Style Studio

• \$17.95 - 160 pages. Cat. No. 857. At the printers. Ships to stores the last week of January.

Companion titles to **Rifts® China**

The following books are ideal companion titles for any China campaign:

Rifts® World Book 7: Rifts® Underseas, \$20.95 - Cat. No. 815.

Rifts® World Book 8: Rifts® Japan, \$21.95 - Cat. No. 818.

Rifts® World Book 17: Warlords of Russia, \$20.95 - Cat. No. 832.

Rifts® World Book 18: Mystic Russia, \$16.95 - Cat. No. 833.



Rifts® World Book 25: Rifts® China Two: Heroes of the Celestial Court

Rifts® China, Book Two presents all the butt kicking martial arts action of film, comic books and legend. Oriental monks. Demon Quellers, Soothsayers, and warrior character classes, mystic powers, special abilities, magic, good guys, champions, heroes and avatars (not to mention the Celestial Court working behind the scenes). Sure to be hot!

- The Celestial Court.
- Heroes, avatars of the gods, and superhumans.
- O.C.C.s include the Demon Queller, Soothsayer, various monks and more.
- Martial artist character classes - Rifts® style! Count on it!
- Oriental Mystic powers. Oriental Magic Tattoos, magic weapons and more!
- Secret Monasteries where the Demon Quellers and other champions are trained.
- More background and settings for Rifts China.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda and Erick Wujcik.
- Cover by John Zeleznik.
- Art by Buries, Dubisch, Okamura, Drunken Style Studio and others.

Powers Unlimited™ Two For Heroes Unlimited

Powers Unlimited™ Two presents new *categories* of heroes and their unique abilities, gimmicks and vulnerabilities. Written by Carmen Bellaire with contributions from Kevin Siembieda and others. Color cover by Ramon Perez.

- New Power Categories of superhumans.
- More powers, background and guidelines to playing superhero characters.
- Written by Carmen Bellaire.
- Cover by Ramon Perez.
- Art by Freddie Williams, Kent Buries and others.
- \$13.95 -96 pages. Cat. No. 522. Scheduled for a February 2nd release.

Note: *Powers Unlimited One*, with nearly 200 super abilities, is available now.

Rifts® Dimension Builder™

Carl Gleba, author of the popular Phase World®, The Three Galaxies™, has created a sourcebook and guide to help Game Masters create their *own* alien dimensions and worlds. A great tool for G.M.s and fun for players.

- Rules, suggestions and tables for generating dimensions.
- Dimensional anomalies and other strangeness.
- The Shifter "Revisited" plus a few new dimension travel ing O.C.C.s.
- Dimension Familiars and a few other weird creatures.
- A few sample dimensions, adventure ideas and more.
- For use with Rifts® and Phase World®.
- Written by Carl Gleba.
- Art by Buries, Okamura, and Drunken Style Studio.
- \$13.95 - 96 pages. Cat. No. 859. Scheduled for a March release, but may be switched with *Rifts® China 2* for a February release.

Rifts® Chaos Earth™ Sourcebook Three: NEMA™ Mission Book One

The Chaos Earth™ series is a success, and Mission Book One is the latest sourcebook for this continuing series.

It takes a look at NEMA, their missions, survival, heroics and adventure, but the main story focuses on the appearance of a rogue cell of the military that has decided to claim the Chicago area for themselves. The heads of this rogue cell - Juicers - including a few unlike any seen before.

- A Juicer Special Forces operation makes its bid for power, making this the first Juicer Uprising.

- Some new weapons, vehicles and gear.
- More on NEMA plus adventure scenarios, adventure ideas and settings.
- Completely compatible with Rifts®.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- Cover by Mark Evans.
- Art by Apollo Okamura, Freddie Williams II, and others.
- \$10.95 - 64 pages. Cat. No. 663. Scheduled for a March 29 release.



Beyond the Supernatural

A game of contemporary exploration into realms unknown.

A stark, plausible reality where ghosts, demons, psychics, cultists and magic are real, yet remain unknown to the world at large.

Player characters who are part of the secrets, part of the problems, and humanity's only hope.

A world where the player characters become immersed in a myriad of subcultures, ancient secrets, conspiracies and dark horror.

A time and place *Beyond the Supernatural*.

Beyond the Supernatural™, 2nd Edition goes beyond normal convention to create a riveting world of suspense, intrigue and the supernatural with twists that make it unlike anything that has come before it.

- Magic, psionics and weird abilities.
- New psychic, magic and spiritual O.C.C.s.
- Victor Lazlo and his lasting legacy: The Lazlo Agency.
- More world background and guides to adventure.
- Horror, mystery, monsters, and more.
- Top artists, highest production values.

- Written by Kevin Siembieda and Randy McCall. New material by Siembieda.
- Cover by John Zeleznik.
- Art by Ramon Perez, Michael Dubisch, Freddie Williams and others.
- \$22.95 - 192 pages. Cat. No. 700. Scheduled for a March 22 release but *may* be delayed till April (we hope not; shooting for March).



Other Palladium Lines

The Palladium Fantasy RPG® line. Heroes Unlimited™ line and others have not been forgotten. We have a bunch of titles in mind for these and other game lines, but for the first quarter of 2004 we're focusing on Rifts® and the release of Beyond the Supernatural Two™. Don't worry, more good stuff is coming.



Guns for Hire

New Military Skill Programs and Mercenary Templates

Optional Material for the Ninjas & Superspies™ RPG

By John C. Philpott

(Former USAF F-15 Avionics Technician and currently a civilian electrical engineer with the US Navy.)

Mercenaries, soldiers of fortune, hired killers; just the very mention of the name inspires images of the tough, ruthless hombre who makes his living by ending the lives of others. In the deadly, cutthroat world of the Ninjas & Superspies™ RPG they make up one of the four pillars of the clandestine world along with Agents, Gizmoteers, and Martial Artists. Agents provide the skills, Gizmoteers provide the gadgets, and Martial Artists provide the close-in hand-to-hand combat, while the Mercenaries provide the big guns, adding a serious punch to any team. For this reason nearly every government, agency, and secret society has been known to employ their services at one point or another. Their big gun, no nonsense approach to combat also makes them popular with role players, and every player character group typically has at least one around to provide that extra firepower when things go awry.

Despite their usefulness to the Ninjas & Superspies™ world, however, little attention has been spent on adding to or improving their cadre of skills or available backgrounds. In fact, new skills that have since been made available in other campaign worlds have so far bypassed Ninjas & Superspies™ completely. For example, while running a campaign in the mid 1990s I had several players playing Mercenary O.C.C.s, many with backgrounds in Special Forces (such as the Navy SeALs). Yet despite all of these Special Forces characters none was able to do so much as make a HALO jump or even use Scuba equipment, two prerequisites for even the most basic of Special Forces teams! It was then that I knew I needed to incorporate some new skills and even skill programs into the campaign.

As I set out to incorporate new skills from other campaign worlds (such as Parachuting and Camouflage) I soon realized that many of these new skills were also missing from existing skill programs. Certainly everyone that has graduated from military Basic Training (i.e. has the skill program) should know the rudiments of Military Etiquette and surviving chemical warfare

attacks. The more I expanded these programs, the more I noticed other discrepancies in the military skill programs and that other military backgrounds (such as practically the entire Navy) were missing entirely. Soon my relatively minor task of updating my campaign with a few new skills had become a full-blown project! The more I created, the more I saw that needed to be created. By the time the dust had settled I was staring at several typed pages of new skills and skill programs as well as background data to make an article all to itself. There was only one thing to do with all of this information: make it a full-fledged Rifter™ article!

The following pages are the results of this mad foray. Included are new skills to be added to the Ninjas & Superspies™ campaign world, new Military skill programs and updates to existing ones, new Non-Military skill programs that I saw fit to include here, and finally some background information on the military, including character templates. The new skills (Military and Non-Military) include both older, familiar skills borrowed from other campaign settings (such as Rifts® and Systems Failure™), and entirely new skills I have created myself. In addition to creating some new Military skill programs I have also edited some of the existing ones to reflect the addition of these new skills. I also saw fit to include some new Non-Military skill programs (Basic, Espionage, and Gizmoteer) that I created over the years to fill various campaign or character voids I have encountered. Finally, I have included pages of background material on the military, particularly Special Forces and Combat Pilots, including some character templates that can help guide you to creating a character that realistically portrays a specific military background (such as a Marine Sniper). Keep in mind that the background information in this article mostly involves the US Military and its structure (this is the military with which I am most familiar). Also keep in mind that all of these new skills and skill programs are entirely optional; use or ignore all or part of this article as you see fit. Hopefully, however, you will find them to be a great boon to your campaign and will have a lot of fun and excitement using them. Enjoy!

New Skills

In order to create these new skill programs we first need the appropriate skills to do so. Many of these skills you will recognize from other RPGs such as Rifts®, Palladium Fantasy RPG®, and Systems Failure™. These skills are basically the same as portrayed in their original game(s), though many have been modified with additional information to represent the unique environment of the Ninjas & Superspies™ campaign setting. In addition I have created a handful of new skills (marked *New!*) which I feel will add to the flavor of the Ninjas & Superspies™ setting and others in the Palladium Books Megaverse®. I have arranged these skills in the following subgroups: Military Skills, Pilot and Pilot Related Skills, and Other. Immediately following the name, I have indicated which skill category(ies) to add the skill in question to. Unless otherwise indicated by a Secondary Skill percentage, the following skills *may not* be taken as Secondary Skills.

New Military Skills

Camouflage: [Add to Espionage/Military and Military skills]

The skill of concealing a fixed base position, vehicle, boat, equipment or individual using natural or artificial materials. A fair amount of time is involved in the preparation of a larger position. Large cargo nets, cut branches or underbrush are used most often in camouflage. This skill is also useful to conceal traps. Note that sounds or odors coming from the place of concealment will negate even the best camouflage and lead enemies right to it. Base Skill: 20% +5% per level of experience.

Field Surgery: [Add to Military and Medical skills] An advanced form of field first aid, this skill represents a knowledge in surgery and medicine in a primitive "field" environment. This skill includes the basics of sterilization and cleaning/stitching of wounds, as well as the removal of bullets, shrapnel, or other foreign objects, but advanced surgery and trauma treatment is possible only if the character also possesses the Medical Doctor skill. Also included in this skill is some basic Holistic Medicine (equivalent to the skill of the same name, but at 1/2 of the character's Field Surgery skill level). Base Skill: 16% +4% per level of experience. Special Bonus: Add a one-time bonus of +10% if the Paramedic skill is known, or +20% if the Medical Doctor skill is known. Requires: First Aid. The Paramedic and/or Medical Doctor skills are extremely helpful, but not needed.

Fortification: (*New!*) [Add to Espionage/Military and Military skills] Skill in the design and construction of field fortifications and defensive positions from natural or artificial materials. Typical materials include logs, sandbags, stone, brick, and cement (building with stone, brick, concrete, steel, and other heavy materials requires the Carpentry/Con struct ion and/or Civil Engineering skill(s)). These fortifications are intended to give some protective cover for forces or personnel defending a fixed position and are not easily mobile (if mobile at all). The amount of defensive protection any given fortification gives depends on the skill of the designer/builder and the materials used (and the G.M.'s discretion). Use of modern materials such as reinforced concrete or thick steel plating may even offer some light Mega-Damage (M.D.C.) protection (in M.D.C. settings such as Rifts®)! Keep in mind that the camouflage or concealment of these fortifications requires a separate skill (see the Camouflage skill). Base Skill: 30% +5% per level of experience.

Military Etiquette: [Add to Military skills] This skill grants a clear understanding of the way the military works, including rules of behavior (when to salute, how to address superiors/subordinates, etc.), military procedures and routines, standard issue of equipment, special ordering procedures, proper display of rank and medals, advancement in rank (and the duties that come with it), proper troop formations, how to deal with military bureaucracy (the chain of command, proper channels, who to contact to get things done, etc.), and other useful information in matters of military protocol and bureaucracy. Base Skill: 35% +5% per level of experience. Note: All military personnel have a fundamental knowledge of Military Etiquette (base skill of 30% with no improvement), but the above skill is much more complete, with a strong knowl-

edge of what is expected or correct, and the formal, "by the book" way of doing things. It also offers the knowledge of loopholes in the system and use of the "contact/favor system" that allows one to get things done in a more expedient, if not necessarily proper manner, at 1/2 the character's current skill level.

Nuclear, Biological & Chemical (NBC) Warfare: [Add to Military skills] This is the knowledge of safety procedures to protect oneself and others from the effects of nuclear, biological, or chemical warfare agents, waste and contamination. This includes the proper use of protective clothing and the Mission Oriented Protective Posture (MOPP) levels of protection as well as the understanding of the various "alarms" and "flags." The character is also knowledgeable in the detection, identification, safe handling, "clean-up" and containment of such hazardous materials. While the character is skilled in NBC agent detection and identification, the Military Intelligence skill is required to know the origin of the agent itself and what nation or faction might have used it. The actual use of NBC agents in combat is done through the use of delivery weapons (such as bombs or artillery shells) and requires a W.P. in these weapons in order to use them. Note: Knowing this skill and having the equipment to actually perform this skill are two very different conditions. Many characters will have one but not the other. Electronic NBC detection equipment will give a +10% to the detection and identification of the agent/contaminant. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

Parachuting: [Add to Espionage/Military, Military, Physical, and Pilot Related skills] Includes the methods, procedures, and techniques of parachuting, packing a chute, skydiving techniques, precision landing without injury, and the practice of jumping out of a perfectly good aircraft. For military purposes, parachute insertion offers secrecy due to its silent nature and often goes undetected by the enemy. The following three methods of parachuting are most commonly used for paratrooper insertion:

High-Altitude, High-Opening (HAHO): These jumps take place from as much as 25,000 to 30,000 feet (7,620 to 9,144 m) of altitude and the Paratroopers drift laterally to the desired drop zone (DZ) where they wish to land. This technique is often used to "throw off" enemy units who would probably search for the paratroopers directly beneath the path of the aircraft. This also, however, leads to a wide dispersal of the airborne forces, requiring time for them to regroup. This method also offers a measure of safety as it allows for time to deploy the emergency chute if the primary one fails to open. **High-Altitude, Low-Opening (HALO):** Like HAHO jumps, these begin at an altitude of 25,000 to 30,000 feet (7,620 to 9,144 m), but in this case the paratrooper doesn't open the chute until 4000 feet (1220 m) or even less. The advantage is that the rapid jump minimizes the chances for detection, but it does not allow time for the deployment of an emergency chute.

Low-Altitude, Low-Opening (LALO): The most dangerous form of jump, LALO jumps typically start as low as 300-500 feet (91 to 152 m)! Opening is almost immediate and often uses a static line. Any complication (failed roll) means the character falls to the ground without the opportunity of using

an emergency chute, suffering 1D6 damage for every 10 feet (3 m) they fell (starting with the initial altitude of the jump). Even if the jump goes off flawlessly, the character has a 20% chance of taking 6D6 S.D.C. damage (even in M.D.C. body armor!) from an awkward landing (may roll with impact for 1/2 damage).

Base Skill: 45% +5% per level of experience. A failed roll indicates that the parachute did not open. This may be due to an improperly packed chute, tangled lines, etc. HAHO jumps offer the opportunity to use a back-up emergency chute (second roll). If all chutes fail, the character falls to the ground, suffering 1D6 damage for every 10 feet (3 m) fallen starting with the initial altitude of the jump. (I certainly hope your character has Falling Technique if this happens!) Keep in mind also that parachuting troops are sitting ducks to ground fire while they are slowly floating to the ground (-5 to dodge).

Trap Construction: (*New!*) [Add to Espionage/Military and Military skills] Skill in the construction of various traps, both for antipersonnel and/or for hunting purposes. These traps may be designed to kill, maim, or capture, and often make use of explosives or poison. Traps may be constructed from natural objects (such as foliage and stakes) or from modern materials (like trip wires or even motion sensors). The actual execution and effect of the trap depends on the trap's design and circumstances surrounding it (G.M.'s discretion). The use of land mines or explosives such as the Claymore mine requires the Demolitions skill, while the construction of any integrating trap itself falls under this skill. **Base Skill:** 20% +4% per level of experience.

Trap/Mine Detection: [Add to Espionage/Military and Military skills] Knowledge of the strategic placement of booby traps and mines, the telltale landmarks and indications of traps and mines, and how to avoid them, as well as the use of mine and explosive detection equipment. The character has been trained to watch for suspicious objects, dirt mounds, trip wires and camouflaging materials that may denote the presence of a trap. The character can easily disarm simple snare traps and trip wires, but the Demolitions Disposal skill is required to disarm mines/explosives. **Base Skill:** 20% +5% per level of experience on visuals alone. Add +50% when using special detection equipment to locate mines or explosives, or +10% to locate other types of traps with detection equipment.

Underwater Demolitions: [Add to Military skills] Fundamentally the same basic skills and training as Demolitions, but with an emphasis on using explosives in an underwater environment, including underwater techniques, area effect, sound wave damage, different types of explosives, as well as arming, disarming, and repairing torpedoes and depth charges. **Base Skill:** 56% +4% per level of experience. **Note:** Any character with the Demolitions skill can use explosives underwater, but at -10%. **Requirements Note:** The Swimming: Basic and/or Advanced skills are not required for this skill, but not having them limits the ability of the character to reach certain explosives.

W.P. Surface to Air Missiles (SAM): (*New!*) [Add to Military W.P. skills] Proficiency in and use of various Surface to Air Missile systems for air defense and anti-missile defense purposes, such as the Rapier, Stinger, and Patriot missiles. Skill

includes both hand-held missile systems (such as the Stinger and Blowpipe) and large, vehicle-mounted systems (such as the Rapier and Patriot). It also includes fixed or ship-mounted SAM systems, such as the SEA SPARROW and STANDARD missile systems. Note that the fixed and vehicle-mounted types usually require several people to operate them, including fire control personnel (who would use this W.P.) and radar/guidance/control specialists (using the Weapon Systems skill). Bonus to strike is the same as for other Military Weapon Proficiencies (see page 43, Ninjas & Superspies™ RPG). Character is assumed to be familiar with 1D4 missile systems determined when the skill is learned (all "hand-held" types count as one "system"). Unfamiliar large missile platforms will require 1D4x10 minutes of familiarization/training before they can be operated to a limited degree (at 1/2 bonus) and will require 2D6 hours of formal training before they can be used without penalty. Using unfamiliar systems without familiarization or training is considered shooting wild (no bonuses), and firing a SAM (other than hand-held) without this W.P. is considered impossible.

W.P. Surface to Surface Missiles (SSM): (*New!*) [Add to Military W.P. skills] Proficiency in and use of various medium- to long-range Surface to Surface Missile systems (such as the Tomahawk and SCUD) and includes Intercontinental Ballistic Missile systems such as the Minuteman. These weapons usually require several people to operate them, including fire control personnel (who would use this W.P.) and radar/guidance specialists (using the Weapon Systems skill). Bonus to strike is the same as for other Military Weapon Proficiencies (see page 43, Ninjas & Superspies™ RPG). Character is assumed to be familiar with 1D4 missile systems determined when the skill is learned. Unfamiliar large missile platforms will require 1D4x10 minutes of familiarization/training before they can be operated to a limited degree (at 1/2 bonus) and will require 2D6 hours of formal training before they can be used without penalty. Using unfamiliar systems without familiarization or training is considered shooting wild (no bonuses), and firing an SSM without this W.P. is considered impossible.

W.P. Underwater Weapons: (*New!*) [Add to Military W.P. skills] Proficiency in and use of various underwater weapon systems such as those used in submarine warfare. Skill includes both weapons used by submarines (such as torpedoes) and weapons used in anti-submarine warfare (such as depth charges). It also includes knowledge about the use and avoidance of undersea mines and obstacles, though the creation and arming of such traps require different skills (Underwater Demolitions for mines and Carpentry/Construction, Civil Engineering, or Trap Construction for obstacles, etc.). Note that submarine launched missiles (cruise missiles, SLBM, etc.) require the W.P. Surface to Surface Missiles skill in addition to the W.P. Underwater Weapons skill. Underwater weapons usually require several people to operate them, including fire control personnel (who would use this W.P.) and sonar/guidance specialists (using the Weapon Systems skill). Bonus to strike is the same as for other Military Weapon Proficiencies (see page 43, Ninjas & Superspies™ RPG). Character is assumed to be familiar with 1D4 underwater weapons systems determined when the skill is learned. Unfamiliar platforms

will require 1D4x10 minutes of familiarization/training before they can be operated to a limited degree (at 1/2 W.P. bonus) and will require 2D6 hours of formal training before they can be used without penalty. Using unfamiliar systems without familiarization or training is considered shooting wild (no bonuses), and firing an underwater weapon without this W.P. is difficult at best (VS percentage for the equivalent surface W.P. or skill, and is considered impossible with no equivalent W.P. or skill).

New Piloting and Pilot Related Skills

Advanced Electronic Combat: (*New!*) [Add to Communications and Pilot Related skills] Similar to the Communications skill Electronic Counter-Measures (Ninjas & Superspies™ RPG, page 37), but includes the theory and manipulation of all forms of freely-propagating (air-transmitted) electromagnetic radiation, including radio/communications, navigation, satellite/GPS, and RADAR signals. This skill can be used to detect and counteract (*jam*) enemy communications, radio-frequency navigation, RADAR, and other radio-frequency transmitting/receiving equipment (Electronic Countermeasures, "ECM") as well as the ability to counter enemy attempts at ECM in order to keep friendly transmissions working (Electronic Counter-Countermeasures, "ECCM"). If the character also has some form of combat airborne piloting skill (such as Pilot Jet Fighter or Pilot Combat Helicopter), the Advanced Electronic Combat skill covers both airborne ECM/ECCM (fighter-borne RADAR and AWACS) and ECM vs ground-based threats (SAM and early warning RADAR). All characters with the Advanced Electronic Combat skill can attempt to avoid and possibly counteract optical detection and communications equipment (laser, infrared, etc.) at half their skill level. Base Skill: 30% +5% per level of experience.

Naval Surface Combat: (*New!*) [Add to Pilot: Advanced skills] Similar to the Air-to-Air Combat skill (Ninjas & Superspies™ RPG, page 44) but based on water (surface and submarine) combat, from lakes and rivers to oceans. Like the Air-to-Air skill, the Naval Surface Combat skill can increase without end beyond 100%. Use only for water-based combat piloting rolls, surface or submarine. This skill gives a bonus of 10%, +2% per level of experience, to any regular sea-borne piloting skill.

Pilot Amphibious Landing Craft: (*New!*) [Add to Pilot: Advanced skills] Includes the piloting of all civilian and military landing craft, from small boats to "Higgins Boat" (LCVP) style landing craft, to modern Hovercraft (LCAC), to amphibious tanks and vehicles. This skill also includes the knowledge of the unique difficulties of piloting a ship into tidal waters and the recognition and avoidance of underwater obstacles, natural and man-made. Note that the piloting of larger amphibious ships such as transports, dock-style landing ships (LSDs, LSTs, etc.), and large amphibious assault ships (LHAs and LHDs) falls under the Pilot Large Ships & Ocean-Liners and/or Pilot Large Military Ocean Craft skills, though piloting such ships safely into beachhead/shallows, coral reefs, or similar obstacle-filled areas would fall under this skill. Base Skill: 40% +5% per level of experience. Re-

quires: Pilot Motorboats for standard landing ships, and Pilot Hydrofoil/Hovercraft for LCAC-style landing hovercraft.

Pilot Hydrofoil/Hovercraft: *(New!)* [Add to Pilot: Basic skills] The ability to pilot high-speed Hydrofoil and Hovercraft sea vessels of various sizes, including military vehicles like the US Navy LCAC, but does not include the ability to land Hovercraft on beachheads or land (-20% skill roll unless the Pilot Amphibious Landing Craft skill is also known. Landing Hydrofoils on land is not possible under any circumstances). Base Skill: 30% +5% per level of experience. Requires: Pilot Motorboat.

Pilot Large Ships & Ocean-Liners: *(New!)* [Add to Pilot: Advanced skills] Includes all civilian medium to large ships and ocean liners from tugboat-sized to cruise liners. Base Skill: 50% +4% per level of experience. Secondary Skill Level: -10% base proficiency. Requires: Pilot Motorboat.

Pilot Large Sailing Vessels: *(New!)* [Add to Pilot: Advanced skills] Includes large sail yachts and old "galloon" style multi-rig sailing ships from antiquity. Base Skill: 30% +5% per level of experience. Requires: Pilot Sailboat.

Pilot Large Military Ocean Craft: *(New!)* [Add to Pilot: Advanced skills] Includes all types of large military surface ships (no submarines), from frigates (FFG) to nuclear aircraft carriers (CVN). Base Skill: 40% +5% per level of experience. Requires: Pilot Large Ships & Ocean-Liners.

Pilot Military Submarines: *(New!)* [Add to Pilot: Advanced skills] Includes all large military-style submarines including Attack, Scout, and Ballistic Missile subs, conventional (diesel) or nuclear engines. "Silent" piloting can be made at -10%, and is treated as a "Prowl" for game purposes. Base Skill: 40% +5% per level of experience. Requires: Pilot Submarine.

Pilot Extra-Vehicular Unit (EMU): [Add to Pilot: Advanced skills] This skill involves the use of personal zero-G maneuvering (space) vehicles such as NASA's EMU compressed air backpack. The EMU and similar devices allow personal maneuvering in zero-G conditions by shooting out jets of compressed air. These jets are not powerful enough to fight gravity, and are not usable in any environment beyond zero gravity or micro-gravity (i.e. not usable on planets, moons, or asteroids of sufficient size). Base Skill: 35% +5% per level of experience.

Pilot Rockets and Rocket-Craft: [Add to Pilot: Advanced skills] The earliest experiments in human space travel utilize liquid-fuel and solid-fuel rockets. These large rockets use a controlled explosion to propel themselves at high rates of acceleration. This skill encompasses the use of all forms of human-piloted and remote-piloted rockets, from small personal rocket planes to huge interplanetary rockets like the Saturn series that took Astronauts to the moon. Base Skill: 25% +5% per level of experience.

Pilot Space Shuttles and Space Planes: [Add to Pilot: Advanced skills] This skill allows the character to pilot reusable spacecraft such as the American and Russian (former Soviet) Space Shuttles. These vehicles typically use traditional rockets to propel them into orbit or beyond, and then glide back down to Earth on airfoils (wings) and land on a runway like an airplane. The skill also includes the use of experimental

Space Planes that utilize similar technology. Note that this skill only encompasses the use of the Orbiter (Shuttle) unit itself. Piloting the actual rockets used to launch the vehicle into orbit requires the Pilot Rockets and Rocket-Craft skill listed above. Base Skill: 25% +5% per level of experience.

Pilot Off-Road Vehicles: *(New!)* [Add to Pilot: Basic skills] The knowledge of driving various land vehicles off (the beaten path through wilderness, mud, and even low water. This allows the character to traverse harsh driving environments without flipping the vehicle or getting it stuck. This skill merely gives one the ability to take various vehicles through normally impassable conditions somewhat safely, and does not give the character any actual piloting skills they do not have. Base Skill: 15% +5% per level of experience added to the Piloting skill of the vehicle used (to offset penalties normally received due to off-road conditions. Secondary Skill Level: -10% base proficiency. Requires: At least one land-based vehicle Pilot skill. Note: -20% if using any vehicle not normally equipped to handle off-road conditions, i.e. not four-wheel drive, lacking a proper suspension/undercarriage, etc.

Pilot Personal ATV: *(New!)* [Add to Pilot: Basic skills] The knowledge of and skill in piloting small personal all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), such as three-wheel and four-wheel ATVs, and small multi-person "dune buggies" including the Navy SeAl Desert Patrol Vehicles. Base Skill: 60% +4% per level of experience. Secondary Skill Level: -10% base proficiency.

Pilot Personal Watercraft: *(New!)* [Add to Pilot: Basic skills] The knowledge of and skill in piloting small personal watercraft such as Jet Skis, Wet Bikes, Wave Runners, and underwater sleds. Base Skill: 60% +4% per level of experience. Secondary Skill Level: -10% base proficiency.

Pilot Professional Racing Boat: *(New!)* [Add to Pilot: Basic skills] Specialized knowledge of high-performance, high-speed racing boats. Use of any motorboat in a high-speed pursuit or combat requires this skill. Base Skill: 30% +5% per level of experience. Requires: Pilot Motorboat.

Pilot Professional Racing Motorcycle: *(New!)* [Add to Pilot: Basic skills] Specialized use of high-speed racing bikes. This skill is required for any high-speed motorcycle chases or combat. Base Skill: 40% +5% per level of experience. Requires: Pilot Motorcycle.

Other New Skills

Animal Husbandry: [Add to Cultural or Technical skills] This character is knowledgeable in the care and feeding, breeding and reproduction, treatment, and behavior of domesticated animals. This includes farm animals and domesticated pets. Reduce the base skill by 1/2 when caring for captive, sick, or injured wild animals (unless the character also possesses the Zoology skill, in which case this penalty is negated). Base Skill: 40% +5% per level of experience. Secondary Skill Level: -10% base proficiency.

Animal Training: *(New!)* [Add to Cultural or Technical skills] This skill allows for the training of domesticated animals or

the domestication of wild or feral animals (if the wild animals are trained from an early age). The character can train an animal to perform minor "tricks" (i.e. "fetch" or "saddle breaking" riding animals) in 1D4 months. More complex tasks (i.e. sniffing for explosives) will take 1D4+5 months. The character will know after half the necessary training time if the training is going to succeed (i.e. the character rolls against their skill level then). Base Skill: 30% +5% per level of experience. Secondary Skill Level: -10% base proficiency.

Arctic Survival: *(New!)* [Add to Espionage or Cultural skills]

The ability to survive in the harsh, frozen desert of the Arctic and Antarctic ice caps, as well as the frozen wilderness of far-northern Europe, Asia, Canada, and Alaska. Skill includes surviving exposure, finding safe paths, building shelter, and other survival techniques. Survival in the frozen upper reaches of mountains can be done at 1/2 skill level; this penalty is negated if the Mountaineering skill is also known. Base Skill: 40% +5% per level of experience. Secondary Skill Level: -10% base proficiency.

Carpentry/Construction: *(New!)* [Add to Technical skills]

This skill includes the basic skills of construction and carpentry needed to build simple structures and houses, buildings, roads, and similar construction projects. Characters with this skill can also work as workmen on major civil engineering projects. Skills include basic woodworking, welding/riveting, mixing/pouring of concrete and asphalt, basic wiring and plumbing, basic floor/tile and wall work, basic painting/sealing/corrosion control, and the use of most household tools. The use of heavy machinery like bulldozers and cranes requires the Pilot Heavy Machinery skill. Base Skill: 40% +5% per level of experience. Secondary Skill Level: -10% base proficiency.

Civil Engineering: *(New!)* [Add to Mechanical, Military, and Science skills]

This skill includes the theory and practice of civil engineering, including the design and construction of buildings, bridges, water/sewage networks, roads and railroads, landing strips, and similar infrastructure. Also included is surveying and the basic mapping/cartography required to establish a construction site. In addition, "major" civil engineering projects, such as large dams, large/long bridges (including suspension bridges), major highways, major airports, or skyscrapers, may be attempted at -20% of the character's skill level. Base Skill: 30% +5% per level of experience. Requires: Mathematics: Advanced. Carpentry/Construction is extremely helpful, but not necessary.

Environmental Suit Operation: [Add to Pilot Related, Espionage/Military, and Technical skills]

Sometimes the only way to survive in harsh climates, extreme temperatures, or unbreathable atmosphere is through the use of an environmental suit, or E-suit. The basic environmental suit is an airtight, temperature-conditioned full-body suit with an independent internal air supply. A good example of such an E-suit would be the space suits used by astronauts and cosmonauts. This skill includes knowledge about the make and manufacture of various E-suits, when, where, and how to use them, and even allows for emergency field repairs of E-suits at 1/2 the skill level. Base Skill: 30% +5% per level of experience.

Horsemanship: [Add to Pilot, Basic, or Cultural/Technical skills] This skill includes the basic principles of riding, the care and feeding of the animal, recognizing the breed and quality of the animal, and performing charging and jumping maneuvers. The skill percentile is used whenever such maneuvers are performed, as well as for the determination of breed and quality. Base Skill: 50% +4% per level of experience. Special Bonuses: Due to the height, leverage, and velocity of the horseman, the rider receives the following bonuses on hand-to-hand (not projectile) combat when charging: +1 to parry and dodge, and +4 to damage. Note that projectile weapons such as guns and bows suffer reduced accuracy when the horse is in motion. Aimed shots are not possible, and bursts are possible only when not at a full gallop (shooting is wild at full gallop). Secondary Skill Level: -10% base proficiency.

Meteorology: *(New!)* [Add to Science or Cultural skills]

This skill allows for the prediction of upcoming weather within 5D6% accuracy on a successful skill roll. If taken as a cultural skill this skill represents weather prediction based on signs from nature and other methods handed down from person to person (add a flat +5% to the base skill if taken "culturally"). If taken as a Science skill this is considered to be the equivalent of the modern science of Meteorology and predictions are based on scientific data. The following bonuses are available only if taken as a science skill: Add 5% to the skill if traditional weather prediction equipment is available, such as barometers, wind gauges, and thermometers. Add 10% if modern computerized measurement devices are available. Add 20% if weather satellite pictures and data are available. Base Skill: 15% +5% per level of experience.

Ocean Survival: [Add to Espionage or Cultural skills]

Similar to the PFRPG® skill of Castaway/Shipwreck Survival (see Palladium Fantasy RPG® Book 3: Adventures on the High Seas, page 7), this skill encompasses survival when adrift on the oceans. This includes the ability to tread water until finding something floating to cling to (flotsam), the ability to find fresh water (from certain types of fish, seaweed, etc. or the condensation of dew), and the ability to survive exposure to the extremes of heat and cold typical on the surface of the ocean. Base Skill: 27% +3% per level of experience. Secondary Skill Level: -10% base proficiency.

Oceanography: *(New!)* [Add to Science skills]

This character is trained in the "behavior" of the ocean, and knowledgeable of the plants and animals that live on, under, or around it. On a successful skill roll, the character will be able to determine the current flow, the tides, what kind of creatures will live there, the basic ecosystem of the particular area, and what kind of weather is common to the area (but not the ability to predict the weather). Base Skill: 40% +5% per level of experience.

Public Speaking: [Add to Communications or Technical skills]

Training in the quality of sound, tone, pitch, enunciation, clarity, and pace in speaking to the public, loudly and distinctly. Also includes the practice of good, enticing storytelling and composition of the spoken word. The percentile number indicates the overall quality and charisma of the spoken word. Base Skill: 30% +5% per level of experience. Secondary Skill Level: -10% base proficiency.

W.P. Bola: (*New!*) [Add to Ancient Projectile Weapon Proficiencies] Training in the use of the Bola, a weapon made up of three to five weights attached by string. They are used by first twirling them over one's head and then by throwing them at a victim's limbs or neck in an entangling attack. A successful neck entanglement will perform a choking attack, exactly as described for the martial art attack. Each "throw" uses one hand-to-hand attack. Typical Bola range is 60 feet (18.3 m). Bonuses: Start with a +1 to entangle (thrown) at level one. Add an additional +1 to entangle (thrown) at 4th, 7th, 10th, and 13th levels.

W.P. Improvised: [Add to Ancient Weapon Proficiencies] This skill represents training in the use of various everyday objects as improvised hand-to-hand weapons. Pool sticks, bottles, broom handles, suitcases, step ladders, and even telephones and other small appliances become effective weapons in the hands of a master of this skill. These "weapons," however, must be of a reasonable size and weight (at least about the size of a 12oz bottle), and unlike the Moo Gi Gong martial art, this skill *does not allow* for the use of small, inconspicuous items like pencils, credit cards, or magazines as weapons. (For a good example of W.P. Improvised in action, watch any Jackie Chan movie.) Typical damage for these "weapons" is 1D4 to 1D6 and may go as high as 2D6 damage in special circumstances (G.M.s, use discretion in this). Bonuses: Start with a +1 to strike with improvised weapons at 1st level, and gain an additional +1 bonus to strike at 4th, 6th, 12th, and 15th levels, as well as a +1 to damage at 5*, 10 , and 15th levels. Practitioners of Moo Gi Gong are considered to already possess this W.P. at a Weapon Kata level.

W.P. Lasso: (*New!*) [Add to Ancient Weapon Proficiencies] This character is trained in the use of a lasso or lariat as a means of entangling, as well as in how to properly tie one. Range is a maximum of 30 feet and is limited, of course, by the length of the rope. Each "throw" uses one hand-to-hand attack, as does the retrieval of the lasso after a missed throw. Note that the character still has possession of the other end of the rope after a successful entanglement, and may take advantage of this to pull the entangled victim off their feet, etc. Bonuses: Starts with a +1 to entangle at level 1. Add an additional +1 to entangle at 4th, 7th, 10th , and 13th levels.

Zero-G Maneuvering and Combat: [Add to Espionage/Military, Physical, and Pilot Related skills] This skill involves the ability to maneuver oneself in conditions of zero gravity and micro-gravity typically encountered in space or orbit. The character knows the nature of physics in zero and near zero gravity. While an inexperienced character will flail around aimlessly, characters with this skill will bound along from wall to wall and handhold to handhold as easily as if they were walking on dry land. This allows the character to maneuver and fight in such conditions without the —4 penalties to strike, parry, and dodge normally encountered. (Note: Characters with the Parachuting skill may, at the G.M.'s discretion, suffer only a -2 penalty under micro-gravity and zero gravity conditions.) It also makes the character used to the disorientation and sickness common to those unaccustomed to micro-gravity environments, and makes them immune to all forms of motion sickness. This skill, in addition to remov-

ing all combat penalties, grants a zero-G equivalent of the Sense of Balance sub-skill (Acrobatics and Gymnastics) at 30%, +5% per level of experience.

Zoology: (*New!*) [Add to Science skills] This is the study of animals of various classes and phyla, their habits, life cycles, and basic biology (full biological knowledge requires the Biology skill). A successful roll of this skill will allow one to identify animal species (including scientific name), determine their age and health, and predict their behavior and reactions to a given situation. If dealing with a previously unknown or unrecorded species (the character will know this on a successful skill roll), they may predict their likely behavior at 1/2 their normal skill level, based on similar species. Having this skill gives the character a +5% bonus to the Animal Husbandry skill if also possessed. Base Skill: 40% +5% per level of experience.

Modified Military Programs Using the New Skills

In addition to the creation of new skill programs with the addition of the above new skills, I find it necessary to update some of the existing Military skill programs to reflect the greater diversity in skill availability. While these changes are entirely optional, you may find they better reflect the abilities of the real world soldiers they represent. Individual G.M.s may also find the need to add to, subtract from, or otherwise modify these programs further to reflect the individual needs of the campaign or character. The following changes should be made to the following original Military skill programs from the *Ninjas & Superspies™* RPG book (see pages 33 and 34):

Military: Basic Military Skill Program

Add the following new skills to this program:
Military Etiquette (+10%) NBC Warfare
(+10%) Camouflage (+5%) First Aid (+10%)

Subtract the extra Physical skill.

Sorry, you can't learn Acrobatics or Juggling in basic training, at least not in most western nations. Running and Climbing pretty well cover the extent of basic training's physical requirements. If you insist on having the extra Physical skill, at least limit it to Athletics (General), Prowl, or Swimming, Basic.

Military: Advanced Infantry Skill Program

Add the following new skills to this program:
Military Etiquette (+15%) Fortification (+15%)
Trap Construction (+5%) Field Surgery
(+10%)

Military: Guerrilla Warfare Skill Program

Add the following new skills to this program:

Camouflage (+10%) Field Surgery (+5%) Trap Construction (+10%) Trap/Mine Detection (+5%)

Military: Electronic Warfare Skill Program

Add the following new skill to this program:

Advanced Electronic Combat (+10%)



Modified Military Piloting Skill Programs

The following skill programs are essentially the same as the programs of the same name on page 34 of the original *Ninjas & Superspies™* book, but with a few adjustments. First, all military pilots (fixed or rotary wing) must go through a set pilot training course, starting with small training aircraft and working their way up to Combat Fighters or Helicopters (one just doesn't hop in a supersonic fighter and start flying without knowing the basics). Piloting skills were chosen to reflect this graduated training. Next, Pilot Related skills were set to those below. One can hardly even *land* a high-speed fighter or advanced helicopter, even on calm clear days, without the aid of modern instrumentation (Instrument Rating). Plus, without the Weapon Systems skill, firing any weapons but straight guns (without the

aid of computerized targeting, i.e. firing wild) would be impossible. Next, I added W.P. Pistol and Wilderness Survival skills since all military pilots, even high-altitude reconnaissance pilots, are trained in survival techniques and handguns for self-defense/survival reasons (in case they are shot down in hostile territory). Since pilots of all branches of the service spend time over the water, the necessity of the Ocean Survival skill is inherent. Finally, the Jet Mechanics and Helicopter Mechanics have been removed from their respective Pilot skill programs. While all pilots do have a basic mechanical knowledge of their aircraft (this is necessary for a full understanding of the aircraft and its piloting requirements), this does *not* necessarily mean the Pilot can repair his/her own aircraft. (It takes a large crew of mechanical and electronic specialists for that.) Any Mechanical or Electrical skills must be acquired elsewhere.

Note that while pilots do occasionally have to "bail out," the aircraft ejection seat does most of the actual "work," and pilots do not regularly "practice" parachuting. In this way they are not experienced in parachuting to the level of proficiency required for the Parachuting skill. [Author's note: contrary to the old joke, some modern helicopters *do* have pilot ejection systems (they jettison the rotor blades before ejecting the pilot).]

Note also the "preferred" airframe rule I have included. This is because, quite simply, modern pilots train and fight in one specific aircraft type, typically performing one specific type of mission. These missions include, but are far from limited to, Air-to-Air Intercept, Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD or "Wild Weasel"), Interdiction Strike, Aerial Reconnaissance, Close Air Support, Military Airlift (cargo, personnel, and paratrooper delivery), and Air Superiority. This airframe specialization results in the pilot gaining combat bonuses and skill bonuses in flight-related skills with that airframe type (example: F-15 pilots have a "preferred" airframe of F-15, gaining bonuses when flying F-15s). While the pilot has enough flying skill to fly a different aircraft type with minimal training and "check-out" time, they are always most comfortable with their original airframe. Becoming fully proficient in a different aircraft type requires flying that airframe almost exclusively for several months (8+), or even years. This will result in a *switch* of preferred airframes: the character "loses" their original preferred airframe (no extra bonuses with that airframe any longer), and gains the "new" preferred airframe instead. Optionally, a *second* preferred airframe could be gained by going through full training all over again in that type — at the G.M.'s discretion, the player may take the Military: Combat Aircraft or Helicopter Aviation skill program *twice*, giving a +5% on all Pilot Related skills (and Air to Air Combat) and allowing for a *second* preferred airframe type (e.g. AH-8 Harrier (USMC) and F-15E Strike Eagle (USAF)) with full bonuses for each (see the "Lateral Transfer" template option under Military Combat Pilot below). [Author's note: both of these programs now contain two skills more than the original skill programs as detailed in *Ninjas & Superspies™*.]

Military: Combat Aircraft Skill Program

This program represents the character having successfully completed Military Flight School and "earned their wings." As a graduate, the character is considered a full Commissioned Officer and entitled to the benefits therein. In general, a nation's Air

Force, Navy, and, occasionally, Marine Corps have combat fighters, though this does vary from country to country (the Armies of most nations tend to specialize in rotary-wing aircraft (helicopters), though many do use small fixed-wing (typically prop) aircraft for scouting or airlift). This skill program represents training in fixed-wing aircraft only; for rotary-wing piloting skills see the Military: Helicopter Aviation skill program detailed below. Also note that the character is used to the rough, turbulent world of aerial combat and as a result is immune to motion sickness, suffering only 1/2 penalties for firing during maneuvers or turbulence (normally considered "shooting wild" -



SKILLS INCLUDED:

- Advanced Electronic Combat (+15%)
- Aerial Navigation (+20%)
- Air-to-Air Combat (+20%)
- Instrument Rating (+20%)
- Pilot Airplane(+15%)
- Pilot Jet (+15%)
- Pilot Jet Fighter (+20%)
- Radio: Basic Communications (+10%)
- Read Sensory Equipment (+15%)
- Weapon Systems (+15%)
- Wilderness Survival (+5%)
- Ocean Survival (New!) (+5%)
- W.P. Pistol

Plus choose one specific aircraft type (example: F-15 Eagle, F-18 Hornet, AC-130 gunship) as a *preferred airframe*, with a +10% bonus (for that type only) in all connected skills (example: Piloting, Air-to-Air Combat, Instrument Rating, etc.), and a +2 on all combat bonuses in that airframe type.

Military: Helicopter Aviation Skill Program:

This person has earned their wings as a Combat Helicopter Pilot and is considered a Warrant Officer or Officer depending on the situation and the G.M. (most US Army pilots are Warrant Officers). While basic fixed-wing flying skills are known, this character has specialized in rotary-wing craft (helicopters and gyroplanes, etc.) and is most comfortable in them. Also note that the character is used to the rough, turbulent world of aerial combat and as a result is immune to motion sickness, suffering only 1/2 penalties for firing during maneuvers or turbulence (normally considered "shooting wild" - no bonuses). Rotary-wing aircraft are used widely by the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps of most nations, but less so by the Air Force. **SKILLS INCLUDED:**

- Advanced Electronic Combat (+5%)
- Aerial Navigation (+20%)
- Air-to-Air Combat (+20%)
- Instrument Rating (+20%)
- Pilot Airplane (+10%)
- Pilot Basic Helicopter (+15%)
- Pilot Combat helicopter (+20%)
- Radio: Basic Communications (+10%)

- Read Sensory Equipment (+15%)
- Weapon Systems (+15%)
- Wilderness Survival (+5%)
- Ocean Survival (New!) (+5%)
- W.P. Pistol

Plus choose one specific helicopter type (example: AH-64 Apache, CH-53 Super Stallion, UH-1 Huey) as a *preferred airframe*, with a +10% bonus (for that type only) in all connected skills (ex: Piloting, Air-to-Air Combat, Instrument Rating, etc.), and a +2 on all combat bonuses in that airframe type.

New Military Skill Programs

As stated above, I hope to bring new diversity to the military (Mercenary) character in the Ninjas & Superspies™ RPG. Hopefully these new Military skill programs will expand the role of the military character and help recreate some of the variety of specialties and skills present in the modern armed forces, as well as bring new fun, ability, and realism to the game. I'll begin with the skill program that started it all:

Military: Special Forces Skill Program:

This character has the background of a commando in one of the world's many highly trained special operations and/or counter-terrorist organizations, such as the British SAS or US Navy

SeALs. Trained in stealth and experienced with a variety of special skills, Special Forces teams around the world have gained a deadly reputation as dangerous and ruthlessly efficient shadow-warriors.

SKILLS INCLUDED:

- Swimming (+20%)
- Swimming, Advanced (w/SCUBA) (+15%)
- Prowl (+10%)
- Parachuting (New!) (+15%)
- Camouflage (New!) (+10%)
- Trap Construction (+10%)
- Demolitions (+10%)
- Demolitions Disposal (+5%)
- Underwater Demolitions (New!) (+5%)
- W.P. Submachine-Gun
- W.P. Knife

Military: Wilderness Survival Skill Program:

(Optional: This skill program may also be taken as an Espionage skill program.)

This character has extensive training and experience in outdoor wilderness survival, all across the world, in all types of harsh environments. As a result, the character can survive just about anywhere, with few to no provisions, relatively easily. The character is also able to assist in keeping others alive under such circumstances, and can formally train others in the arts of survival.

SKILLS INCLUDED:

- Wilderness Survival (+15%)
- Desert Survival (+15%)
- Arctic Survival (New!) (+10%)
- Ocean Survival (New!) (+10%)
- Swimming (+15%)
- Swimming, Advanced (w/SCUBA) (+10%)
- Land Navigation (+10%)
- Mountaineering (+10%)
- Spelunking (+10%)
- Fishing (+5%)
- Tracking (+10%)
- Prowl (+5%)
- Fasting

Military: Combat Engineering Skill Program:

This skill program reflects the skills and training of a combat engineer. US military combat engineers include members of the US Army Corps of Engineers, the US Navy Construction Battalions (CBs; the famous Navy "Sea Bees"), the US Air Force Civil Engineering Squadrons (including Prime BEEF [Primary Base Engineer Emergency Force] teams and Rapid Engineer Deployable - Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineer ["RED HORSE"] mobile engineering forces), US Marine Corps Combat Engineer Battalions, and the Coast Guard Civil Engi-

neers. Training is an intensive mix of civil engineering, construction, demolitions, demolitions/trap disposal, and combat training that allows the members of these teams to ensure the mobility and logistics of friendly regular fighting forces, while impeding the mobility and logistics of enemy forces. Much of this must be done under constant heavy enemy fire and/or assault, often requiring the Engineers themselves to take up arms and fight off the attackers! Typical tasks of Combat Engineers include the building (or demolition) of supply lines and communications links (bridges, roads, rails, landing strips, telephone lines, etc.), the breaching of enemy fortifications and impediments (walls, obstacles, fences/wire, traps, mine fields, and explosives), the construction of friendly fortifications and impediments, the construction of forward bases and bivouacs (including medical and air), and the construction of full-sized bases/airfields. Some Combat Engineering projects have included major infrastructure, such as the US Army Corps of Engineers' work on flood control and irrigation, to include the construction of the major levees and dams of America.

SKILLS INCLUDED:

- Armorer (+5%)
- Camouflage (New!) (+10%)
- Carpentry/Construction (New!) (+20%)
- Civil Engineering (New!) (+10%)
- Demolitions (+20%)
- Demolitions Disposal (+20%)
- Fortification (New!) (+20%)
- Pilot Heavy Machinery (+10%)
- Read Sensory Equipment (+10%)
- Trap Construction (New!) (+15%)
- Trap/Mine Detection (New!) (+20%)
- Underwater Demolitions (New!) (+5%)

Military: Field Medic/Surgeon Skill Program:

(Optional: This skill program may also be taken as a Medical skill program.)

This character has the background of a military medic, hospital corpsman, or field (M*A*S*H) surgeon, treating and evacuating combat wounded often under fire. This profession is demanding and dangerous, but the character is likely to be shown the utmost respect and admiration by his or her fellow soldiers. Medical corpsmen are historically the most decorated troops by profession; however, these awards are often given posthumously. SKILLS INCLUDED:

- Biology (+5%)
- Field Surgery (New!) (+25%; this includes the +20% bonus from the Medical Doctor skill)
- First Aid (+20%)
- Medical Doctor (+15%)
- Paramedic (+15%)
- Pathology (+5%)

Additionally, these troops are hardened to combat and the sight of blood/wounded, giving them a one-time bonus of +2 to save versus Horror Factor and any type of battle-induced Insanity.



Military: K-9 Corps Skill Program:

(Optional: This skill program may also be taken as an Espionage skill program.)

Dogs have long been used by humans in military and civilian (police) roles, usually to sniff for explosives and/or contraband/drugs, or used to search for or apprehend fugitives or enemy troops. Serving as a canine trainer and/or K-9 corps member, this character is familiar with the training and use of dogs in such a way. Characters with this skill program can also order their canine "partners" to attack a specific individual or group on command [Author's note: dogs are trained to bite once (1D4 damage) and then "pull down" a target (equivalent to a "body flip/throw") so that the individual can be apprehended — they are almost *never* trained to maim or kill, although instinct can sometimes get the better of them {fixed 1% chance that the dog will instinctively continue to attack}]. In the course of serving with their canine companions, the character has likely gained feelings of admiration and love for their four-legged partners, often mourning the dog's loss the same as they would for a fallen human comrade. Typical breeds of dog used in this manner include German Shepherds, Belgian Shepherds, Rottweilers, and Bloodhounds (Bloodhounds are the most effective tracking dogs, 90% track by scent). [Author's note: the United States and other nations have also experimented similarly using trained Seals, Porpoises, and Dolphins in military roles. At the G.M.'s discretion, a similar skill program based around marine mammals can also be taken to reflect this "Dolphin Corps."]

SKILLS INCLUDED:

- Animal Husbandry (+10%)
- Animal Training (+25% for canines, no bonus for non-canines)
- Detect Ambush (+5%)*
- Detect Concealment (+10%)*
- First Aid (+5%)
- Hojo-Jutsu (+5%)
- Prowl (+10%)
- Tracking (+15%)*
- Trap/Mine Detection (+10%)*

Note: All of the above skills that are marked with an asterisk (*) gain an additional bonus of +5% when performed with the aid of a canine trained in that skill (+10% if the character trained the canine himself!).

Military: Naval Surface Combat Helmsman Skill Program:

This character has the skills and background of a navy officer specialized in "big-ship" naval surface and submarine combat, from small cutters, to frigates, destroyers and cruisers, up to large surface combatants like aircraft carriers, amphibious assault ships (LHA/LHD), and perhaps battleships (note: no longer in service in most navies). This character is typically a ship's "helmsman" specialized in piloting one or more of the Navy's many seagoing vessels, but is also assumed to have picked up some practical experience in navigation. Additionally, the character is used to the roller coaster ride of ocean swells and choppy seas, and is therefore immune to motion sickness. The skill is set up for standard surface combatants (frigates, destroyers, cruisers, and carriers), but you can replicate other specialties based on your other skill selections, choosing your aquatic piloting skills to reflect your character's background. To create a Submarine specialist, choose the Pilot: Submarine and Pilot: Military Submarine skills. To create an Amphibious Assault/Landing ("Gator Navy") specialist, choose Pilot: Amphibious Landing Craft and Pilot: Hydrofoil/Hovercraft. For that matter, take the Pilot: Sailboat and Pilot: Large Sailing Vessels skills for a Naval Officer assigned to "historical" ships still under commission, such as America's USS Constitution or Britain's HMS Victory! At the G.M.'s discretion you can "trade" the +20% bonus for the Pilot Large Military Ocean Craft skill with the +15% of your "chosen" specialty Piloting skill (ex.: a Sub specialist could trade the bonuses between Pilot Large Military Ocean Craft and Pilot Military Submarine, giving him/her a +20% to the Pilot Military Submarine skill and +15% to the Pilot Large Military Ocean Craft). Note that this skill program creates a background as a ship's helmsman, navigator, or other bridge crewman; the character is *not* assumed to know anything about firing shipboard weapon systems (that falls under the Military: Naval Artillery/Gunner skill program).

SKILLS INCLUDED:

- Naval Combat (New!) (+20%)
- Navigation (+20%)
- Read Sensory Equipment (+15%)
- Ocean Survival (New!) (+15%)

Swimming, Basic (+10%)

Pilot Motor Boat (+15%)

Pilot Large Ships & Ocean-Liners (+15%)

Pilot Large Military Ocean Craft (+20%)

Pilot: Two (2) other aquatic at +15% (Typical choices include Submarine, Military Submarine, Amphibious Landing Craft, & Hydrofoil/Hovercraft).

Additionally, choose one specific ocean vessel type (example: Submarine, Destroyer) as a preferred vessel type, with a +10% bonus (for that type only) in all connected skills (i.e. Piloting, Naval Combat, Navigation, etc.).

Military: Naval Artillery/ Gunner Skill Program:

This character has the background of a Navy gunner and artillery specialist and has been trained on a variety of naval weaponry, from boat-mounted machine guns to medium-range anti-shipping and anti-aircraft missiles, to the huge 16" guns on the "Mighty Mo." (Battleship USS Missouri). The character may also (player's discretion) be a submarine weapons specialist; this does not change the skill program, just the player character's background and weapon system specializations. This character can fire these weapons in all weather conditions (with a reduced penalty). Additionally, the character is used to the rough, turbulent world of naval gunnery and as a result is immune to motion sickness, suffering only 1/2 penalties for firing during maneuvers or rough seas (normally considered "shooting wild"-no bonuses). **SKILLS INCLUDED:**

Armorer (+5%)

Ocean Survival (New!) (+15%)

Read Sensory Equipment (+15%)

Swimming, Basic (+10%)

Weapon Systems (+15%)

W.P. Artillery*

W.P. Surface to Air Missiles*

W.P. Surface to Surface Missiles'

W.P. Underwater Weapons

W.P. Vehicle Mounted Weapons'

*Special: Considered Shipboard equivalents, such as the 16" guns on Battleships. All strike bonuses reduced by one (i.e. -1 to strike) for land-based equivalents (-2 for aerial-based equivalents!), but the character gets a one-time +1 strike bonus for naval equivalents. Additionally, the character suffers only 1/2 normal penalties for firing on rough or choppy waters.

Military: Aerial Artillery/ Gunner Skill Program:

This character has served as an aerial gunner on one of the world's many flying gunships, such as the AC-130 Specter or AC-47 Spooky. An alternate to this program is that of Helicopter Gunner. To make a Helicopter Gunner, optionally replace the Aerial Artillery W.P. with any other ground-based W.P., includ-

ing Military (note: Helicopters tend not to be able to handle large cannon armament). Whichever you choose, the character is used to the rough, turbulent world of aerial gunnery and as a result is immune to motion sickness, suffering only 1/2 penalties for firing during maneuvers or turbulence (normally considered "shooting wild" - no bonuses). **SKILLS INCLUDED:**

Aircraft Armor & Weaponry (+5%)

Parachuting (New!)

Read Sensory Equipment (+15%)

Aircraft Mechanics (+5%)

Weapon Systems (+15%)

W.P. Artillery**

W.P. Machine Gun**

W.P. Vehicle Mounted Weaponry**

**Special: Considered Aerial equivalents, such as the 105mm Howitzer on the AC-130 gunship. All strike bonuses reduced by one (i.e. -1 to strike) for ocean or surface-based equivalents, but the character gets a one-time +1 strike bonus for aerial equivalents. Additionally, the character suffers only 1/2 normal penalties for firing under turbulent conditions or hard

Military: Astronaut/Cosmonaut/ Space Traveler Skill Program:

One of the elite few with "the right stuff" to be selected for space duty, this character has been trained for and possibly served in space vehicles. Whether the character is an American Astronaut, Russian Cosmonaut, one of the new Chinese Astronauts, or serving with another nation, organization, or even corporation, this character is one of the few human beings to have seen his or her home planet from space (or at least trained to do so). While most spacefarers are military personnel, many civilians have served as well. Most manned Earth space travel (as of the timeframe of Ninjas & Superspies™) is limited to Earth orbit, with a handful of manned missions by the United States to Earth's moon. All missions beyond the moon, such as to Mars, have so far been limited to unmanned probes and satellites. Of course, the G.M. may have other ideas for his or her campaign! **SKILLS INCLUDED:**

Astrophysics (+15%)

Environmental Suit Operation* (+10%)

Math: Advanced (+5%)

Navigation (+15%)

Orbital & Interplanetary Navigation (+20%)

Pilot EMU* (+15%)

Pilot Rockets and Rocket-Craft* (+10%)

Pilot Space Shuttle/Space Plane* (+15%)

Read Sensory Equipment (+20%)

Zero-G Maneuvering & Combat* (+15%)

* = New! Additionally, the character suffers only 1/2 normal penalties for firing under turbulent conditions or hard maneuvering, and is immune to motion sickness.

Other New Skill Programs

Here are a few non-Military skill programs I have created over the years. It seemed right to include them here.

Basic: Acting and Cinematography Skill Program:

This person has a background as an actor/actress or thespian (stage actor), and has a lot of experience with acting and/or cinema, either fiction (plays, movies, TV, etc.) or non-fiction (documentaries, biographies, etc.). **SKILLS INCLUDED:**

- Public Speaking (New!) (+15%)
- Screen Acting (+20%) (See Mystic China, Chao Ta Kung Fu, page 177)
- TV/Video (+5%)
- Imitate Voices (+10%)
- Impersonation (+10%)
- Disguise (+10%)

Basic: Boating/Maritime Skill Program:

This person has a background as a professional fisher/diver/boater, grew up around water, is a water enthusiast, or otherwise has a lot of practical maritime experience. **SKILLS INCLUDED:**

- Swimming (+15%)
- Swimming, Advanced (+10%)
- Oceanography (+5%)
- Ocean Survival (+15%)
- First Aid (+5%)
- Fishing (+15%)
- Plus three (3) water-based non-military pilot skills of choice, all at +10%.

Basic: Computer and Network Technician Skill Program:

This person has the skills for and/or the background as a computer repair/assembly technician or network administrator/IT technician. **SKILLS INCLUDED:**

- Computer Operation (+15%)
- Computer Programming (+10%)
- Computer Networking (+15%)
- Computer Repair (+10%)
- Basic Electronics (+5%)

Basic: Cowboy/Ranch Hand Skill Program:

The North American West, Australian Outback, Mongolian Steppes and Argentinean Plains (to name a few places) still have a sizable number of ranchers and cattlemen/vaqueros, who live

the life of the cowboy, herding cattle or other livestock from horseback.

SKILLS INCLUDED:

- Animal Husbandry (New!) (+15%)
- Animal Training (New!) (+10%)
- Horsemanship, General (+20%)
- Land Navigation (+10%)
- Tracking (+10%)
- Wilderness Survival (+15%)
- W.P. Whip
- W.P. Lasso or Bola (New!)
- W.P. (one of choice excluding Military)

Basic: Extreme Sports Skill Program:

This person is an enthusiast for the dangerous "extreme" sports portrayed in events like the "X-Games."

SKILLS INCLUDED:

- Mountaineering (+10%)
- Swimming (+10%)
- Swimming, Advanced (+5%)
- Spelunking (+5%)
- Parachuting (New!) (+10%)
- Athletics, General
- Bicycle (New!) (+10%) (See Mystic China, Open Hand Martial Artist; page 48)
- Acrobatics (Special: Emphasis on "aerobic maneuvers" and stunts)

Plus add two Sports skills at +10%. These should, of course, be selected from among the "extreme" sports popularized by such events as the "X-Games." Typical choices are Skateboarding, Snowboarding, In-line Skating, "Air-boarding" (w/ parachute), Skiing (Water or Snow), etc. See the X-Games or similar programming for several other examples.

Basic: Field Naturalist or Field Scientist Skill Program:

This character has spent some time in the wild, typically in Africa or the Australian Outback, studying wildlife for scientific or conservationist reasons. This character can be the equivalent of Jane Goodall (Zoological studies) or even "Crocodile Hunter" Steve Erwin (capturing animals for conservation, zoos, or study). Whatever the case, this character is quite comfortable living in harsh, primitive conditions and can patiently stay in one place (typically hidden for observation) for hours.

SKILLS INCLUDED:

- Animal Husbandry (+15%)
- Animal Training (+10%)
- Biology (+10%)
- Camouflage (+10%)

Horsemanship (+5%) Land Navigation (+5%) Prowl (+5%) Tracking (+10%) Wilderness Survival (+10%) Zoology (+10%)

Wrestling (Special: Intended for use with animals, but can just as easily be adapted for use against humans.)

Basic: Hunter/Outdoorsman Skill Program:

This character has a knack for and an interest in hunting, fishing, camping, and other outdoor sport. For a more "nature friendly" option, replace Trap Construction, W.P. Rifle, and/or Fishing for an equal number of wilderness-based Cultural or Physical skills. Appropriate choices include Survival skills, Swimming, Climbing, Mountaineering, Animal Husbandry, etc.

SKILLS INCLUDED:

Camouflage (+10%)
Fishing (+10%)
Land Navigation (+5%)
Prowl (+5%)
Tracking (+10%)
Wilderness Survival (+10%)
W.P. Rifle/Shotgun
Trap Construction* (+15%)

*Special: Non-military, non-explosive traps only; i.e. only snares and the like. (Intended for catching wild *game*, i.e. animals.) All military (explosive) or anti-personnel type traps are at 1/2 skill level, and without the above +15% bonus.

Basic: Independent Study Skill Program:

This skill program accounts for a non-regimented study program initiated by the player or taken as part of a larger training program (such as free electives taken during college). This program is often taken to "balance out" the character, or to account for desired skills unavailable with the character's current skill program selection. Since this is a skill *program*, the character has access to all skills not expressly forbidden below, including many that are unavailable as Secondary Skills. Additionally, since these skills are "professionally" learned, the character gains the full (non-Secondary) percentage level for them.

SKILLS INCLUDED:

Take any four (4) skills from any category *except* Advanced Pilot or Military W.P., with a total bonus of +20% to be divided among the four skills as the player sees fit. For example, a player might take a +10% on their first skill and a +5% each in two of the three remaining skills, leaving no bonus for the fourth and final skill.

Basic: Outdoor Survivalist Skill Program:

This person is either an enthusiast for survival, has received survival training, or has otherwise lived off the land, perhaps

unwillingly, for long periods of time in harsh environmental conditions. These characters have therefore gained many survival skills.

SKILLS INCLUDED:

Land Navigation (+10%)
Swimming (+5%) Swimming,
Advanced Tracking (+5%)
Wilderness Survival (+15%)
Desert Survival (+10%) Arctic
Survival (New!) (+10%) Oceanic
Survival (New!) (+10%)

Basic: Paramedic/Medical Technician Skill Program:

This skill program represents training or a background as a professional nurse, nurse-practitioner, medical technician, paramedic, or other non-doctorate medical professional. While these backgrounds are quite different from one another in terms of required education and the actual job performed, they do share some of the same *basic* skills.

SKILLS INCLUDED:

Biology (+5%)
First Aid (+25%)
Paramedic (+20%)

Basic: Professional Driver/ Vehicle Enthusiast Skill Program:

Gives the character a background as either a professional driver/vehicle operator (including racing, commercial/freight, chauffeur, heavy equipment, etc.), or just as someone with a love for operating various vehicles. Which background the character has, depends on skill selection and the whims of the player.

SKILLS INCLUDED:

Automobile Mechanics (+10%)
Pilot Automobile (+15%)
Plus add four other Basic Pilot, Pilot Related or Mechanical Skills at +10% each.

Optional: If the player has selected one of the Professional Racing skills as one of his piloting skills, he may (G.M.'s discretion) select the Sports cultural skill (instead of a Piloting or Pilot Related skill) in that particular "type" of racing for a background as a "Professional" race driver. See the rules for the optional professional status under the Sports cultural skill (Ninjas & Superspies™ page 39) for more details on being a professional sports personality.

Espionage: Bounty Hunter Skill Program:

This character knows the skills of the trade as a professional bounty hunter or fugitive tracking specialist. This may either be from experience with a professional (government) organization

like the police or CIA/FBI, or as a private bounty hunter for hire. Whichever the case, the character is trained in the arts of tracking fugitives and capturing them effectively once found. It also includes the necessary training to hide oneself and take steps against the likelihood of ambush by their fugitive "marks." It does not include the use of tracking dogs (such as bloodhounds) to track down their marks (this requires the K-9 Corps skill program).

SKILLS INCLUDED:

- Tracking (+15%) Land
- Navigation (+10%)
- Interrogation (+10%) Prowl
- (+10%) Hojo-Jutsu(+15%)
- Escape Artist (+5%)
- Concealment (+10%) Detect
- Ambush (+5%) Detect
- Concealment (+15%)
- Locksmith (+10%) Radio:

Basic Operation
Plus any two non-military W.P.s of choice (typically Pistol, Rifle/Shotgun, and/or Knife).

Possible covers (pick one): Cartographer, Chef, Courier, Diamond/Gold Trader, Diver, Geologist, Journalist, Mercenary/Weapons Dealer, Missionary, Photographer, Roustabout, or Surveyor.

Espionage: Vehicle Specialist Skill Program:

(Optional: may also be taken as a Military skill program to reflect a military vehicle operator background.)

This character has specialized in the operation of motor vehicles of many types, for infiltration/extraction of agents, smuggling/blockade running, and/or as a getaway/pursuit specialist. This character is trained in a variety of vehicles, from land vehicles to aircraft and sea-going vessels. **SKILLS INCLUDED:**

- Automobile Mechanics (+10%)
- Offensive Driving (+10%)
- Read Sensory Equipment (+15%)
- Pilot Automobile (+20%)
- Pilot Professional Race Car (+15%)
- Pilot Motorcycle (+15%)
- Pilot: Four (4) others at +10% each (may include Advanced Pilot skills).
- Pilot Related: Three of choice at +10% each.

Possible covers (pick one): Cartographer, Consulting Engineer, Courier, Diplomat, Diver, Freelance Airplane Pilot, Geologist, Import/Export Agent, Mercenary/Weapons Dealer, Missionary, Photographer, Surveyor, or Tour Operator.

Gizmooteer: Forgery Specialist Skill Program:

Essentially based on the Forger O.C.C. found on page 21 of the Rifts™ Mercenaries Sourcebook, this skill program represents the training and ability for complex forgeries. With this skill program, the character has the ability to recreate (forge) a variety of items, including but not limited to documents, recordings, art, and handwriting. In addition to the regular Forgery skill, which typically covers documents, signatures, simple IDs, etc., this character can do the following:

- Duplicate handwriting (-5%).
- Forge complex ID and security documents/badges that include holograms, crests, logos, or other complex items (-5%).
- Repair damaged/torn documents to look only worn (-10%).
- Create false credit cards, ATM cards, or even counterfeit money (-15%).
- Forge jewelry, sculptures, or other works of art (-25%).
- Forge audio/video or computerized recordings (-15%).
- Recreate any magic, alchemical, or mystical items seen (if applicable to the campaign), such as alchemy compounds, runes, wards, mystic symbology, scrolls, circles, etc. (-45%).

All of these are done using the basic Forgery skill (full level), or by using the Basic Gizmooteer Construction Skill (B.G.C.S.) at 1/2 percentage level. In general, use the Forgery skill for "paper" documents and IDs, and use the B.G.C.S. for more complex items such as art or video forgeries, along with the applicable skill for the forgery, such as Art or TV/Video.

SKILLS INCLUDED:

- Art (+15%)
- Computer Operation (+15%)
- Computer Hacking (+5%)
- Computer Programming (+10%)
- Cryptography (+5%)
- Forgery (+20%)
- Optic Systems (+5%)
- Photography (+10%)
- T.V./Video(+15%)

Medical: Veterinary Medicine Skill Program:

This character has specialized in the field of veterinary medicine and surgery. All of the below skills that are labeled "Veterinary" are considered the "animal" equivalents of the normal skills of the same name. These skills may be performed on human patients, but at 1/2 the normal skill level, **SKILLS INCLUDED:**

- Animal Husbandry (+15%)
- Biology (+20%)
- First Aid (+10%)
- Medical Doctor (Veterinary) (+20%)
- Paramedic (Veterinary) (+20%)
- Pathology (Veterinary) (+10%)
- Zoology (+15%)

with the Academy of Mercenary O.C.C. (Nearly all fixed-wing/non-helicopter aircraft pilots and many rotary-wing/helicopter pilots are Officers. The U.S. Military no longer has any Enlisted pilots, and neither do many other major industrialized nations.) Alternately, another Mercenary (or even Gizmoteer or Agent!) O.C.C. may be selected to create a variation on your typical pilot theme (such as a "cross-training" scenario).

Combat Aircraft Pilots (Fixed-Wing)

In order to create a fixed-wing pilot character, one should start with the Military: Combat Aircraft skill program as detailed above. I have set up the skill program to duplicate as close as possible the actual training process for a modern fixed-wing military pilot. Fixed-wing aircraft are utilized in America by the Air Force, Navy (typically Carrier-based), and Marine Corps (often Carrier-based or Amphibious Assault Ship (LHA, LHD) based). The US Army uses mostly rotary wing (helicopter) aircraft. What you do from there depends entirely on what you want your pilot's background to be. The following offer some interesting scenarios:

Promotion/Commission or Cross-Training: Originally Enlisted in this or another branch of the military, the character was commissioned as an Officer and became a pilot. Alternately, the character was an Officer of a different occupation (such as Infantry or Armor) who cross-trained to become a pilot (or vice versa). Either way, simply select other Military skill programs to reflect the other occupation. Or (G.M.'s discretion) trade a Military skill program for a Gizmoteer, Espionage, or Medical skill program to reflect the other occupation. (Note: The Gizmoteer: Vehicle Construction skill program makes an interesting basis for a former enlisted Aircraft Mechanic/Technician (with *exceptional* technical skill for the job, I might add) who got the chance to fly aircraft he/she used to work on).

Lateral Transfer: Starting off as an Army or Marine Helicopter pilot (possibly as a Warrant Officer (Army)), the character was commissioned as a full Officer in one of the other Armed Services and became a combat pilot. [Author's Note: I was stationed with a former US Army Cobra Helicopter pilot who transferred to, and was commissioned in, the US Air Force as an F-15C Fighter pilot.] To create this background, simply take both the Military: Helicopter Aviation *and* Combat Aircraft skill programs. An alternative to this is a transfer from fighter pilot to fighter pilot, often from a different service or even nation. At the G.M.'s discretion, the player may take the Military: Combat Aircraft skill program *twice*, giving a +5% on **all** Pilot and Pilot Related skills (and Air to Air Combat), and allowing for a *second* preferred airframe type (ex. AH-8 Harrier (USMC) *and* F-15E Strike Eagle (USAF)) with full bonuses for each. (Note: This fighter-to-fighter scenario may also happen in the same service; example 1: F-16C Falcon (USAF) *and* F-15C Eagle (USAF); example 2: AH-8 Harrier (USMC) *and* F-18E Hornet (USMC)).

Weapon System Officer (WSO), Radar Intercept Officer (RIO), or Electronic Warfare Officer (EWO): The WSO ("wizzo") and RIO ("reeyo") are "co-pilots" of sorts for twin or multi-seat aircraft, whose job is to control the aiming and firing of munitions (weapons), leaving the pilot free to fly the aircraft.



Creating Realistic Military Personnel Using Skill Programs

By combining skill programs in realistic ways, one can effectively duplicate or reproduce almost any military specialty background. The following specialties allow the player to create characters from Military Pilot or Special Forces backgrounds with some accuracy. Keep in mind, though, that these are merely generalizations; the actual specialties themselves are typically a lot more in-depth or specialized than presented here. However, the following "templates," I feel, capture the spirit of the specialties while still maintaining the flow and balance of the game. If you disagree or feel that these templates are not right for your game, feel free to change them as you see fit, or eliminate them altogether.

Military Combat Pilots

A popular basis for Military characters is that of Military Combat Pilots (who are as stereotyped, "Hollywood-ized," and misunderstood as the Special Forces characters mentioned below). The best way to create a Military Aircraft Pilot is to start

The EWO is similar, but instead flies in a "Electronic Warfare" aircraft, such as an EF-111 Raven or EA-6 Prowler, and handles the jamming of enemy radar, communications, electronics, etc. (ECM). For a WSO or RIO, select the Military: Combat Aircraft skill program and (G.M.'s discretion) increase the Weapon Systems skill to +25% (with an additional +) to strike, for a total of +3). In exchange for the increased skill, the WSO must subtract a total of 10% from among the remaining skills in that program, divided among them as the player sees fit (example: -5% from Pilot Airplane and -5% from Instrument Rating). For an EWO, select the Military: Electronic Warfare skill program and (G.M.'s discretion) increase the Electronic Counter-Measures and Advanced Electronic Combat skills by +25%. In exchange for the increased skills, the EWO must subtract a total of 15% from among the remaining skills in that program, divided among them as the player sees fit.

Military Flight Surgeon: Basically a Medical Doctor qualified for flight duties, so they can better understand the stresses of flying and for rapid transportation to needed areas. The Flight Surgeon usually sits in the back seat and rarely (if ever) participates in actual combat. A player character is assumed fully competent to fly a fighting aircraft, however. This character can be created, at the G.M.'s discretion, by substituting a Medical skill program (almost always the Medical Doctor or Field Medic/Surgeon program) for one of the character's Military, Gizmoteer, or Espionage (not Basic) skill programs.

Pilot Engineer: Most modern pilots hold degrees in technical and engineering areas. Based on this, the Pilot Engineer has, with the G.M.'s discretion again, the option of exchanging one (or more) of his/her Military, Espionage, or Medical (not Basic) skill programs for a Gizmoteer skill program. An alternate to this is simply a Gizmoteer with the Military: Combat Aircraft skill program.

Squadron Security/Intelligence Officer: This is a Flying Officer in charge of security and military intelligence concerns for the Combat Squadron. Simply take the Military Intelligence skill program in addition to your Flight skill program(s).

Aerial Gunnery Specialist: This character is either the pilot of a gunship (such as the AC-130 Specter) who has learned how to fire the artillery weapons on his/her aircraft, or a former aerial gunner who became a pilot. (Note: in the real world the military ends to be pretty specialized, and gunship pilots typically can not fire their aircraft's guns. Likewise, the gunners are almost never qualified to fly.) Whatever the case, this character combines the abilities of a Combat Pilot with those of an Aerial Artillery specialist. To create these characters, simply choose the Military: Combat Aircraft skill program (with a preferred airframe in a gunship like the AC-130), and then choose the new Military: Aerial Artillery/Gunner skill program.

Pilot Agent: The importance of a Military Combat Squadron, both in combat and peacetime, makes it an inviting target for espionage and subterfuge. This is where the Pilot Agent comes in. This character is either an enemy "mole" (who has infiltrated the Combat Squadron for the purpose of spying, information gathering, and/or potential sabotage), or a friendly "plant" (there for anti-infiltration and counter-espionage purposes). Either way, the Pilot Agent must keep his/her position as an agent secret to the rest of the pilots. This character is either an actual "Agent" O.C.C. who has taken the Military: Combat

Aircraft skill program, or (G.M.'s discretion) a pilot who has traded a Military, Medical, or Gizmoteer (not Basic) skill program for an Espionage skill program (the Espionage: Deep Cover skill program is ideal).

Combat Helicopter Pilots

Like their fixed-wing brethren. Helicopter pilots also fulfill many roles and offer a variety of role-playing options. While certain differences in philosophy and attitude between fixed and rotary-wing pilots do arise, for the most part (and for game purposes) the two "professions" are quite similar. The most noticeable difference is that many helicopter pilots are Warrant Officers and not full Commissioned Officers (this applies to the US Army, but not to the other branches of the US military, where rotary-wing pilots are Officers). Otherwise, the similarities typically outweigh the differences in terms of pilot "culture" and specialties (in my experience at least similar enough for game mechanics).

To create a Military: Combat Helicopter Pilot character, start with the modified Military: Combat Helicopter Pilot skill program outlined above, and simply pick the remaining skill programs around the desired background you want. You can choose from the backgrounds listed above under Military Combat Pilots, or can create your own from existing skill programs. Of the above specialties, all can apply equally to Combat Helicopter Pilots.

Special Forces

To create a Special Forces based character, start with either a Commando Mercenary, Veteran Grunt Mercenary, Academy Officer Mercenary (choose Hand to Hand: Assassin), or possibly a Worldly Martial Artist or Gizmoteer. While not necessary, the Arts of Invisibility are extremely helpful. Possessing at least the Prowl skill is a must, however. The Special Forces skill program outlined above should take up one of the character's Military skill programs (or, in the case of the Worldly Martial Artist, the only one). If the character has other Military skill programs available, the Guerilla Warfare skill program is an ideal second choice with its Camouflage, Survival and Navigation skills. But what do you do with the remaining skill program slots? This is simply a matter of what you want your character's background specialty to be. Below are some possibilities. Note that not all of the below specialties will be on most teams; which specialties will be present depends on the type of team and its mission. Many of the below backgrounds are only possible starting with Commando and Veteran Grunt O.C.C.s, as Academy Officer doesn't have an available Espionage skill program, and the Worldly Martial Artist has *either* a Military or an Espionage skill program and not both. However (strictly at the G.M.'s discretion), you may be able to exchange a Military, Medical, or Gizmoteer (not a Basic) skill program for an Espionage skill program in order to fit the bill.

Dedicated Sniper/Assassin: Hidden under a shroud of camouflage and waiting as patiently as a spider for the prey to come to him, the Sniper/Assassin is a man to be feared. This is the character with the "one shot, one kill" philosophy and the skill

to do it. To make a dedicated Sniper/Assassin, select the Espionage: Body Guard/Assassin skill program (this one gives the Sniper skill with an additional +1 strike bonus (+3 total)). Arts of Invisibility, particularly the "Art of Hiding," are exceptionally helpful. Additionally, a character possessing the "One Life, One Shot, One Hit, One Kill" Martial Art Power (under Martial Art Techniques) would make for an exceptionally deadly Sniper, as this power allows for unrivaled bonuses to strike if enough time is spent concentrating.

Heavy Weapons/Demolitions Specialist: Always ready, willing, and able to dispense some "indiscriminate justice," this character specializes in blowing (things up and creating general havoc and diversions. They also act as forward artillery and air strike observers and may be required to "paint" a target with a targeting laser (to guide in munitions launched from elsewhere). They are also handy for covering an escape when things go awry. For this character, select skill programs heavy in Military W.P.s, such as Military: Advanced Infantry, Guerilla Warfare, and Armor & Artillery. The Gizmoteer: Explosives Construction skill program also comes in handy. Note: It is possible to be either a Heavy Weapon or a Demolitions Specialist if so desired. While these are separate tasks in many teams, they are often combined in smaller ones. Take skills pertinent to the area or areas you wish to concentrate in.

Unarmed Combat Specialist: Need someone to take out the enemies quietly, up close and personal? The Unarmed Combat Specialist is the man for the job. To put it quite simply, this character is an expert in martial arts and hand to hand combat in general. This is typically where the Worldly Martial Artist O.C.C. comes in.



Scout/Scoutfinder/Traillblazer: Before the enemy can be engaged or observed, someone needs to find them. Additionally, good maps and intelligence are a necessity for any mission to succeed. This specialist has that dangerous role of scouting ahead (Long Range Recon Patrol, LRRP), usually alone or in a group of four or fewer, and relaying enemy positions and fortifications to the rest of the team. Arts of Invisibility are practically a must, as are Trap/Mine Detection skills. Military: Guerilla Warfare and Military Intelligence are good skill programs to select for this specialty, as are the above Military: Wilderness Survival and Basic: Outdoor Survivalist skill

Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) Expert: It doesn't do the team much good to blow up the bridge or rescue the hostages if they are captured or get lost in the woods later! That is where this character comes in, being tasked with keeping everyone else alive and out of enemy hands when behind the lines and/or in harsh environmental conditions. Survival and navigational skills are a must. Escape and infiltration skills are also handy. Take the Military: Guerilla Warfare and Military: Wilderness Survival (or Basic: Outdoor Survivalist) skill programs. Other handy skill programs to have would be the new Espionage: Bounty Hunter skill program (see *New Skill Programs* above) and any of the infiltration-related skill programs listed under Infiltration Specialist below.

Infiltration Specialist: So now that you've found the enemy headquarters, how do you quietly sneak in without setting off the alarms or alerting the enemy to your presence? This is the person whose job it is to break through those security systems and pick the necessary locks. Basically a "breaking and entering" specialist. They may also be called on to gather information and plant bugs. To create this specialist, choose from the following skill programs: Gizmoteer: Locksmith & Security Systems, Espionage: Security Systems, and Professional Thief. The Communications/Electronic Warfare skill programs listed below (under the specialty of the same name) are also helpful. This is another specialty where the Arts of Invisibility really come in handy.

Photography/Intelligence Gathering: Sometimes what you really need is intelligence on the enemy. It's always a good thing to know what the objective looks like and how it is guarded before going in with guns blazing. This character, therefore, is called in to take photographic and/or video reconnaissance of enemy or terrorist held locations. This character should possess at least rudimentary infiltration and wilderness skills (see Infiltration, SERE, and Scout specialties above), and must know how to operate a camera effectively (Photography and/or TV/Video skills). This specialty is often combined with that of the Scout, SERE, or Infiltration Specialist.

Communications/Electronic Warfare Specialist: Communications are vital to the success of any military mission. Someone needs to stay in (secure) communication with headquarters and coordinate communications amongst the team. Likewise, someone needs to disrupt enemy communications and security systems. The following skill programs epitomize the aspects of Military Communications and Electronic Warfare — Military: Electronic Warfare; Espionage: Information Gathering, Surveillance Specialist, Spy Network Administration, and Security Specialist; Gizmoteer: Electronic Communication, Telephone

Hacking, Computer Hacking, and Locksmith & Security Systems; Basic: Communications. Which you choose depends on what areas you want to concentrate in and the skill programs available to your O.C.C. This character is typically an NCO or Warrant Officer and is often the second in command. Communications Specialists in particular are important, and typically stay with the Team Commander (see below) in order to relay his/her orders. (Note: It is possible to fill this role with a Dreamer or Gizoid Gizmoteer who has selected the Military: Special Forces skill program.)

Spec Ops Team Delivery Specialist: Before the mission can be initiated, the team first has to be inserted quickly and quietly into the enemy territory. Afterwards, the team members (and any rescued personnel or hostages) need to be evacuated safely. This is the pilot of the helicopter, airplane, motorboat, SeAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV), or other vehicle who drops off and later retrieves (hopefully) the Special Forces unit. The skill program selected determines the specific type of transportation specialty. For an Airborne Parachute Drop Specialist, select the Military: Combat Aircraft skill program with a "preferred" airframe in a transport aircraft such as the C-130 or C-141. For a Helicopter Specialist, choose the Military: Helicopter Aviation SP with a "preferred" airframe in a transport craft such as the UH-1 Huey, MH-53 Pave Low, CH-53 Super Stallion, or UH-60 Blackhawk. For a Seabone Specialist, select the Military: Naval Surface Combat or Basic: Boating/Maritime or Vehicle Enthusiast skill programs with an emphasis on small watercraft such as motor boats, submarines (such as the SDV), Pilot: Amphibious Landing Craft, and high-speed craft such as Hovercraft/Hydrofoil. Naval Specialists are typically Enlisted, Helicopter Specialists are typically Warrant Officers, and Combat Pilots are always Officers (but subordinate to the Team Commander (see below)). Note: Since most "Delivery" drops are "drop and leave" scenarios with set drop and pickup times, the pilot of the craft itself rarely participates in the actual mission. The exceptions to this involve missions using small, inflatable motor boats that are easily stowed or concealed, the long task of camouflaging a larger craft such as a helicopter, or using pre-existing landing strips (see Combat Control below). For this reason, such roles are recommended for NPCs. Otherwise, the player can simply be a "backup" in case the normal pilot is injured or killed.

Medical Specialist: Even the best teams occasionally take casualties. In addition, rescue missions often retrieve personnel or hostages/prisoners in dire need of medical assistance. As a graduate of the Special Operations Medical Association (SOMA) training course, this character is a Medical Specialist capable of advanced field medicine while still able to perform the duties of a Special Forces operative. Take the Field Surgery skill as a minimum. It's also a good idea to take the Military: Field Medic/Surgeon or Basic: Paramedic/Medical Technician skill program (see above) or, at the G.M.'s discretion, exchange an existing Military, Gizmoteer, or Espionage (but not a Basic) skill program for a Medical skill program, particularly Medical Doctor. This character is particularly important on CSAR/Pararescue teams (see below). If the character is a full medical doctor men they are likely an Officer, but are always subordinate (regardless of rank) to the Team Commander (see below).

Engineering/E.O.D.: Graves, mines, and obstacles can quickly bog down even the most elite forces. When you're on the offensive you want them removed. Conversely, when you're on the defensive, you typically want them built. This character is either an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) expert, or an Engineer tasked with removing mines, explosives, and other obstacles out of the way of invading friendly forces or building such obstacles to impede the progress of enemy forces. Police and Counter-Terrorist (CT) teams always feature at least one EOD member to defuse bombs and explosives left behind by terrorists and other lunatics. The primary skill program for this specialty is the Military: Combat Engineering skill program. Other good skill programs to take for this background include the Military: Guerilla Warfare skill program (with its Trap/Mine Detection skills), Gizmoteer: Locksmith and Security Systems (with its Demolitions Disposal and Engineering skills), or any other programs that feature one or more of these skills. With the importance of underwater mine removal, any skill program with the Swimming: Advanced skill (such as Military: Special Forces) is also helpful.

K-9 Corps Specialist: Military and police forces have used dogs in various roles for centuries. K-9 (dog) teams are sometimes used to search for explosives or fugitives/enemies. They are sometimes used by military Special Forces and military CT teams, but more often used in civilian CT teams. To make this character, simply take the Military: K-9 Corps skill program dictated above. K-9 corpsmen are often also Scout/Recon or E.O.D. specialists (see above) who have skills appropriate to this other specialty.

Military Linguist/Translator: Any deep infiltration or Counter-Terrorist team is often in need of trained linguists, particularly in foreign lands. A graduate of the Special Operations Foreign Language Office (SOFLA), this character fills that role. The only requirement is to be at least bilingual/bi-literate, though the more languages the character knows, the better. Any of the language-based skill programs like Basic: Language are helpful. Most US Army Special Forces ("Green Beret") members are multilingual.

Psychological Operations (Psyops)/Civilian Affairs (CA): Turning the troops and/or populous against their government or leaders is a great way to impede the enemy. Unlike most military specialties, these characters are specifically concerned with the psychology of the military and civilian population of enemy-held lands. These specialists aim to undermine the morale of the civilian populous and/or military soldiers, incite rebellion, and generally destroy faith in the enemy government. While quite similar in aims and goals, these two specialties differ in methods. CA tends to work through "proper" diplomatic channels to accomplish its aims, while Psyops tends to use more direct or clandestine methods including leaflet drops and radio broadcasts. The main requirement for these specialties is the Military Intelligence skill program, though linguistic skills are very helpful.

Negotiator: In a hostage situation, it is often helpful to have someone able to talk to the hostage taker(s), either to talk them into surrendering or to delay them until direct action can be taken. Negotiators are almost always a pan of counter-terrorist and hostage rescue teams, but are rarely, if ever, used in traditional (military) Special Forces teams. Essentially, this person

talks to the terrorists/hostage takers in order to come to terms, secure surrender or the release of the hostages, and/or delay the hostage takers until more forceful measures (assault/sniper) can be initiated safely. This character's only real requirement is a good M.A. and perhaps P.B., though infiltration and communication skills are extremely helpful.

Team Commander: All good teams need a good leader. This character is the head honcho and main tactician for the Spec Ops team. Typically an Academy Officer or a Veteran Grunt, This character is almost always an Officer. He/she is *the* Team Commander regardless of rank, period. This is a lot of power, but also a lot of responsibility, and the role should not be taken lightly. To create this character, one should select the Military: Advanced Infantry and Military Intelligence skill programs. Use the remaining skill programs to round out the character by choosing one of the specialties above and selecting skill programs from them to create a "secondary" background. Communications and/or Electronics skills are preferable to combat-oriented ones. [Note to G.M.s: The power and prestige of [his role makes it very alluring for many, and you may be beset with requests by players who want to fill it. Be warned — people who most desire power are often those that are least able to handle it. Give the position to a player who has typically shown a high degree of intelligence, maturity, quick thinking, and responsibility. If no such players exist, or if all players are new to the game (or to role-playing), you may want to have an NPC fill this role until such time as a potential leader emerges.]

Final Note Concerning Specialties: These specialties are but a few possibilities. If you can think of other specialties, or your

campaign has other requirements (such as "mystical" or chi-related) that are not addressed by the previous specialties, feel free to create new roles as necessary.

Real World Special Forces Units

The following paragraphs briefly outline some real world Special Forces (and near-Special Forces) units on which to base your characters. In all cases, these are oversimplifications and do not fully encompass the roles of these units. For more detail on these or other Spec Ops units, there are many excellent books, documentaries, and web sites available that describe in detail the history, training, and missions of the units.

United States Special Forces

The largest and most diverse nation in terms of its Special Forces (and pseudo-Special Forces) units, with the widest variety of missions, America's Special Forces are also probably the most recognized, so I will begin with them.

US Navy SeALS: Possibly the most famous (and infamous) Special Forces team in America (if not the world), the SeALS (stands for Sea, Air, and Land) represent what we normally think of as "Special Forces." Originally derived from the Navy Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT) of World War II, the SeALS are divided into six different "teams," numbered 1 through 5, and 8 (the famous SeAL Team 6 (Counter-Terrorist)



has been disbanded and reassigned as DEVGRU (see Counter-Terrorist teams below). Teams 1, 3, and 5 work primarily in the Pacific Theater of Operations, while 2, 4, and 8 work in the Atlantic. SeALs are primarily tasked with quiet interdiction into enemy controlled territory by a variety of methods. These include, but are not limited to, HALO jumps, underwater infiltration (via SCUBA), and amphibious assault from small motor craft or the submersible SeAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV). All the above "specialties" can be represented in a SeAL campaign, though airborne delivery is typically handled by someone outside the SeALs (such as Navy, Marine, Air Force or Army pilots). Seaborn delivery, however (particularly small motor boats and SDVs), is often handled by an actual member of the team. SeALs wear a distinctive gold eagle-and-trident insignia called simply the "Trident." Loads of information is available on the Navy SeALs, both in books and on the Internet (both factual and fictional).

US Army Airborne Infantry: The oldest American "Special Forces" unit (although not truly Special Forces, and not a part of US Special Operations Command (SOCOM)), US Army Airborne Infantry is basically a dedicated paratrooper infantry unit. Their job is to drop in behind enemy lines and secure a strategically important area, such as a bridge, airstrip, or hilltop. While not a "true" Special Forces unit, these characters still incorporate several "Special Forces" attributes. Use the above "specialties," but with an emphasis on weapons, artillery/armor, and infantry skills. The most well known divisions of the US Airborne are the 82nd and 101st Airborne. Airborne Infantry members wear red berets.

US Army Rangers: Formed during WWII, the Rangers are possibly the largest American "Special Force." Formed into Battalions, and not "teams" like most Spec Ops Units, the Rangers are as much an army as a Special Force. The primary job of the Rangers is to move in fast and heavy when least expected and soften up the enemy defenders, and then leave just as quickly and unexpectedly, often to allow for a larger "conventional" force to move in. They also are good for "diversionary tactics" that allow for the silent implantation of other Spec Ops organizations or units for more surreptitious missions. Rangers also conduct Long Range Recon Patrol (LRRP) duties, and several dedicated Ranger LRRP units exist. Rangers traditionally wore a black beret, before the black beret became standard issue.

US Army Airborne Rangers: A specialized and more independent sub-unit of the Rangers, US Army Airborne Rangers are perhaps the most brazen and least subtle of America's Special Forces units. Heavy on the Heavy Weapons Specialists, Airborne Rangers typically parachute into hostile territory with guns blazing. Like the "regular" Rangers, Airborne rangers "soften up" defenses and perform distraction missions. They are often tasked with keeping the defenders occupied while a stealthier team, such as the SeALs or Pararescue, sneaks in the back to perform something more clandestine (i.e. rescue, demolitions, etc.). These teams may feature all of the above specialties, but are primarily combat oriented in nature.

US Army Special Forces: These are the famous "Green Berets." Originally formed from the US Army Rangers and Airborne, the US Army Special Forces differ from the other two organizations in that they are meant to stay for a while. While the Rangers' mission is to move in quickly and aggressively and

then withdraw, the Army Special Forces are intended to stay behind enemy lines to train and assist local partisan rebels in guerrilla warfare, sabotage, and other covert actions. Like the SeALs, the Army Special Forces may be represented quite well using the above "specialties," although an "in-team" Helicopter Specialist is just as likely as a Seaborn Specialist is to be. While the SeALs are typically more "coastal-oriented," the Army Special Forces usually perform more "inland," with HALO drops from Air Force cargo aircraft or rappels from Army Helicopters. Wilderness Survival, Scout, and Guerilla Warfare experts are essential in Army Special Forces missions. Loads of information is available on the Army Special Forces, both in books and on the Internet (both fact and fiction).

US Army 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment: Also known as the "Night Stalkers," this is basically an aerial support unit specializing in helicopter insertion and extraction of Special Forces teams. To make a Night Stalker, use the Spec Ops Team Delivery Specialist template above, with a specialty in Helicopters. This unit wears a maroon beret.

US Army Pathfinders: Not a true "Special Forces" unit, and not under SOCOM, this specialty incorporates many skills common to the "true" Special Forces units. Their job is basically as described above in the Scout/Recon/Pathfinder specialty. Pathfinders tend to work alone or in small teams of four or less, often with Sniper support.

US Army/Marine Corps Forward Observers: Another Specialty that, while not a "true" Spec Ops unit (non-SOCOM), incorporates many of their skills. Forward observers travel alone or in small squads behind enemy lines, and scout out enemy troops and fortifications. Once they have found a suitable enemy fortification, convoy, or encampment, they radio in for artillery or air strikes on the target, sometimes "painting" the target themselves with a targeting laser ("lazing" the target). A combination of stealth/pathfinder characteristics (i.e. Guerilla Warfare) and heavy weapons (i.e. Armor and Artillery) skills is ideal for this arrangement.

US Marine Snipers: Essentially as described above in the Sniper/Assassin specialty, they have gained notoriety as a force in their own right. They are typically sent in alone, in pairs, or with a small team (usually Marine Force Recon, see below).

US Marine Force Reconnaissance: Originally the Marines' equivalent of the Army Pathfinders, their role has been expanded to such a degree that they are usually considered an actual Special Forces unit (although they too are not under SOCOM). Originally deployed in teams of four, they now typically have Marine Sniper support as well. Like the Army Pathfinders, their job is essentially the Scout/Recon/Pathfinder/Traillblazer specialty above, with the inclusion of a Sniper for many missions. They are sometimes called the "Green Ghosts" or "Rock Eaters."

US Air Force Pararescue: One of America's lesser known Special Forces units, USAF Pararescue (also known as the "PJs") is primarily tasked with Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR), going behind enemy lines to rescue downed American or allied pilots. (These were the guys who rescued F-16 pilot Capt. Scott O'Grady from Bosnia and the F-17 Stealth Fighter pilot from Kosovo.) In addition, they also perform this "behind the lines" rescue for any and all allied personnel, *including other Special Forces units!* With training every bit as rigorous as their

Army and Navy counterparts. Pararescue is a force to be reckoned with. With an emphasis on covert rescue over attack, Pararescue engage the enemy only when necessary to rescue the allied personnel, prisoners, or hostages. All of the above "specialties" are applicable, particularly the SERE and Medical specialties, and most are also trained medical personnel as well (First Aid and Field Surgery). Any mission will typically have helicopter insertion/extraction specialists, and always have one or more Medical Specialists on it to handle wounded. During peacetime they are often tasked with civilian search and rescue, particularly during natural disasters. Like the US Army "Night Stalkers," Pararescue members wear maroon berets.

US Air Force Combat Control: Another little known Air Force Spec Ops unit. Combat Control (CCT) has quite a unique role: they sneak in behind enemy lines (typically via HALO drops), "secure" the area by taking out any enemy resistance, set up a usable air field, and act as a sort of local "air traffic controller" and command and control center. They also will drop in to set up other types of communications and navigational aids at strategic locations. These "air fields" are typically primitive and intended for sturdy cargo aircraft like the C-130. Combat Controllers are instrumental in setting up mass evacuations and supply deliveries in hostile territory. Combat Control teams are typically small (2-4 members) and experienced in Communications and Electronics. Communications/Electronic Warfare Specialists are particularly important. Combat Controllers wear red berets.

US Air Force Trailblazers: Basically the USAF equivalent of the Army Pathfinders or Marine Force Recon. Not currently active, but may be "reactivated" at the G.M.'s discretion.

US Military Wilderness Survival Instructor: Another "pseudo" Spec Ops specialty indigenous to all four American services, this person's job is to teach wilderness survival techniques to other military personnel through on-Location, hands-on experience. As with the SERE specialty above, the Military: Wilderness Survival (or Basic: Outdoor Survivalist) skill program is necessary.

US Military Engineering/Construction Corps: Includes the Army Corps of Engineers, USAF "Red Horse" Construction Squadrons, and the US Navy Construction Battalion ("Sea Bees"). These engineering and construction specialists are tasked with removing or bypassing natural or man-made obstacles, often under heavy enemy fire, to allow for a large conventional force to move in. Obstacles range from rivers and gorges, to rough ground, to barricades and barbed wire, to mine fields (sea or land) and traps. These troops may also be called upon to build these "obstacles," or even to make a fighting "withdrawal" from a battlefield, doing everything possible to impede the enemy's advance by detonating bridges, etc. While not actual "Special Forces" units, the importance, difficulty, and danger of this specialty make it worth mentioning here. To make someone of this "specialty," simply follow the Engineering/E.O.D. template above.

Great Britain

Possessing perhaps the world's most deadly Special Forces teams, British Special Forces have shocked the world time and time again with their speed, stealth, and deadly professionalism. Includes:

British Army Special Air Service (SAS): Perhaps the world's first true "Special Forces" Commando squad, the SAS traces its origins to the Second World War, where they raided German air bases in north Africa. Kept out of the public eye for decades, the SAS was finally revealed to the public in the 1980s after their lightning-fast assault of the Iranian Embassy in London, which was at the time being held hostage by a group of terrorists. In the ensuing conflict, all but one Terrorist (who hid amongst the hostages) was killed without a single SAS or hostage loss. They truly epitomize their slogan of "Who dares, wins." The SAS is similar in form and function to the US Navy SeALS, in being a combination Airbone/Seabone/Underwater Commando unit. SAS characters may be created using the above "specialties." SAS troops wear a distinctive sand-colored beret.

British Special Boat Squadron (SBS): For years an independent unit, the SBS has recently been absorbed into the more famous SAS. SBS is similar in form and function to the US Navy SeALS, with a strong emphasis on water insertion. SBS characters may be created using the above "specialties" with an emphasis on aquatic skills. Like US Army Special Forces, SBS members wear green berets.

Israeli Special Forces

Perhaps the best-trained and most experienced Special Forces/Counter-Terrorist teams in the world come from Israel (the social-political and military atmosphere of the area makes this a must). Israeli Special Forces have stunned the world countless times with their bravery, cunning, and ruthless efficiency. These units have worked hand-in-hand with the Israeli Secret Service (MOSSAD) on many occasions. (Note: The official MOSSAD martial arts form, Krav Magha, is a rather natural form for these characters to lake; see Ben C. Lucas' brilliant article on world martial art forms in **The Rifter #7** (page 45) for Krav Magha.)

Sayeret Mat'kal (General Staff Recon): A team of Counter-Terrorist Commandos made famous by their 1972 liberation of an Israeli Airlines 707 from Black September terrorists. They were made legendary by Operation Thunderbolt, their 1976 storming of Entebbe Airport in Uganda (where 106 hostages of an Israeli airplane hijacking were being held), killing all the terrorists without suffering a single hostage loss. They wear red berets.

Sayeret Golani (Special Recon Patrol): Spec Ops/CT and heavy assault team similar to the Sayeret Mat'kal. They gained notoriety for their 1973 night assault on the heavily fortified Mt. Hemon during the Seven Day War, where they scaled its steep cliffs to deliver a devastating surprise attack, capturing the mountain from the invading Syrian forces who had taken it earlier in the conflict.

Sayeret Tzanhanim (Rangers): Spec Ops group similar to the US Army Rangers who assisted the Sayeret Mat'kal during Operation Thunderbolt.

Unit 5101 (SHALDAG) and Unit 5707: Forward Artillery Observers known for their bravery and efficiency.

Unit 669: A Combat SAR unit much like USAF Pararescue.

Russian Volska Spetsialnoe Naznacheniya (Spetsnaz)

One of the worlds most famous and feared Special Forces groups, the Spetsnaz traces its origins to the old "Red Army" days of the Soviet Union. Formerly dedicated to special actions and subterfuge against NATO forces during the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the rise of terrorism and organized crime in the former Soviet Union, has shifted the focus of this deadly force to a more Counter-Terrorist role. The Spetsnaz are divided into three types of teams:

Vysotniki (Special Operations Teams): Similar to the British SAS, the Vysotniki perform a variety of tasks including unconventional warfare, long range Recon, sniper, intelligence, high-altitude parachute interdiction, unarmed combat, and quick assault/raid.

Raydoviki (Raiders): An interdiction and partisan training team similar to the US Army Special Forces.

Razvedchiki (Recon Scouts): A Long-Range Recon Patrol (LRRP) team similar to US Marine Force Recon.

Other World Spec Ops Teams

Australian Special Air Service (SAS): Based on the British unit of the same name, the Australian SAS (est. 1978), also known as the "Jungle Ghosts," is divided into two main groups: the Tactical Assault Group (TAG) and the Offshore Assault Team (OAT). TAG, the older and more famous of the two, is essentially a military Counter-Terrorist (CT) team that also performs missions similar to their British SAS namesakes (see below for more information on CT teams). TAG members, like their British counterparts, wear a sand-colored beret. OAT is similar in function to the British SBS or US Navy SeALS.

Belgian Equities Specialisees de Reconnaissance (ESR): Belgium's "Specialized Reconnaissance Teams" are sort of a cross between the American Marine Force Recon and Army Ranger units. While officially disbanded in 1994, units are still being trained, "just in case." G.M.s, feel free to "re-form" the ESR as you see fit.

Brazilian Grupo de Mergulhadores de Combate (GRUMEC): The Brazilian Navy Combat Diver Group. Similar to the US Navy SeALS or the Norwegian Froskemands Korps (see below).

Canadian Special Forces: Includes the Canadian Airborne Regiment (similar to the US Army Airborne) and the Combat Divers (similar to the US Navy SeALS or the Norwegian Froskemands Korps).

Colombian Lanceros: The Colombian Army's "Lancers" are basically the equivalent of the US Army Rangers.

Danish Jaeger Korpset (Ranger Corps): Based on the US Army Rangers and the British SAS, the Jaeger Korpset of Denmark still have strong ties with the SAS and often train alongside them. However, with no squadrons of large helicopters, Denmark must rely on British and German helicopters for any missions requiring them. Primarily a Recon team (like US Marine Force Recon), the Jaeger Korpset also performs missions such as Sabotage and Direct Assault (US Ranger style).

Danish Froskemand Korpset (Frogman Corps): Denmark's equivalent of the US Navy SeALS and the Norwegian Froskemands Korps (see below), the Froemand Korpset are similar to both in many ways, and often train with them.

French Special Forces: French Spec Ops show as much diversity in form and function as their US equivalents. French Special Forces units wear a black beret and include the following:

Regiment de Parachutistes d'Infanterie de Marine (1er RPIM; the "Marine infantry Parachute Regiment"): A French Army Airborne regiment that is similar to the British SAS.

Groupement des Fusiliers-Marins Commandos (GROUFUMACO; the "Marine Commando Team Command"): A French Navy group which resembles the US Navy SeALS or British SBS.

Groupement des Fusiliers Commandos de l'Air (GFCA; "Air Commando Team Command"): A French Air Force Combat SAR team much like the USAF Pararescue.

French Foreign Legion (Legion de Etrangere de Francais): The famous French Foreign Legion (based in Algeria) is a crack elite assault brigade, known for their brutal training and willingness to accept just about anyone who thinks they can make it through. Sort of a combination Shock Trooper/Ranger/Heavy Assault team, this organization has earned their "rough and ready" reputation.

German Kampfschwimmerkompanie (KSK): Much the same as the US Navy SeALS or the Danish Froemand Korpset, the German "Combat Diver Company" deals primarily in Underwater Demolitions and Amphibious Assault. Originally created by West Germany to combat the "Warsaw Pact" nations (particularly East Germany), the KSK has taken a more "global" and "Counter-Terrorist" approach since the German reunification in 1991.

German Fernspah: The German Wehrmacht (Army) Long-Range Recon Patrol, similar to the US Marine Force Recon.

Greek Special Forces: Includes the *E.T.A.* Long-Range Recon Patrol (LRRP), the *Batrahon Tropos* Underwater Demolition Team (UDT), the *Atexiptotistes* paratroopers (who fought alongside the British SAS and SBS in WWII), the *Katadromeis* (Commandos), and the *Amfivioi Katadromeis* (Amphibious Commandos, similar to the US Navy SeALS).

Indonesian Komando Pasukan Sandi Yudha (KOPSANDHA): Similar to the British SAS, this organization was founded by a former Dutch Special Forces member named Visser who had moved there in the 1950's.

Italian Commando Raggruppamento Mento Subacqueo Incur-sione (COMSUBIN): An innovator in aquatic warfare, the Italian COMSUBIN was one of the earliest water-based Special Forces groups. Very much like their American and British counterparts, SeALS and SBS respectively, the COMSUBIN fulfill many of the same missions.

Italian Brigata Paracadutisti Folgore: Italy's Airborne "Parachute Brigade," similar to the US Airborne Infantry.

Netherlands (Dutch) Special Forces: Include the following:

Bizondere Bijstands Eehheid (BBE; "Special Backup Unit"): A special unit of the Marine Forces of the Netherlands that is similar to the US Rangers and Marine Force Recon.

Marine 7NL Anfbilts Verkenning Peloton (Special Boat Section): A unit similar to the British SBS.

108th Korps Commando Troepen (10thth Corps Commando Troops): A commando team similar to the US Army Rangers. They were originally formed during WWII, in exile in Scotland during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands.

New Zealand Special Air Service (SAS): Based on the British unit of the same name, the New Zealander SAS is quite similar in most respects. They wear a **red beret**.

Norwegian Special Forces: Includes:

Marine Jagerne (Marine Rangers): A Deep Penetration and Sabotage unit similar in function to the US Navy SEALs or the British SAS.

Froskemands Korps (Frogman Corps): Similar to the Marine Jagerne but based more around SCUBA and water insertion, much like the British SBS.

Oppklesk Brigade ("Recon Rats"): LRRP unit.

Filipino Special Forces: An American colony or protectorate for years, the military of the Philippines was built in the image of the US Armed Forces. Special Forces are no exception, being based largely on their American equivalents and often working/training alongside them. Filipino Special Forces fall under the Philippine Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and include:

Philippine Army (PA) Scout Rangers: Similar to the US Army Rangers and known to work with them regularly.

PA Special Forces: Similar to the US Army Special Forces.

Philippine Navy (PN) SEALs: Patterned after their US namesakes, the PN SEALs regularly train and work with them in an organization known as the Special Reactionary Group (SRG).

Philippine Marine (PM) Corps Force Recon: Essentially the same as their American namesakes.

Philippine Air Force (PAF) Special Operations Group (SOG): A CSAR team similar to USAF Pararescue.

Portuguese Special Forces: Portuguese Special Forces come in four basic groups: Commandos, Rangers, Paratroopers, and Marine Detachment for Special Actions. These units wear green berets (like US Army Special Forces) and are basically similar to other Spec Ops units of equivalent names.

Polish Special Forces: Consists of the Polish Army 1st Commandos (Rangers) and the Polish Navy Combat Divers (Frogmen).

South African Recon Commandos (RECCES): The South African "Recon Commandos," similar in function to the Norwegian Marine Jagerne.

South Korean 707th Special Mission Battalion: Essentially an Army Special Forces unit similar to the US Army Rangers and US Army Special Forces.

Spanish Brigada Ligera de Infanteria Para Caidista: Spain's "Para-Infantry" Airborne brigade.

Turkish Special Forces: Turkey's Special Forces are broken up into two main types: Land and Sea. The Land Special Forces are divided into three "Commando Brigades" (1st-3rd) and are similar in function to the US Army Rangers. The Sea forces are divided into the Su Altı Savunma (SAS), or "Underwater Defense," and the Su Altı Taaruz (SAT), or "Underwater Attack." These function similarly to other national Frogman brigades,

and differ from each other only in their basic mission — attack vs defense.

Counter-Terrorist Units

The rise of international terrorism has led to the creation of several national and even international Counter-Terrorist (CT) forces. There are basically two types of CT units: Military and Civilian. Military CT teams are typically divisions of Military Special Forces units, and characters should follow the character creation guides for the original Spec Ops unit. Civilian CT units are typically divisions of Police Forces or Investigatory/Intelligence organizations (like the American FBI). To create a "Civilian" CT Agent, simply start with an Espionage Agent O.C.C. or give them a former "military" Spec Ops background. To create an Agent specifically on the CT Infiltration teams (such as the French GIGN), fill remaining Military skill programs with ones suggested in the Special Forces specialty list above. (Preferred specialties are Sniper/Assassin, Scout/Recon/Pathfinder, Demolitions/EOD (for Demolitions Disposal Purposes), Communications/Electronic Warfare, Infiltration, Team Delivery, Medical, Negotiator, and of course Team Commander.)

Military Counter-Terrorist Units

US Army Special Forces 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment (SFOD) - Delta: Better known as "Delta Force," this team is actually a part of the US Army Special Forces (Green Beret) and is primarily made up of them (sometimes of Rangers and Airborne forces (primarily 82nd) as well). To create a Delta Force character, start with his/her "background" unit (i.e. US Army Special Forces, Rangers, etc.) and create the character from there, paying close attention (regardless of "background" unit) to the US Army Special Forces, as this is the controlling unit. Note that Delta Force does not "officially" exist. **US Navy Special Warfare Development Group (DEVGRU):** Formerly SEAL Team 6, this team was recently formed into its own separate unit. All members are Navy SEALs and should be created as such. (See US Navy SEALs in the above Special Forces section.)

Philippine Army Special Forces Alpha Two Zero (A-20): Essentially the same as the US Army's Delta Force in form and function, and typically work and train alongside them.

Civilian Counter-Terrorist Units

International Police Force (InterPol): Originally formed as an anti-smuggling organization (primarily for weapons and drugs), InterPol has had their mission expanded to include counter-terrorism as well. Based in Europe, this organization extends throughout the world. InterPol-based characters can be of any O.C.C. in **Ninjas & Superspies™**, though most are Espionage Agents or Gizmoteers.

Special Warfare Assault Teams (SWAT): Both individual local police departments and large national organizations utilize these organizations. While their training is similar to that of Special Forces and Counter-Terrorist units (although arguably

not a mission, the scope of their missions is typically limited by the jurisdiction of the controlling organization. Local police departments rarely go beyond their respective cities/counties/etc., while national organizations have free roam about their nation and its waters. Most national CT organizations fit into this category, although their jurisdiction may sometimes extend beyond national borders in terrorist actions concerning that nation's people or property (e.g. airplane hijackings).

American Federal Bureau of Investigation Hostage Rescue Team (FBI HRT): Basically a national SWAT team that specializes in hostage situations, this organization uses a lot of former local Police SWAT team members and former Military Special Forces members. Their jurisdiction is as described above for national SWAT teams.

Argentinean Brigada Halcon (Falcon Brigade): Basically a national CT team under the jurisdiction of the Buenos Aires Police Force. Brigada Halcon was formed in 1986.

Austrian Gendarmerie Einsatzkommando (GEK) Cobra: Formed originally in 1973 (as GEK Bad Voslau) to combat terrorism being committed against Israeli settlers (who were using Austria as a staging area for West Bank and Gaza settlement). GEK Cobra is similar in form and mission to the German GSG-9 or the French GIGN (see below).

Canadian Joint Task Force 2: A highly secretive CT force that evolved from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Special Emergency Response Team (SERT).

Chilean Unidad Anti-Terroristas (UAT): Chile's national police CT team.

Colombian Agrupacion de Fuerzas Especiales Urbanas (AFEU): Colombia's "Special Urban Operations Group" CT squad; used mostly to combat Colombia's drug cartels.

Danish Aktionstryken (Police Action Strike Force): Denmark's Civil CT team and a part of their national police force, this organization often works with the Danish Jaeger Korpsset and Froemand Korpsset Special Forces units (see Special Forces above).

Egyptian Task Force 777: Egypt's national CT force. Task Force 777, is best known (regretfully) for their botched assault on terrorist-held Egypt Air flight 648, where insufficient intelligence and poor planning resulted in the deaths of several hostages. Since then Task Force 777 has enlisted the aid of several CT and Spec Ops teams from around the world in an effort to better train and prepare themselves for future contingencies. So far no new contingencies have surfaced, but the foreign help has greatly improved the skill and readiness of the team.

Finish Osasto **Karnu (Bear Force):** Finland's national CT force under the jurisdiction of the Helsinki Police Force.

French Groupe d'Intervention Gendarmerie Nationale (GIGN): A division of the French Gendarmerie (Police), the GIGN is one of the most feared and respected Counter-Terrorist Forces in the world. They first gained notoriety in 1994 after storming hijacked Air France flight 8969, and killing all the terrorists (who had previously killed the plane's pilot) on board without the loss of any more hostages, and with only two GIGN injuries.

German Grenzschutzgruppe 9 (GSG-9): Germany's equivalent of the French GIGN, this group gained notoriety in 1977 when they (with the help of two British SAS agents) stormed a

Lufthansa airplane held hostage in Africa by terrorists, killing four of the five hijackers without a single friendly or hostage loss.

Italian G.I.S.: National CT force under the jurisdiction of the Italian Carabinieri (National Police).

Mexican Force F (Zorros): Mexico's national Police "Foxes," a CT force divided into three squads: Urban Combat, Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD), and Sniper/Marksman squads.

Polish GROM: Well-trained but new CT force formed in 1991 that has yet to see major action and is yet unproven.

South Korean National Police Unit 868: Also known as the Kyunchal Teuk-kung-dae, or Police Special Response Team, Unit 868 was formed to combat potential terrorism at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

Swedish Ordnings Polisen Nationella Insatsstryka (ONI): The "National Police Response Force" is Sweden's equivalent of the GIGN or GSG-9.

Some Final Considerations

This section contains some other factors one needs to consider to insure realism and playability in military-based cam-

Rank and Grade

Every military force in the world maintains some structure of rank. Even the loosest groups of bandits or armed mobs typically have leaders and followers of some sort. In the case of most modern organized military forces, this involves an organized, structured system of ranks and pay grades, and an organized force structure of command layers. While each rank and grade system varies with the service and country, most follow a traditional (European style) system of Commissioned Officers and regular non-commissioned (enlisted) troops. The rank structure of the United States Armed Forces is typical in this manner, and is also the one with which I am most familiar. For these reasons, I have included the US rank structure below for reference. Ranks marked with a single asterisk (*) denote Non Commissioned Officer (NCO) status, ranks marked with two asterisks (**) denote Senior NCOs, and those with three asterisks (***) denote the special, unique "highest enlisted" rank in the service (held by only one person at a time), who outranks all other enlistees (the enlisted equivalent of the Chief of Staff). The Air Force does not use the Warrant Officer ranks, and the Navy no longer uses the W1 or W5 rank. Note that the following is only a simplified list and does not include most of the "Specialist" ranks or the special administrative positions like First Sergeants. U.S. Coast Guard ranks are not included here, but are similar to the US Navy ranks below. Reserve and National Guard units use the equivalent rank/grade system as the "parent" service.

Pay	Rank (Army)	Rank (Navy)
	<i>Enlisted</i>	
E-1	Private	Seaman Recruit
E-2	Private (PV2)	Seaman Apprentice
E-3	Private, 1st Class	Seaman
E-4	Corporal/Specialist	Petty Officer, 3rd Class'
E-5	Sergeant*	Petty Officer, 2nd Class
h-6	Staff Sergeant*	Petty Officer, 1st Class*
E-7	Sergeant, 1st Class**	Chief Petty Officer**
E-8	Master Sergeant**	Senior Chief PO* -
E-9	Sergeant Major**	Master Chief PO**
E-9***	SM of the Army***	MCPO of the Navy***

Warrant Officer

W-1	Warrant Officer 1	WO 1 (no longer used)
W-2	Chief WO 2	Chief WO 2
W-3	Chief WO 3	Chief WO 3
W-4	Chief WO 4	Chief WO 4
W-5	Chief WO 5	(not used by Navy)

Commissioned Officer

CM	2 nd Lieutenant	Ensign
0-2	1 st Lieutenant	Lieutenant Junior Grade
0-3	Captain	Lieutenant
0-4	Major	Lt. Commander
0-5	Lt. Colonel	Commander
0-6	Colonel	Captain
0-7	Brigadier General	Rear Adm. Lower Half
0-8	Major General	Rear Adm. Upper Half
0-9	Lieutenant General	Vice Admiral
0-10	General	Admiral

Rank (Marines)
Private
Private, 1 st Class
Lance Corporal
Corporal Sergeant*
Staff Sergeant*
Gunnery Sergeant*
Master Sergeant**
Sergeant Major**
SM of the MC***

Airman, Basic
Airman
Airman, 1st Class
Senior Airman Staff
Sergeant* Technical
Sgt.* Master
Sergeant** Senior
Mst. Sgt.** Chief

2 nd Lieutenant
1 st Lieutenant
Captain
Major
Lt. Colonel
Colonel
Brigadier General
Major General
Lieutenant General
General
Master Sgt.** CMSgt of the AF***

(no WO ranks in AF)	Warrant Officer 1
N/A	Chief WO 2
N/A	Chief WO 3
N/A	Chief WO 4
N/A	Chief WO 5

2 nd Lieutenant
1 st Lieutenant
Captain
Major
Lt. Colonel
Colonel
Brigadier General
Major General
Lieutenant General
General

Too Many Officers!

One final note concerning the rank of military-based characters is the overall enlisted-to-officer ratio. You probably have noticed that several of the Military skill programs (Advanced Infantry and Naval Surface Combat, for example) give the character a background as a military Officer, as does, obviously, the Mercenary: Academy Officer O.C.C. While such backgrounds are quite acceptable in more general mixed-O.C.C. campaigns, this can create a lot of chain-of-command problems in a full- or mostly-military campaign. If you run or participate in a strictly

For any given military team, there should be no more than one Officer for every six to eight team members. (Exception: Military Doctors, Pilots, and Chaplains, all of whom are always subordinate to the CO and basically outside the regular chain of command.) A similarly sized party should have no more than one Warrant Officer if any (most teams will have none, as Warrant Officers usually fill special duties). The remainder of the party should be Enlisted with one Senior NCO (E-6/Staff Sergeant in the US Army, perhaps higher), one or two Junior NCOs (typically an E-4/Sergeant), one or two E-3s (Corporals), and the rest E-1s or E-2s (Privates). What this basically boils down

to is that for any given military force, the following approximate ratios should be enforced: Officer - no more than 10-15%; Warrant Officer - 10-20%; NCO - 25-30% (30% Senior, 70% Junior); Junior Enlisted - 35-55% (30% E-3, 70% E-1 or E-2).

Keep in mind that for a Military Pilot based campaign, these ratios do not apply. All fixed-wing combat pilots and many rotary-wing (helicopter) pilots are Officers (some rotary-wing pilots, particularly in the US Army, are Warrant Officers). In these campaigns, all pilot players and NPCs should be of those ranks. Note that the chain of command rules still apply, and that there must be a clearly defined rank structure. In an Air Force Fighter Squadron, for example, pilots in training are typically 2nd Lieutenants (O-1), new pilots are 1st Lieutenants (O-2), experienced pilots are Captains (O-3), Flight leaders are Majors (O-4), and Squadron Commanders are Lieutenant Colonels (O-5). Wing Commanders/Base Commanders are usually full Colonels (O-6) or Brigadier (one-star) Generals (O-7), with higher ranks being sent to Major Commands (MAJCOMs) such as the Air Combat Command (ACC), staff positions at the Pentagon, or other important command or staff positions. New player character pilots (1st level) should ideally start at Lieutenant rank (O-1 to O-2) and should start no higher than Major (O-4) in special circumstances.

Palladium Fantasy RPG

The Lost Art of Goleancy

Optional Rules for The Palladium Fantasy RPG®

By Sonny Rice

The Elf/Dwarf War lasted for centuries, and had many casualties, beyond the millions of all races who perished. One of the greatest of these was Golemancy, a form of magic which enabled complete mastery over animating the inanimate.

Before the war, Golemancers took great pride in their work. Extensive time, effort, and money were put into a Golem to create a totally original byproduct. Each Golemancer had his or her own style when it came to Golem creation. These iron or stone automatons could resemble anything from a towering Minotaur to a half-man/half-spider horror. Custom-made Golems were limitless in appearance thanks to the incredible imagination of their makers.

Now, all that remains of this amazing mystic art are the creations themselves.

There is no mention of Golemancy in any known text. Unless a manual of some form is found, there is no way to replicate the

uniqueness of a Golemancer's work. Fortunately, adventurers and treasure seekers are constantly discovering ancient tombs, buried cities, and other pleasantries that were thought lost for thousands of years. It is on the shoulders of these brave men and women to discover this lost magic that was as prominent as Diabolism and Summoning during The Time of a Thousands Magicks.

There is, however, a downside to discovery. Adventuring parties may stumble upon the tomb of a powerful Golemancer who didn't want his final resting place disturbed. These poor souls would no doubt encounter the Golemancer's last several creations.

Golemancer History

The art of Golemancy has been dead too long for any living soul to remember how it began. Some of the older races (such as dragons and Faeries) only remember the part Golemancers played in society.



While a few Golemancers were adventurers, traipsing the world accompanied by their animated companions, most were merely work-for-hire craftsmen. The powerful and the rich were able to, quite literally, purchase custom-made Golems. Golemancers had the capability to bond their creations with paying customers. Needless to say, the price for such a bonding was astronomical, and only one Golem at a time could be bonded to a non-Golemancer. It was also a custom for aging rulers to hire a Golemancer to create a guardian for their tomb. Such practices detoured all but the craziest of tomb robbers.

Sadly, Golemancers were brought in by the thousands to fight in the Elf/Dwarf War. Both sides of the war used Golems for specialty tactics. While Dwarves would fire Golems into enemy ranks by using siege weapons; Elves would use the hulking

behemoths as an integral part of the war that both sides began aiming offenses at the Golemancers themselves. Assassinations, ordered by Elf and Dwarf alike, saw to it that the all the masters of the magical animation were put to death. The extinction of Golemancy was easily justified for the sake of war.

Aside from the occasional unique Golem guardian, the *Crete Golem* Wizard spell is all Palladium has left to remember this dead mystical art. While Earth Warlocks have always known the basics of Golem creation, it is unknown how a Wizard learned the craft. On the other hand, Earth Warlocks and Wizards alike may know the secrets of rudimentary Golem animation, but they are far from mastering the ability.

Humanoid Description

(These traits are only rolled if the G.M. wants his Golem to have a humanoid appearance).

If the Golemancer was paid a handsome commission for the creation of a Golem, most buyers wanted their automatons fashioned in a specific way. Disgustingly rich purchasers had their own image fashioned or a replica of a loved one or favorite hero. The following quick table is for a simple design. However, if a G.M. decides so, he may use the following table for the Golem's starting appearance before rolling on the *Unique Characteristics Table*. If the Golem is humanoid in appearance, the G.M. must decide if the Golem is male or female.

01-15% Warrior: This Golem was clearly fashioned after a hero or it was meant to look intimidating to its enemies. Most warrior designs are muscular in stature, have little to no armor on their person (even though it doesn't change their S.D.C.), and may wear weapons at their sides. It is up to the G.M. if the Golem uses a weapon instead of its hands for its attacks.

16-30% Completely Armored: This Golem design is relatively close in appearance to the Warrior design, with the exception that it is fully armored. The armor is only meant to cause second thought to the brave and chase away the cowardly. The armor does not increase the Golem's Armor Rating or its S.D.C.

31-50% Robed: If a Golemancer patterned a Golem after himself or another mystic, the robed characteristic would be used. These Golems do not have the commanding presence of the Warrior trait, but the robes certainly do not decrease the Golem's abilities. This design was the Golemancer's favorite, especially if the mystic was adding a gem ability to the Golem's repertoire.

51-60% Common Man/Woman: This is the most rare and least used among the humanoid traits. The reasoning is that the poor were never able to afford tailored Golems. If, by a freak chance, a pauper had a Golem fashioned, the Golem would most likely have the Formless Trait seen in the *Bizarre Characteristic Table*. Even if the Golemancer created the Golem for a poor friend or family member, why would he spend the time and money on an elaborate design? Intricate detail or not; a Golem is a Golem!

61-90% Rich Man/Woman: Next to the Warrior designs, the Rich Man/Woman design is the second most common. Many customers with rich coffers would spare no expense in creating large stone or iron copies of themselves. This way,

when the Golems battled victoriously, the rich egoismians felt that they actually had something to do with the outcome.

91-00% Child or Youth: The only time this design is used is when a buyer requests the Golemaner to chisel the Golem into the likeness of a family member or a ruler who has yet to come of age. Also, there is nothing more humiliating than being pummeled by a Golem designed after a baby!

Note: The following table for unique Golem characteristics was created to put a new twist on confronting these animated monstrosities. None of these listed characteristics make the Golem tougher, faster, or a better combatant (aside from the gem abilities). Even after the new characteristics are rolled, the Golem will still have its original stats: I.Q. 6, P.S. of 25 (30 if iron), P.P. 15, P.E. 25, P.B. 3, and a Spd. of 8. Even the stats for Horror Factor, Armor Rating, S.D.C. damage, and attacks per melee round remain the same. The only new additions to the Golem's abilities are the gem powers (see below). This chart is in no way meant to make a Golem stronger and more powerful. It was simply created to add variety to Golems.

If G.M.S allow players to create original Golems, then they may use any of the characteristics from the following table *except for the Gem Ability table*. This was a characteristic that only a Golemaner could create.

These characteristics are also not the "be all, end all" of Golem variety. Game Masters are more than welcome to add to the chart or create their own tables. Have fun with it and use your imagination.

Unique Golem Characteristic Table

- 01-20% Altered Head:** Roll on the *Head Table*.
- 21-40% Altered Arms:** Roll on the *Hands Table*.
- 41-60% Altered Arms:** Roll on the *Arms Table*.
- 61-75% Altered Legs:** Roll on the *Legs Table*.
- 76-85% Bizarre:** Roll on the *Bizarre Table*.
- 86-95% Gem Abilities:** Roll on the *Gem Ability Table*.
- 96-00% Two Characteristics:** Roll or select two characteristics. Ignore any result of 86% or higher. If you get the same characteristic twice, roll twice on the appropriate table.

Head Table

01-15% Normal Head: While some Golems may have a featureless head, this Golem has a well-sculpted visage. Additional characteristics (human or Elven, male or female, stunning or hideous, bald or healthy length of hair, etc.) are decided by the G.M. Even a Golem wearing a hat or helmet should not be dismissed. The G.M. should pattern the head after the personality or artistic integrity of the Golemaner.

16-35% Animal or Insect Head: All types of animal (birds, rodents, felines etc.) and insect heads are available to the Golem. While the Golem may look horrifying, its Horror Factor does not increase. Also, the Golem may use its head as weapon (head butt with a bull's head or maybe bite with a lion's head). No matter what attack the Golem chooses, it will always do 3D6 damage (plus Supernatural P.S. bonus).

36-55% Golem or Monster Head: The head of this Golem can resemble any monster or demon race or even a skeletal or undead creature. The Golemaner could have been a Deevil/demon worshiper or may have been infatuated with death. Either way, the mystic animator placed his vision (or maybe even his race) into this automaton.

56-70% No Head: Truly a unique design among unique designs. This Golemaner had enough forethought to place the Golem's head inside its stomach. While the head is clearly visible just above the animation's waistline, it will take additional hacking time to remove the head from the creature's body. Also, with the Golem's head inside its torso, this gives the Golemaner different options for hiding the creature's heart. He or she could easily place the heart inside the Golem's arm, leg, or another location that is not of the norm.

71-80% Weapon Head: This characteristic allows the Golem to use its head as a weapon in combat. The Golem could have some pointed headdress or crown that allows for stabbing damage, or maybe a thick helmet or animal horns for head-butting. The damage is still the same as normal strikes.

81-90% Multiple Faces: This Golem has 1D4 different faces (or the same face with 1D4 different facial expressions). These faces are sculpted around the Golem's head; whether the head can rotate on its own accord and show the different faces is up to the G.M. The faces can be selected or easily rolled randomly. If the G.M. chooses, he may roll 1D4x10% (to get the best result between 10-40%) for each face on this table. Once completed, the Golem may have up to four different faces from four different races, animals or demons.

91-00% Multiple Heads: During the design of the Golem, the Golemaner decided to sculpt 1D4 heads on the automation's shoulders. All of the Golem's heads can be of the same race or four different horrific visages. The G.M. may roll 1D4x10% (to get the best result between 10-40%) for each head on this table, or just pick whatever he wants. Like the *Multiple Faces* trait, the Golem may have up to four different heads from four different races, animals or demons.

Hands Table

01-10% Normal Human: The hands of the Golem resemble normal humanoid hands that include five digits. During combat, the Golem may try to grab its opponents or simply bash the enemy with its fists.

11-30% Claws (Animal or Insect): The Golem either has long, sharp nails at the ends of its fingertips, or it has animal or insect claws instead of hands. This characteristic can range from eagle talons to lion paws. Heaven help any character that gets caught in the claws of a Golem that has scorpion pincers. Supernatural crush/squeeze would take its toll on the hardest of warriors.

31-50% Weapon in Hands: A weapon wielding Golem would certainly make any seasoned adventuring party pause before action. The G.M. may choose any type of weapon for the monstrosity to use, as long as he or she remembers that the Golem is considered giant-sized and it has Supernatural Strength.

51-70% Weapon for Hands: Instead of normal appendages, the Golem has weapons that protrude from its wrists. Weapons

may range from pole-arm tips to hand axes. Damage is standard for Golems.

71-90% Hands Hang on Chains from the Wrists: This characteristic is similar to the Weapons for Hands characteristic. When this automaton was created, the Golemancer attached long chains to the Golem's wrists. Instead of the traditional ball and chain, this creature's hands have replaced the ball. The difference from this characteristic and the previous one is that the Golem is still able to use its hands as if they were attached to its wrists! Not only does the characteristic give the monster range with its fists, but it also gives it range for grabbing its oppo-

91-00% Handless: While the Golem has no hands, it is far from defenseless. Even though the creature's wrists end in stumps, it will still use its forearms as weapons.

Arms Table

01-15% Normal Human: The Golemancer chiseled a well-proportioned set of arms for this Golem. Depending on the head, the arms can be masculine or feminine. Scholarly arms are more frail and thin looking, while warrior arms are thick with muscles.

16-30% Animal or Insect Arms (Lion, Badger, etc.): This trait could range from panther to preying mantis arms. When these characteristics were created, the Golemancer started at the shoulder of the Golem (instead of starting at the wrists like the above *Claws* characteristic). The end result is a freakish aberration. Animal and insect worshiping cults asked for these types of Golems.

31-50% Multiple Arms: This Golem has anywhere from two to four sets of arms! Though the number of attacks for the creature stays the same, it is able to hit multiple targets at once. This is one of the few traits that will make a Golem more dan-

51-70% Arms All over Body: This is another horror to behold. Not only does the Golem have two normally placed arms, but it also has small and large arms that are randomly placed on the body. To determine how many arms the Golem has, the G.M. must roll 2D6. While the original two arms are normal in appearance, the extra arms will be freakish in some way. Whether the extra arms are small and useless, oversized and veiny, or even a partial appendage (the arm sprouts from the body at the elbow or at the wrist), is entirely up to the G.M. As far as combat goes, this characteristic would be treated the same as the Multiple Arms characteristic. Golemancers that produced these types of Golems were quite insane.

71-85% Tentacles for Arms: Writhing tentacles have taken the place of arms for this particular Golem. It will use the tentacles to crush/squeeze targets or simply lash to strike.

86-00% No Arms: Armless but not harmless, this Golem uses its legs and body as weapons. These Golems were either rush jobs or crafted specifically for some unknown purpose.

Legs Table

01-15% Normal Human: This Golem has two proportionate legs and feet.

16-30% Lower Part is Animal or Insect: The Golemancer has created the Golem to look half-human and half-beast (similar to a Centaur or a Satyr). While the Golem resembles something human from the waist up, the lower extremities are that of an insect or animal. Preying mantis, tigers, and even centipedes have been copied in design.

31-50% Extra Set of Legs: The hips of this animation are twice the normal size in order to hold the extra pair of legs. This characteristic does not make the creature faster, but it is more stable on its feet, and it allows the automaton to strike at more targets with its additional legs.

51-70% Lower Part is Structure: A very unique Golemancer created this trait. The upper half of the Golem may look normal, but the lower half is an object or device not associated with Golems. For example, while the Golem is normal from the waist up, the lower half may be a chariot carriage. The Golem's speed will be normal, as the wheels of the chariot move as if they were a part of the Golem (which indeed they are). Other possible structures can be a large sphere that is cleverly connected to Golem's waist, or a large, sideways pillar that the Golem uses like a steamroller. Such ramming and plowing attacks would be the same as a body block, but the damage would be normal for a Golem.

71-85% Weapons for Feet: Whether the Golem's feet are spear-tips, hammerheads, or the automation simply has a peg leg is entirely up to the G.M. This characteristic is only created by request since it can affect the Golem's balance, especially in certain types of terrain.

86-00% Misshapen Legs: *Misshapen Legs* is another trait created only by request, if the Golemancer is paid to create a Golem and fashion it after the buyer, some Golems end up with clubfeet or some other form of physical defect. Even unusually short and stout legs have been created.

Bizarre Table

01-15% Two Golems Connected at the Back: When the Golemancer created this creature, he chiseled two Golems out of the same piece of stone. Instead of separating the two Golems, the Golemancer decided (for one reason or another) to keep his creation a singular entity. While the Golem has two bodies (two heads, four arms, four legs, and two torsos), it is considered a single automaton for the sole reason that the Golemancer never separated the two creatures.

When this automation is encountered, it will fight and move as one creature even though adventurers are facing two Golems that are connected at the back. All attacks and S.D.C. are normal because it is considered *one Golem*. However, the additional parts that are connected to its back can strike anyone that approaches its flank or rear.

16-35% Two Golems Connected at the Waist: While this Golem has only one set of legs, two torsos sprout from its waist. While the Golem's attacks are the same, it is able to confront surrounding attackers.

36-55% Gem Abilities: This unique trait could only be replicated by a Golemancer. Before the animation process took place, the Golemancer would insert a gem of significant value into the Golem's forehead, mouth, hand, or chest. By expending a certain amount of P.P.E. and casting a spell, the Golemancer

was able to imbue the Golem with a spell ability. These abilities can only be used three times a day. During combat, in the place of one of the Golem's attacks, the automaton is able to use the gem ability against its opponents. Whatever ability the Golem has depends on the gem that is placed within it.

If this trait is rolled, roll separately on the *Gem Ability Table*.

56-70% Bladed or Spiked: When this Golem was created, the Golemancer placed thorns, small blades, or spikes all over the body or on specific body parts. While this does not change the Golem's damage when striking, it does add 1D6 damage when the creature is grappling.

71-80% Golem Transformation: During the Elf/Dwarf War, Stone and Iron Golems were used during sieges. Upon request, Golemancers would create Golems so they could fold themselves into a rough sphere (similar to an armadillo). Once folded, the Golem could then be launched from any catapult or trebuchet with fair accuracy. Another transformation type includes a Golem that is shaped like an ancient Egyptian mural. All of the edges of the Golem are shaped in blocks and right angles. Once the Golem is completed, a tomb wall is fashioned to fit the Golem's body. Tomb robbers will be unpleasantly surprised when they pass by a wall decoration that suddenly slides out to attack. The G.M. is encouraged to come up with more types of this trait.

81-90% Amalgam: This monstrosity is a true abomination. Only the most bizarre and insane of Golemancers would create a Golem made of different insects, races, and animals. This mad vision could have a lobster pincer for one hand, a lion paw for the other, a spider's lower body, and a horse's head. There are no limits to the different combinations that can be created.

91-00% Near Formless: The traits of this particular Golem are undefined. Instead of a head, there is a simple lump with a set of eyes and a mouth. Even the creature's arms and legs end before the feet and hands were even sculpted. Interestingly enough, these types of Golems were very common during the war. Most Golemancers were able to mass-produce these types of Golems at a quickened pace, while others lost precious time sculpting and whittling fingers, feet and faces.

Gem Ability Table

All gem abilities can only be used three times a day. Also, this trait can only be replicated by another Golemancer. Not even an Alchemist knows this secret of Golemancy.

01-15% Citrine (yellow gem): This gem ability allows the Golem to cast *Energy Bolt*. This ability is identical to the third level Wizard spell (4D6 S.D.C. damage, 150 feet/45.7 m, 18 or higher in order to dodge, etc.). The bolt will be shot out of the gem, wherever it is placed.

16-35% Ruby (red gem): This gem trait gives the Golem the ability to shoot a *Fire Bolt*, identical to the fourth level Wizard spell. When the spell is fired, treat the ability as if it were cast by a fifth level Wizard (125 feet/38.1 m range, 5D6 S.D.C. damage, dodge instead of a saving throw, etc.). The Fire Bolt will fire from the ruby.

36-55% Sapphire (blue gem): Sapphire allows the Golem to use *Ice Bolt* (found in the Library of Bletherad™ sourcebook). The ability is identical to the spell found in the

Tome of Northern Winter (300 feet/91.4 m, 3D6 damage to mortals, 6D6 to fire-based creatures, and a numbing effect if a standard saving throw is not met). See sourcebook for details.

56-70% Obsidian (black gem): This gem empowers the Golem to cast *Shadow Bolt* (found in the Library of Bletherad™ sourcebook). This ability is used as if were cast by a fifth level Wizard (7D4 damage, dodge if victim sees the bolt coming, -5 to dodge if the gem is used in the dark). The bolt is fired from the gem stone.

71-80% Emerald (green gem): This particular gemstone gives the Golem the power to cast *Speed of the Snail*. The ability is identical to the ninth level spell, except it only affects one person at a time. All other effects are standard as if cast by a fifth level Wizard (60 feet/18.3 m range, 10 minute duration, standard saving throw, etc.). See spell for more details.

81-90% Diamond (white or clear gem): The diamond gem imbues the Golem with the ability to cast *Blinding Flash*. This trait is identical to the first level Wizard spell (10 feet/3 m radius, up to 60 feet/18.3 m away, standard saving throw, etc.). This ability is also cast from the gem.

91-00% Amethyst (purple gem): This gem allows the Golem to cast *Befuddle* on its enemies. This ability is identical to the second level Wizard spell. When used, this ability is considered to be cast by a fifth level Wizard (100 feet/30.5 m, 10 minute duration, standard saving throw, etc.). See spell for full details of effects.

Self-Awareness

The downside to using tremendous amounts of P.P.E. for anything is that there is always something that can go wrong. Though frustrating, time consuming, and disaster on the coin purse, failing during the Golem creation process was the least of a Golemancer's worries. During this time period of powerful magic, about one out of a thousand Golems created would become self-aware!

What does this mean?

Once these Golemancers finished with their creations, the creations would gain sentience.

If a Golemancer were lucky, these self-aware Golems would see their maker as a father or god-like figure. While the Golem may listen to the occasional order or request, the automaton would always question its maker. These issues could easily escalate into a situation reminiscent of Frankenstein.

On the extreme downside, not only does the Golem gain intelligence, but it also has its own agenda. These free-willed behemoths could see flesh and bone as weak and not think twice about smearing every humanoid that stood in the way of its goals (whatever they might be).

A self-aware Golem is extremely rare, but could be an incredibly interesting NPC to run as a G.M. Before the party meets up with such an oddity, use 3D6 to roll the Golem's I.Q., M.E., and M.A. Also, secretly choose the Golem's alignment. If the party is lucky, they may have a new talkative traveling companion who wants nothing more than to explore the outside world. On the other hand, the Golem could be using the party as its pawns. As a G.M., I am looking forward to using this idea myself.



The Fires of Korath

Part One

An Adventure for the Palladium Fantasy RPG®

By Michael Long

Introduction

The Fires of Korath is an epic adventure intended for a party of four to seven characters, between 4th and 7th level. It is a grim tale of good versus evil. An unholy artifact has been rediscovered and must now be destroyed in order to prevent the minions of darkness from using it to enslave the entire Palladium World! What starts out as a simple errand to deliver an important message for a priest, quickly turns into a perilous quest to save the world. Good luck and good quest!

Note: Text in *italics* may be read to the players

Prologue: "The Roaring Dragon Inn"

Your fearless band of adventurers have been riding the overland road for the past week, through the green hills and moss-covered forests of the Eastern Territory. After several adventures in the Old Kingdom, you have decided to head north into the northern reaches of the "Territory," to the small border kingdom of Valadon.

One night as your party sits 'round a table regaling the crowd with your latest exploits, a stately, white-haired Elf dressed in the robes of a Priest of Light, approaches your table. As he draws near, the crowd quiets down and disperses.

He bows politely and begins to speak, "Noble adventurers allow me to introduce myself, I am Draxx Silvercrown, a Priest of Light. I have heard it said that your band is both brave and fearless, is this not so? Ah yes, I thought as much. Good! I have need of your services. I have an extremely important message which must be delivered to a fellow Priest of Light. His name is Horoth Wavestrider. High Priest of Algor. The gods of light and

darkness begin to war, and the news that I send him is grim indeed... the Old Ones begin to waken! It is vital that he receive this message. Without the knowledge contained within, the gods of light are doomed to fall and a new era of darkness will dawn. I shall give each of you 5,000 gold crowns upon delivery of the message and returning a copy of it to me, sealed by Horoth. I shall give each of you 500 crowns now, as well as provide you with all of the equipment, provisions and arms you might need on your journey. What say you? Will you do it?"

After careful deliberation, the party should agree to do it. Even the more selfish members of the party can see no joy or profit in a world ruled by the unholy Old Ones.

The next day, true to his word, Draxx hands each of you a heavy coin purse filled with 500 crowns, then takes your party to the marketplace and provides you with all of the necessary provisions, equipment and arms your group will need on your journey. Once your party is outfitted, Draxx hands each of you a leather scrollcase with a copy of the message to Horoth inside. He solemnly looks each of you in the eyes and says, "This message must reach Horoth... but be warned, others shall try to prevent it from reaching him!"

At daybreak, you are met at the edge of town by Draxx, who wishes you all a safe journey. He has also brought gifts for you — two Healing potions for every member of your party! Bidding the elderly priest farewell, you set off for the island kingdom of Bizantium. Your party intends to cross the Great Northern Wilderness to reach the coast and charter a ship to carry you across the sea to Bizantium.

Now, after a month-long journey across the forest-covered hills of the Wilderness, your party is only two days from the Bizantium port city of Tiras.

This is the adventure hook... it seems fairly simple enough, but unbeknownst to the party it will be anything but simple, as they shall soon discover. Draxx Silvercrown is not who he says he is, and is actually the dragon-god, *Kym-Nark-Mar* (Dragons & Gods, pages 223-224). He wants to warn his fellow dragon-god *Kormath* (Dragons & Gods, pages 225-226), who is disguised as Horoth Wavestrider. Both gods have no means to destroy the "Glave of the Old Ones" (which would cause them great harm if they were to touch it themselves) and are prevented by the gods of darkness from speaking to each other. So, they have decided to put their faith in these lesser beings and let them do this dangerous task for them and the world.

Chapter 1 - The Children of the Glave

As you near the city of Tiras, your party spots a strange procession wending its way along the road towards you. An odd mix of men, Ogres, Ogres and other creatures, all dressed in dark robes, march down the road, bearing a black banner with a strange red emblem on it, hanging from a skull-topped pole-staff.

As they draw near, you notice they are led by a monstrous Troll, who proudly wears a necklace of skulls around his thick

neck. A heavily-muscled Ogre easily bears the banner and its heavy cross-pole. Your party is confronted by a sneering Wolfen who stops in your path and says, "Stand aside! Bar not the path of great Arasoth and the followers of the Glave! Move aside and live, or die where you stand!"

The "Children of the Glave" are led by Arasoth (the huge Troll), and number one hundred strong. As long as the party moves aside and are non-threatening, they will be left alone. If they are foolish and choose to be aggressive or mouthy, they will quickly be overwhelmed, beaten until they are unconscious, and left for dead. They will also be stripped of all of their valuables, including their messages to Horoth!

If the party questions the "Glaveites" about the banner, they will be told that it represents the Glave of the Old Ones, a tri-headed axe blade, which is their holy symbol. It is an ancient rune weapon that was once used by the Old Ones to dominate and subjugate the world. When the younger gods and their dragon-god allies rose up against the Old Ones and cast them down during the "Great War," the Glave was lost. Now, the "Children" claim that it has reappeared in the very shrine (the Shrine of Thoth) where it was last seen, so many millennia ago. They now travel in search of this shrine to reclaim the Glave for their masters, the Old Ones, in order to set them free and re-establish their unholy reign of terror!

Chapter 2 - The Road to Tiras

After the followers of the Glave fade into the twilight, your party decides to call it a night and set up camp, in order to reach Tiras by mid-afternoon. One by one each of you nod off, except for the sentry on watch.

Around midnight, you are all suddenly awakened by an enormous thunderclap followed by a blinding flash of light! There, in the midst of your camp, stands a red-skinned, still smouldering Deevil!

In a voice reminiscent of water being poured over hot coals, it begins to speak. "You puny creatures bear a message to the Guardians of Light, those who would hold the Glave in check! I can't allow you to deliver that message, you fools! I'll feast on your entrails and drink your blood... then I'll grind your bones to dust! Ha, ha, ha, ha..."

If the party tries to negotiate with the evil being, he will become infuriated and attack the party, after shouting:

"I'll not bargain with lessers! I'll destroy you all and your message as well! As you die... know that the light dies with you, know that and despair!"

If the party decides to surrender their messages, he will become amused, because he plans on destroying them anyway. If they do so, he will tell them:

"Ha, ha, ha! So, you think that by surrendering your messages that I'll spare you? You are fools! Prepare to die a slow and very painful death!"

Valkoth Dreadbane -3rd level Devil Warrior

A.R. 12, 50 S.D.C. 60 **Hit** Points, Horror Factor 14, P.P.E. 200, 8.2 feet (2.5 m) tall.

Bonuses: +2 initiative, +6 to strike, parry and dodge, +2 on all saving throws against magic, and +6 to save vs Horror Factor.

Attacks: 4 melee or 2 magical.

Damage: Claws or head-butt (4D6+8).

Abilities: 60 feet (18.3 m) nightvision. see the invisible, **turn** invisible at will, metamorphosis: human, track by scent 55%, dimensional teleport 70%, bio-regeneration (3D6 S.D.C./Hit Points per round), and magically understands and speaks all

Spell Strength: 13

Spells: Blinding Flash, Cloud of Smoke, Compulsion, Create Coal, Fiery Touch, Globe of Daylight, Heal Wounds, Imperious to Fire, Luck Curse, Phobia: Curse, Remove Curse, Stench of Hades and Turn **Dead**.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Chapter 3 - The Port City of Tiras

The following day you arrive at the small, yet bustling port city of Tiras, a colony of Bizantium. A tall, wooden palisade surrounds the town and you see armed soldiers on it, as well as at the gates. You pass through the gates and enter Tiras, under the watchful eyes of the guardsmen.

Along the dock-lined waterfront, Bizantium merchantmen, Wolfen longships and vessels from other foreign ports line the wharves, loading and unloading their cargoes. As you turn down one of the side streets, a creaking sign swinging in the breeze catches your eye. The figure of an elderly sailor is painted on it. Painted in bold, red letters below the figure are the words, "The Ancient Mariner Inn, "

Inside the inn. Dwarfes and Wolfen freely mingle with Elves and men, as well as a few Orcs, Goblins and Gnomes. Mead and ale flow freely amidst the raucous laughter and conversations of the inn's patrons. Many play games of chance, such as cards, dice, knife throwing and arm wrestling. Many appear to be sailors and mariners, the ideal place to charter a vessel for Bizantium.

If the party asks someone about chartering a vessel, they will be directed to the corner of the bar, where they will find Captain Corridan, who is headed for Bizantium in the morning (the others won't sail for weeks, or are headed elsewhere).

In the corner of the tavern you spot the ship captain you were told of: a gray-haired Dwarf lounging on a stool with a huge tankard of ale in his brassy fist. His bearded face is covered with a good-natured grin and his eyes sparkle with amusement when he smiles. As your party approaches him, he quickly gives you the "once-over" before saying, "I be Corridan Blackanchor, cap 'n of the Sparrow, and who might ye be? "

After you have explained you need to him, he smiles and says, "The Sparrow is a sturdy little ship, she won't disappoint ye! For 150 crowns I'll see you in Bizantium in only two days

Corridan is extremely trustworthy (Principled alignment) and is a highly skilled captain. He is a 7th level Dwarfven Mariner.

After you have decided to pay his price and the proper arrangements have been made, he happily raises his tankard in a toast, saying, "May mighty Algor calm the waves and speed the winds."

He then makes arrangements for his Mate to fetch you in the morning, before he staggers out the door and into the foggy night.

At dawn you are awakened by his Mate, a friendly Lizardman named Kerith Silvertongue. He leads your party through town and aboard the small vessel. By mid-morning, you are well beyond the sight of land, sailing north for Bizantium.

Chapter 4 -The Northern Sea

As the day goes on, the player characters each have a 20% chance of noticing that several of the crewmen wear Glaive pendants... are they in danger?

The day steadily passes by and the Sparrow draws ever closer to Bizantium. In the early hours of the following morning you are all awakened by shouts and the clash of arms! Arming yourselves, you rush up to the deck, where you see the Captain and his loyal crewmen (12 men) defending themselves from a large group of mutineers (Glaiveites) (32 men). Corridan and his men are hard-pressed by their assailants, who are chanting, "Death to the messengers of the light!"

They fend off the Glaiveites while several sailors ready the lifeboat and lower it into the choppy sea. When the boat is ready, the Captain, your party and the seven remaining crewmen scramble aboard and steer it away from the ship amidst the screams and shouts of the mutineers.

When the lifeboat is about a mile away, an explosion rocks the ship in the distance, followed by a quick succession of smaller ones. As the ship begins to founder and sink into the tossing waves, Captain Corridan begins to laugh, "I wondered what magic powders those accursed Wizards wanted delivered. Ha, ha, now I know! Enjoy your ride down you thieving blighters! Ha, ha, ha!!"

With that said and done, the crew raise the sail, and using Algor's star as their guide, they head for Bizantium once more. Turning to your party, Corridan gives you a knowing smile and says, "Now my friends, let's get that message delivered!"

This is merely another incident to heighten the players' curiosity as to why the message is so important that they have nearly been killed twice now because of it.

Chapter 5 -Across the Open Sea

As the night turns to day, Kerith announces that you are still on course and should make landfall on Bizantium that afternoon. The news is greeted with a hearty cheer.

Some time that morning, one of the crewmen notices swells and ripples in the water, as if something huge and menacing had just swam past the boat! Without warning, several huge, ropey tentacles leap out of the sea and begin to coil around the boat! Everyone grabs up their weapons and begins to hack at the rope-like coils. Looking into the choppy waves, you can see it clearly now — it is an enormous squid! Its blood-red eyes glare hatefully at the lifeboat and the intruders onboard. The Captain shouts orders to his men and urges them to move quickly. "Quick now! Else the sea demon break our keel and pluck us from the sea!"



Giant Squid

A.R. 8, 30 S.D.C. 30 Hit Points, Horror Factor 16. 120 feet (36.6 m) long.

Bonuses: +1 initiative, +4 to strike, parry and dodge. Attacks: 6 melee. **Damage:** Eight 50 foot (15.2 m) long tentacles (3D6+15), and

two 100 foot (30.5 m) long tentacles (3D6+22), crush/squeeze attack (2D6+15), ram attack (1D6x10), and bite (3D6+6).

Luckily for the crew, the beast is a lone creature and not a member of a school of these aggressive predators, or else the boat and all aboard would be doomed!

When the squid's Hit Points are reduced to 10 or less, it will break off its attack and disappear into the murky depths.

After a long, hard-fought battle, the squid is overcome and flees into the murky depths once more. The survivors return to their tasks and begin to patch the battered boat up, as it limps on towards Bizantium.

By mid-afternoon, the misty shores of Bizantium are sighted on the horizon, as is a Bizantium warship. An hour later, the Seadragon heaves to and welcomes your party and the surviving sailors aboard. Her Captain, Kaladon, listens intently to your tale and smiles before saying, "You are indeed lucky my friends! I've seen an entire squadron of ships destroyed by a school of those sea demons. You are quite fortunate indeed!"

He turns to his men and gives them their orders, which they rush off to attend to. Then he turns to your group and informs you, "We shall make landfall within the hour my friends." With that said, he strides off to attend his duties.

When the ship docks, the party can set off to find Horoth and the Temple of Algor.

Chapter 6 - The Temple of Algor

Your band makes its way across the busy docks and wharves heading into town. You pass numerous shops, both merchants and craftsmen, as well as a large number of smithies, inns, taverns and stables. The streets are crowded with townsfolk, intent on their errands and tasks. You spot an occasional group of priests and wizards, as well as several detachments of Bizantium soldiers and town guards in the midst of the crowd. YOU pass by an impressive Temple of Light and the massive monument known as the "Crypt of the Seas," a memorial dedicated to every sailor who has been lost at sea. You continue on through the marketplace... Ahead of you is the imposing military citadel named "Castle Jashius." To the right of it is the magnificent Temple of Algor. A huge marble statue of a bearded, trident-wielding Algor stands watch over the mighty edifice. This is where Draxx told you to come, for this is the residence of Horoth Wavestrider!

observant
city:

First: The city is very clean and orderly... apparently this is a very law-abiding town and mischief probably won't be tolerated.

Second: There is a notable absence of non-humans, although an occasional Elf, Dwarf or other creature can be spotted every now and then. Therefore, any non-humans in the party might cause quite a stir, since they are such a rare sight.

The huge, iron-bound double doors of the temple swing effortlessly inward, without a sound. As you walk down the mar-

ble-clothed aisle, you notice several worshippers scattered throughout the large chamber. As you draw nearer to the sanctuary, two blue-robed acolytes step forward and politely ask if you need assistance.

Once the acolytes are told that the party bears a message for Horoth, they will lead the party to his study (the room just beyond the sanctuary).

The two acolytes lead you to a small study. Seated behind a large wooden desk, studying a leather-bound tome, is none other than Horoth Wavestrider. He is a huge, bear of a man with long, blonde hair and a flowing beard of gold. He lays his book aside as your party is led before him and introduced by the acolytes. He rises and warmly greets each of you, his bright eyes and warm smile are quite reassuring. In a rich, deep voice he says, "I am Horoth Wavestrider. High-Priest of Algor, how may I be of service to you?"

The party should inform him that they bear a message for him from Draxx. When they do so, he will direct them to some comfortable chairs, as his acolytes offer them refreshments. When the party is settled in, he will study the message.

Horoth visibly pales as he reads the message, then he shrugs it off and chuckles, "I'm sure you all wish to know what the message says, eh? But I must study it further, then I shall make its contents known to you. Until then be my guests and enjoy a hearty meal."

The two acolytes will then lead the party to a small dining hall, where they present food and wine to them. After an hour, the acolytes return and lead the party back to Horoth's study.

Horoth looks worried as you are led back into the study. He begins with an ominous observation, "Times are indeed dark! Ages ago, during the "Age of Chaos," the wicked Old Ones ruled an enslaved world. Then they began to plot against each other. Xy, the most powerful of them, sought to find a way to keep them in check. So he created an immensely powerful rune weapon, known as the "Glaive of the Old Ones." Welding this terrible weapon. Xy ruled unopposed for many years, until the younger gods and the dragon-gods rose up against them in rebellion, eventually defeating and imprisoning them in a magical slumber. When Xy fell, the Glaive fell as well, disappearing into thin air, and has never been seen since that day, by gods or

"Now it has reappeared in the same temple that it disappeared, the Temple of Thoth in the Algor Mountains. It is rumored that Thoth and Xy are the same entity... although Thoth doesn't remember the Glaive or his dark past. If the followers of the Glaive claim it again, they will use its powers to awaken the Old Ones, who will try to enslave the world again. It is too powerful for the minions of darkness to hold, it must be destroyed forever!"

Horoth carefully considers each of you before continuing, "The gods of light seek your aid, yours and yours alone! Name your price. You must destroy the Glaive, else the world will be

At this time the players should agree to continue or else the adventure is at an end, the world will be enslaved and living Hell will be unleashed on the world.

"Before this mighty weapon can be destroyed, four things must be taken from it.

"First... its lies must be silenced forever. Travel to the Eastern Territory and seek the Shrine of Rurga. When you have found it, take the Glaive within and place it on her altar. Call upon Rurga and beg her to silence its lies forever, and she will do as you ask!

"Second... its might must be stripped from it. Travel to the Timiro Kingdom and you shall find the Obelisk of Ra. When you have found it, lay the Glaive on its altar and wait until the sun rises. When the sun strikes the altar, the holy light of Ra shall pour down on the Glaive and destroy its power!

"Third... its unholy vision must be blinded. Travel to the Old Kingdom and seek the mountain peak, Mount Eriel. On this peak is a temple devoted to the ancient god, Eriel. Within it is the bottomless "Well of Despair"... go to this well and pry out the "eyes" (the rubies, set in the surface of the Glaive) of the Glaive, dropping them into it, thus blinding the Glaive forever.

"Fourth... its life must be extinguished. Travel to the distant Yin-Sloth Jungles and seek out the Temple of Utu, Lord of the Dead. Place the Glaive on his blood-stained altar and ask Utu to take its life, and he shall do as you command. But beware! Utu is the god of death and enjoys taking life, so he might want to take yours as well!"

Each of these tasks must be done in this order, in order for the Glaive to be rendered weak enough to be melted down, otherwise it will just reappear at the Shrine of Thoth once more!

"When all of these things have been accomplished, take the Glaive to the volcanic peak known as Mount Korath, in the Baalgor Wastelands. An ancient temple dedicated to Korath, the god of fire, is built upon the rim of the volcano. Travel to this temple and cast the Glaive into the mouth of the volcano, and it shall be utterly consumed by the fires of Korath! Then the world shall be safe from the Old Ones once more. Will you destroy the Glaive, as the gods of light wish?"

As your party sits in council, Horoth stamps each of your messages with his personal wax-seal then hands them back to you. After careful deliberation you realize you must destroy the Glaive once and for all.

Chapter 7 - The Shrine of Thoth

Each of has been given a map showing the way to the Shrine of Thoth. Your departure and return from Bizantium to the port city of Tiras was without further incident. Upon arrival you bed down at the "Ancient Mariner." The next morning you set out in search of the Shrine of Thoth, within the icy Algor Mountains far to the east.

Your party follows a narrow mountain pass, reaching a small stone bridge which spans a deep gorge. You are brought up short as you notice a huge, blue-skinned Giant standing watch over the bridge. His chain mail hauberk is covered in frost, and a deadly berdiche is slung over his broad shoulder. When he spots your party he smiles broadly, brandishes his weapon and tells you, "You may not enter the realm of the Algor! Turn aside and I shall spare ye... if ye shan't, ye shall never leave these mountains alive!"



Hoth Hoarfrost — 3rd level Algor Frost Giant Soldier

A.R. 9, 20 S.D.C. (chain mail hauberk), 75 S.D.C. 35 Hit Points. Horror Factor 10, 18.6 feet (5.6 m) tall. Bonuses: +3 to strike, parry and dodge, and +3 save vs Horror Factor.

Attacks: 3 melee. Damage: Frost breath (range: 30 feet/9m, 4D6), punch

(3D6+10), or Berdiche (5D6+10).

Abilities: Nightvision 60 feet (18.3 m), and impervious to cold. Alignment: Miscranni.

After you've defeated the Giant, your party makes its way across the bridge and onward down the path. Topping the next rise you finally spot your destination... the Shrine of Thoth! It is a beautiful and awesome structure built into the cliffs. Its polished granite walls gleam in the fading sunlight.

1) The Portico

A wide staircase leads up to a covered landing. Before you are a pair of massive doors, engraved with a golden ankh (the holy symbol of Thoth).

2) Entrance Hall

Four columns support the ceiling of this chamber, and in each corner stands a statue. In the near right-hand corner is a statue of Ra, the sun god, in the near left a statue of Benna, the goddess of rebirth. In the far right-hand corner is a statue of Isis, the mother goddess, and in the far left-hand corner is a statue of Anhur, the war god. A pair of doors lies straight ahead as do two to each side of you. As you enter the chamber you hear the skitter of claws on stone and turn to see a pair of giant cave spiders rushing towards you!

(2) Giant Cave Spiders

A.R. 8, 25 S.D.C. 20 Hit Points each, 5 feet (1.5 m) long. Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +2 to strike and parry, and +3 to dodge.

Attacks: 3 melee.

Damage: Bite (1D6) plus venom (4D6 per bite, unless the victim successfully saves vs lethal poisons, 14 or higher).

3) Hallway

4) Hallway

This hallway has a small staircase which leads down. On the floor is a small, dark puddle.

Black Jelly

A.R. 10, 40 Hit Points, Horror Factor 15.

Attacks: One melee.

Damage: Contact (1D6).

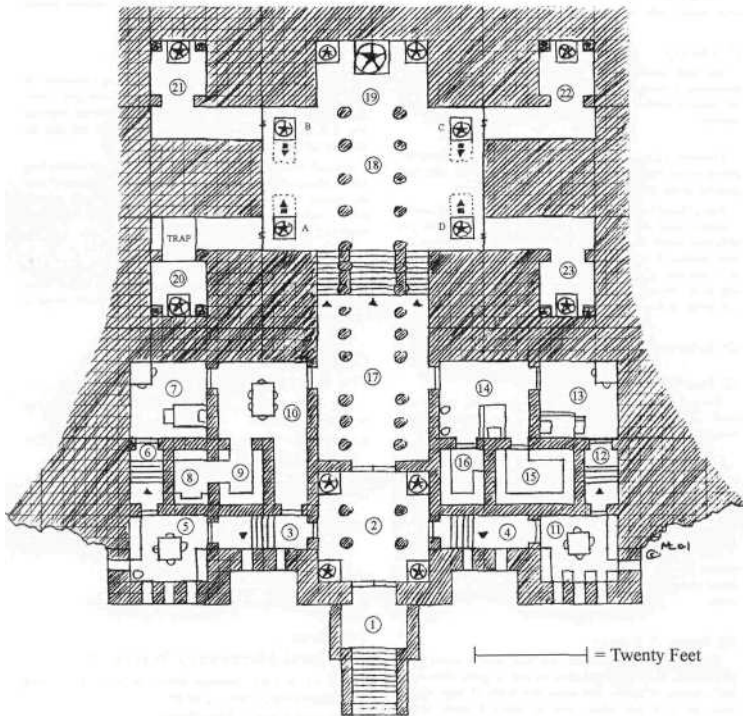
Abilities: Immune to normal weapons and psionic attacks, impervious to cold, and resistant to fire.

5) Study

Soft moonlight filters through four small windows, revealing two wooden bookcases filled with various books and scrolls. A doorway lies to the right, and in the far left-hand corner is a wooden chair. A wooden table surrounded by four stools sits in the middle of the room. A beautiful, golden candle stand sits on the tabletop, surrounded by several scrolls and parchment

The books are of no consequence or value, however on the table are three magical scrolls (Heal Wounds, Remove Curse and Turn Dead) and the golden candle stand (worth 150 gold crowns).

6) Hallway



7) Bedchamber

This spacious chamber contains a large bed. An iron-bound trunk lies at its feet, and a small wooden table sits in the corner, with two stools nearby.

The trunk contains priestly robes and a small leather bag that holds 275 gold crowns, (5) Healing potions, (3) all-purpose remedies and a Rod of Restoration (which instantly restores all lost Hit Points to whomever it touches, twice per day).

8) Kitchen

This room is the kitchen of the Shrine. A large stone fireplace stands at one end of the room and a cabinet, filled with various pots and pans, rests against the opposite wall. Dust covers the floor and it is quite evident that it hasn't been used in years.

9) Pantry

Cabinets line the walls of this room. Their doors are standing wide open, and food is scattered all over the floor.

10) Dining Hall

This large room is the dining hall of the Shrine. It contains a large wooden table and six stools.

11) Library

Moonlight pours into the room through several windows, illuminating a room filled with Jive bookcases made of polished oak. Several books lay atop a reading table in the middle of the chamber.

Scattered amongst the various books are four beautiful, leather-bound books trimmed in silver and studded with tiny, precious stones (each book is worth 250 gold crowns).

One of these books is entitled *The Wisdom of Thoth*, and is a magical tome. Any Priest of Light who reads it will gain two additional points of I.Q. and M.E. Any Priest of Darkness that even touches it will permanently lose one point of I.Q. and M.E., and take 2D6 points of damage for daring to touch such a holy book. Anyone of Miscreant or Diabolic alignment will take 1D6 points of damage.

12) Hallway

13) Bedchamber

This fair-sized bedchamber holds two bunk beds, as well as a small wooden table with two stools in the corner, and two iron-bound trunks at the end of the bunks.

The two trunks contain the clothing of the former occupants, as well as two small leather bags, which contain a total of 101 gold crowns and 62 silver crowns.

14) Guest Chamber

This large and spacious chamber is a guestroom where important visitors, such as visiting priests and other dignitaries stayed during their visit. It holds a bunk bed and two wooden

15) Pantry & Buttery

This room contains cabinets that hold several containers of dried meats, fruits and vegetables, as well as grain, flour, sugar and a variety of spices. The room also holds 15 kegs of fresh water and 9 of rare wines (each of which is worth 50 gold crowns).

16) Storeroom

This room contains a cabinet that holds household items, such as rope, nails, candles, candle holders, drapes, linens, etc.

17) Hall of the Temple

Twelve black, granite columns support the high ceiling of this beautiful hall. Directly ahead of you is a small staircase that leads into the temple itself, and to each side of your party are solid, wooden doors. As you draw near the steps leading into the temple, you hear the faint sound of hushed voices.

On either side of each column is a beautiful wall scone made of silver (worth 50 gold crowns each), and the finely-wrought carpet on the floor is also very valuable (worth 500 gold crowns).

18) Temple of Thoth

More columns support the ceiling of this large chamber. In each corner is a marble statue of the ibis-headed god Thoth. Ahead of you, in an alcove, is another, more massive statue of him. It is flanked by two other statues, one of the sun-god Ra, the other of the mother goddess Isis.

A small group of raiding Glaivettes, led by an evil-looking Lizard Mage, confronts a huge feline humanoid (a Ramen) near the statues. The hands of the Lizard Mage glow with magical power, while his companions, two Bearmen and four Orcs, attempt to flank the noble creature.

The Ramen is a servant of the gods of light and the guardian of the Glaive. As the battle begins, the Ramen and Lizard Mage seek each other out and do battle, until the powerful mage is eventually destroyed.

(2) Bearmen -

3rd level Mercenary Warriors

A.R. 11, 70 S.D.C. each, 50 Hit Points each. Horror Factor 14, 9.5 feet (2.9 m) tall.

Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +2 to strike and parry, and +3 to save vs Horror Factor.

Attacks: 3 melees.

Damage: Claws (2D6+7), head-butt (1D6+7), bite (2D4) and battle-axes (4D6+7).

Abilities: Nightvision 10 feet (3 m), prowl 30%, track by scent 68%, swim 70%, climb/scale walls 60% and recognize poisons 90%.

Alignment: Anarchist and Miscreant.

Each has a belt pouch containing 10 gold crowns.

(4) Orcs -

2nd level Mercenary Warriors

A.R. 13, 38 S.D.C. (studded leather armor), 20 S.D.C. each, 20 Hit Points each, 6 feet (1.8 m) tall. Bonuses: +3 to save vs Horror Factor. Attacks: 2 melees. Damage: Claws (1D6+3), bite (1D6), spears (orcs #1 and #2)

(2D6+3), short bows with 40 arrows (orcs #3 and #4) (1D6+3) and maces (all) (2D6+3).

Abilities: Nightvision 40 feet (12 m) and track by scent 25%.

Alignment: Diabolic (all).

Each has a belt pouch containing 5 gold crowns.

19) The Shrine of Thoth

At the conclusion of the battle, the Ramen turns to face you and then motions for you all to approach. In a deep and reas-

suring voice he says, "I know why you have come. You have come to destroy the Glaive... not to free it as these foolish ones had sought to."

He points at the four statues in the room and continues, "The statues which stand in each corner of this temple bear the likeness of Thoth. However, one is not of his divine nature, it is a forgotten relic of his past. Behind this statue... the one which is and is not Thoth, lies the unholy Glaive of the Old Ones! Choose amongst yourselves, then push that statue aside to reveal the way... but choose carefully... for behind one is glory, behind another is the Glaive, and behind the other two is doom!"

When the regal creature has finished speaking, he silently fades away in a shimmer of blinding light.

Returning to the main temple (room #18), the party may investigate each of the statues.

Statue A

This statue of Thoth stands with outstretched arms, palms down, as if in a gesture of healing. Compassion and mercy seem to shine through his eyes.

If this statue is pushed aside, it reveals the secret passage leading to room #20.

Statue B

This statue of Thoth stands with a shield on his arm and a sickle-sword in his raised hand, as if he were ready to strike you down. Hatred and rage seem to fill his eyes.

If this statue is pushed aside, it reveals the secret passage leading to room #21.

Statue C

This statue of Thoth stands with an opened book cradled in his hands, his head lowered as if reading a passage from it. His bright eyes seem to be filled with knowledge and intelligence.

If this statue is pushed aside, it reveals the secret passage leading to room #22.

Statue D

This statue of Thoth stands with his hands tucked away, i

If this statue is pushed aside, it reveals the secret passage leading to room #23.

20) Crypt of Compassion

On the wall of this passageway, just inside the entrance, is a cryptic passage written in letters of gold! It reads, "The healing touch of Thoth I'll bear... else death shall fall from the air!"

In order to bypass the trap in this passageway, a Priest or Wizard must cast some form of healing spell on the hallway before proceeding. If they don't, a huge section of the ceiling will give way and fall on the party (inflicting 2D6 points of damage per person).

At the end of the passage you enter a small crypt. Two small statues, one of Ra, the other of Isis, flank a large statue of Thoth. In his hands is a well-crafted silver decanter, which is filled with some sort of sparkling liquid.

The decanter (worth 50 gold crowns) is filled with enough Healing potion for 20 doses!

21) Crypt of Hatred

On the wall of this hallway, just inside the entrance, is a cryptic message written in blood red letters. It reads, "Sundered secrets of a forgotten age, hidden past, wars I wage! I am hate, I am despair, I am rage!"

This dark passage serves to remind the followers of Thoth of his past mistakes... that he was once the most powerful of the Old Ones, Xy!

At the end of the passage you enter a small crypt. Two small statues, of nameless Old Ones, flank a large statue of hideous Xy. In Xy's tentacles is a terrible, wicked looking artifact... the Glaive of the Old Ones. The Glaive appears to be three axe-heads joined in the center, composed of an unknown black metal. On its face are several tiny gemstones, as well as glowing red runes that pulse with a sinister life of their own!

The Glaive of the Old Ones possesses the following proper-effects and abilities:

Xystus - The Glaive of the Old Ones

Type: Glaive. A rune weapon of legend.

Damage: 6D6, but does double damage to the gods of light and triple damage to the dragon-gods.

Alignment: Aberrant.

Powers: Possesses all of the common rune powers, plus: ■

Has an I.Q. of 22.

- The Glaive never dulls and is so sharp that it negates the A.R. of its foe and penetrates any armor, so long as the attacker's unmodified roll to strike is 5 or higher!
- When thrown, the Glaive will fly up to 1,000 feet (305 m) away and automatically return to the thrower's hand.

Spells: Each spell can be cast up to 6 times per day at 7th level proficiency. Xystus has 120 P.P.E. and recovers P.P.E. at a rate of 5 per hour.

- Befuddle
- Blinding Flash
- Circle of Cold
- Circle of Flame
- Darkness
- Fear (Horror Factor 16)



- Globe of Daylight
- Heat Object & Boil Water
- Impervious to Fire
- See the Invisible
- Wall of Flame

Psionics: Each psionic power, except for Mentally Possess Others, can be used up to 6 times per day at 6th level proficiency.

- Commune with Spirits
- Induce Sleep
- Mentally Possess Others (2 times/day)

- Sense Good
- Sense Magic

Clerical Abilities:

- Heal Wounds (2D6 Hit Points/S.D.C.) (6 times/day)
- Remove Curse, 65% (once/day)
- Animate and Command 4D6 Dead for 8 hours, 70% (2 times/day)
- Turn 8D6 Dead for up to 8 hours, 60% (4 times/day)
- In the hands of a high-level (10th or higher) Priest of Darkness or a Chaos Priest, (he Glaive has a 90% chance of summoning one of the imprisoned Old Ones.

Curses: The Glaive of the Old Ones causes the alignment of the wielder to deteriorate by two degrees (i.e. a Scrupulous character becomes Anarchist). In addition to this, the wielder

must roll once on the random psychosis table, while they possess the Glaive. Methods of Attack: Xystus will attempt to mentally possess the

wielder, then lead them to a high-level Chaos Priest or Priest of Darkness. Personality: Xystus has only one purpose in life... to free the

Old Ones! He will trick, deceive or betray anyone he can, in order to attain his goals.

22) Crypt of Knowledge

On the wall of this hallway, just inside the entrance, is a cryptic message, this one written in sparkling blue letters. It reads, "Hidden secrets of the misty past, seek that which shall forever last!"

This message serves to remind the party of Thoth's infinite knowledge.

At the end of the passage you enter a small crypt. Two small statues, one of Ra, the other of Isis, flank a larger one of Thoth. In his outstretched hands is a rod, which glows with a silvery light and radiates an aura of peace and tranquility.

The rod is a magic item dedicated to Thoth, which has the following powers and abilities:



Viraketheth - The Rod of Thoth

Type: Rod. A greater holy weapon.

Damage: 4D6, but does 6D6 against Deevils, demons, dragons and other supernatural creatures of magic.

Alignment: Unprincipled. Powers: . Heal
2D6 Hit Points/S.D.C., 3 times/day.

- Sense magic and evil in a 60 foot (18.3 m) radius, at will.
- Turns 6D6 dead to dust. 90% (3 times/day).
- Expels greater Deevils and demons, 50% (once/day).
- Expels lesser Deevils and demons, 90% (2 times/day).
- Places a 100 foot (30.5 m) circle of protection around the entire party which prevents the Glaive from mentally possessing them!

23) Crypt of Wisdom

On the wall of this hallway, just within the entrance, is a cryptic passage, written in silver letters. It says, "Wisdom is the unbreakable and immovable rock of life!"

This passage reminds the party of Thoth's great wisdom.

At the end of the passage you enter a small crypt. Two small statues, one of Ra, the other of Isis, flank a larger one of Thoth. In his hands is a beautiful golden decanter filled with a liquid that seems to almost glow. Upon entering, a five foot long, insect-like creature uncoils itself from around the base of the statues and rushes towards you!

Her reflecting the glow of torchlight

The liquid is merely y
off of the decanter.

Rock-Crawler

A.R. 14, 15 S.D.C. 25 Hit Points, Horror Factor 12, 5 feet (1.5 m) long. Bonuses: +1 to strike, +2 to dodge, and +5 to save vs poisons and drugs.

Attacks: 2 melee.

Damage: Bite (2D4).

As you make your way back to the entrance of the shrine, the Ramen rematerializes in front of your party. In his strong voice he says, "Here are maps that will show you the way to each of the sites, where you must go to destroy the Glaive."

He hands each of you a map case. Inside you find a carefully rolled map, drawn on parchment. Once more, he begins to speak, "Take these maps now and be off with you... the followers of the Glaive approach once more and mean to possess it... now flee! Good luck and may the gods watch over you!"

These maps show the way to the following sites:

- The Shrine of Rurga (in the Eastern Territory)
- The Obelisk of Ra (in the Timiro Kingdom)
- The Temple of Eriel (in the Old Kingdom mountains)
- The Temple of Utu (in the Yin-Sloth Jungles)
- The Temple of Korath (in the Baalgor Wastelands)

Chapter 8 - The Ruined Keep

With Glaive in hand, your party heads south once more, through the pine-covered mountains and foothills of the Northern Wilderness. According to your maps, it will take twelve days to reach the Shrine of Rurga, located just inside the Eastern Territory.

After nine days of uneventful travel, you stumble across a crumbling stone keep. Its sits astride a narrow cliff ledge, with a deep gorge on either side of it.

1) Entrance

As your party approaches the entrance of the keep, two iron-bound, wooden doors, you spot a sinister-looking oak tree nearby. Without warning, two knot-holes, curiously shaped like eyes, begin to glow with a golden light and keen intelligence.



Will-o-the-Wisp

A.R. 10, 600 S.D.C. (main body) and 20 S.D.C. (branches), 180 Hit Points, Horror Factor 10. 16 feet (4.9 m) tall. Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, +6 to party and +3 on all saving throws.

Attacks: 6 melee or 2 magical/psionic. Damage: (10) small branches (1D6+3), (5) medium branches (3D6+3) and (3) large branches (5D6+3).

Abilities: (Faerie limitations apply)

Spells: (Faerie limitations apply)

- Call Lightning
- Circle of Rain
- Create Fog
- Earth Rumble
- Extinguish Fires
- Globe of Daylight
- Mend Cloth
- Purple Mist
- Wind Rush

Psionics: I.S.P.: 56.

- Commune with Animals
- Object Read
- Presence Sense
- Sense Evil
- Sense Magic
- Telepathy

Alignment: Scrupulous.

This normally good tree Faerie v it senses the presence of the Glaive;

2) Entry Hall

This entry hall has two arrow-loops on either side, an iron-bound double door directly ahead, and a raised portcullis just inside the main entrance.

3) Guardroom

Ruined tables and chairs, as well as other debris, litter this former guardroom. Along the walls are wooden racks, which once held the guards' weapons. As you enter the chamber, you notice two twisted, faun-like creatures (known as Pucks), rummaging through a bag of loot. When you enter, they turn towards you and charge, shrieking loudly!

(2) Pucks

A.R. 10, 40 S.D.C. each, 15 Hit Points each, Horror Factor 10, 4feet(1.2m)tall. Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +2 on

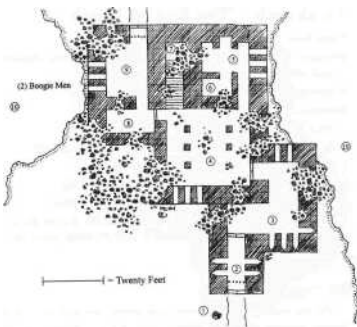
all saving throws and +6 to save vs Horror Factor. **Attacks:** 5 melee or 2 magical. **Damage:** Claws (1D6), kick (3D6) or bite (1D6+2). **Abilities:** Nightvision 90 feet (27 m), and metamorphosis: goat,

dog, pony or wild boar. **Spells:** (Faerie limitations apply)

- Concealment
- Death Trance
- Repel Animals
- Spoil

Alignment: Diabolic (both).

The small bag holds 152 gold crowns, 186 silver crowns and 87 small gemstones (worth 10 gold crowns each).



THE RUINED KEEP

4) Hall

Five stone columns support the crumbling roof of this large room. Stone rubble is scattered across the dust-covered floor.

Amidst the debris on the floor, there are 127 gold crowns, 42 small gemstones (each worth 10 gold crowns), a silver amulet (worth 50 gold crowns), and a golden armband (worth 150 gold crowns).

5) Kitchen

This long-deserted kitchen or value.

6) Pantry

This room was once the pantry of the keep. It still contains 3 kegs of a very rare Elven wine (each of which is worth 100 gold crowns), and 2 kegs of an excellent Dwarven mead (each of which is worth 125 gold crowns).

7) Staircase

The staircase to the nearly collapsed upper story is blocked by tons of rubble and debris. Each round the character party attempts to remove the debris, there is a 25% chance of causing another collapse (which inflicts 2D6 points of damage to everyone in the stairwell).

8) Guardroom

The walls of this guardroom are crumbling, and debris litters the room. Scattered about the chamber, on the dust-covered floor are various discarded weapons.

The floor are 10 spears, 5 war flails, 3 halberds, 2 bastard swords and 2 crossbows (one of which is broken).

9) Exit Hall

Large chunks of rock and debris fill the corner of this hall. Ahead of you, you see a raised porticulis and a pair of iron-bound, wooden doors. As you near the exit, two small, hideous Boogie Men climb out from their places of concealment in the debris and spring towards you with frightening speed!

(2) Boogie Men

A.R. 5, 45 S.D.C. each, 25 Hit Points each. Horror Factor 12, 3 feet (0.9 m) tall. Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +2 to dodge and +4 to save vs poi-

Attacks: 4 melee.

Damage: Claws (1D4) or bite (1D6).

Abilities: Nightvision 90 feet (27m), prowl 77% and climb/scale walls 90%.

Alignment: Diabolic (both).

Each has a belt pouch on his person. One contains 23 gold crowns and a golden ring (worth 50 gold crowns); the other contains 10 gold crowns, 32 silver crowns and a golden holy symbol (that of Ra, god of light; worth 75 gold crowns).

10) The Gorge

The Keep sits astride a 500 foot (152 m) deep gorge, with nothing but air on each side of it. It can only be crossed by going through the Keep.

Chapter 9 - The Shrine of Rurga

Returning to the trail once more, your party continues on. After three more uneventful days of weary travel, you sight the Shrine of Rurga on a distant hillside several miles away. Several hours later you stand before the impressive structure and its pair of plain, iron doors. As you prepare to enter, you each recall the words spoken to you by Horoth... "First, its lies must be silenced forever. Call upon Rurga and beg her to silence its lies!"

1) Nave

Sixteen marble columns support the massive roof of this long hall-like chamber. On either side of each column is a silver torch holder (worth 10 gold crowns each). There are three doors on each side of the hall, and a staircase, which leads up, at the end of the chamber.

2) Store Room

These two room;

3) Study

This room contains several polished oak bookcases, which are filled with a great many books and tomes. There is also a small wooden table with a padded chair nearby. On the table is a beautiful leather-bound book. Its dark red cover is trimmed in silver and bears the scales of truth (the holy symbol of Rurga) on its face.

The book is the original copy of the *Ta'Palladia* (Rurga's holy book), and though it can be handled and read in the room, it can't be removed from it by any means. Any evil character who touches it will receive 1D6 points of damage per round until they release it! Any good character who touches it will be blessed by Rurga herself (+3 to save on all saving throws and immunity from the effects of magical Horror Factor and fear. These effects are permanent!).

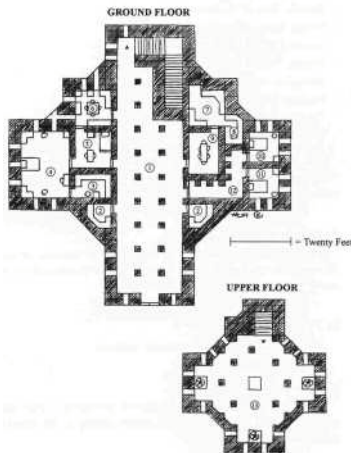
4) Priest's Bedchamber

This room contains several cabinets, as well as three wooden stools, a desk and a comfortable bed. Under the pillows is a silver, sword pendant necklace (a symbol of Rurga; worth 150 gold crowns). In this chamber, the party will begin to feel as if they are being observed, which they are... by Rurga herself!

5) Acolyte's Bedchamber

This room contains a bunk bed, two wooden stools and a table. It also holds two small, wooden chests. Both contain the red

THE SHRINE OF RURGA



and silver robes of a priest/priestess of Rurga, as well as other clothing. In addition to these items, they also contain two small, leather bags, which contain a total of 80 gold crowns. On one of the beds is a beautiful long sword; its blade gleams silver and is lined with the runes and symbols of Rurga, which glow with an intense red light!

Veritas - The Sword of Truth

Type: Long sword. A minor holy weapon of Rurga.

Alignment: Principled.

Damage: 4D6, but does 6D6 against Deevils, demons, dragons and other evil supernatural creatures.

Powers:

- Heals 2D6 Hit Points/S.D.C. (3 times/day).
- Senses evil within a 40 foot (12 m) radius.
- Turns 3D6 dead to dust (2 times/day).

6) Library

This room holds five bookcases, which are filled with hundreds of books. In the center of the chamber is a long, wooden table surrounded by four stools. A beautiful rug lies on the cold, stone floor beneath the table.

The rug is worth 250 gold crowns and none of the books are magical or of any significance, with the exception of one: the *Silver book of Mhedibab*. It contains the names of several forgotten deities of the pantheon of Rurga; ■ Archas, God of Magic.

- Cendon, God of Fire.
- Deneth, God of Darkness.
- Halga, Goddess of the Forge.
- **Leoric**, God of Honor and Victory.
- Lheric, God of Light.
- Morgana, Goddess of Healing.
- **Sendra**, Goddess of Thievery.
- Tholan, God of the **Sky**.
- Valga, Goddess of the Woodlands.

This book will only be of value to a Priest of Rurga, who could use it to restore the entire pantheon to its rightful place in

7) Kitchen

This is the former kitchen of the shrine. It contains several cabinets and counter-tops, as well as a large, stone hearth in the

8) Pantry

This room contains several empty cabinets.

9) Dining Hall

This room was once the dining hall of the shrine. Aside from a long, wooden table and the six stools around it, the room is quite empty.

10) Guest Chamber

11) Guest Chamber

These nearly identical rooms each contain a large, comfortable bed, a wooden stool and a small, wooden chest that contains linens and candies.

12) Hallway

This hallway contains five 1 foot (0.3 m) tall, silver statuettes of Rurga, Cirga, Lista, Leoric and Lheric (each is worth 200 gold crowns), set into small niches in the **wall**.

13) The Sanctum

This is the sanctum of the shrine. Seven marble columns support the high ceiling, and three alcoves contain beautiful marble statues. The statue to the right is of Leoric... he wears a fine suit of plate mail and bears a long-handled battle axe. The statue to the left is of Lheric... he wears long, flowing robes. His face is calm and serene. Directly ahead, past the altar in the center of the room, in the distant alcove is a statue of Rurga... she wears her suit of fine plate mail. Her long hair is braided and drapes across her shoulder, and in her hands is a great flamberge.

As you lay the Glaive on her altar, the statue of Rurga comes to life and speaks to you in a strong yet kindly voice, the voice of a warrior maiden. It says, "What is it you seek here, my children?"

At this point the party should ask her to silence the lies of the Glaive. When they have made this request, she will further say:

"Yes, I have heard the lies that it speaks! I shall burn them away forever! But first, I have a question for you. " At which time she points to one of your group.

At this time she will single in the party and ask them:

■ *What is Truth?"*

The character should respond with something like... "it is the lack of guile and deceit", "the lack of falsehood" or simply put. "the truth is the truth!" If they answer incorrectly their alignment will deteriorate by one degree (i.e. Principled becomes Scrupulous, etc.).

When the chosen member of your party has given their answer, Rurga will pause and consider it, before nodding and sternly pointing to the Glaive. Then in a commanding voice, she begins, "The truth is truth enough! Truth is the light that darkness can neither hide from nor escape!"

White-gold light blazes forth from the hands of Rurga and surrounds the Glaive, silencing its unholy voice forever! When the glow has finally faded, you notice that the statue of Rurga is once more lifeless. In your minds you hear her voice again as she tells you, "Now, you must be away! For the Glaive must not be allowed to free the Old Ones. It must be destroyed! Farewell my children, I shall be ever near and watching over you!"

With that done, Rurga has stripped away the following powers and abilities from the Glaive:

Spells:

- Befuddle
- Darkness
- Fear (Horror Factor 16)

Psionics:

- Induce Sleep
- Mentally Possess Others

P.P.E.: Is reduced to 80 and is recovered at a rate of 24 per day.

Other Abilities: Its I.Q. is reduced to 16 and it is no longer able to communicate telepathically! The runes on the Glaive glow with slightly less intensity than before.

Chapter 10 -The Stone Tower

Your party has been back on the trail for the past two weeks, heading southwards for the Timiro Kingdom and the Obelisk of Ra. As you enter a small, secluded valley, just inside the Old Kingdom, you stumble across a solitary stone tower, It appears to be lifeless and deserted.

1) Entry Hall

The walls of this high-ceilinged hall are covered with five, well made tapestries (each worth 100 gold crowns).

2) Privy

3) Store Room

4) Armory

Arms and armor hang from wooden racks that line the walls of this room. The room contains: 8 steel helmets, 5 suits of studded leather, 3 suits of chain mail, 6 spears, 3 battle-axes, 8 halberds, 4 berdiches, 8 long swords, 4 short swords and 5 maces.

5) Guardroom

This small room contains two beds, a wooden table and two stools. As you enter, two Orc guards, dressed in chain mail byrnies and armed with berdiches, order you to halt!

(2) Orcs - 2nd level Mercenary Warriors

A.R. 14, 44 S.D.C. (chain mail armor), 20 S.D.C. each, 30 Hit Points each, 6 feet (1.8 m) tall. Bonuses: +4 to save vs Horror Factor and +3 to dodge and party. Attacks: 2 melees.

Damage: Claws (1D6+6), bite (1D6) or berdiche (3D6+6). Abilities: Nightvision 40 feet (12 m) and track by scent 25%. Alignment: Mischief and Diabolic.

Each carries a small belt pouch on his person. One contains 16 gold crowns, the other 12.

6) Refectory

7) Pantry

As you enter this small chamber, you notice seven Giant Rats, rooting through the food inside the cabinets and on the shelves. When the nearly two-foot-long (0.6 m) rodents notice your party, they begin to growl and hiss fiercely at you!

(7) Giant Rats

A.R. 9, 10 S.D.C. each, 20 Hit Points each. Horror Factor 10. Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +2 to strike and +3 to dodge.

Attacks: 2 melees.

Damage: Bite(1D6).

Abilities: Nightvision 200 feet (60 m), climb walls 70%, acrobatics 30% and prowl 80%.

8) Kitchen

This room contains a long counter-top on one wall, and a stone hearth at the far end.

9) Antechamber

10) Treasury

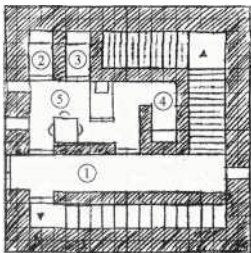
This room contains six iron-bound, wooden chests, resting on wall shelves. They also rest on a pressure plate trap! When any of the chests are removed from their shelves, it will activate a spear trap, causing 5 spears to spring out from the walls, inflicting 2D6 damage to anyone in the chamber! The six chests contain:

- Chest #1 (contains 287 gold crowns).
- Chest #2 (contains 321 copper crowns).
- Chest #3 (contains 510 silver crowns).
- Chest #4 (contains 87 gold and 182 silver crowns).
- Chest #5 (contains 150 small rubies and sapphires, worth 10 gold crowns each).
- Chest #6 (contains 126 small emeralds and garnets, worth 10 gold crowns each).

11) Great Hall

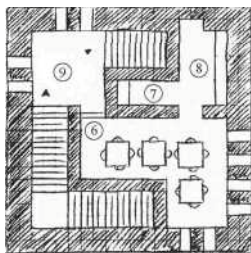
This beautiful hall contains three wooden tables and twenty-six stools. Four wall tapestries, three rugs and two fire braziers complete the hall's furnishings. As you enter the room, the fire braziers spring to life and begin to approach your party.

GROUND FLOOR

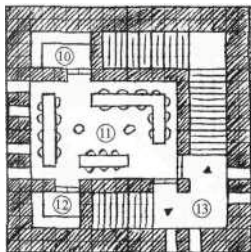


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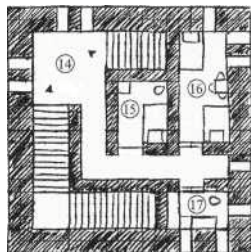
FIRST FLOOR



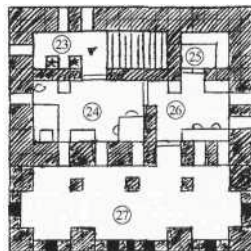
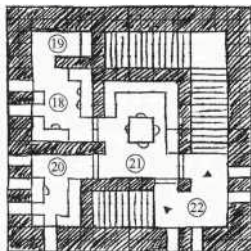
SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR



FOURTH FLOOR



FIFTH FLOOR

— = Twenty Feet

The wall tapestries are quite realistic and are very beautiful (each is worth 200 gold crowns), as are the rugs (each is worth 150 gold crowns).

(2) Animated Fire Braziers

A.R. 12, 25 S.D.C. each, 30 Hit Points each. Attacks: 2 melee. Damage: Bite (with the lid; 1D6) and spit hot coals (2D4+4).

12) Chandlery

This chamber contains several empty cabinets.

13) Antechamber

14) Antechamber

15) Guest Chamber

This room contains a comfortable bed, a wooden chair, and a chest which holds linens and blankets.

16) Apprentice's Bedchamber

This bedchamber has two beds and a wooden table with three stools. Seated at the table, examining a large, leather-bound book, is a thin figure dressed in white robes. As your party enters, the figure turns in your direction, revealing a young woman, regarding you with curiosity.

This is Senakh Greymoon, an apprentice Air Warlock. She is friendly and very inquisitive.

Senakh Greymoon - 2nd level Human Air Warlock

A.R. 10, 20 S.D.C. (soft leather armor), 15 S.D.C. 25 Hit Points, 100 P.P.E., 5.6 feet (1.7 m) tall.

Bonuses: +2 to save vs Horror Factor and +1 to save vs magic.

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 15, M.A. 12, P.S. 12, P.P. 16, P.E. 14 and P.B. 17.

Attacks: 2 melee or magic.

Damage: Staff (2D4) or by magic.

Abilities: Speak with Elementals 92%, Sense Elemental within 120 foot (36 m) radius 35%, Summon Lesser Elementals 10%, Sense Storms and Other Atmospheric Disturbances 40%, Sense Air Impurities 40%, and Astronomy 65%.

Spell Strength: 12

Spells:

- Cloud of Slumber
- Create Light
- Levitate
- Miasma
- Northwind
- Silence

Alignment: Anarchist.

She has a belt pouch with 136 gold crowns in it.

17) Apprentice's Study

Two wooden bookcases stand against the walls of this small chamber. A powerfully built man in brown robes stands near one such bookcase, looking for a specific title. When he finally notices your party, he turns and politely asks, "How may I be of service?"

This is Aerikh Blackstone, an apprentice Earth Warlock. He is very strong, intelligent and well read.

Aerikh Blackstone - 2nd level Human Earth Warlock

A.R. 10, 20 S.D.C. (soft leather armor), 20 S.D.C. 32 Hit Points, 115 P.P.E., 6.2 feet (1.9 m) tall.

Bonuses: +2 to save vs Horror Factor and +1 to save vs magic.

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 16, M.A. 15, P.S. 20, P.P. 16, P.E. 17 and P.B. 12.

Attacks: 2 melee or magic.

Damage: Long sword (2D6+5) or by magic.

Abilities: Speak Elemental 92%, Sense Elemental within a 120 foot (36 m) radius 35%, Summon Lesser Elementals 10%, Recognize Natural Minerals 66%, Sense Dangers in the Earth (including traps) 40%, Underground Sense of Direction 84%, Holistic Medicine 50%, and Identify Plants & Fruits 65%.

Spell Strength: 12

Spells:

- Chameleon
- Hopping Stone
- Rock to Mud
- Rot Wood
- Track
- Wither Plants

Alignment: Anarchist.

18) Wizard's Laboratory

This odd room contains a wide variety of strange items. There are several wooden cabinets and counter-tops, as well as three chairs. On the counters are glass beakers and other containers, and in the far corner is a full-sized Devil skeleton!

The cabinets contain labeled containers of spell components, such as dragon's blood, ground dragon's bones, the tongues of wizards, ground unicorn horns, etc. Each vessel is a one ounce container... there are 22 such jars (each of which is worth 20,000 gold crowns on (he average!). However, only a man of magic will recognize their value; to others they will seem to be odd and worthless items.

19) Wizard's Apotheca

This small room at the far end of the Laboratory contains a cabinet of clearly labeled flasks of magic draughts.

Each flask contains enough of each draught to make five full potions. The following potions are inside the cabinet:

- All-Purpose Remedies

- Charm
- Healing
- Healing (Superior)
- Impervious to Cold
- Impervious to Fire
- Invisibility
- Might of the Palladium
- Negate Poisons
- Negate Potions
- Reduce Self
- Size of the Behemoth
- Sleep
- Swim as a Fish
- Tongues

20) Wizard's Study

This chamber contains two polished mahogany bookcases, filled with a great number of books on a wide variety of topics, as well as a wooden desk and a well-padded chair,

21) Library

This beautiful room contains a huge, black oak bookcase that holds a vast selection of books and tomes on a wide variety of subjects, a wooden table with four comfortable chairs around it, and a well-crafted rug beneath it.

Several of these books hold enough knowledge in them to confer upon the reader the following base skill percentiles:

- Anthropology (of any race) 40%
- Archaeology (of any race) 40%
- Biology 50%
- Botany 50%
- History (of any race or time period) 50%
- Language (any known language) 60%
- Lore (any) 50%

22) Antechamber

23) Antechamber

This small, moonlit antechamber is absolutely empty, except for two man-sized statues of mummified Lizard Men, dressed in loincloths. Their blazing eyes are merely bright rubies reflecting the moon's glow.

These two statues are Lesser Stone Golems, which will spring to life whenever something living passes by them!

(2) Lesser Stone Golems

A.R. 12, 50 S.D.C/Hit Points (each Golem will completely regenerate in only 24 hours, unless their heads are buried separately from their bodies!). Horror Factor 12,6 feet (1.8 m) tall.

Bonuses: +1 to strike and parry, normal weapons only do 1/2damage, while magic and magic weapons do full damage.

Attacks: 3 melee.

Damage: Claws (2D6+5).

Abilities: Nightvision 200 feet (61 m), impervious to fatigue, hunger, thirst, pain, poisons, disease, cold, fear, Horror Factor, psionics and illusions. Magically understand all languages.

Each of the Golems has a pair
250 gold crowns!).

24) Wizard's Bedchamber

This large room is filled with a variety of strange oddities. A large bed seems to hover in mid-air, and a wooden stool quietly paces back-and-forth across the chamber. There are two other stools around a table, and against the wall is a sturdy bookcase, as well as an iron-bound trunk. On the table is a mummified Troll head and a cage with a captured Sprite in it. A small sphere of light darts across the room, seeking to light up the area in which you are standing.

The captured Sprite is named Eldane Greenleaf, and he will be overjoyed to be released. The Troll head will come to life when commanded to "awaken." It is named Mimir and has an I.Q. of 30, and can answer nearly any question put to it... though getting him to answer willingly might prove to be difficult. The iron-bound trunk is a magical one... it never weighs more than two pounds (0.9 kg) and can hold up to 250,000 coins (it is empty now)!

25) Magical Treasury

This small chamber glows with an aura of magical energy. Several magic items can be seen on the shelves of the cabinet at the far end of the room.

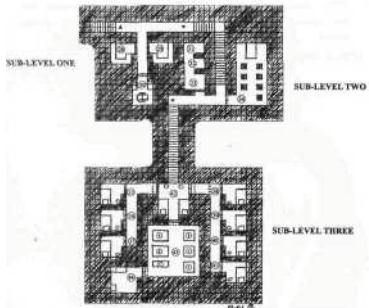
The following magic items are on the shelves:

- Anti-Venom Charm
- Boots of Fleetness
- Bottomless Quiver
- Cloak of Shadows
- Ironhide Ring
- Keremond's Spellshield
- Magic Waterskin
- Ring of Tongues
- Ring of Vigor
- Shadow Amulet
- Staff of Truesight

26) Wizard's Observatory

This small, moonlit chamber has several wooden cabinets and counter-tops in it, as well as two wooden chairs. Astronomical and navigational tools sit atop the counters: astrolabes, sextants and compasses. On one of the counter-tops is a huge celestial globe, showing all of the constellations on it. On the other is a fine globe of the Palladium World, as well as a fine

telescope. Sealed at the table is a dark-robed mage with a short brown beard. He is making notes of his observations in his journals rials.



This is the dark Wizard, Crispin Darkbane, lord of this tower and a follower of the Old Ones!

Crispin Darkbane — 6th level Human Wizard

A.R. 14, 50 S.D.C. (cloak of protection), 20 S.D.C. 45 Hit Points, 220 P.P.E., 6.4 feet (2 m) tall. Bonuses: +2 to save vs magic, +2 to parry and dodge, +1 to strike, and +4 to save vs Horror Factor. Attributes: I.Q. 16, M.E. 16, M.A. 16, P.S. 18, P.P. 15, P.E. 16 and P.B. 15.

Attacks: 3 melee or 2 magic. Damage: Berdiche (which he uses as his staff; 3D6+3) or by magic. Abilities: See and Use Ley Lines, Ley Line Drifting, Ley Line

Rejuvenation, Recognize Enchantments 65%, and Recognize Magic 50%. Spell

Strength: 14 Spells:

- Befuddle
- Cloud of Slumber
- Concealment
- Decipher Magic
- Domination
- Energy Bolt
- Fireball
- Globe of Daylight
- Increase Weight
- Magic Net
- See the Invisible
- Sense Magic
- Shadow Meld
- Telekinesis
- * Tongues
- Turn Dead

Alignment: Aberrant

27) Balcony

Three stone columns support the roof over this balcony, and a stone handrail runs along the edge.



28) Pantry

This room contains a large wooden cabinet that holds dried fruits, meats and vegetables.

29) Buttery

This small chamber contains wooden racks that hold kegs of ale and wine. Seated on the floor of the room are four drunken Goblins, rolling the dice.

(4) Goblins - 2nd level Mercenary Warriors

A.R. 13, 38 S.D.C. (studded leather armor), 15 S.D.C. each, 20 Hit Points each, 4 feet (1.2 m) tall.

Bonuses: +1 to save vs Faerie magic, +3 to save vs Horror Factor, and +3 to dodge and parry.

Attacks: 2 melee.

Damage: Daggers (1D6), falchions (2D6) or morning stars (2D6).

Abilities: Nightvision 90 feet (27 m), underground tunneling 40%, underground architecture 20%, and underground sense of direction 25%.

Alignment: Diabolic (all).

There is a small pile of coins on the floor, including 38 gold, 69 silver and 46 copper crowns.

30) Guardroom

This is the quarters of the drunken Goblins in room #29. It contains two bunk beds, a small wooden table and four stools.

31) Treasure Vault I

This small alcove contains seven iron-bound treasure chests that sit on the floor against the far wall. It also contains a spear trap, which will activate whenever the first person enters the vault. The victim must successfully dodge an attack of 16 or else take 3D6 points of damage from the three spears! Two of the chests are empty, while the others are full, containing a total of:

- 6,790 gold crowns.
- 4,505 silver crowns.
- 118 Dwarven crowns (coins from the ancient Dwarven Empire, worth 5 gold crowns apiece!).

32) Treasure Vault II

This alcove contains eleven iron-bound treasure chests that also sit against the far wall. Four of the chests are empty, while the others are full, containing a total of:

- 5,867 silver crowns.
- 7,248 copper crowns.
- 12 platinum dragon crowns (coins from the long-vanished Elven Empire, worth 100 gold crowns apiece!).

33) Treasure Vault III

This alcove contains ten iron-bound treasure chests, which sit against the far wall. Five of the chests are empty, while the others are full, containing a total of:

- 193 small emeralds, rubies and sapphires (worth 15 gold crowns each).
- 42 large diamonds, garnets and carbuncles (worth 50 gold crowns each).
- 18 star pearls (silver pearls of great value and beauty; worth 150 gold crowns each).
- 12 sun pearls (golden pearls of great value and beauty; worth 250 gold crowns each).
- 97 pieces of jewelry (gold, silver and copper; worth 25 gold crowns each).

34) Tomb of Sikandar Silverstar

Seven marble columns support the ceiling of this dark tomb. At the far end of the chamber is a burial vault. On the lid of the vault, written in golden letters is the name of its occupant... Sikandar Silverstar. A beautiful silver and gold staff lies on top of the vault. As you enter the crypt your party is suddenly attacked by a fierce, demonic Ghoul!

Ghoul

A.R. 12, 20 S.D.C. 45 Hit Points, 5 feet (1.5 m) tall.

Bonuses: +1 to strike and parry, +2 to dodge, +8 to save vs Horror Factor and +2 on all other saving throws.

Attacks: 3 melee.

Damage: Claws (2D6) and bite (1D6).

Abilities: Nightvision 300 feet (91.4 m), see the invisible, underground (tunneling 35%, resistant to fire and cold, prowls 55%, dimensional teleport 21%, knows all languages, and bio-regenerates 1D6 S.D.C./Hit Points once every melee

Alignment: Diabolic.

The only thing of value in the tomb is the staff.



The Staff of Sikandar

Type: Staff. A greater magic item.

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Damage: 4D6, but does 6D6 against any evil creature.

Powers:

- Grants the bearer (a Wizard only) an additional 200 P.P.E.
 - Glows with a soft golden light.
 - +5 on all saving throws.
- Spells: Each spell can be cast up to 4 times/day at 10th level proficiency. The staff has 100 P.P.E. and recovers P.P.E. at a rate of 10 per hour!
- Anti-Magic Cloud (once/day)
 - Banishment (once/day)
 - Charm
 - Dispel Magic Barriers
 - Dispel Wards (once/day)
 - Energy Bolt
 - Fire Bolt
 - Globe of Daylight

Heal Wounds See the Invisible

Psionics: Each psionic power 10th level proficiency. Deaden

Pain Impervious to Cold

Impervious to Fire Increased

Healing Mind Block Resist

Fatigue Resist Hunger Resist

Thirst

35) Prison Cell

This small prison cell contains a wooden stool and a bunk bed. The entrance is blocked by a heavy iron portcullis.

The cell is empty and the portcullis can only be unlocked by the guard key (in room #42) or the torturer's key (in room #43).

36) Prison Cell

This room is identical to room #35.

37) Prison Cell

*This small cell is identical to the others. The rotting carcass of a recently deceased Orc lies atop the **bunk**.*

38) Prison Cell

This small cell is just like the ones before. As you approach the cell, a starving and ragged Ratling begins to beg piteously for food and his freedom.

The Ratling is an unfortunate thief who was recently captured.

Muss the Nibble -2nd level Ratling Thief

A.R. 5 (unarmed), 20 S.D.C. 25 Hit Points (reduced to 10 due to starvation), Horror Factor 11,4.7 feet (1.4 m) tall.

Bonuses: +1 initiative, +2 to strike, and +4 to dodge and parry.

Attributes: I.Q. 20, M.E. 8, M.A. 12, P.S. 10, P.P. 17, P.E. 14 and P.B. 10.

Attacks: 3 melee.

Damage: Claws (1D6) and bite (1D4). His (4) daggers (1D6) and scimitar (2D6) are to be found in room #44.

Abilities: Nightvision 40 feet (12 m), "passive" nightvision 1200 feet (366 m), 40 foot (12 m) day vision, underground tunneling 40%, underground architecture 30%, underground sense of direction 45%, climb 70%, swim 70%, imitate voices 60%, keen hearing, pick locks 55%, disarm traps 25%, pick pockets 45%, and locate secret compartments and doors 40%.

Alignment: Diabolic.

39) Prison Cell

This cell is identical to the others. The skeletal remains of two unfortunate prisoners lie face down on the cold, stone floor. On the wall, written in dried blood is a strange message: " Woe to us all, Morgath is insane! The fiend loves his work, he enjoys killing us slowly with his torture devices. Months of pain and agony! How long must this Hell last? "

40) Prison Cell

This cell is identical to the others.

41) Prison Cell

This small cell is identical to the others. An Elf maiden and a young woman sit on the bunk, quietly talking.

The two young maidens, Sereth and Rhyssa, are old friends who were being accompanied by Coronn Goldbranch (the Elven soldier in the torture chamber, room #43) through the Old Kingdom to the Timiro Kingdom, until they were captured a week

Sereth Shadowstalker -4th level Human Thief

A.R. 5 (unarmored; her suit of studded leather, A.R. 13. S.D.C. 38, is in room #44), 32 S.D.C. 30 Hit Points (however, due to her recent capture her Hit Points are down to 24), 5.4 feet (1.6 m) tall.

Bonuses: +2 to strike, +4 to dodge and parry.

Attributes: I.Q. 13, M.E. 15, M.A. 10, P.S. 12, P.P. 17, P.E. 15 and P.B. 12.

Attacks: 3 melee.

Damage: Punch (1D4) and kick (1D6). Her (4) daggers (**ID6**), crossbow with 46 bolts (1D6) and war hammer (2D6) are located in room #44.

Abilities: Pick Pockets 55%, Pick Locks 65%. Disarm Traps 35% and Locate Secret Compartments and Doors 50%.

Alignment: Anarchist.

Rhyssa Joysong — 3rd level Elven Minstrel

A.R. 5 (unarmed), 25 S.D.C. 30 Hit Points (however, due to her recent capture her Hit Points are reduced to 22), 6 feet (1.8 m)tall.

Bonuses: +2 to dodge and parry. **Attributes:** I.Q. 15, M.E. 15, M.A. 10, P.S. 12, P.P. 17, P.E. 14 and P.B.22. Attacks: 2 melee. Damage: Punch (1D4) or kick (1D6). Her dagger (1D6) and quarterstaff (2D6), as well as her silver harp, lute and flute are located in room #44. Abilities: Nightvision 60 feet (18 m). Play Musical Instrument (professionally): Harp 75%. Lute 55% and Flute 55%, and Sing (professionally) 75%.
Alignment: Principled.

42) Guardroom

This room contains two bunk beds and two wooden stools. To the right and the left are iron-bound doors and raised portcullises, and another such door lies directly ahead. As you enter, four human guardsmen leap to their feet, snatching up their halberd!

(4) Human Guardsmen — 3rd level Mercenary Warriors

A.R. 13, 38 S.D.C. (studded leather armor), 25 S.D.C. 25 Hit Points, 6 feet (1.8 m) tall. Bonuses: +3 to save vs Horror Factor, and +3 to dodge and parry.

Attacks: 2 melee.

Damage: Daggers (1D6) and halberds (3D6).

Alignment: Miscreant (all).

Each guard has a small belt pouch with 10 gold crowns in it, and a small ring of keys (which open rooms #35 through #43).

43) Torture Chamber

This huge, torch-lit chamber is so hot and stifling that it's nearly unbearable. Tools and instruments of torture fill the room. To the left is a spike-lined coffin, commonly known as an "iron maiden." There is a cauldron of boiling oil with hot irons dangling above it further down. Past the cauldron is a heavy stone block with an iron-ring set in it, that serves as a whipping post.

On the right-hand side of the chamber is a horrible device known as the Rack, on which prisoners are stretched until their joints are dislocated and death claims them. There is a table further down, on which the prisoners are drawn (disemboweled)



and quartered (cut into four pieces). A bit further, past the table is a six foot (1.8 m) deep water trough, in which prisoners are repeatedly dunked until they confess or drown!

When the enter the room, your party spots a huge Minotaur cheerfully turning the crank on the rack another notch... as the Elf strapped onto it writhes in agony!

The Elven prisoner is the companion of Rhyssa and Sereth (in room #41), captured only a week ago. The brave and noble warrior did his best to defend his comrades, even offering to be tortured first!

Coronn Goldbranch — 4th level Elven Soldier

A.R. 5 (unarmored); his suit of chain mail, A.R. 14, 44 S.D.C. and small shield are in room #44), 30 S.D.C. 35 Hit Points (however, due to his imprisonment and having been tortured on the rack, his Hit Points are reduced to 6). 6.4 feet (1.9 m) tall. **Bonuses:** +2 to save vs Horror Factor, +2 to strike, and +3 to

dodge and parry. **Attributes:** I.Q. 12, M.E. 13, M.A. 11, P.S. 17, P.P. 18, P.E. 16

and P.B. 18. Attacks: 3 melee. **Damage:** Punch (1D4+2) or kick (1D6). His dagger (1D6+2),

long sword (2D6+6) and mace (2D6+2) are all located in room #44.

Abilities: Nightvision 60 feet (18 m).

Alignment: Scrupulous.

the following letters are used on the map to indicate the location of the torture devices:

- The Rack.
- The Iron Maiden.
- The cauldron of boiling oil and the hot irons.
- The drawing & quartering table.
- The whipping post and a cat-o-nine-tails.
- The water trough.

The horrible Minotaur is none other than Morgath the Torturer! He is sadistic and bloodthirsty, and will make every attempt to capture the party to torture them, rather than kill them outright.

Morgath Bloodmane - 6th level Minotaur Gladiator (Torturer)

A.R. 12, 85 S.D.C. 55 Hit Points, Horror Factor 14, 10.3 feet (3.1 m)tall.

Bonuses: +6 to strike, dodge and parry, and +5 to save vs Horror Factor. Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 15. M.A. 11, P.S. 27, P.P. 18, P.E. 25

and P.B. 10. Attacks: 3 melee. Damage: Claws (2D6+12), head butt (3D6+12), horn charge (5D6+12 and 60% chance to knockdown), and battle axe (4D6+12). Abilities: Nightvision 60 feet (18 m), recognize scent of others

22%, track blood scent 54%, resistant to fire and cold, and disarm and entangle attacks (18-20).

Alignment: Diabolic.

He has a small belt pouch containing 200 gold crowns, and a small ring of keys (which open rooms #35 through room #43).

44) Torturer's Bedchamber

This bedchamber contains a huge, oversized bed and an open cabinet with several wooden shelves. In the cabinet are the belongings and arms of the five prisoners in the prison cells.

The cabinet contains the following items:

- A suit of chain mail armor.
- A suit of studded leather armor.
- A small shield.
- (10) daggers.

- A quarterstaff.
- A war hammer.
- A small crossbow with 46 bolts.
- A scimitar.
- A long sword of exceptional quality (+4 damage bonus).
- A silver harp (worth 2,500 gold crowns).
- A flute (worth 1,000 gold crowns).
- A cherrywood lute (worth 500 gold crowns).



Enthralled

Optional New Psychics and Psionics for Rifts® By

Levi Jobnstone

In this article you will find several exciting new psionic powers and R.C.C.s. There are a few new powers in each of the categories of Physical, Sensitive, and Healing, and many new powers in the Super category. Several of the new Super psionic powers are additional forms of mind control to help round out that area of a master psychic's abilities. Another area of psionics with cool new abilities is telekinetics.

Many of these new powers were created in-game, when a player or an NPC needed to be able to do something just outside of what existing powers would allow. After writing up almost twenty powers in response to game situations, I became inspired to write up other powers as well. Below are a couple of notes about some existing powers and some of the new powers. I hope everyone enjoys the new powers as much as my players and I have.

One aspect of telekinesis that is often debated by many players and Game Masters is how it actually moves objects. Many players and G.M.s feel that telekinesis applies force to an object to move it. However, what telekinesis actually does is induce kinetic energy in an object through some form of physical telepathy and sheer force of will. Kinetic energy is the energy of an object in motion. An object can gain kinetic energy naturally by being acted on by gravity, or some other force pushing or pulling it. Telekinesis can "charge" an object with kinetic energy, causing motion. This is not a force that pushes or pulls the object. Nor is telekinesis a force that can crush something. However, there is a new super psionic power, Telekinetic Force, in this article that does create a force that can push on or crush something. Telekinetic Force generates force by focusing psychically created kinetic energy to the surface area of an object instead of "charging" the object with the energy. For G.M.s and players who have different ideas on how telekinesis functions, disregard the Telekinetic Force power. You may however want to use its damage rules with telekinesis.

Another new power that I should make note of is Sense Psionics. This power is more similar to the other sensing psionic powers than its predecessor Detect Psionics. I created the new

power for two reasons. The first is that it has never been used to me that Detect Psionics was in the Healing category and not the Sensitive category. The other reason for the addition of Sense Psionics is that Detect Psionics' range, duration, and I.S.P. cost are all structured differently than the other sensing powers. The new Sensitive power is more like the powers of Sense Magic and Sense Evil. Also, Sense Psionics has the ability to track psionics. For any Game Masters or players who prefer Detect Psionics, feel free to disregard the new ability.

Another new aspect that I have added to my psionic sensing powers is the ability to track that type of energy or emanation back to its source. The tracking aspect of these powers is similar to a Psi-Stalker's but not as accurate. I have also added this type of tracking ability to Sense Dimensional Anomaly, Sense Evil, and Sense Magic in my games. All of my players may use these powers to track like a Psi-Stalker. I give a base tracking skill of 40% +3% per level of experience for each of those sensing powers. This leaves all of the powers less effective than a Psi-Stalker's when the target being tracked is actively using their powers. Give it a try. I'll bet that any of your players who run psychics will enjoy this new aspect of their powers. Or it may encourage some players to take these powers.

It's amazing how enthralled I have become with psionics. My first character for Rifts® was a Cyber-Knight and they have always been one of my favorite character classes. But after working on this project. Game Mastering for a Kinetic Master, and playing an Intuitive Warrior, I now enjoy Racial Character Classes even more than the Cyber-Knight.

New Racial Character Classes

Note: Below are four new Racial Character Classes. These classes have been geared for Rifts®, but could easily be modified for any of the Palladium RPGs. Only races with the ability to develop psionics may select from these R.C.Cs.

New Racial Character Classes

Enthraller Intuitive
Warrior Kinetic
Master
Telepath

Enthraller R.C.C.

The Enthraller is a psychic similar in raw power to the Mind Melter. However, the Enthraller lacks the flexibility and range of powers that the Mind Melter possesses. This psychic is the master of mental manipulation and control powers. The Enthraller has more control of others' minds and knows more ways to "make" friends and (surreptitiously) influence people than any other known psychic class. These psychics tend to be controlling, self-serving, manipulative, and should never be trusted. These psychics also tend to be secretive and paranoid, and do

not reveal their true level of power, they will go out of their way to "change" all of the witnesses' minds about what happened. This makes them even more distrusted than Mind Melters by anyone who might actually know the difference. Known Enthralers are



never allowed into the Coalition States, and those discovered in their territory are usually executed.

Special Powers of the Enthraler:

1. Master of the Mind: The Enthraler is immune to all forms of mind control and possession, and gains a bonus of +4 ID4 to M.E. at first level.
2. Psionic Powers: Starts with: Alter Aura, Mask I.S.P. & Psionics, Mind Block, Empathy, Telepathy, Deaden Senses, Hypnotic Suggestion, Empathic Charisma (*new!*), Telepathic Suggestion (*new!*), Mentally Control Others (*new!*), and Hypnotic Control (*new!*). In addition, at each level of experience from level 2 through level 9, the Enthraler chooses any two of the powers from the list below. At each level, tenth and above, the Enthraler chooses one psionic power from any category excluding Mind Bleeder.

Enthraler Powers List, Levels 2-9

Alter Memory (*New!*)
Alter Personality (*New!*)
Bio-Manipulation
Bleed Memory
Bleed Skills
Brian Scan
Cause Hallucination (*New!*)
Day Dream
Empathic Transmission
Empathy: Superior (*New!*)
Induce Amnesia (*New!*)
Induce Insanity (*New!*)
Mental Block
Mental Block Removal
Mentally Possess Others
Mind Bond
Mind Trip
Mind Wipe
Psychosomatic Disease
Shared Perception (*New!*)
Telepathy: Superior (*New!*)

3. I.S.P.: At first level the psychic will have M.E. +3D4x10. Each additional level the character gains 10 I.S.P.
4. Saving Throw vs Psionic Attack: As a master psychic, the character only needs a 10 to save versus psionics.
5. P.P.E.: 2D4.
6. Bonuses: In addition to the M.E. bonus listed in #1 above, the Enthraler gets the following bonuses: +4 to M.A., +2 to save vs illusion, +3 to save vs Horror Factor.

Enthraler R.C.C.

Alignment: Any, but due to the arrogance that often accompanies their great powers, and the manipulative nature of the powers themselves, most Enthralers tend to be of Unprincipled, Anarchist, or evil alignments.

Racial Notes: The genetic aberration that produces Enthralers is thankfully rare in all major psychically inclined races, accounting for less than one percent of all Mind Melter-level master psychics. However, this aberration is rather more common among the Changeling populous, accounting for a full 10% of all Changeling master psychics, a fact that adds fuel to the fires of Changeling hatred and distrust.

Attribute Requirements: M.E. 14 or higher, M.A. 12 or higher; a high I.Q. is helpful, but not required.

O.C.C. Skills:

Language: American (+30%)
Language: Two of Choice (+30%).
Performance (+15%) Interrogation
(+15%) W.P.: One of Choice. Hand
to Hand: Basic

Hand to Hand: Basic can be changed to Hand to Hand: Expert for the cost one O.C.C. Related Skill, or Martial Arts (or Assassin if an evil alignment) for the cost of two skills.

O.C.C. **Related:** Select six (6) other skills of choice at level one, plus select one additional skill at levels four, eight, and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any. Domestic: Any. Electrical: Basic only. Espionage: Any (+15%). Mechanical: Basic only.

Medical: First Aid only. Military: Any.

Physical: Any except Acrobatics, Gymnastics, and Wrestling.

Pilot: Any (+5%). Pilot Related: Any. Rogue: Any (+15%).

Science: Basic Math only. Technical: Any (+10%). W.P.:

Any. Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select five (5) Secondary Skills from the previous list at level one, and two additional skills at levels three and nine. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in the parenthesis. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated in the list.

Standard Equipment: Traveling clothes, binoculars, gas mask, sunglasses, canteen, tent, sleeping bag, utility belt, flashlight, radio, backpack, survival knife, food rations, silver cross, mallet and wood stakes, pocket digital video recorder, a notebook or journal, a couple pens or pencils, and personal items. May start with a horse or exotic riding animal, hover cycle, or small all-terrain vehicle. May start with any medium or light body armor. One energy weapon of choice with two spare clips.

Money: Starts out with 6D6x100 in credits and 4D4x1000 in saleable black market items.



Intuitive Warrior R.C.C.

These psychics are born warriors. Intuitive Warriors are very similar to Mystics, in that they gain all of their psionics and combat skills through meditation and intuition. There are a couple of theories that these psychics are actually born Mystics, but

somewhere along the path to enlightenment they lose the connection to magic, and instead develop incredible combat abilities.

With a general sense of honor and discipline. Intuitive Warriors are well respected. Most feel a calling to be greater than themselves and help others. Intuitive Warriors seem to be drawn to conflict, and trouble never seems far. Always ready to test their skills and abilities, these psychics will rarely back down from a threat. Most Intuitive Warriors wander the land on an intuition-guided sojourn until they find a place to settle and call home. During this long journey, these warriors will many times fill the role of roaming lawmen, righting wrongs. Others become honorable bounty hunters or even dedicated bodyguards. Few of the psychics are evil, and even the few who are still display a twisted sense of honor (Aberrant alignment).

The warriors are masters of Physical psionics, and very adept with Sensitive powers as well. Generally the Intuitive Warrior will also develop a few Healing powers. They are also one of the only master psychics that do not develop Super Psionic powers. This group of psychics is fairly rare.

Special Powers of the Intuitive Warrior

1. **Psionic Combat Awareness:** Intuitive Warriors automatically have an innate combat awareness that is a combined form of Intuitive Combat and Sixth Sense. This incredible awareness gives them an excellent edge in combat. These warriors can never be surprised, and can always attempt to dodge or parry any incoming attacks. This dodge or parry in eludes attacks from invisible enemies, or attackers hidden by range or camouflage. The combat awareness engages automatically whenever the psychic or anyone within a 150 foot (45.7 m) area is in danger. If the psychic is out of I.S.P. they will not get the bonuses, but will still know that they or someone else nearby is in danger. The warrior will also know whether he is in danger or someone else is. The psychic can also activate this power with a thought, instantly. At fourth level the Intuitive Warrior's dodge becomes an auto-dodge. Bonuses: +4 on initiative, +2 to strike, +2 to parry, +4 to dodge, +4 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +2 to disarm. Sixth Sense and Intuitive Combat cannot be chosen as other psionic powers.

Range: Self, 150 foot (45.7 m) area.

Duration: 2 minutes per level. I.S.P.

Cost: 10.

2. **Other Psionic powers:** Starts with the powers: Mind Block, Summon Inner Strength, and Clairvoyance. At first level also choose 6 Physical powers and 4 powers from between the Sensitive or Healing categories. At levels two through four, choose 3 powers from the Physical, Sensitive or Healing categories. From fifth level on, the psychic gains two new powers from the Physical, Sensitive or Healing categories.

3. **I.S.P.:** At first level the psychic will have M.E. +3D4x10. At each additional level, the character gains 10 I.S.P.

4. **P.P.E.:** P.E. +4D6.

5. **Saving Throw vs Psionics:** As a Master Psychic, the Intuitive Warrior only needs a 10 or higher to save versus psionics.

6. **Other Bonuses:** +1D4 to P.S., +2 to P.P., +1D4 to P.E., +2D4 to Spd., +1D4x10 S.D.C. +1 attack per melee, and +3 to save vs Horror Factor.

Intuitive Warrior R.C.C.

Alignment: Any, but most tend to be Principled, Scrupulous, occasionally Unprincipled, and rarely Aberrant.

Attribute Requirements: A high P.E., P.S., and P.P. are help-ful, but not required.

O.C.C. Skills:

Language: American (+30%)

Language: Two of Choice (+30%).

Literacy: American (+20%)

Lore: Two of Choice (+15%).

Physical: Choose Four (+20%).

W.P.: Choose Four.

Hand to Hand: Martial Arts or Assassin (if an evil alignment).

O.C.C. Related: Select six (6) other skills of choice at level one, plus select one additional skill at levels three, seven, and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any. Domestic: Any. Electrical: Basic only.

Espionage: Any. Mechanical: Basic only.

Medical: First Aid, Paramedic, or Holistic Medicine only (+5%).

Military: Any (+10%).

Physical: Any (+20%).

Pilot: Any. Pilot Related:

Any. Rogue: Any. Science:

Any. Technical: Any

(+10%). W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select four (4) Secondary Skills from the previous list at level one, and two additional skills at levels four and nine. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in the parenthesis. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated in the list.

Standard Equipment: Traveling clothes, binoculars, gas mask, sunglasses, canteen, tent, sleeping bag, utility belt, flashlight, radio, backpack, survival knife, food rations, silver cross, wooden stakes and mallet, pocket laser distancer, one or two pairs of handcuffs, rope and climbing gear, and personal items. Vehicle will usually be heavy-duty motorcycle, hover cycle, small military vehicle, or any domesticated riding animal. May start with any medium or heavy body armor, but most prefer medium because of the increased mobility. Many of these characters will try to acquire Techno-Wizard additions to their armor. One weapon of choice for each W.P., and three spare clips for any modern weapons. The Intuitive Warriors also love to use Techno-Wizard weapons.

Money: Starts out with 2D6x100 in credits and 2D4x1000 in saleable black market items.



Kinetic Master R.C.C.

The Kinetic is the true master of all things telekinetic. Almost all of their psionic abilities manifest in the form of extensive psionic control over kinetic energy (telekinesis). These psychics are even more rare than the Zappers, and many would say even more dangerous. Although the Kinetic has no powers over electricity or electrokinesis, their telekinetic powers are far more potent. Part of what makes these psychics so dangerous is that their powers are invisible and silent, unlike the pyrokinetic powers of the Burster or the electrokinetic powers of the Zapper.

These psychics tend to enjoy physical confrontation and tests of raw psionic strength. The Kinetic Master is a psychic much more likely to solve things physically than most of their psionic brethren. They love physical competition and combat, yet see the "mental" nature of their powers as a sign of strong intellect as well. Many strive to become a "supreme warrior" who balances physical strength with mental prowess and cunning. The Kinetic typically relies on strength and endurance to get what he desires, and most Kinetic Masters are correspondingly bold, arrogant, and aggressive.

Kinetic Masters owe their incredible powers to a rare genetic aberration of the Mind Melter. Kinetic Masters are often easy to discern from other psychics at a glance, having an additional minor genetic aberration that causes them to be unusually taller and bulkier than others of their race. These mutants also tend to have unusual iris colors such as violet, yellow, and bright red. Their large, stout frames and odd eye colors make them immediately identifiable to those who know of these psychics, and immediately mark them as a different type of being. Most Kinetics see this difference as a divine marking, labeling them as a superior genetic "race." How they act on this depends on the individual, with good-aligned Kinetics often seeing themselves as divine "guides," while selfish and evil Kinetics see themselves as a "master race" as such, often "destined to rule."

Those who know Kinetics by sight are typically wary of these "psionic mutants," with many outright fearing and loathing them. Other master psychics have varied views on them, with less physical psychics (like mental-oriented Mind Melters, Mystics, Psi-Stalkers, Psi-Warriors, and Entrallers) seeing them as mindless brutes and "lesser" psychics, while more physical psychics (like Burstlers and physical-oriented Mind Melters) see them as brethren and/or competition/threats. There are almost none of these psychics within the Coalition States, and only a couple thousand in North America.

Special Powers of the Kinetic Master;

1. Telekinetic Force Aura: The Kinetic radiates a telekinetic aura that can hinder physical attacks. This aura reduces the damage of all kinetic attacks directed at him by half (including physical blows, arrows/crossbow bolts, firearm projectiles, and even rail gun slugs). This aura can further be manipulated and focused to deflect/parry such physical attacks, with a +3 bonus to parry (plus any Physical Prowess parry bonus).
2. Negate Kinetic Energy: The Kinetic also has the ability to negate all kinetic energy around him, including all forms of telekinesis. While activated, all projectiles stop in mid air and fall to the ground once they encounter this field, as if hitting an invisible wall. This "wall" will also stop the shrapnel and concussion from explosions. This does not affect the Kinetic's telekinesis or other telekinetic powers.

Cost: 5 I.S.P. Duration: One minute per level of experience. Range: One foot (0.3 m) per level of experience.

3. Increased Telekinetic Powers: At first level, all telekinetic power ranges and durations are increased by 50%. At second level, all telekinetic power lifting weight limits and pounds-of-force applied are increased by 50% (make note of any increased damage due to the increase in force). At fourth level, double the standard range for all kinetic powers. At

sixth level, all telekinetic power lifting weights and force applied are double the standard amounts (make note of any increased damage due to the increase in force). Also starting at seventh level, the Kinetic can manipulate twice as many objects with his telekinetic powers.

4. Telekinetic Powers: These psychics start with the powers of: Telekinetic Leap, Telekinetic Lift, Telekinetic Punch, Telekinetic Push, Telekinesis (Super), Telekinetic Acceleration Attack, Telekinetic Force Field, Telekinetic Air Walk (see *Psychscape™*, page 72, under the Psi-Slayer), Telekinetic Force (*New!*), Telekinetic Shockwave (*New!*), Resist Damage (*New!*), Summon Inner Strength, and Strength of Mind (*New!*). At third level the Kinetic gains the power of *Psychic Body Field*, and at fifth level gains *Suppress Fear and Mind Block*. The Kinetic may also choose one new Physical or Sensitive power at levels 2,4,6, 8, 10, 12, and 14.
5. I.S.P.: At first level the psychic will have M.E. +3D4x10. At each additional level, the character gains 10 I.S.P.
6. Saving Throw Versus Psionic Attack: As a Master Psychic, the Kinetic only needs a 10 or higher to save versus psionics.
7. P.P.E.: 2D6.
8. R.C.C. Bonuses: +2 to strike, +3 to roll with impact, +4 to save vs Horror Factor; add +1D4 inches (+2.5-10 cm) to height, +1D4x10 +20 lbs (+13.5-27 kg) to weight, +30 S.D.C. and +1D6 to P.S.

Kinetic Master R.C.C.

Alignment: Any, but due to the arrogance that often accompanies their great powers most tend to be of *Scrupulous, Unprincipled, Anarchist, or Aberrant* alignment.

Racial Notes: Kinetic Masters are a rare aberration of the Mind Melter. Any race with the capability to become Mind Melters can also become Kinetic Masters. The genetic aberration that produces Kinetic Masters is most common among Dwarves (65% of all Kinetics are Dwarven), but is sometimes found among humans and even Elves (another 30% of all Kinetics). This aberration is a lot less common among other races (less than 1% of all psychics for other races).

Attribute Requirements: None.

O.C.C. Skills

Language: Native (+30%)

Radio: Basic (+10%)

Pilot: One of Choice (+10%).

Read Sensory Equipment (+10%)

General Athletics

W.P.: Two of Choice.

Hand to Hand: Expert

Hand to Hand: Expert can be changed to Hand to Hand: Martial Arts (or Assassin if an evil alignment) for the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill.

- O.C.C. Related: Select four (4) other skills of choice at level one, plus select one additional skill at levels four, eight, and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.
- Communications: Any (+10%). Domestic: Any.

Electrical: Basic only.

Espionage: Wilderness Survival only.

Mechanical: Any (+15%).

Medical: First Aid only.

Military: Any.

Physical: Any, except Acrobatics.

Pilot: Any.

Pilot Related: Any.

Rogue: None.

Science: Math only (+10%).

Technical: Any (+5%).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Land Navigation only.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select five (5) Secondary Skills from the previous list at level one, and two additional skills at levels three and nine. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in the parenthesis. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated in the list.

Standard Equipment: Traveling clothes, binoculars, gas mask, sunglasses, canteen, tent, sleeping bag, utility belt, flashlight, radio, backpack, survival knife, food rations, silver cross, and personal items. Vehicle will usually be a heavy duty truck, jeep, motorcycle, or hover cycle. May start with any medium or light body armor. Many experienced Kinetic Masters boldly put wearing armor altogether in favor of their natural powers. One energy weapon of choice with two spare clips. Most of the time an intimidating heavy energy pistol is chosen. Kinetics tend to rely on their natural powers and choose not to carry many weapons.

Money: Starts out with 4D6x100 in credits and 2D4x1000 in saleable black market items.

Telepath R.C.C.

The Telepath is the most gifted of sensitive psychics. This psychic has a broader range of sensitive powers than any psychic other than the Mind Melter, and their sensitive powers are far more powerful.

Telepaths tend to be caring, compassionate and understanding. Most have a good nature and a happy-go-lucky outlook. Telepaths also like to be around other people. Many love to meet new races and investigate new customs and ways of living. Some Telepaths spend their entire life traveling, just to learn as much about the world as they can. With their incredible array of sensitive powers and good nature, Telepaths make excellent character additions for almost any group.

Telepaths are only slightly more rare than Mind Melters. However, few Telepaths have ever been known to be dangerous, so they are rarely heard about. Many governments, including the CS, employ Telepaths as diplomats, spies, and interrogators because of their incredible array of sensitive powers.

Special Powers of the Telepath:

1. **Telepathy & Empathy:** The Telepath automatically has the Sensitive powers of Telepathy and Empathy. Both of these

powers are more than double the normal range. See the **Rifts® RPG** book or the **Rifts® Game Master Guide** for full details.

Range: Read thoughts up to 120 feet (36 m)+10 feet (3 m) per level, or 280 feet (85 m)+20 feet (6 m) per level for two-way communication.

Duration: Indefinite.

Saving Throw: Standard.

I.S.P. Cost: None.

2. **Break Mind Block:** If the Telepath chooses, he may try to break through another psychic's Mind Block with Telepathy and Empathy. If the victim fails the save against Break Mind Block, they will no longer have the protection of their Mind Block from Telepathy or Empathy, or the bonus from the Mind Block to their save vs psionics. A victim who fails the saving throw from this power may not activate a new Mind Block until the duration of Break Mind Block expires.

Range: 120 feet (36 m)+10 feet (3 m) per level.

Duration: One minute per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

I.S.P. Cost: 12.

3. **Enhanced Sensitive Powers:** At first level, all of the Telepath's Sensitive power ranges are increased by 50%. At third level, all Sensitive power durations are increased by 50%. At seventh level, all Sensitive power ranges are doubled. At eleventh level, all Sensitive power durations are doubled.
4. **Empathic Animal Friendship:** This is identical to the Psi-Druid's power of the same name, See *Psycscape™*, page 61 for full details. All Telepaths have a natural affinity with any animal, wild or domestic. All animals will see the Telepath as a friend. Guard dogs will not bark, and animals in the woods will not scatter when the Telepath is near them. Telepaths gain a +10% to any Horsemanship skills.



5. Other Psionic Powers: In addition to the powers above, the Telepath starts with: Alter Aura, Mask I.S.P. & Psionics, Mind Block, Sixth Sense, See Aura, Empathy: Superior (*New!*), and Telepathy: Superior (*New!*). At first level, also choose three (3) powers from the Sensitive and Healing categories. At second and third levels, the character may choose three (3) powers from the Sensitive category and one from the Healing category. Each additional level starting at fourth, the Telepath may choose two powers from the Sensitive or Healing categories, or from the list of available Super Psionics below.

Telepath Super Psionic Powers List:

Empathic Charisma (*New!*)

Group Mind Block

Group Trance

Hypnotic Suggestion Mind Bond

P.P.E. Shield Psychic Omni-

Sight Radiate Horror Factor

Shared Perception (*New!*)

Telemechanics Telepathic

Suggestion (*New!*)

6. I.S.P.: At first level the psychic will have M.E. +3D4x10. Each additional level, the character gains 10 I.S.P.
7. Saving Throw Versus Psionic Attack: As a Master Psychic, the character only needs a 10 to save versus psionics.
8. P.P.E.: 2D4.
9. Bonuses: + 1D6 to M.A., +1D4 to P.B., +3 to Perception, +3 to save versus illusion, +3 to save versus Horror Factor.

Telepath R.C.C.

Alignment: Any, but i

pled. Attribute Requirements:

A high

helpful, but not required.

O.C.C. Skills:

Language: American (+30%) Language: Two of Choice (+30%). Literacy: American (+20%) Lore: Two of Choice (+15%). Performance (+15%) Communication: Two of Choice (+10%). Hand to Hand: Basic may be taken for the cost one O.C.C. Related Skill, or Hand to Hand: Expert for the cost of two skills.

O.C.C. Related: Select six (8) other skills at level one, plus select one additional skill at levels four, eight, and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency. Communications: Any (+10%). Domestic: Any. Electrical: Basic only.

Espionage: Any (+15%).

Mechanical: Basic only.

Medical: First Aid, Paramedic, or Holistic Medicine only.

Military: None.

Physical: Any except Acrobatics, Boxing, Gymnastics, or

Wrestling.

Pilot: Any (+5%).

Pilot Related: Any.

Rogue: Any (+15%).

Science: Any.

Technical: Any (+10%).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select five (4) Secondary Skills from the previous list at level one, and two additional skills at levels three and nine. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in the parentheses. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated in the list.

Standard Equipment: Traveling clothes, binoculars, gas mask, sunglasses, canteen, tent, sleeping bag, utility belt, flashlight, radio, backpack, survival knife, food rations, silver cross, and personal items. Vehicle will usually be motorcycle, hover cycle or any domesticated riding animal. May start with any medium or light body armor. One energy weapon of choice with two spare clips.

Money: Starts out with 4D6x100 in credits and 2D4x1000 in saleable black market items.

Experience Point Tables

For the Enthraler and Telepath, use the same experience table as the Mind Melter. Use the Cyber-Knight experience table for the Intuitive Warrior. Last use the Burstier experience table for the Kinetic Master.

New Psionic Powers

The following new psionic powers may be added to the existing psionic power lists in the Rifts® RPG main book (page 115) and the Rifts® Came Master Guide (page 85). All are available to any psionic character classes (R.C.C., or P.C.C.) with normal restrictions and the Game Master's approval.

New Psionic Powers List

Healing Powers

Psionic Purge

Restore Memory

Physical Powers

Enhanced Reflexes Resist

Damage Resist Energy

Resist Magic Resist

Psionics Strength of

Mind

Sensitive Powers
Clairvoyant Prediction
Enhanced Perception
Extended Presence Sense
Mind's Eye Psionic
Seeking Sense Psionics
Sense Supernatural

Super Psionic Powers

Alter Memory
Alter Personality
Cause Hallucination

Empathy: Superior
Hypnotic Control Induce
Amnesia Induce Insanity
Mentally Control Others
Psionic Blast Shared
Perception Telekinetic
Blast Telekinetic Force
Telekinetic Shockwave
Telepathic Suggestion
Telepathy: Superior

Healing Psionic Powers

Psionic Purge

Range: Touch. Duration:
Permanent. I.S.P.: 10

Psionic Purge is an ability that the psychic can use to purge the effects of psionics placed on an individual. To use this power the psychic must put the person to be purged into a trance-like meditative state (which will take 1D4 minutes). After the patient is in the open and relaxed state the psychic will spend another few minutes (1D4 minutes) purging the patient's mind and body. In this long, ritual-like ceremony the psychic removes/cancels the effects of any long-term psionic control/command. Hypnotic Suggestion, Bio-Manipulation, Mental Illusion, Induced Nightmare, or non-permanent psionic-induced insanity for the cost of 10 I.S.P. per effect. This ability does not drive out possessing psychics/entities (that requires Exorcism), restore memory that has been altered, or remove Mind Blocks, nor does it heal damage caused by physical psionic attacks (such as Pyrokinesis or Psi-Sword).

Restore Memory

Range: Touch. Duration:
Permanent. I.S.P.: 12

This is a simple but useful power that can restore a small block of memory lost earlier due to natural causes, aging/disease, physical or mental trauma, magic, or psionics. The memory that is restored can be any single skill, event, or part of the patient's personality. Multiple or total memory loss or Mind Wipe must be restored one skill, event, memory, etc. at a time.

Physical Psionic Powers



Enhance Reflexes

Range: Self.
Duration: Two minutes per level of experience.
I.S.P.: 10

When a psychic uses this ability, he greatly enhances his mind-body connection, hand-eye coordination, and reaction time. This power allows the psychic to be more agile and aware of his body. For the duration that this power is in use, the psychic gains the following bonuses: +1 attack per melee, +3 on initiative, +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge. +2 to P.P. (adding further bonuses to strike/parry/dodge if boosted to 16 or higher), and +15% to all Physical skills that rely on coordination or balance.

Resist Damage

Range: Self.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 25

The psychic using this power toughens all tissue in his entire body and generates a minor biofeedback field that absorbs damage. When in effect, the psychic only takes half damage from any fall, impact, punch, bullet, or energy attack, even if the damage is magic or psionic. Even damage that goes directly to Hit Points is halved. Furthermore, the biofeedback field absorbs the first 5 S.D.C. or Hit Points of damage from each attack. This damage resistance does not apply to anything the character is carrying.



Resist Energy

Range: Self.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 8

This power reduces the damage to the psychic from any form of energy attack, by one half. This can include lasers, plasma, particle beams, psionic energy, and magic energy. This energy resistance does not apply to anything the character is wearing or carrying.

Resist Magic

Range: Self.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 15

A very useful power for psychics. Resist Magic provides excellent protection from all forms of magic. When active, this power reduces the damage, effects, and duration of all magic affecting the psychic, by half. This power also grants a bonus of +3 to save vs all magic.

Resist Psionics

Range: Self.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 10

Similar to, but more extensive than Mind Block, this power helps protect the psychic from psionic attacks. Resist Psionics disrupts all psionic energy in and around the psychic. This psionic disruption also means that the character cannot activate any of his own powers, and any that were active are immediately cancelled. While this power is active, the character's aura cannot be read, all Empathy and Telepathy is prevented, all damage from psionic attacks is halved, all effects of psionics are halved, the duration of psionics affecting the character is halved, and the character is +3 to save vs all psionic attacks. While the psychic is using this power, anyone trying to track him with any

type of psionic power will be at -30% and will only be able to sense him from half the normal distance. This protection will block and reduce all helpful psionics, as well. If the character was already under the influence of a psionic power when he activates Resist Psionics he gets to roll to save against that psionic power again. If he saves the second time, then the duration and effects are both reduced by half.

Strength of Mind

Range: Self.

Duration: Two minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 10

This power is as much mind over matter as it is an actual boost to the body's physical capabilities. The psychic is empowered with supernatural strength and endurance by "willing" the body to be stronger and focusing psionic energy directly into the muscles. The psychic gains bonuses of +10 to P.S., +5 to P.E., and +20 S.D.C. for the duration of this ability. The supernatural strength does not give the psychic the ability to inflict Mega-Damage with punches or kicks, but it does instill the power to lift and carry the same as a supernatural creature.

Sensitive Psionic Powers

Clairvoyant Prediction

Range: Self.

Duration: Instant.

I.S.P.: 4

Base Chance of Prediction: 62% +2% per level of experience. This unique power is a simple form of Clairvoyance that is used to guess the outcome of simple events or decisions. This power will give the psychic a feeling of the most probable outcome for simple events, such as the outcome of a roll of the dice, coin flip, contest, or decision someone will make. If the odds of an outcome or decision are one in ten or better, the psychic rolls on the base prediction roll (above) to predict the correct outcome. If the odds are 1/1 to 1/100, the psychic is -5%, 1/101 to 1/1000, they are -15%, 1/1001 to 1/5000, -45%, and any event with odds worse than 1/5000 is -65%.

Enhanced Perception

Range: Self.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 10

This incredible psionic power augments the psychic's physical senses, enhancing his perception. This enhanced state of awareness sharpens all natural senses by 50%, and further enables the psychic to "filter" all of this extra sensory input in order to concentrate on one or a few specific things. While using this ability, the psychic will notice every detail around him down to the slightest motion, sound, scent, and shadow. He will further be likely to notice changes and inconsistencies that might reveal traps, illusions, feints, or tricks (including

slight-of-hand, etc.). The psionic power provides the psychic with a +3 to Perception, +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, and a +10% to any skill that relies on any of the basic senses (such as Intelligence, Tracking, or certain Physical skills like Juggling or Prowl).

Extended Presence Sense

Range: Self, 20 feet (6.1 m) plus 5 feet (1.5 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Two minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 8 Base Skill: 50% +3% per level of experience.

As the name implies, this power is an extended version of the Sensitive psionic power of Presence Sense, increasing the psychic's sensory perception at the expense of sensing range. While this power reduces the actual range of sensing (compared to the Presence Sense ability), it does increase the psychic's level of sensory detail. This power essentially functions like the standard Presence Sense power, yet also allows the psychic to pinpoint the exact number and location of all sentient beings in the area of effect. Otherwise, this power is identical to the standard ability.

Mind's Eye

Range: Self, 100 feet (30.5 m) plus 50 feet (15.2 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Two minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 8

Mind's Eye is a sensory power that instills the psychic with radar-like vision. This psionic radar allows the character to see the shape of everything around him. Even people or items concealed through magic (except Invisibility: Superior) can be seen with this radar vision. A psychic using this power suffers no penalties when blinded or in complete darkness. The psychic can sense and interpret the shape, distance, direction, speed, and location of everything around in all directions at an accuracy of 70% +2% per level of experience. While using this power, the character has the following bonuses: +3 on initiative, +1 to strike, +2 to parry and dodge, and cannot be snuck upon or surprised. Heavy rain or smoke greatly hinders this power, negating the bonuses and giving a -30% to interpreting ability.

Psionic Seeking

Range: 1 mile (1.6 km) per level of experience.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 6

With this power the character will be able to sense and possibly find any object or person he desires. The psychic needs to have some knowledge of the person or item he is Searching for. This knowledge can include meeting the person or touching the item in the past, having a picture of the person or item, having an item that belongs to the person he is searching for, or having the owner of the item present. The base chance of finding someone or something is 40% +5% per level of experience. If the character is looking for an item of his own, or a close friend or

relative, he gains a +20% to this roll. Even if the character fails the roll to find the person or item, he will be able to sense whether or not the object is within his range.

Sense Psionics

Range: 100 foot (30.5 m) area.

Duration: 2 minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 4

Base Skill: 40% +3% per level of experience.

This ability enables the character to sense the use of psionics, tell approximately how close it is, and in what general direction. This power can be used to track the psychic emanations back to their source, with a 40% +3% per level of experience chance of success.

Sense Supernatural

Range: 140 foot (42.7 m) area.

Duration: Two minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 3

Base Skill: 25% +3% per level of experience.

A power similar to the Psi-Stalker's, this enables the psychic to sense and track supernatural creatures. Although the range is greatly lower than a Psi-Stalker's, this can still be a very useful ability. While using this power, the psychic will sense the presence of any type of supernatural creature, including demons, Deevils, Elementals, dragons, and even Entities. Tracking the supernatural using this power is done at a skill of 25% +3% per level of experience.

Super Psionic Powers

Alter Memory

Range: Touch.

Duration: One day per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 20

Saving Throw: Standard.

Alter Memory is a powerful method of manipulating someone's mind. With using this power, the psychic must touch the victim's head for about half a melee (seven seconds) to **alter** a memory. The memory alteration can be a person's face, something someone said, what the victim has seen or heard, or even what happened in a single event. For the psychic to alter a memory, he or she must have prior knowledge of the memory. This can be from the psychic using Mind Bond or some other psionic power, the victim talking about it, or the psychic being present when the event took place. Alternately, the psychic can implant a completely fabricated memory. An inserted memory or manipulated one can be no longer than a ten-minute block of time per level of experience of the psychic.

Alter Personality

Range: Touch and verbal suggestion.

Duration: One day per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 30 **Saving Throw:** Standard.

This powerful mental manipulation ability will temporarily (but potentially significantly) alter the victim's personality. This alteration can be as little as a change in clothing preference or favorite form of entertainment, to a complete change in disposition, and may be used to raise or lower the victim's alignment by one level (such as from Unprincipled to Scrupulous or Anarchist).



Cause Hallucination

Range: 90 feet (27.4 m).

Duration: Varies. **I.S.P.:**

8 to 20. **Saving Throw:**

Standard.

This impressive power gives the psychic the ability to cause others to have hallucinations. The hallucinations can be minor, like seeing a 5-dollar bill as a 100-dollar bill, or a major hallucination like interacting with a person or creature that is not there. Or the psychic could cause a moderate hallucination that he or someone else looks different or is wearing different clothes. The psychic can also cause the individual to believe they are experiencing something that is not really happening, like an earthquake. Someone affected by this power will interact with the

hallucination as if it were real. This can include believing that someone is being injured and acting as if they have that injury.

This power is a form of hypnotic suggestion. The psychic must simply verbally state what he wants the victim to experience, and will that experience to manifest in the victim's mind. This could be as simple as handing a clerk at a store a 5-dollar bill while using the power and stating to the victim, "Here, do you have change for a hundred?" If the victim fails his saving throw against this attack, he will see a hundred dollar bill and act accordingly. Or the psychic could say, "Look out! Here comes the demon!" while pointing at the entrance to a room. If the victim fails to make his save vs psionics, he will see a demon come bursting in the door, and he will react as if it were real. After the hallucination is initiated, the psychic may want to manipulate the hallucination beyond what the victim's mind would automatically generate. This can be done to keep the situation under control or manipulate it however the psychic may need. Each time the psychic modifies or directs the hallucination will require the psychic to use a melee action.

Minor hallucinations, like making someone believe a small item is different than it really is, cost 8 I.S.P. A moderate hallucination, such as causing someone to believe the psychic is someone else or looks different, cost 14 I.S.P. Causing someone to have a major hallucination, like interacting with a demon, costs 20 I.S.P.

The psychic may also cause hallucinations in multiple victims simultaneously. The psychic may affect 1 person per level of experience. When the psychic attacks multiple victims he must expend I.S.P. for each victim. If the psychic needed to get by a security checkpoint with three guards that could see his ID was not real, then the psychic would need to be at least third level and would have to spend the I.S.P. needed to create the hallucination of a real ID for each of the three (24 I.S.P. total). Any of the guards that failed to save vs the psionic attack would see the ID as the psychic intended.

The duration of the hallucination depends on the situation. If the psychic using this power moves past his range from the victim, the victim's hallucination will automatically end within 1D4 minutes. If someone else who is not seeing the hallucination tells the victim it is not real and has a good explanation for it, the hallucination will end. If something happens in the hallucination that is completely unbelievable, the hallucination will end. If the victim was led to believe that a 5-dollar bill was really a 100-dollar bill, then he will believe that until the next time he looks at the bill after the psychic has left the area, or when someone else tells the victim otherwise. Game Masters, use your discretion.

Empathic Charisma

Range: 30 feet (9.1 m).

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 10

Saving Throw: Standard.

Similar in nature to the magical spell Charismatic Aura, this power enhances the natural charm of the psychic. Empathic Charisma endows the psychic with a limited form of Empathy and Empathic Transmission that helps him to determine the basic mood and desires of people around him. Although the psy-

chic will not be able to fully control a pinpointed the exact emotions of those around him, it will give the psychic a vague sense of each person's general emotional state. The psychic can also transmit any general emotion to those around him. This transmitted emotion will not change anyone's actual feelings, but may sway them in the direction the psychic wishes. Using Empathic Charisma, the psychic will typically be able to swindle, trick, or con one person or an entire group. This is further enhanced when used in conjunction with other powers, such as Telepathy, Empathy, Empathic Transmission, and Enhanced Perception (see above). For the duration of this ability, the psychic will have his M.A. raised by 1D4+2 points and his P.B. raised by 2 points. The psychic will also have trust/intimidate and charm/impress skills equal to 85% (or the value given by their enhanced M.A. and P.B., whichever is higher). Those who save against Empathic Charisma will not radiate their emotions to the psychic, nor are they influenced the psychic's transmitted emotions or charisma. The psychic is -30% to trust/intimidate and charm/impress skills against those who save.

Empathy: Superior

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m) plus 50 feet (15.2 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 2 minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 8 Saving Throw: Standard.

This is a more powerful Form of Empathy than the lesser Sensitive power. With Empathy: Superior the character can not only sense current surface emotions, but can also sense emotions that are deeper than the current emotional state. The character can find what emotions are attached to anything he desires if the victim fails the saving throw. This means that the character could tell if the victim was afraid of something, angry with someone, hates something or someone, or even what the victim's normal emotional state is. If the emotion the character is sensing is something really strong, they may see a glimpse of or hear part of the memory associated with that emotion (60% +3% per level chance). Sometimes the character will be able to sense the victim's true feelings, when the victim doesn't even realize what those feelings are. A saving throw should be rolled for each emotion or memory that the character tries to read. The character can make one attempt to sense deep emotions from a victim for each attack per melee. This power can be incredibly useful for interrogation.

Hypnotic Control

Range: 12 feet (3.7 m), with eye contact.

Duration: 2D6 melees.

I.S.P.: 20

Saving Throw: Standard.

Used by psychics to turn victims into dazed "zombies," the victim of this power falls into a deep hypnotic state wherein they are easy to manipulate and command. The victim of the Hypnotic Control will obey almost any command given to him/her by the psychic. To use this power the psychic must make (and maintain) eye contact for at least one melee round.

During this meleé the psychic is becoming "performing" hypnotizing actions (such as swinging a weight on a chain, chanting, or acting) or simply be making small talk or an actual conversation. The victim who fails their saving throw will seem dazed and "zombie-like" to those who see him in the hypnotized state. Those who know the victim will immediately realize that he is not acting quite himself. Once in this hypnotic state, the victim will obey almost any command the psychic gives (verbally, visually, or telepathically) as long as the command is not drastically against his alignment. Also, those in this state will have a -2 to save against any other psionic attacks from the controlling psychic (including "extensions" of the Hypnotic Control), but will be immune to all forms of mind control from anyone else. Furthermore, the victim will perform all skills at -20%. The victim loses half of their attacks per meleé, all combat actions are at -3, and the victim is unable to take any independent actions or make any independent decision (making the hypnotized victim unable to perform any but the most simple of tasks). Powers or spells that require little or no cognizant thought can be used by the victim at the controlling psychic's command, assuming the psychic knows that the character possesses the power(s). The victim will clearly remember everything that happens during this time. This can sometimes lead to severe mental trauma, depending on the actions the controlling psychic takes with the victim's body.

Induce Amnesia

Range: Touch.

Duration: 1D4 days per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 10 to 30 (see description below).

Saving Throw: Standard.

This power is similar to, but not as drastic as Mind Wipe. With this power the psychic simply must touch the victim's head and "suggest" that they forget some block of memory. This memory block can be as little as one skill or a memory of a single event, to as great as full amnesia. A minor loss of memory only costs 10 I.S.P. The psychic may cause the victim to forget a large block of time (up to months or years) or the majority of their skills for a cost of 20 I.S.P. If the psychic expends 30 I.S.P. he may make the victim forget their entire life, all their skills, or even their personality. In all cases the victim will never be able to remember what caused their memory loss. During the amnesia (duration of the power), the character will feel as though he is forgetting something and may even have blurred glimpses of the forgotten memories. Under extreme circumstances, the character may even be able to use a forgotten skill that is critical at that moment.

Induce Insanity

Range: 10 feet (3 m) and verbal suggestion.

Duration: 1D4 days per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 30 Saving Throw: Standard.

Another terrifying mental manipulation power that temporarily causes the victim to suffer insanity. The insanity induced can be one of the psychic's choice, or a random insanity (roll on the optional random insanity table on page 19 of the Rifts® RPC).

Mentally Posses Others

Range: 30 feet (9.1 m) +10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 2 minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 40

Saving Throw: Standard (animals are at -4 to save).

This terrifying power allows the psychic to take control of another person's (or animal's) body like a living puppet. Like the Mentally Posses Others power the psychic is able to see, hear, and speak from the victim's body as if he possessed it, yet the control is indirect as if by "remote control" rather than actually commanding the body from within. This power takes most of the psychic's attention to perform: reduce all combat bonuses by 50% and the controlling psychic must divide his attacks between his and the victim's body — e.g. a psychic with four attacks per meleé has four attacks to divide between himself and the "puppet" victim (2/2, 1/3, etc.), regardless of how many attacks the victim had originally. Like the Mentally Posses Others power, the psychic controls only the body, and is unable to access the thoughts, knowledge, or memories of the victim with this power. The controlled victim is still conscious, but in a dazed state. He sees and hears everything his controlled body does as if he is in a dream state, and will remember most of what happened. This can sometimes lead to severe mental trauma, depending on the actions the controlling psychic takes with the victim's body.

Psonic Blast

Range: 50 feet (15.2 m) +10 feet (3 m) per level.

Duration: Variies.

I.S.P.: 30

Saving Throw: Standard, and a dodge of 16.

This devastating attack causes neural damage and hemorrhaging in the brain. The psychic using this attack fires tendrils of psionic energy from his hands or eyes at the intended victim. If the victim fails to dodge, a jolt of destructive psionic energy ripples through his body and brain. The energy disrupts and damages the nervous system as it ripples through the victim. When the destructive energy reaches the brain it attacks the its tissue, causing severe pain, disorientation, and temporary memory loss. If the victim is struck by the bolt of energy and makes a save vs psionics, then he only suffers 1D4 damage directly to Hit Points, -1 on all combat actions and attacks per meleé for 1D4 meleés. If the victim fails to save vs the psionic attack, he suffers 1D6 damage directly to Hit Points per level of the psychic, all combat actions are -4, the victim loses half of his meleé attacks, has a throbbing headache for an hour (-30% to all skills), and forgets 1D4 random skills, psionics, or spells (G.M.'s discretion) for 1 day per level of the psychic. The psionic energy can even pass through environmental armor. If the victim is wearing an exoskeleton armor, the Psionic Blast can penetrate the armor but only does half damage. Targets in power armor, a robot or vehicle cannot be affected by this attack.

Shared Perception

Range: 120 feet (36.6 m).

Duration: 1 minute per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 15

Saving Throw: Standard.

This psionic power gives the psychic the ability to share his perception with someone else, or spy on someone else's perception. This sharing of perception includes all sensory input. The other person also perceives whatever the person whose perception is being shared out sees, hears, smells, touches, or tastes. This power can be incredibly useful for spying or sharing information with allies. Victims of this power whose perception is being shared out to the psychic will feel as if someone is watching or looking over their shoulder.

Telekinetic Blast

Range: 50 feet (15.2 m) +10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Instant.

I.S.P.: 10 for S.D.C. damage or 20 for Mega-Damage (Rifts® or other M.D.C. campaign worlds only). Saving Throw:

Dodge at -3. Damage: 1D4x10 S.D.C. or 2D6 Mega-

Damage (Rifts® or

other M.D.C. campaign worlds only).

This impressive power creates a solid but invisible sphere of telekinetic force that is hurled at near supersonic speeds to its target. The psychic needs only to make a general throwing/pushing/hurling motion and is +3 to strike with the Telekinetic Blast (no other bonuses apply). The victim may attempt to dodge the Telekinetic Blast attack if they know that it is coming; all dodge attempts are at a -3 to dodge.

Telekinetic Shockwave

Range: Radius around psychic.

Area of Effect: 5 foot (1.5 m) diameter per level of experience.

Duration: Instant.

I.S.P.: 20

Telekinetic Shockwave is an area effect version of TK Push. This power creates a Shockwave of telekinetic force that emanates from the psychic in all directions like the Shockwave from an explosive detonation. This Shockwave has the rough equivalent strength of P.S. 20 +2 per level of experience of the psychic, and will do 3D6 S.D.C. damage to everyone caught within the radius of the Shockwave. Psychics above first level can reduce the area of effect by increments of five feet (1.5 m), down to a minimum diameter of five feet. In addition to the damage, the TK Shockwave will push most humans three yards/meters away from the psychic, and has an 80% chance of knocking them off their feet. Those weighing more than 300 lbs (135 kg) or who have a Supernatural Strength will only be pushed back one yard/meter, and only have a 20% chance of being knocked down.

Telekinetic Force

Range: 80 feet (24.4 m) per level of experience.



Duration: 1 minute per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 10 per 50 lbs (22.5 kg) of force.

Note: This power can only be taken if the psychic has already taken either the Physical or the Super psionic power of Telekinesis.

This telekinetic power is a variation and combination of the Physical psionic powers of Telekinesis and Telekinetic Push, creating focused TK Force on a specific object. Instead of simply lifting or moving an object with telekinesis or adding TK enhancement to a physical blow, this power applies a "hand" of telekinetic force directly to an object. This telekinetic force can be used to push open doors, knock things over, crush/smash things, or squeeze. The psychic can use this power to pin someone's hand to a wall or the ground, hold a door closed, or even strangle someone, assuming their target is fully visible to the naked eye. Just like with other telekinetic powers, the psychic must have a clear view of the area where the TK Force is applied. For example, this power cannot be used to crush someone's throat if their neck is hidden inside body armor, or slam a door in another room. The TK Force can be divided between multiple objects, as many as one object per level of experience of the psychic. Damage from a TK Force crushing attack is 1D4 S.D.C. per melee round for each 50 lbs (22.5 kg) of TK Force applied. If this is a "strangling" crush attack, an additional 1D4 points of damage (direct to Hit Points) is done, per melee, per 50 lbs (22.5 kg). Victims of a strangling attack will normally lose consciousness after their P.E. X 4 in seconds of strangling time.

Telepathic Suggestion

Range: 60 feet (18.3 m).



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Duration: Varies.

I.S.P.: 15

Saving Throw: Standard.

A psychic using this power can implant a powerful suggestive command into someone's mind. Unless the victim saves, he will carry out the command without hesitation. This can be as simple as a few spoken sentences, such as "open that door," or "go to the castle," or more complicated like sending an encrypted message or performing a task or skill. This power can also be used to make the victim drop his weapon or surrender. If the command goes against the character's alignment, the character has a +3 to save vs this power. If the suggestion goes drastically against their alignment or ethics (such as commanding a good-aligned character to kill a loved one), the victim automatically saves.

Telepathy: Superior

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m) plus 50 (15.2 m) feet per level of experience for probe, or 200 feet (61 m) plus 100 feet (30.5 m) per level of experience for two-way communication.

Duration: 2 minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 8

Saving Throw: Standard.

Just like the lesser Sensitive power of Telepathy, Telepathy: Superior grants the ability to hear surface thoughts, or send and receive telepathic messages. However, this superior form of the power gives the character the ability to read deeper or even subconscious thoughts. If the victim fails the saving throw, the psychic will be able to read thoughts on any subject he wants. This can include passwords, names of contacts, the victim's true name, and even skills. Sometimes (40% +3% per level of experience chance) the character will be even able to see or hear parts of memories associated with the thoughts he is reading from the victim. A saving throw should be rolled for each skill/memory/thought that the character tries to read. The character can make one attempt to pull information from the victim for each attack per melee.

The Hammer of the Forge



By James M.G. Cannon

Chapter Twenty-Five Going Home Again

After the sentencing of Quajinn Huo, the band of adventurers who had brought him to justice went their separate ways. The Temporal Wizard, Romana Vorishcenko ne Usckios, remained with the Council of Time, though she promised rather enigmatically that she and Caleb would meet again. Kassiopeia Acherean went home to Alexandria to rest and recuperate. She brought the Cetestine Joriel with her, hoping to convince the android to fully abandon the S'hrax Vek Confederacy and settle permanently in free space. Doctor Abbot and his charge, the young monk Arwen Griffin, took passage on a bulk cruiser to the planet Diogenes in answer to a request for help from an old

colleague of Abbot's. Siv Yurilak, the Noro pilot, rocketed back W Noro-Gar to pay some outstanding debts, but promised the others he would be available should they ever need him.

For the first time since Lothar of Motherhome found him in the desert world of Koola, Caleb Vulcan found himself alone in the Three Galaxies. Caleb's initial plan to arrest Thraxus following the defeat of Huo was complicated by the part Thraxus himself played in Huo's downfall. While the young Knight pondered his next move and tried to think of how best to approach the Thraxus problem, a new crisis arose and Caleb's attention was quickly diverted.

— excerpt from Caleb Vulcan

The air was rank with the stench of metal and hydraulics. Her breath rasped in her throat and the echoes of her feet slapping against the floor bounced along the narrow corridors, but those sounds were swallowed up by the rumbling and clanging of the great engine deep within the structure, grinding away at the planetoid.

Frances Starling was chief officer of the Petro-Chem Mining Conglomerate facility of Vyarus-VI. The facility was largely automated, digging through miles and miles of rock to extract precious ores. Besides Starling, there were nine other Petro-Chem officers stationed on Vyarus-VI, two specialized 'Borgs among them. Starling's duties largely amounted to keeping those nine men and women motivated and working, despite the remoteness and emptiness of the planetoid. Starling herself didn't need much in the way of creature comforts, so long as she received her six month rotation back to inhabited space for every six

spent on a site. A jog, a hot cup of coffee, and some jazz trids to relax to, and she was fine.

At least, she used to be. Shortly after she started her current rotation she received word that her brother Hiram, captain of the CAF ship *Hidalgo*, had died while on a routine mission. Some kind of alien death machine had reactivated after millennia of disuse, and every hand aboard the *Hidalgo* had perished. Frances and her brother had never been what one might call close, but his passing had hit her nonetheless. Trying to reconcile the fact that she would never see him again eventually led her to thoughts of her own mortality.

Starling had made it to the other side of fifty, not yet middle-aged by Tri-Galactic standards, rising through the company at a brisk pace and reaching a position of considerable power and responsibility. But she possessed no loved ones to mourn her own inevitable passing.

"Morbid thoughts for a Friday morning," Starling muttered to herself. The facility was running ahead of plan, too, and they'd hit a rich vein of beryllium two days ago that showed no sign of tapping out. Financial success couldn't keep the dark thoughts from her mind, however.

Daily distractions might do the trick. Her comm beeped, and Starling keyed it automatically, not breaking stride. "Go ahead."

"Chief, we have a visitor," came Quinn's voice from the operations center.



The supply ship wouldn't be arriving for another two weeks, and Starling wasn't aware of any other scheduled ships. "Heading for the docking bay. Who is it?"

"That's the ship, Chief. It's not a ship. It's just some guy." That forced Starling to slow down. She came to a halt in the middle of the corridor. "What do you mean, Quinn?"

There was a strange note in the engineer's voice. "I'm not sure. There's a human standing outside the airlock on level six. He knocked politely and now he's just waiting."

"Human? Are you sure?"

Quinn coughed. "Not really. He's not wearing a suit, but he looks human enough."

Starling sighed. Vyaris-VI had no atmosphere. Anyone outside the safety of the mining facility needed a vac suit to survive. "I hate god-like aliens," Starling muttered. "I'll take a critter over a god-like alien any day."

Quinn laughed, but there was a nervous note in his voice. "What's the plan, Chief? Should I get Hermann and Viktor?"

"No, they're deep in the machine right now. No use bothering them. With any luck this won't get violent anyway. Have Zem and Freke meet me at the airlock in two minutes. Starling out."

Starling took a deep breath and wiped a hand across her sweaty brow. She could use a shower. Maybe that cup of coffee. A month or two on Antares. She went to find the lift, hoping that her decision to leave the 'Borgs at work in the bowels of the facility was a wise one. God-like aliens tended to be mischievous rather than violent, but there was a first time for every-thing.

Starling found Zem and Freke waiting for her on level six. The tall, long-limbed Noro smiled grimly as she came out of the lift. He jammed a thumb in the Wolfen's direction. "Freke says we should be armed and armored for this."

Freke growled low, and the bionic lense in his left eye socket glittered dangerously. "If this facility was properly armed, we wouldn't have to worry about intrusions like this."

"Noted," Starling said. "We're not soldiers, Freke. Not even you, not anymore. If this is a hostile, we follow normal procedures." Which largely amounted to jumping in the *Tremont* and blasting off for civilized space at best possible speed. "But we need to evaluate the situation first. So... either of you get a good look at the fellow yet?"

"Horrible fashion sense," Zem supplied. "Looks human enough, but the lack of a vac suit is the least of our worries. He's definitely got some type of internal power source that has my sixth sense dumping cold buckets of water over my head. Metaphorically speaking, of course."

"Further noted," Starling said. "Let's see what we have, genttlebeings." She made a beeline for the airlock, pausing only once to adjust her jogging suit into some semblance of official dress. The three of them stopped before the circular door of the lock. The viewscreen by the control panel showed a human sized man, back to the camera, looking out over the shattered plain of Vyaris-VI from the vantage of the mining facility's sixth level. He was clad in a floral print short-sleeved shirt over a darker long sleeved garment, canvas shorts, and sandals. Strange garb for a being who could withstand the crushing cold and emptiness of vacuum. Starling gave Zem a hard look. "Seriously, how worried are you?"

Zem shrugged. "I sense no immediate danger. Chief. But there's something about this that makes me ill at ease."

Starling nodded. "Freke, open the door." The Wolfen shook his big, gray muzzled head but keyed the opening sequence on the lock. Starling felt the soft thrum of machinery in her teeth as the outer door scissored open, then closed behind the visitor. A hiss of jets followed as the airlock pressurized, and then the heavy inner door cycled open.

And the very last person Frances Starling ever expected to see again stepped into the corridor, a part of her life thirty years dead and gone, big as life and twice as beautiful. He was of average height and well built, with frosty blue eyes and a neatly trimmed black beard. Those blue eyes clouded for a moment as he looked at her, not quite able to place her face. She was painfully conscious of the passage of time, which had so badly affected her and seemed not to have touched him at all. She was sagging and flabby and graying, and he was lean and strong and ageless.

Starling keyed her comm. "Stand down everyone. Nothing to worry about. Our visitor is a Cosmo-Knight."

Recognition brought the Cosmo-Knight's eyes to life. ■"Frankie?" he said. "Is it really you?"

"Sol Vyking," she said, "welcome to Vyaris Station."

* * *

"I just stopped in for a cup of tea and a Danish, honestly," Vyking said as they sat in the commissary. Here the thrum of the mining machinery was dulled by several insulated levels to make the crew's living quarters as comfortable as possible. In Starling's case, she missed the rumble of the mighty engine.

"I didn't know you were here. I didn't know you were in mining." Vyking's voice was full of unconcealed surprise, and he couldn't take his eyes off her. Just as his unchanged form made her feel uneasy, the shots of gray through her blonde hair and the wrinkles she never bothered to disguise seemed to fascinate him. She felt vaguely self-conscious, and resented him all the more.

Starling sipped her own hot beverage, black coffee with just a hint of sugar. "Vyaris is somewhat remote, Sol. Just passing through?"

His eyes crinkled. "Not exactly. There are some smugglers using the other side of the planetoid as a resupply point on their way to Noro-Gar. I was staking them out when I became aware of the mining station and thought I'd check it out. I don't need to eat anymore, but I do get cravings sometimes."

"I'll bet," Starling said. She managed to keep most of the bitterness out of her voice.

The smile died on Vyking's face. "Yeah."

"Don't look so glum, Sol. Think of everything else you got out of the deal. You criss-cross the Three Galaxies living a life of high adventure, seeing sights no mortal man could ever hope to see, much less survive. Yet time has not left a single mark upon you."

Vyking frowned. "I never meant to hurt you, Frankie," he said softly.

"Yes, your intentions were always noble, weren't they? Well, never mind that. Tell me about these smugglers of yours. Is this installation in any danger?"

"I was playing played with the empty mug in his hand for a moment, not looking at her. "We're given a choice, Frankie."

"What?"

He raised his voice. "Cosmo-Knights. We're given a choice, when the Forge first appears before us. It gives us visions of the future, what that choice will bring us. Most of that information fades once the choice is made, except for vague feelings of déjà vu when we finally inhabit those moments we foresaw once before. But for some things we can retain at least a glimmer of future knowledge, if not necessarily particulars."

He paused, gathering his thoughts, and then went on. "It is a rare Knight of the Forge indeed who has a peaceful end. For all our gifts, we are not immortal, and we live dangerous lives. Some Knights either allow their gifts to pervert their basic humanity, or else give in to human temptations and thus suffer a fall from which they never rise again. It is a fine line we walk, finer than a razor's edge, made all the more difficult when one knows how it all ends."

Vyking looked up at Starling, his blue eyes seemingly piercing through her. "I know that my life does not end well. I knew it when I accepted the Forge's charge, and I knew it when I left you. I hoped — I wanted — my leaving to save you from that pain."

Starling could only shake her head. "If you'd told me that thirty years ago, I would have told you that it didn't matter. I'm afraid that the passage of time hasn't altered my response at all, but it has changed the reasons for it."

He blinked first and looked away.

"So, about those smugglers?"

"I doubt they'll be of any concern. Their kind succeeds by maintaining a low profile, and they operate on the other side of the planetoid. You've nothing to worry from them."

"I suppose you'll be off to deal with them soon, then?"

Vyking ducked his head, then looked up at her, a weird light in his eyes and a twisted smile. "Do you hate me that much, Frankie?"

"I didn't think so," Starling said. "I thought I'd put it all behind me long ago. Until you appeared in the airlock. Just looking at you seems to cause almost physical pain."

The smile died. Perhaps he expected a different response. But she had never lied to him, and even thirty years absence had not broken the habit. She felt a kind of grim satisfaction as he wordlessly stood and carried his mug and plate to the sink at the back of the room.

"I'll show you out," she said when he returned.

"For no need," he attempted to protest.

"I'm still chief of the facility, Sol. Certain responsibilities to that post." He nodded and followed her out of the commissary. They walked in silence through the brightly lit corridors, feet echoing along the grated floor, until he found his voice again.

"Did you ever marry?"

"Twice," she told him. "Neither stuck. The first marriage gave me a daughter. She... died."

"I'm sorry, Frankie."

"For what? Not being there to save her? It's not your fault the tram went off the track. Seven hundred other people died with her." That was another ancient pain she thought she'd put be-

hiding, but Vyking had resurrected that well. This was turning out to be a terribly depressing day.

Then, just when she didn't think it could possibly become any worse, they stumbled across the body. Vyking put out a protective arm as they rounded a corner and came upon it, as though the corpse could be dangerous. Starling brushed past him and knelt beside it, and felt a sudden constriction in her chest as she recognized Jeffries, one of the station engineers, Jeffries was a slight woman with mousy brown hair and a horsey kind of laugh, but her face was now a blackened ruin where the blaster hit her.

"Oh my God," Starling heard herself say. She looked sharply at Vyking. "Your smugglers?"

His look was grim as he knelt down beside her and examined Jeffries' body. "No. I doubt it very much. I told you they aren't aware of this facility and I stand by it." He gently lifted Jeffries' body, cold eyes scanning the wound and the floor beneath it. "The laser burned through her head. There should be carbon scoring on the wall, the floor, something. She was killed somewhere else and her body was dumped here." He looked at her. "Smugglers wouldn't be so careful."

Starling swallowed. "Who then? None of my people could do this." He didn't argue with her. She would have been happier if he had.

"We may have time to locate the murder scene. But that may be what the killer is counting on."

"I have nine men and women who will search this station from top to bottom."

"Yes." Vyking frowned. "What's standard procedure for emergencies?"

"We have a lifeboat, a ship called the *Tremont*. It's barely FTL capable, and it has no shields or weapons, but it's designed to get us to a civilized system for pick-up."

"What?"

Vyking stood up, walked around Jeffries' body, and examined the floor. "I don't think it's a good idea to alert the whole station. Not yet."

"While there's a killer on the loose? Are you insane?"

"There's a scuff mark here," Vyking said, ignoring her. "The killer had to drag the body from somewhere along this corridor." He paused and the cold eyes fell on Starling. "Are there any special procedures to access the *Tremont*?"

"Just three ID cards from any of the crew. But you don't think—"

"Yes, I'm afraid I do."

Starling glared at him. "This is my crew, Sol. I know these people. None of them could do this." Not to Jeffries, at any rate. She was harmless, maybe a little reserved sometimes, and her laugh could be annoying. Starling looked away from Vyking, at the body lying in a heap in the corridor. Starling would never hear that laugh again. "I can't believe she's dead."

"Come with me. The killer dragged her from somewhere, maybe we can find something that will help us."

"We can't just leave her here," Starling protested.

"She's not going anywhere," Vyking said coldly. He walked off, eyes scanning the floor and walls for more evidence.

Starling put her head in her hands for a moment. She hated him, his callousness, his sense of superiority. "Razor's edge," he had said. She couldn't help but think he was teetering off of that ledge. But she followed him anyway.

Thirty meters down the hallway, Vyking halted. "Look," he said, pointing to a smudge on the wall, barely noticeable. "Carbon scoring from the laser blast. Jeffries must have been killed here. Look around, see if you can find anything."

"Find what? There's nothing here. This is an access passage linking the living quarters to the freight elevator. Other than the ducts in the walls, there's nothing to see."

"Look."

Starling sighed. Vyking scanned the walls and floor and ceiling, ran his hands along the smooth metal panels and rough grates, tapped with his knuckles and listened for an echo that wasn't there. With reluctance, Starling began to mimic him. She was convinced they were wasting time. The killer was loose, her people deserved to be warned, and she was neglecting her duty as chief of the station. And Jeffries was dead, just like that. Last night she had been talking about her son's desire to join the CAF. Starling tried to talk her out of letting him join, and with that horsey sound in her throat, Jeffries had said it wasn't her decision.

Starling closed her eyes for a moment. *None of my people did this*, she prayed silently.

When she opened her eyes, she noticed a scuff mark on one of the walls. It was low to the ground, barely noticeable if she wasn't looking for something like it. Starling drew closer, and realized it wasn't a scuff, but a discolored section of the wall paneling. With a frown, she touched it. It was warm to the touch. She pressed down.

There was a clack and the panel slid open, revealing a darkened recess behind it. As Starling stared, open mouthed, the recess lit up with red and blue light. There were screens and computer panels inside, all decorated with an alien alphabet that looked vaguely familiar and somehow sinister.

"Those are Kreeghor letters," Vyking said, over Starling's shoulder.

"Are you positive?"

"Yes." His voice was grim, and when Starling risked a look back at him, his face was a cold mask.

"What would a Kreeghor... spy, for lack of a better word, be doing here? Vyaris has no strategic value. It's rich in resources, but if the Transgalactic Empire wanted them, they could just send a dreadnought over and take them. I don't get it."

Vyking eased past her, into the recess. He flipped switches haphazardly and watched the screens for a moment. "The same reason the smugglers are using Vyaris, I suspect. It's a relay point. Kreeghor spies in the CCW interior can bounce their messages off this rock and into the TGE. There's probably a network of similar stations around the galaxy to keep the CCW from tracking them effectively. If this console has kept records of those transmissions, this could be one of the single greatest intelligence finds in history."

"Lucky you," Starling snorted. "I still have one dead crew member and a killer on the loose in my station. What do you plan to do about that?"

"Shivok," Vyking swore. "The core has been wiped. Eh, didn't really think he'd be that stupid anyway."

"Are you listening to me, Sol?" Starling snapped.

He looked away from the computer screens for a moment. "Yes, of course. The killer. Now that his cover is blown, he'll probably try to take the *Tremont*. I'll head for the ship, you warn your crew. You may also want to do a sweep for explosives. The killer will probably try to sabotage this installation before he escapes."

She stared at him for a moment. "Right. Take the freight elevators at the end of this passage. The *Tremont* is on level fourteen." She grabbed her comm off her belt as Vyking began to jog down the corridor.

"Sol," she called after him. He turned. "Is this really all just a coincidence? Did you really come here for some smugglers? You didn't know about this Kreeghor stuff at all?"

"No, I did not," he said. "But I'm afraid my presence here may have panicked the spy and made him sloppy." Without further elaboration, he ran down the hall.

"Qrun," Starling swore. It was the only Kreeghor word she knew. She keyed her comm for a wide broadcast and started to talk to her people, knowing that she was alerting the spy as well. That couldn't be helped. "Attention Vvaris Station, we have an emergency situation. Amanda Jeffries has been murdered and a Kreeghor spy uncovered. Initiate standard lockdown and emergency procedures."

The first procedure was a sound off from each crewmember. Only Freke and Zem failed to check in. Starling gritted her teeth. Naturally it would be the two most dangerous people on the station as her suspects. Freke was a trained killer, but he had fought against the Kreeghor for the CCW; he lost his eye and arm in the Battle of Dalask. Zem, on the other hand, had psionics. Of anyone on the station, he was the most likely to prove dangerous to Vyking. Even a Cosmo-Knight's prodigious defenses were useless against the powers of mind or magic.

Further, the fact that two of her people didn't call in told Starling that the killer, whomever it might be, probably had their three ID cards.

Oh my God, what if it's both of them?

"Quinn, I want a sweep of the station, check for any incendiaries, explosives, or irregularities in the machinery."

"Aye, Chief. I'll send Kim and Zoe to link up with you."

"No," Starling decided. "I'm heading for the *Tremont*."

"Chief?"

"You heard me." She raced after Vyking.

* * *

The heavy doors of the freight elevator scissored open and Starling stepped out onto level fourteen. The ceiling was several meters high here, the floor dominated by cargo boxes. To the left, supplies. On the right, the fruits of the station's labor, crates of refined beryllium ore and other minerals. Directly ahead, through the maze of boxes, was the docking area. Besides the *Tremont*, there was also enough room for the occasional supply ship to dock.

Starling took a cautious step forward, head cocked and listening for any sign of trouble. A beam of light stabbed through the air, passing so close to her cheek that her skin flushed red from the heat, and burned a hole in the elevator door. Instinctively, Starling dropped down and somersaulted across the floor, using a crate for cover. Starling's heart pounded in her breast and a cold sweat broke out across her body. She tentatively touched her cheek and released a grateful sigh when she realized her flesh was whole.

Starling cursed herself for a fool. What use would she be against an armed killer? Without armor to protect herself from the high intensity laser, she would literally be toast. She smiled grimly at the thought, then recalled Jeffries' charred body and the smile died.

"Freke?" she called. "Or is it Zem? Why are you doing this?" Silence.

"Is it money? Or did you lose faith in the ideals of the Consortium? Lose interest in freedom and justice?"

"Freedom is overrated," said a familiar voice. Zem dropped down from above, landing beside her, limbs splayed out like a spider. It was Zem and yet not Zem, his familiar features twisted into a cruel smile, his long, thin limbs flexing in unnatural ways.

"What are you?" Starling breathed.

"I am what my masters made me," Zem said. His hand flashed out, quicker than lighting, and wrapped around Starling's chin. He held her in a tight grip and jammed her head backward into the side of the crate. "Bio-Wizardry," Zem continued. "Not yet an Invincible Guard but on my way."

"You killed Jeffries," Starling said through gritted teeth. Zem was stronger than she could have imagined, and his nails dug into her skin. "Why? I thought we were friends."

"Stupid human feckick," Zem spat. "I used to lay awake at night devising ways to kill you and the rest of the crew. I'd gut you like zriil right now, but I need you alive so long as that grun-eating Cosmo-Knight is about."

Starling grinned, or tried to, and blinked back tears of pain. "You don't know him very well, do you?"

Zem's smile faltered for a moment. He looked up, and his round black eyes showed a glimmer of surprise, and then a metallic blue blur slammed into him and two bodies crashed across [the floor, shattering boxes as they thrashed together.

Starling rubbed her jaw. Lines of blood decorated her cheeks where Zem's nails had cut her. She was lucky he didn't take her head off when Vyking tackled him.

The Knight and the Noro wrestled still. Zem's face twisted further, his jaw elongating and growing teeth that snapped at Vyking, while his limbs continued to stretch and wrap around the Knight's body. They could not penetrate Vyking's bulky and baroque armor, however. An intricate design wound around the surface of the armor, while the darkness of the void shimmered wherever a gap showed. A pair of huge horns erupted from the open-faced, featureless helm. Vyking butted Zem's face with the horns, breaking his nose and shattering sharp teeth. Zem howled in pain.

Something nibbled at the back of Starling's mind as she watched the titans struggle against one another, neither gaining much ground. Zem had no blaster.

Which meant...

"Hold it, Chief." Freke told her. Starling half-turned. The Wolfen looked at her sadly, his bionic eye glimmering. He pointed his left arm at her, the metallic hand folded back to reveal the muzzle of a very large looking gun.

"You too?"

Freke shrugged. "I've told you about the Battle of Dalask, haven't I? I could never tell you the full story. They wouldn't let me. They captured me, cut me, burned me, put things inside me to make me do things for them. My mind has not been my own since that day." The muzzle of the gun, wide as Freke's wrist, began to hum and glow. "But they left my mind awake inside my body, watching from the inside, unable to do anything.

"Cosmo-Knight!" Freke shouted. "Release Zem or the Chief here gets acquainted with the high end of the Kelvin scale."

Vyking and Zem paused in their struggle to take in Freke and Starling standing a bare dozen feet away, Freke's blaster pointed at Starling's head. Zem laughed, a high pitched sound that sent shivers down Starling's back. Beneath his featureless helm, Vyking's expression was invisible. The baleful blue glow of eyes within the black void of the helm was answer enough, however. There was a flash of light and Zem's body fell to the floor, burned through by cosmic fire.

Vyking rose to his full height, impressive and frightening in his armor. "You have two choices," he said, his voice deep and echoing from within his helm. "Surrender, or death."

Freke gritted his teeth and edged closer to Starling. "Sorry about this, Chief. I wish this could end another way."

"Dammit, Freke, fight their programming," Starling said. "This isn't you! Don't let them beat you. Fight it."

Freke growled and jabbed the blaster at Starling. "I . . . I . . . shoot me, Knight!"

Without hesitation, Vyking focused his beams again. Blue light flashed across the intervening space and burned through Freke's chest, throwing him backward.

"No!" Starling howled. She threw herself on the ground beside the Wolfen. His burned and broken body thrashed weakly, while froth and blood fell from his muzzle. The bionic arm was a dead weight at his side, the eye now dim. "Freke, hold on. We're going to help you. Hold on!"

Freke's natural brown eye focussed momentarily on her. "S'alright, Chief. Better this way." He coughed up blood, blinking rapidly. "Have to warn you. Zem worked the machine, never saw much." He coughed again, and Starling tried to forestall him from talking, but he went on. "Kreeghor. Weapon. Code words of some kind... 'Shadow Star.'"

Freke closed his eye for the last time, and his body relaxed in Starling's arms, gradually growing colder. Vyking knelt down beside her, the armor gone, just Sol again.

"I'm sorry, Frankie."



She brushed off his attempt at sympathy, retreating from him and wiping tears from her eyes. "What did he mean by that last part?"

"I've no idea. That is what worries me."

Phage World



Optional Source Material for Rifts®

By Mark Hall

Note: These were originally intended to completely replace the Undead Vampires south of the border with something a bit more agreeable to my tastes. I always felt that the vampires down there were kind of hokey, to tell the truth, and I kept picturing Psi-Stalkers as the true vampires of Rifts Earth. I expanded on the idea, slowly changing them from suave bloodsuckers to a more subtle kind of villain. One who would really scare the Coalition, because they can't find them, can't identify them, and can't tell if some of their most loyal and valuable troops are actually loyal, or pawns of the enemy.

Psi-Vampires

The rumors had spread through the ranks of the ISS with frightening speed. Some of the 'Stalkers in C Squad were infected. Just the thought of it made Lt. Parker's blood run cold. He'd known a 'Stalker that wound up infected... she wasn't that stable to begin with, none of them mutants were, but the disease had pushed her over. She'd taken down four troopers in full armor before anyone could get a clear shot, then she shrugged off everything but the plasma grenade, and he wasn't sure if that's because she had taken so much punishment before, or because it was plasma. He hoped they were just rumors. He didn't want to go through that, not again.

Amongst Psi-Stalkers, there is now a dark rumor of something that will make them more than they are, something that will grant them a kind of power and ability they'd never dream of. Longer life. Greater strength. Speed, agility, rapid healing,

and further development of psionics... everything needed to become the perfect hunter, to continue the hunt for decades, even centuries. Passed from 'Stalker to 'Stalker, it's rumored to be an arcane secret, something dormant in all 'Stalkers, just waiting for the right key to open it up.

The "secret" is actually a virus, specific to the Psi-Stalker sub-species. Where this virus came from is a mystery, but it is assumed to be a mutant microbe from Atlantis's Bio-Wizardry labs. The virus is communicable, passed through blood and other bodily fluids and into the Psi-Stalker's body. Many 'Stalkers have been infected when they shared a kill with another 'Stalker... many more when they shared a bed or blood on a battlefield. The virus infiltrates the mind of a Psi-Stalker, latching onto key portions of the brain and stimulating certain innate abilities that are never fully realized in the average Psi-Stalker. The infected Psi-Stalker enhances his already impressive physical abilities with a subconscious use of Telekinesis and other psionic powers.

Several varieties of the phage exist, each opening different powers within the 'Stalker, and each jealously destroying any other foreign cell or virus that invades their territory. The phages seem to be fiercely competitive, and it's not unknown for 'Stalkers infected with one variety to attack those harboring another, simply because they harbor a genetic rival.

When first infected, a Psi-Stalker will likely not notice much. For the first 1D4 days, the phage is curable with a simple anti-viral, and has no effect. At the end of that period, the phage has twined itself into the very fabric of the 'Stalker. Every cell hosts a virus, and the abilities that come with being infected now take effect.

Too rarely mentioned in these dark rumors is the price paid for such gifts: Humanity. The abilities require that the Psi-Stalker eschew food and drink in favor of a more concentrated form of nourishment — blood, the food for the entire human body. They still require P.P.E., but can no longer ignore their need for physical nourishment. In addition, the light of the sun becomes painful and distracting to the infected 'Stalker, so they become creatures of the night, restlessly hunting, unable to control their urge for blood. Yet they can disappear into human society, almost indistinguishable from normal Psi-Stalkers. The phage gets a save vs psionics at the same difficulty level as a Psi-Stalker (6 or better on a D20) in order to avoid any form of supernatural detection (including See Aura and Psychic Diagnosis). Lone Star's K-9 Sniffers have half the normal chance to detect it if specialized in Cancer or Robotics and Implants, and the virus has proven successful at hiding from almost all mechanical probes (they have only a 3% chance of detecting the "PSVP").



The Abilities of Infected Psi-Stalkers

Also known as Psi-Vampires,

The Infected, or Culture Victims

At this time, there are four known "cultures" of the Psi-Stalker Vampiric Phage (PSVP), none of which appear to affect the Psi-Stalker's normal abilities at all. Each share a certain number of common traits, but also have a pair of related abilities that make them unique and influence the outlook of their hosts. The abilities common to all cultures of PSVP are:

- +3 to initiative.
- +1 to strike.
- +1 to parry.
- +4 to dodge.
- +4 to pull punch.
- +2 to roll with punch.
- +2 to disarm.
- +10% to Gymnastics and Acrobatics moves.
- +10% to Climb and Swim.
- 600 foot (183 m) Nightvision (cannot see in absolute darkness).
- Life span is increased to ten times normal.
- Impervious to poisons, toxins, and diseases.
- Carrying capacity is increased by 20%, and lifting weight is based on this new carrying capacity.
- The Psi-Vampire can leap an additional 2 feet (0.6 m) upward or 3 feet (0.9 m) across for each level of experience.

- Damage is now $3D6 + P.S.$ bonus from a punch, $4D6 + P.S.$ bonus from a kick, or $6D6+6 + P.S.$ bonus from a jump kick.
- For 6 I.S.P. per attempted strike, a Psi-Vampire can do no real human damage ($1D4 + P.S.$ bonus on a punch, $2D4 + P.S.$ bonus on a kick) in M.D., but he must pass a save of 14 or higher or take $1D6 S.D.C.$ damage himself. If he spends 6 I.S.P. for a jump kick, he automatically takes $2D6 S.D.C.$ damage, but he does $3D6 + P.S.$ Bonus in Mega-Damage. If he misses, the I.S.P. are still expended.
- Bio-regenerate $2D6$ HP or $3D6 S.D.C.$ every other minute (once every 8 melee rounds).
- Radiate Horror Factor, as per the Super Psionic Power (requires no I.S.P., activated at will).
- Can erect a Psychic Body Field, as per the Super Psionic power (requires I.S.P.).

Culture One

The first culture tends to make its victims very sneaky, as well as very observant. In addition to the Super Psionic power of Psionic Invisibility (Psyscape page 42), they constantly have the minor psionic power of See the Invisible running. If they already possess See the Invisible, this replaces the normal version of the power, and they get a Sensitive Psionic power of choice.

Culture Two

The second culture's victims tend to be very sensual, reveling in the emotions and sensations of others. They gain the Super Psionic power of Empathic Transmission, as well as the minor

power of Empathy, the latter being constantly. Like above, if they have Empathy, this replaces it, and they may choose another Sensitive power.

Culture Three

People infected with the third culture become very straightforward and blunt to the point of rudeness, and are often able to get away with it. They now have the Super Psionic power of Mind Wipe, as well as a perfect memory, equal to a constantly functioning Total Recall. If the psychic already has Total Recall, they can replace it with another Sensitive power.

Culture Four

The fourth kind of Psi-Vampires are the most different from their relatives. They all have the constantly running ability of Impervious to Bio-Manipulation. In addition, at levels 1, 4, 7, 10, and 13, the phage allows them two Mind Bleeder powers of choice. If the character has already passed these levels, he gets the powers anyway, as if he was infected since first level. This means a Psi-Stalker infected at 4th level will have 4 Mind Bleeder powers when the virus fully takes hold of him, while one infected at 1st will only have 2.

Other varieties of the phage may exist, or may come about due to mutation, but these are the ones that have been catalogued to date.

The Down Side

The drawbacks associated with this phage are only now coming to light. The first one is that they begin using the Brodkil, not the Psi-Stalker, experience table. They remain the same level, but won't go up until they reach enough experience for the next highest level. For example, "Morrigan" has 9100 experience points when the virus takes root in her system. She remains 4th level, even though she doesn't have enough experience to be 4th level on the Brodkil table. However, she now has to get enough experience to make 5th level on the Brodkil table before she goes up a level. Her total has to be 19,201, not 16,501, before she increases again, as she has to spend a lot of time getting used to her new abilities.

Sunlight is also painful to Psi-Vampires, though nowhere near as deadly as it is for their undead cousins. When exposed to sunlight, they lose all the bonuses and abilities given by the phage and their combat rolls suffer a penalty of -2 (or -10% on skills). While they only lose 1D4 S.D.C. each round, the pain will be such that it will feel like 5D4, until the Culture Victim passes out, believing his Hit Points to be at zero. He will continue to take damage from the sunlight until the actual damage (the 1D4 taken each round) kills him, or until he is taken out of the sunlight. Environmental armor will halt the damage, but not the penalties. The weaker sunlight of a Globe of Daylight spell will give them a -1 (-5%) on all combat rolls, as well as make the Psi-Vampire irritable and easily angered, but will have no other effect.

As mentioned above, blood replaces the normal Psi-Stalker nutritional requirement for a pound of meat and a glass of water. The vampire must ingest approximately one pint of blood each

day, though they can go for three days before they really begin feeling any negative effects. At that point, they become susceptible to a feeding frenzy, the same as other vampires (see **Vampire Kingdoms**, page 18, for details). Unlike undead vampires, however, starvation can lead to death. If the Infected is deprived of blood for more than a week, they take 6D6 points of damage to both Hit Points and S.D.C. down to a minimum of 2 points each (this damage cannot be healed by their innate Bio-Regeneration), and also cut all bonuses and attacks per melee by half. After three weeks of such starvation, they will die as the phage consumes their body in order to survive, bursting into flames as their doubled P.P.E. is turned inward to fuel the starving phage.



Psi-Vampires, as a rule, don't have any special vulnerability to wood, silver, holy symbols, or the various herbs. They also are not affected by water, running or not (considering blood is about 60% water, they would soon be dead if they were). A few have developed phobias of these objects, but those effects are psychosomatic, inflicted subconsciously upon the psychic by himself. However, in the case of a Psi-Vampire, who has melded his psionic powers with his body, psychosomatic damage can become all too real, and those that suffer from phobias of these objects suffer from them as much as a normal vampire.

Questions & Answers

By Rodney Stott, Shawn Merrow & Kevin Siembieda

The focus of this column is *magic*, and as we get further into doing the conversions for Yin Sloth Jungles, first edition Palladium Fantasy magic comes to the front.

As I write this, I have a copy of one of Palladium's newest releases in front of me, *The Rise of Magic*, the new Chaos Earth™ supplement, so some of the questions people might ask have come from this book.

- Rodney Stott & Shawn Merrow

Where are the Experience Point Tables from the new Chaos Earth™ book: *Rise of Magic*? I looked but could not find them?

Oops, did we forget them?

Best to keep an eye out on the Palladium Web Site for details on these missing experience point tables.

What is the status of Systems Failure™, since it was missing from the catalogue you sent out?

Systems Failure is still available from Palladium Books - a steal at \$12.95 - 144 pages. Cat. No. 650. It is a complete RPG unto itself, set in a fictional New Millennium alien invasion. Though adventures and source-material for it appear in *The Rifter* from time to time, the line is dead and the RPG will eventually go out of print.

What are the rules for combining the Permanence Ward with normal spells? I can see how they could be added to circles.

The spell itself must be cast when the Permanence Ward is activated by the Diabolist. This requires both spell casters to work together.

Only spells which have a *duration* can be enhanced by the Permanence Ward, so it cannot be used to make spells like Fire Ball permanent.

If the ward is used to make a spell like Armour of Ithan permanent, it will not provide any magical regeneration, so once the magical armor's S.D.C. has been depleted, it will not regenerate back to normal.

The ward itself must be fixed to the target of the spell, or be within its area of effect (attached to the floor or wall, a door, etc.). For example, a permanent Wall of Fire would need the ward fixed to the floor under the wall of fire itself. If attached to a living creature (i.e., human) it must be physically attached such as placed under the skin or sewn to the skin of the person to be affected. Only one spell can be made permanent by a sin-

Can the Power Ward be used to enhance Spell Magic?

No, the Power Ward cannot be used to enhance Spell Magic, it can only be used for boosting other wards and affecting Ward Magic.

I want to bring in some of the new magic from the *Rifts® Book of Magic to Palladium Fantasy*, can you give me any guidelines?

Basically, it's the reverse of turning S.D.C. spells into M.D.C. ones for Rifts®. In the majority of cases the only thing that you need to change is S.D.C. to M.D.C. This is a simple 1 to 1 conversion; i.e. 1D6 M.D. per level becomes 1D6 S.D.C. per level. It's as simple as that. If a spell seems too powerful and unbalancing for an S.D.C. world using the one on one conversion, reduce it a notch or two.

Can normal Ley Line Walkers and other magic O.C.C.s learn the Chaos Magic spells?

Generally they can *NOT*, since these spells are more intuitive than formal spell magic.

However a Ley Line Walker could learn to duplicate some of these spells with the same capabilities and statistics as in the *Rise of Magic* sourcebook (remember the higher P.P.E. cost for non-Chaos Wizards).

Can you select the Magic O.C.C.s printed in the *Rise of Magic* in Rifts®? And what about the Magic O.C.C.s in Rifts, can they be selected for use in *Chaos Earth™*?

The odd lone-magician throwback to the Chaos O.C.C.s may develop in regions of high magic where there is no formal or practiced use of magic, but this is very rare and even then some of the Chaos Magic spells from the past will not be rediscovered and others may need alteration for the standard Rifts Earth environment. Some of them would be inappropriate or no longer relevant in the future Rifts setting such as the Boom Box, Skateboard, Sparkler, etc.

For the formal Chaos Earth Magic O.C.C.s, these should only belong to *other* worldly/dimensional characters or characters from Earth's past (i.e., characters from *Chaos Earth*) who may have been come to Earth via a dimensional Rift. Modern day sorcerers on Rifts Earth are trained in the formal mystic arts as presented in the Rifts® RPG and supplements. (The first formally trained wizards would begin springing up 20-40 years after the Coming of the Rifts as alien practitioners of magic brought the polished and superior mystic arts to Rifts Earth and passed them on to humans.)

Of all the Chaos Earth™ Magic O.C.C.s, the three that are most likely to exist on Rifts Earth or other M.D.C. worlds are the Demonbringer (always a hoot to play), (he **Demon Caller** (as an inept or primitive demon summoner), and, to a lesser degree, the **D-Shifter** (The latter existed throughout the Rifts Dark Ages into the early decades of the Post Apocalyptic calendar, roughly 20 P.A. Today, however, the D-Shifter is a rarity, a throwback to an earlier age, replaced by the more sophisticated and advanced forms of magic like Temporal Wizards and Ley Line Walkers). The *Demon Worshipers* and *Doomsayer NPC villains* also work in many settings, especially among primitive people.

Magic (and psionic) O.C.C.s from the upcoming Beyond the Supernatural RPG could be adapted for formally trained mages if one so wished, but they would be extremely rare. Such mages may belong to organizations that saw the Coming of the Rifts, and may have made preparations to escape the Great Cataclysm, such as the *Lazlo Agency* mentioned in Rifts® World Book 4: Africa.

Can a magically created duplicate of a character (i.e., Doppelganger, or ID Self) control objects that can only be controlled by the original?

No, they cannot act as the original to control things the original sorcerer created. This means they cannot be used to recharge Talismans created by the true mage or by another duplicate.

Where can I find rules for spell creation?

Rules for spell creation, plus some exotic spells can be found in the Nightbane® sourcebook **Through the Glass Darkly**. While this book is designed for the Nightbane® setting, the rules for magic are easily adapted and used in any of Palladium's games.

Can a Crazy become a Juicer?

No, any combination of the full MOM System and Juicer Conversion will cause the systems which provide the augmentation to overload and fail, killing the character as his body's internal functions go haywire.

Will Magic Tattoos work after Juicer/Crazy conversion?

If the character was a Tattooed Man and then became a Juicer or Crazy, the Magic Tattoos still work because the character is still very much *human*. However Juicer and MOM conversions will reduce the magic tattoos' range, duration, damage, etc., by half as per the normal rules for spell casters who receive bionic implants. Note: A Tattooed Man would *NEVER* willingly submit to such a conversion, so it's something of a moot point.

Can a character use Alter Aura to hide the presence of a Practitioner of Magic from beings like Dog Boys?

Yes, Alter Aura can be used to hide a Practitioner of Magic from a Dog Boy, but it will not conceal active magic, spell casting or magic items.

Lost Magic

What follows is some of the Spell Magic that was lost when Palladium Fantasy was converted from 1st to 2nd edition.

Some of these spells were omitted by error, while others needed scaling back or rewriting, so when we took on the task of converting the **Yin-Sloth Jungles™** sourcebook to Second Edition and we spotted several of these missing spells we decided to convert a larger selection of these Lost Magicks, instead of just doing those spells referenced in Yin-Sloth. So what is presented here is a larger selection of those spells that never made the transition to Second Edition, or were converted and presented in other Palladium products, but never made it back to Palladium Fantasy RPG®.

A Note on **Spell Level**: Most of the spells presented here have a different level than the original level in Palladium Fantasy. This was done to keep the spells in line with the rest of the Second Edition spells and rules.

Strength of Utgard Loki/Might of Palladium

Level: 5

Range: Self or others up to 30 feet (9 m) away; line of sight.

Duration: Two rounds per level of the spell caster.

Saving **Throw:** None.

P.P.E.: 15

This spell is designed to give its subject the "might" or strength and power of a great hero.

It gives the character an extra 2D6+6 S.D.C. one additional attack per melee round, turns P.S. into Supernatural P.S., and provides a bonus of +2 to strike, parry, damage and pull punch.

Note: The original Strength of Utgard Loki spell was a very powerful spell, and when Second Edition was printed it was omitted. Even the potion based on the spell was scaled back and renamed Might of Palladium.

Paralysis Bolt

Level: 6

Range: 90 feet (27.4 m).

Duration: Instant.

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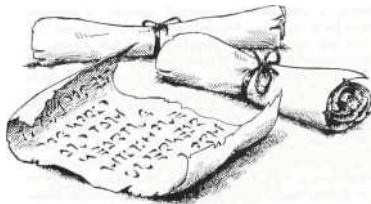
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Saving Throw: Dodge 19 or 20 plus standard saving throw.
P.P.E.: 15

This mystic energy bolt short circuits the victim's motor functions of the brain, rendering him totally paralyzed. The victim cannot move or speak, but can breathe, hear, and think. Paralysis lasts for 6 melees per level of the caster. The bolt hits automatically, leaping from the spell caster's hand or eye in a flash. Only a dodge of 19 or 20 can evade the mystic bolt (parry does not apply).

Reduce Object

Level: 6

Range: 30 feet (9.1 m).

Duration: 3 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 20

This shape altering spell reduces both size and weight of any (non-living) object such as wood, stone, minerals, liquids, statues, furniture, etc. Size is reduced to one-third the original size and the weight is reduced by one-half. This spell only works on objects less than 1000 pounds (450 kg).

Spirit of the Wolf

Level: 6

Range: Self of other.

Duration: 3 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 15

This high powered spell affects only one person per spell casting by heightening the five senses of that person. The following abilities are bestowed.

Sight: Nightvision 100 feet (305 m); 01-50% chance of seeing the invisible.

Hearing: Aware of a wider spectrum of sound frequencies; detects noise within a 20 foot (6.1 m) radius 90%, within 40 feet (12.2 m) 40%; and there is only a 10% chance of being caught off guard or from behind (also see bonuses).

Taste: Identify foods, spices, and plants by taste at a base skill of 50% +4% per level of experience. +10% bonus to the Brewing and Cooking skills.

Touch: Sensitive to even minor temperature changes felt on the skin, and can feel vibrations, raised or carved features, imperfections on a surface, etc. by touch. Base skill is 60% +3% per level of experience. +5% bonus to the skills of Palming, Concealment, Pick Locks and Pick Pockets.

Smell: Can identify odors within a 20 foot (6.1 m) radius or downwind. Human scents and man-made aromas: 72% +2% per level of experience; animal and subtle smells 60% +2 per level of experience.

Note: Additionally, the heightened five senses provide the following:

Track: Fresh trail (up to 3 hours old) 80%, less than one day old trail 60%. more than one day old trail 20%.

Sense of Direction: 90% - sense wind direction 80% - sense of time 70%.

Bonuses: +2 to damage, +1 to dodge, +1 on initiative.

Commune with the Dead

Level: 7

Range: Touch.

Duration: 2 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 20

This spell enables the spell caster to speak with a recently deceased person (12 hours maximum). The corpse will answer simple questions on any subject but does have a tendency to get easily confused. Although the corpse can answer questions, it still retains the memory and personality of the dead person with a will of its own. Consequently, it does not have to tell the truth

To activate the body, the spell caster recites the spell and touches the body. The spell can be cast upon only one body and it must be an intelligent being. The being will speak in its native language.

Sphere of Invisibility

Level: 7

Range: 15 foot (4.6 m) radius up to 30 feet (9.1 m) away.

Duration: 3 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 20

The spell caster is able to create a sphere or bubble of invisibility in which everyone within the sphere vanishes and can't be seen unless they exit the Sphere of Invisibility. The spell caster can alter the radius to his desire up to the maximum of a 15 foot (4.6 m) diameter. He can also mentally move the sphere, but at half his Spd attribute and can't cast spells while manipulating the sphere. In the alternative, the sphere can be stationary, affecting only those who step into that limited area of effect and only as long as inside the area, or the sphere can be cast upon someone else or around an object or item up to 60 feet (18.3 m) away; line of sight required (i.e., the spell caster must be able to see the area he's turning invisible). This spell has the same limitations as *Invisibility: Simple*.

Diminish Others

Level: 8

Range: 90 feet (27.4 m); line of sight.

Duration: 3 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 30

This spell affects any living, mortal creature. It does not affect supernatural beings (gods, Deevils, demons, Elementals, spirits, ghosts or similar) nor creatures of magic (Faerie Folk, dragons, sphinx, golems, zombies, etc.), but it can affect animated skeletons, vampires and Were-creatures. This spell shrinks any one target/person to six inches (0.15 m) in height, so long as that person is within the spell caster's line of vision and within range. Those willing to be shrunk do not roll to save vs

Expel Demons or Deevils

Level: 8

Range: 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Immediate, 1D6 hours. Saving

Throw: Special. P.P.E.: 35

The spell caster is able to repel all lesser demons and other lesser supernatural beings, forcing them to leave the area and not return for at least one hour (roll 1D6 hours). The spell may also expel Greater Demons with less efficiency and for a shorter period (1D6x10 minutes). Note: Lesser supernatural beings must roll an 18 or higher to save vs spell magic. Greater demons and other powerful supernatural beings need only a 12 or higher to save, and usually have significant bonuses that apply. Demon Lords, Elementals (any), spirit beings and gods are impervious to this spell.

See Rifts® Conversion Book One or the Rifts® Book of Magic for the original conversion of the Expel Demons spell. This description is actually an amalgam of two First Edition spells, Expel Demons and Expel Devils.

Turn Objects Invisible

Level: 8

Range: 60 feet (18.3 m).

Duration: 2 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 25

The spell caster is enabled to turn one object invisible or a small number of stationary objects invisible (within a 5 foot/1.5 m radius). However the weight of the object(s) must not exceed 60 pounds. In the case of weapons the weapon will be invisible but will become visible when stained by blood. Magic items turned invisible will still radiate magic if a Sense Magic is per-

Death

Level: 9

Range: 60 feet (18.3 m).

Duration: One melee round.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 50

This incantation wracks its victim's body and nervous system, inflicting 1D6 points of damage per level of the spell caster. This is an automatic hit each time it is cast and affects the victim's Hit Points directly. One person is affected at a time. The spell can hit a target up to 60 feet (18.3 m) away. Use it with care.

Teleport Self

Level: 10

Range: 5 miles (8 km) per level of experience or line of sight.

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 120

This spell functions exactly like the spell Teleport: Superior except that the Wizard can only take himself plus 50 lbs (22.5 kg), and another 5 lbs (2.25 kg) per level of experience in additional weight. The chances of success are the same as those listed under *Teleport: Superior*.

This spell saw conversion in the Heroes Unlimited G.M.'s Guide where it saw print under the spell Teleport. It was omitted by error and sorely missed by Kevin Siembieda, who loved this spell and had characters who used it often.

Geas

Level: 12

Range: 30 feet (9.1 m).

Duration: Conditional.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 250

This powerful spell enables the spell caster to mesmerize and establish a geas/quest within the mind of his victim. The enchanted person will be suddenly compelled to fill the implanted quest, deserting friends, family, and responsibility. The enchanted person will not accept any quest that is illogical or that directly violates his alignment, code of ethics, or beliefs.

Doppelganger

Level: 13

Range: Self.

Duration: 24 hours per level of the caster (permanent ones are very rare). Saving

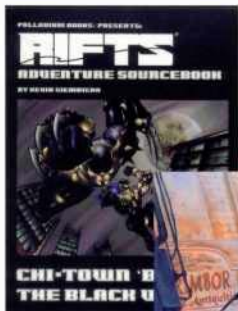
Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 500 for a temporary clone, 2000 P.P.E. to create a permanent one (lives half the remaining life span expected of the original creator).

This powerful spell creates a mystical *duplicate* of the spell cater. This "clone" looks exactly like the spell caster in every way, but possesses only half of his Hit Points, memory, knowledge, attributes, P.P.E. and spell knowledge and casting abilities, etc. The original spell caster can implant any idea, goal, emotion, memory, etc., that he desires into the Doppelganger's mind. He can then awaken it and send it on a mission, or have it work with him side by side. The Doppelganger will never question its existence and is usually completely loyal to its creator.

The Wizard can only create one Doppelganger and cannot create another until that Doppelganger is slain, dispelled or negated. Doppelgangers can be killed by normal weapons or magic and can be instantly destroyed by a Negate Magic spell.

Note: Yes, a Doppelganger can create a Doppelganger of itself (one), but the copy of the copy cannot.



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