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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.

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The Rifter® Number 47

Your guide to the Palladium Megaverse®!

First Printing – July 2009

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Palladium Books® Presents:

THE RIFTER® #47

BRANDT - 97

Sourcebook and Guide to the Palladium Megaverse®

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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.

– *Kevin Siembieda, 2009*

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Page 6 – Art

The art on page six is a black and white version of the cover for **Fleets of the Three Galaxies™**. The artist is *Michael Majestic* and this is his first cover for Palladium Books. You might recognize his name from the stellar artwork he has done for **Robotech®: Macross® Saga**, **Robotech®: The Masters Saga™** and **Chaos Earth™**. And if you think it looks good in black and white, just wait till you see the color cover.

We are pretty excited about **Fleets of the Three Galaxies™** and think fans of science fiction, spaceships and Phase World® are going to love it. It is filled with new spaceships, new information about key people and nations of the Three Galaxies, as well as fabulous artwork, space gear, spaceship creation guidelines, combat damage table, space combat strategies and tactics, details about space fighters and an un-advertized surprise.

Page 7 – From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

Publisher Kevin Siembieda talks about getting new product onto store shelves, reprints part of an email from a fan and waxes philosophic about how role-playing games are supposed to be fun and entertaining, what makes a good game, writer's block, and Erick Wujcik. It's an interesting read and a must for those of you toying with writing RPG material for Palladium or yourself.

Page 8 – News

There is a fair amount of news this issue, starting with the latest about the Rifts® movie, new podcasts, more Murmurs from the Megaverse®, Project X (and what it was), a brief 2009 Palladium Open House "after-action" report, plans for the 2010 Open House (VIP tickets go on sale July 31, 2009!), and other stuff. Read all about it here.

Page 9 – Coming Attractions

Palladium continues to release books at a steady pace. **Nightbane® Survival Guide** (awesome), **Fleets of the Three Galaxies™**, and a new **2009 Catalog**, plus this issue of **The Rifter®** you hold in your hands are all at the printer or already on store shelves as July releases.

Rifts® Dimension Book™ 12: Dimensional Outbreak™, **Heroes of the Megaverse®, Mysteries of Magic™: Book One for The Palladium Fantasy RPG®,** and **Robotech®: UEEF Marines™ Sourcebook** all quickly follow as August and September releases. Get all the juicy details.

And due to space limitations this issue, we didn't even hype up the awesome **Rifts® dice bag**, **Rifts® coffee mug**, **Rifts® baseball cap**, set of **four Palladium magnets**, **calculator**, **new T-shirts**, **Gamer items** and other cool stuff. You'll have to go to Palladium's website and read all about it in the Press Releases and online store.

Page 15 – Rifts® Cargo Cults™

John C. Philpott takes a walk on the bizarre and wild side with his presentation of "Cargo Cults" (a real world phenomenon) on Rifts Earth. Part religion, part magic and all strange, this article is a great example of the totally new and unheard of

ideas that spring up in **The Rifter®** and can energize any campaign.

The Cargo Priest O.C.C. – page 22.

Cargo Magic – page 24.

Supercargo Spells – page 33.

Cargo Engineering Projects – page 39.

Integrating Cargo Magic into Rifts® – page 42.

Artwork by *Kent Burles*, who does a wonderful job capturing exactly what the Cargo Cult is and how its magic works.

Page 43 – The N.O.R.A.D. Duology Part One: The Fall of N.O.R.A.D.

An epic and wild adventure for *Rifts® Chaos Earth™*

Ed Emmer presents a mind-boggling journey that starts out in the first few days of the Great Cataclysm. The world is in Chaos, monsters and demons are everywhere, and the world governments are scrambling to find a plan to survive. This adventure takes a look at what happened to N.O.R.A.D. when the Cataclysm struck.

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U.S.A.F. Silent Soldier Power Armor – page 52.

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Slicer Demon – page 73.

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The Uncertain Future & the Road Ahead – page 77.

N.O.R.A.D. Sublevel Seven Complex Map – page 77.

The Big Map of Sublevel Seven – page 78.

Unresolved Issues – page 82.

Beyond the Supernatural™ Note – page 83.

The biggest surprise of all: This is just Part One of a Two Part Crossover adventure. Part Two, next issue, takes the adventure 300 years into the future and the ruins of N.O.R.A.D. in current day Rifts Earth. Like we said, an “epic” adventure.

Artwork by *Nick Bradshaw*.

Page 83 – The Chain Letter

For Palladium game settings from Rifts® to Nightbane®

Greg Spivey gives us another example of thinking outside the box and taking something we all know about and running with it in strange and unusual ways.

Artwork by *Amy L. Ashbaugh*.

Page 93 – Hammer of the Forge™

Chapter 47: The latest installment of *James M.G. Cannon’s* epic tale set in the Three Galaxies. Our heroes begin to realize that they’re all in the same predicament, and their common enemy reveals himself. Can they hope to defeat him?

Art by *Apollo Okamura*.

The Theme for Issue 47

This issue the theme is weird magic, war and chaos. The centerpiece to this issue is the epic Chaos Earth™ adventure that will take you on a wilder ride than you might imagine. *Cargo Cults* is just more cool weirdness and so is the article about *Chain Letters* in numerous Palladium RPG settings from Nightbane® to Rifts®.

We think this is another concept-packed issue to provoke your imagination and inspire you to try new ideas and expand your gaming Megaverse®.

Fledgling writers and long-time gamers who think they are decent writers should think about sending in *your* own ideas for articles, adventures and source material for **The Rifter®**.

Shouldn’t this be the Swimsuit Issue?

You are correct, this should be the fourth annual swimsuit issue. The swimsuit issue was the brainchild of *Wayne Breaux Jr.*, and we had a lot of fun with it, especially that very first issue. A lot of fans really enjoyed them.

So where is it? Well, as much as folks loved the first two issues, we started to get feedback from our readers that they would rather see more adventures and regular source material than pin-up drawings, even if each illustration was accompanied by a complete description and stats for the femme fatales.

We always try to listen to our audience and give them what they want, so no hot villainous babes this year. If you would like to see the swimsuit issue back next year, *let us know, now*, but it’s totally okay if you don’t.

Rifter® Articles Wanted!

You do not need to be a professional writer. Yes, we want well written and well thought out, original material, but **The Rifter®** is a “fanzine” written by fans, for fans. That means gamers just like you. So think about writing up something short (even something as small as 4-6 pages). Newcomers and regular contributors are always welcomed.

The Rifter® is always looking for new material, especially when it comes to adventures and source material for *all* of our game lines, especially *Rifts®*, *Chaos Earth™*, *Palladium Fantasy RPG®*, *Heroes Unlimited™*, *Ninjas and Superspies™*, *Beyond the Supernatural™*, *Dead Reign™*, *Splicers®* and *Nightbane®*.

Pay is lousy, fame is dubious, but you get to share your ideas and adventures with fellow gamers and get four free copies to show to your friends and family. **Note:** Articles can range from 4-24 pages, be for any Palladium game setting and may be optional and variant rules, adventures, Game Master tips, player tips, monsters, demons, villains, magic, psionics, superpowers, superheroes, new O.C.C.s, Morphuses, short works of fiction, and so on.

The Cover

The cover is by *David Monette*. It was originally created for the Rifts® Collectible Card Game (CCG) waaaaay back in 2000. Wayne and Kevin liked the art and thought it would make a nice, moody illustration that says, cyborg summer, Rifts®, Chaos Earth™ and dangerous fun inside. We hope you like it too.

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 inappropriate 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

The Rifter® #48

The October issue is always our “horror” special issue, so you can expect scary source material, adventures and ideas for Palladium’s many different role-playing game settings, including *Beyond the Supernatural™*, *Nightbane®*, *Rifts®* and others.

- **Material for Rifts®.**
- **Questions and Answers about the Nightbane.**
- **Material for Palladium Fantasy RPG®**
- **Material for Beyond the Supernatural™ (tentative).**
- **Additional source material not yet determined.**
- **The next chapter of *The Hammer of the Forge™*.**
- **Latest news, coming attractions and fun.**

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



Fleets of the Three Galaxies™ cover by Mike Majestic

From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

Sales have been up, down and all over the place. Palladium will have a couple of good months, and then a couple of bad. It keeps your hair standing on end and your mind wondering, “Are we doing really well, or are we in trouble?” Crazy. Sadly, that scenario is true for many businesses, not just our own. We just have to take a deep breath, stay positive, hope for the best, and work hard to make it so.

Palladium has many, great new books coming this Summer and Fall. As far as we can tell, we are printing more RPG products than anyone else on the market, and (usually) feel hopeful about Palladium’s future. As long as we have our fans’ continuing support, we should do just fine in the long run.

In fact, just as we were feeling a little worn out and apprehensive, I get this wonderful e-mail from a fan:

“It’s funny how gaming seems to go in circles. You know, over the past few years, I’ve tried a metric ton of different RPGs – some good, some bad, some indifferent – and none of them, not one, has the tone and enthusiasm of a game like the Palladium Fantasy RPG. And that’s what I finally figured out was missing from other games.

“No one writes with the same passion Palladium does. Anyone can write stat blocks and locale descriptions, but Palladium’s books and authors always seem fired-up about what they’re presenting. That sort of unbridled and unabashed enthusiasm is something you don’t see much of in the other corners of the hobby anymore. Perhaps other writers have become too cynical, or too worried about being “edgy” and have forgotten we’re supposed to be *enjoying* the hell out of this activity.

“So no matter what I try in gaming, it seems I am always coming *home* to Palladium. But I guess by now, I can’t see it being any other way.”

Glad to hear it, my friend. Thank you for the heartfelt and uplifting email. This is exactly why we keep doing role-playing games. We love them and we love our fans.

That love is part of what you are seeing in Palladium’s games and sourcebooks, and what makes them special. As anyone who has come to one of the *Palladium Open Houses* has discovered, we are all gamer geeks just like YOU. We love role-playing games, we love telling stories, and we strive to make you, our fellow gamers, swoon with excitement and bold new ideas.

It’s funny, and I have talked about this before, but a lot of writers and game designers get so caught up in the rules, or the mechanics of writing, or trying to being “edgy,” that they forget they are writing a game. That the game is entertainment and is supposed to be fun. It’s supposed to leave the reader saying, “Wow! I have to play this.” Other times, I think the writers and game designers are afraid to cut loose and end up holding themselves back.

Hey, I’m not slamming the competition or young writers, I see it all the time with my own new guys, and it is a struggle all writers face, myself included. Getting lost in the game mechanics or some other aspect of the game is easy to do and causes the

rest of the book to suffer. Furthermore, no matter how much you may be enjoying the writing and design work, it is hard, challenging and at some point, it turns into *a grind*. You have deadlines to meet, the early inspiration has waned, and you just feel worn out – like the damn book is never going to be finished. Sometimes you might even feel too tired to keep going. You want to put the book aside and work on something else, or nothing at all for a month. Only you can’t do that. You must find a way to re-energize, re-inspire and regain your focus. Most of all, you have to find and keep the fun and what I call “the Wow Factor.”

Erick Wujcik used to marvel at my ability to do that so effortlessly. At least, it looked effortless to him. It’s not, it’s hard, but with years (dare I say, decades) of practice it gets a lot easier. While Erick found the secret to staying fresh and excited about his writing (it is different for every writer), there were times where he just crashed and burned. Poor Erick could suffer from writer’s block for several months at a time. Once it lasted a year! When I’d complain that I was writing slow or that I was suffering a writer’s block for a week or two, Erick would laugh mockingly (and with a touch of envy) and say, “Kev, you don’t know what writer’s block is. Two weeks is nothing.”

Watching Erick and others struggle so hard sometimes, I do understand, and I also realize I am super-fortunate to not suffer like that very often. Part of my success at staying high-energy is due to Erick and the **Detroit Gaming Center**, where I was able to completely immerse myself in gaming and experience hundreds of different gaming styles, approaches and attitudes. During the first 10 years of Palladium’s existence, and a couple of years prior to it, Erick and I would constantly, almost daily, discuss game mechanics, game design, writing and entertainment. While we both took somewhat different approaches to our work, we both grasped early on that we were creating games. Storytelling games at that. Thus, our products had to be, **a)** fun, **b)** captivating stories and settings, **c)** fun, **d)** exciting for the players, **e)** fun, **f)** as easy and fun for the Game Masters to run as it was for the players to play, and **g)** FUN!

While Erick and I always took our work seriously, we NEVER took *ourselves* too seriously. In fact, we often laughed about and felt pity for the G.M.s, players and gaming professionals who took themselves very, very seriously. We were a couple of talented clowns who enjoyed telling stories, gaming, exploring new ideas, sharing them with other people and having fun. We never lost sight of that. We always managed to hang onto our childlike joy of life and a sense of wonder about everything. Consequently, when we got excited about a game idea, we knew other gamers would too. We would use our enthusiasm to run with the idea, think big, try to consider all the possibilities, take the best ideas and push them to the max. If that idea didn’t work, we tossed it out regardless of how much time we may have spent on it, and found something that did work. Not just work, but work better.

For me, I deliberately try to make everything in the books Palladium publishes, whether I wrote it, or someone else wrote it, fun, compelling, interesting, and entertaining. If it’s none of

those things it needs to be “fixed” – rewritten, expanded, shortened, given a different perspective, or whatever it takes – or *thrown out*. If the material isn’t interesting or fun, or doesn’t add to the gaming experience, *it does not belong in the book*. I try to look at everything from the point of view of, “How can I make this the most fun and interesting, or better yet, *wow* the reader?” with everything from a pistol, spell, power or morphus, to a new O.C.C., hero, monster, villain or setting. I never – not ever – think, “Well, it’s just this or that, so what’s there to write about it?” It is our job as writers and game designers to make it *compelling* and *fun*.

We create games. They are supposed to be exciting, surprising, challenging, inspiring and a host of other things. But mostly they need to be playable, compelling and *fun*. And that’s what I, as publisher and game designer, *insist on* for every RPG book and sourcebook Palladium publishes. We miss the mark sometimes, but more often than not, we strike gaming gold, and that means endless hours of fun and adventure. I’m thrilled so many of you recognize and enjoy that about Palladium Books.

It doesn’t hurt that I enjoy the fruits of an overactive imagination, either. Game on!

– Kevin Siembieda, June, 2009

News

By Kevin Siembieda, the guy who should know

Rifts® Movie Update

Here’s what we can tell you:

- JB Films liked Rawson Thurber’s first draft screenplay.
- The Rifts® Movie Option has been renewed for one more year.
- There have been some rumblings and mumblings, but nothing official yet.

I think **JB Films** has *always wanted* to make a **Rifts®** movie, but film-making is not a simple matter. It takes time – sometimes an excruciating amount of time. Everything has to fall into place just right. There is a lot of money, a lot of people, and a lot of other different things to consider and deal with.

Certainly, all of us at Palladium Books would LOVE to see a Rifts® movie – and videogame, and MMOG, and toys, and comic books, and, well, everything you can imagine! Will any of that ever happen? We’ll all have to wait and see.

The dream is still alive.

Project X was a Rifts® MMOG, but we couldn’t make it happen

I think I’ve already announced this online, but while we’re talking about dreams, let me mention here that **Project X** was Palladium’s third attempt to turn **Rifts®** into an *MMOG* (massively multi-player online game).

This time we thought we really had all the right creative people in place. The licensor was a small, start-up company, with an interesting and impressive background in the videogame

business. An up and coming mover and shaker in the electronic medium. The owner and his people had vision, guts, talent, familiarity with Rifts® and the creative minds to make a truly epic **Rifts® MMOG**. *Erick Wujcik* was consulting for us on the matter even before he knew he was sick, which tells you how long we had been working on this project. Erick hooked the MMOG guys up with an incredible *CGI company* whose artistry and skill blew our minds. The Palladium crew and I were going to be intimately involved, and our licensing partners cared about Palladium and the **Rifts®** property. They flew in to meet us. We had several conference calls lasting hours, and excitement was high. For a long while it seemed like a match made in heaven.

Then the worldwide economic crisis hit. Money and investors dried up overnight and the **Rifts® MMOG** languished. After a year of valiant effort on the part of our licensing partner to get financing, there was still none to be had, and we finally had to let the whole thing go.

It was heartbreaking for everyone involved.

Of course, we continue to try to bring **Rifts®** and other Palladium I.P.s (like **Nightbane™** and **Beyond the Supernatural™**) to new venues. It is a much more difficult task than you might imagine, especially in these tough economic times when people are afraid to take risks, but we are confident something will break sooner or later. And when it does, watch out.

Gateway to the Megaverse® Podcast

<http://www.talkshoe.com/talkshoe/web/talkCast.jsp?masterId=50867&cmd=tc>

Matthew Daye is the force behind the “live” podcast program **Gateway to the Megaverse®**.

For a variety of reasons, there have been fewer podcasts this year, but I’m told that’s going to change. For one thing, I plan to be on the show much more often. For example, as I write this, I’ll be on June 22, July 6, and probably July 20 or 27, 2009. Interview shows start around 6:00 PM, chat episodes start at 6:30 PM Eastern Time.

The “live” podcast is usually every *Monday* evening (at 6:00 or 6:30 PM Eastern Time). Some have Palladium creators as guest speakers, others are open discussions about various books, rules, and points of discussion. And I recommend tuning in, especially to the interviews with creators.

One of the cool things about a “live” podcast is you can email or call in *your own questions*, and we appreciate it when you do so.

If you miss a show, no problem, you can also *download the podcast* after the live airing to listen to it at your leisure, *anytime*. So join the fun.

More Kevin Siembieda and other Palladium creators. I plan to get back into the routine of being a frequent guest speaker. I got away from that when dealing with the loss of Erick Wujcik (I was pretty down) and then I became laser focused on getting out new book releases. However, I have come to learn that many listeners enjoyed hearing me talk about Palladium, gaming, game design and stuff, and want me back, so I’m getting back into the podcast swing of things. I apologize if I disappointed anyone by not being quite as accessible as I have been in the past.

On a personal note, I finally had the great pleasure of meeting Matthew Daye at the **2009 Palladium Open House**. Though we have talked many times on the telephone and on the podcasts over the last three years, we never actually met. He's a strapping lad and all around great guy. My only regret was that I was unable to spend much time with him at the Open House as my presence and attention was pulled in a hundred different directions. I know Matthew understood, but it would have been nice. Maybe next year.

Murmurs from the Megaverse®

A continuing blog by Kevin Siembieda

Don't forget about my **Murmurs from the Megaverse®** online. It's a blog sort of dialog where I post my thoughts, feelings, frustrations, product updates, news (often even before it hits our weekly Press Release), musings about life and the creative process, work on current books, behind the scenes insight, and the goings-on at Palladium Books as they are happening. I have been posting 2-3 times a week, sometimes more (sometimes less when I'm really buried with getting books out), but I plan to be posting more often. Editor Alex Marciniszyn posts from time to time as well.

Our pal, *Teresa Mead*, told Alex that as far as she was concerned, my *Murmurs* were the predecessor to *Twittering*. That gave us all a laugh. Anyway, most are fun and informative, so check 'em out from time to time to get a more personal view of life and work at Palladium Books.

I plan to start posting more often every week to keep everyone informed and excited about the future of role-playing in general, and Palladium in particular.



2009 Open House Report

Okay, here is the short version.

After taking a year off, we decided to host another Palladium Open House – four days of fun and gaming. This year's event was May, 2009. We had 95 different gaming events, approximately 230 people in attendance, a live auction (Saturday evening), an epic costume contest (Saturday evening), cool costume prizes, Carmen Bellaire's surprise *Rifts®* board game (a smash hit at the POH), a couple panel talks, and non-stop gaming. Most nights we gamed at Palladium till 1:00 A.M. and the truly committed gamers continued to play at the hotel (we had two

game rooms) into the wee hours of the morning. **The Dead Reign™ Sourcebook: Civilization Gone™** debuted at the POH, I gave tours of the Palladium offices, and 99% of everyone in attendance had a great time.

Kathy Simmons is the hero of the hour, because she did 80-90% of the Open House preparations, cleaning, organizing and set up, and was there the entire weekend making sure most everything ran smoothly. Thanks to Kathy, we were able to focus most of our time on developing new product. It was a truly superhuman effort, and she enjoyed a two minute standing ovation on V.I.P. Night.

One of the really cool things for those in attendance is that 35+ Palladium creators (me, the Palladium staff, freelance writers and artists, contributors to *The Rifter®*, and others) are available to run games, chat and sign autographs. That means you get to play games by the very people who make them. Where else does that happen on such a large scale? *Only at Palladium Books!* The artists also sell prints and original art, do sketches and are happy to talk the day away.

This year ran smoother than ever, thanks largely to Kathy's organizational skills and hard work. We had a few glitches, namely the game sign-up procedure and having enough gaming events to accommodate everyone at all times, but we're working on making the *2010 Open House* even smoother and better than ever.

To read more about the event and to see a couple hundred photos, go to Palladium's website (www.palladiumbooks.com).

2010 Palladium Open House

April 29 - May 2, 2010

The 2009 Open House was such a success that we made the decision to host another Open House **April 29 - May 2, 2010** just weeks later.

We and the people in attendance had so much fun that we just had to do it again. So start saving your money and making plans to come on down and join the fun next Spring.

The same, wonderful hotel has already been reserved and is already taking reservations. (**FYI:** Same low \$69.95 rate for a double bed or king, free Continental breakfast, two open gaming rooms, nice quality, friendly service, plus you can reserve your room *now*, but the hotel does not charge your credit card until the actual event.) Some fans had so much fun that they were trying to reserve rooms for the **2010 Open House** even before we made arrangements with the hotel.

Likewise, because so many gamers wanted to reserve their admissions to the 2010 Open House, you can already purchase admissions to the event from Palladium. Unlike the hotel, however, we do charge your card now, but you can cancel and get a full refund up to March 1, 2010.

Comfort Inn Plymouth Clock Tower Hotel

40455 Ann Arbor Road (right off of I-275)
Plymouth, MI 48170

Call 734-455-8100 TO MAKE A RESERVATION at the \$69.95 price, but you *MUST* tell them you want a room in the **Block Reserved for Palladium Books**.

2010 V.I.P. Thursday Tickets become available *July 31, 2009*

Last year, on the exact same date, we sold out 65 V.I.P. tickets in 13 hours! That means you will want to be ready to place your order for 2010 tickets as soon as they go up for sale.

2010 Open House V.I.P. tickets will be made available in two separate offerings. The first and largest batch (around 45) will go on sale Friday evening, July 31, 2009. We will hold back 20 to be offered in February, 2010. We do so in an attempt to give EVERYONE who wants to attend a chance at reserving V.I.P. tickets.

V.I.P. Night (4:00 P.M. to 11:00+ P.M.): An evening with Kevin Siembieda, the Palladium staff and dozens of other Palladium creators and contributors, dinner catered by Kathy Simmons, soft drinks, first opportunity to make purchases, an open talk with Kevin Siembieda, and then an evening of gaming or chatting with Kevin and other Palladium personalities, one on one. Limited to around *65 lucky paying guests* plus Palladium staff and creators.

Cost: \$60 – sold on a first come, first served basis.

2010 V.I.P. tickets go on sale the evening of July 31, 2009.

2010 Palladium Open House

Dates: Thursday through Sunday, April 29-May 2.

Cost:

3 Day Weekend: \$40 per person (Friday thru Sunday).

Friday Only: \$16 per person.

Saturday Only: \$16 per person.

Sunday Only: \$12 per person.

V.I.P. Thursday: \$60 per person.

Location: The Palladium Warehouse at 39074 Webb Court, Westland, Michigan, 48185-7606. (734) 271-2903 order line only.

Attendance: Limited to around 300. Available on a first come, first served basis.

Hours:

Thursday VIP ONLY Hours: 4:00 PM doors open. 5:30 PM dinner. 7:00 PM Kevin Siembieda talks. 8:00 PM (or so) V.I.P.s can play in various gaming events or gather and talk with Kevin Siembieda, Palladium staff members and other Palladium creators.

Friday Hours: 9:30 A.M. doors open. 10:00 A.M. till midnight gaming and other events. Gaming hours may be extended; plus all-night gaming rooms at the hotel.

Saturday Hours: 9:30 A.M. doors open. 10:00 A.M. till midnight gaming and other events. Live auction and costume competition are part of Saturday's evening events. Gaming hours may be extended; plus all-night gaming rooms at the hotel.

Sunday Hours: 9:30 A.M. doors open. 10:00 A.M. till 4:00 P.M. gaming.

Placing Your Order:

Online Store: www.palladiumbooks.com

By Telephone: Call (734) 721-2903 – have your credit card information ready.

By Mail: Send check or money order to:

Palladium Books

Dept. POH

39074 Webb Court

Westland, MI 48185-7606

Please include your FULL address and apartment number. Also include the complete NAME of EACH person you are ordering a ticket for, as well as your *telephone number* in case there is a problem and we need to contact you.

Methods of Payment:

Credit Cards: *Visa, MasterCard* and most credit cards are accepted. **All Credit Card orders must include:** Credit Card No. – Name on the card – Address of the Credit Cardholder – Expiration Date – Telephone Number of the cardholder.

Check or Money Order: Sent via the USPS or other delivery service.

Certificate of Admission & Special Name Badge. Everyone who places their admission order *before April 5th* gets an 8½ x 11 inch certificate of admission with their name and guest number, suitable for framing or as a collector's item. A color name badge will be waiting for you when you arrive, and some people have Kevin Siembieda sign their badge before they leave.

Palladium RPG titles available as PDFs from DriveThruRPG.com

80+ Palladium titles are available as PDF digital downloads from **DriveThruRPG.com**. With a few more becoming available every month.

New! Palladium's famous **Weapon Series** (*Weapons & Armor, Weapons & Castles, Weapons & Assassins, Weapons of the Orient, Exotic Weapons, and European Castles*) are all being made available in July.

Other notable titles include:

The "original" Rifts® RPG (out of print)

The "original" Rifts® Sourcebook One (out of print)

The Rifts® Index #1 & #2.

The Rifts® Game Shield & Adventure Book (out of print)

The Rifts® Coalition Wars® (Siege on Tolkeen™) series.

The Mechanoid Invasion® Trilogy (1981-1982)

The Mechanoids® (1985; a complete RPG)

The "original" Beyond the Supernatural™ 1st Ed.

Boxed Nightmares™ for BTS First Edition rules

Palladium Fantasy RPG® First Edition rules and the first six sourcebooks (including *Island at the Edge of the World*).

Heroes Unlimited™, First Edition rules (revised).

Aliens Unlimited™ (HU2)

Shadows of Light™ (Nightbane®)

After the Bomb® RPG and related sourcebooks.

The Rifter® #1-40 and more.

2009 Catalog of Palladium Books

A new catalog of Palladium products will be printed and available in July. The catalog is FREE upon request to gamers, stores and distributors. All you gotta do is ask.

Coming Attractions

By Kevin Siembieda, the guy who should know

Coming in July

- Nightbane® Survival Guide™
- The Rifter® #47
- Fleets of the Three Galaxies™
- 2009 Catalog of Palladium Books®
- A couple of books back in print.
- Rifts® Baseball cap

Coming in August

- Mysteries of Magic™ (for Palladium Fantasy RPG®)
- Dimensional Outbreak™
- And maybe a surprise or two.

Coming Fall 2009

- Robotech® UEEF Marines Sourcebook
- Heroes of the Megaverse®
- Armageddon Unlimited™ (Minion War™ crossover for HU2)
- Robotech® New Generation™ Sourcebook
- Robotech® Book of Spaceships
- Warpath™ Urban Jungle™ RPG
- Dead Reign™ Sourcebook Two
- And more?

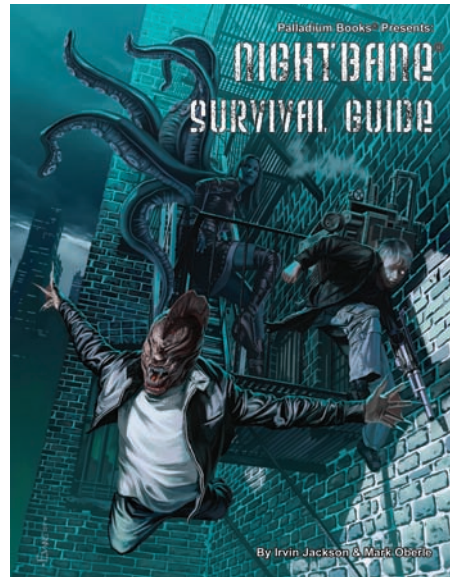
Nightbane® Survival Guide™

By the time you read this, **Nightbane® Survival Guide™** will be in stores (ships from the Palladium warehouse no later than July 9, 2009).

This epic sourcebook is jam-packed with new ideas and revelations about the Nightbane, their psychology, motives, fears, new Morphuses, why the Morphus looks the way it does, new Talents, new insanity table, new skills, making (and keeping) contacts, espionage tactics, a fully fleshed out adventure and many additional adventure hooks and ideas, information, background info and more.

Newcomers can start playing with *this book* and the **Nightbane® RPG**, and **long-time fans** of Nightbane should be thrilled. If you have never played **Nightbane®** before, take a look at this book.

The focus of the **Nightbane® Survival Guide** is on the Nightbane themselves, the Becoming, their survival, the Hidden War against the invading Nightlords, the psychology behind the Morphus, keeping secrets, making contacts, being hunted, re-



cruitment by factions, more info about the factions, new Nightbane Morphus descriptions and tables, new Nightbane Talents, some new skills, and more.

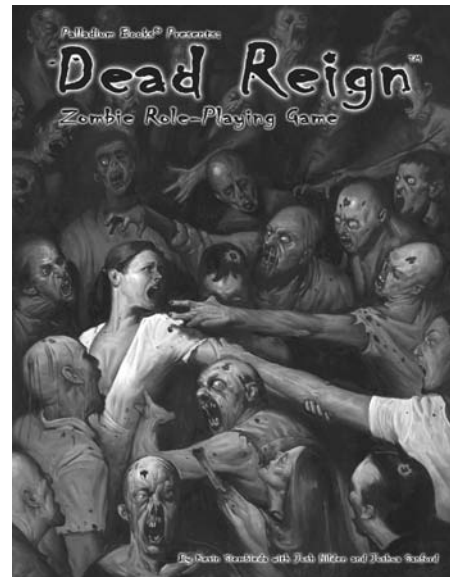
Can also be used with **Dead Reign™**, **Heroes Unlimited™**, **Ninjas & Superspies™**, and any S.D.C. setting.

- **Nightbane Psychology and origin theories.**
- **25 New Nightbane Morphus Tables.**
- **7 New Nightbane Talents.**
- **15 New Elite Nightbane Talents.**
- **42 New Skills.**
- **Making Contacts.**
- **NPC Faction creation rules and recruiting tactics.**
- **New Nightbane Creation Guideline Tables.**
- **Random Nightbane Character Background Tables.**
- **Nightlords and Anti-Nightbane operations.**
- **A complete adventure, adventure ideas and world information.**
- **Written by Mark Oberle, Irvin Jackson & Kevin Siembieda.**
- **160 pages – \$20.95 retail – Cat. No. 735. Available now.**
- **Additional Nightbane® Sourcebooks are currently in development.**

Nightbane® RPG

Superhero-Horror – a new gaming genre

There is a sinister conspiracy afoot, and you are caught in the middle of it whether you want to be or not. You see, everything changed on **Dark Day** – the day the sun never rose. Something bad happened that day. Most people don't know exactly what, but nothing has been the same since. Life is a little grimmer, the days a little darker, the nights a lot more frightening, and the future uncertain. People claim monsters now lurk in the shadows and streets at night. People claim your husband, wife, child, friend, co-worker, or delivery man may not be who you think they are. They may be some "thing" not even human.



The Earth was invaded on Dark Day and most people don't even know it. The world leaders, governments and law enforcement agencies were the first to be infiltrated and taken over. Replaced by depraved and wicked supernatural beings that appear human but are not. Other monsters are said to roam the streets too. The Internet is full of stories about monsters, vampires, demons, and something called the Nightbane and something worse, the Nightlords and their minions. The (demon controlled) governments deny any such thing. The only ones who truly know better are the *Nightbane*. The Nightbane know, because they are drawn, like moths to a flame, into a secret war against the dreaded Nightlords and their diabolic legion of dark servants and human traitors.

Welcome to the world of **Nightbane®**. And actually there's more, as the conspiracy and conflict extends into the realms of the *Dreamstream*, the *Astral Plane*, and the hellish world of the *Nightlands*.

- **The Nightbane R.C.C. – misbegotten heroes.**
- **Nightbane Morphus tables.**
- **Nightbane gangs/secret societies known as *factions*.**
- **Nightbane Talents, magic and psionics.**
- **The Nightlords and their key demonic minions.**
- **Dark Day, conspiracy and what comes next.**
- **Horror and heroics in a world of treachery & deceit.**
- **A complete role-playing game. Cover by Brom.**
- **240 pages – \$24.95 retail – Cat. No. 730. Available now.**
- **Epic Sourcebooks include *Between the Shadows™* (the Dreamstream, Astral Plane, monsters, and world information), *Nightlands™* (the twilight homeland of the Nightlords, more minions, demons, monsters, and adventure), *Through the Glass Darkly™* (the most disturbing forms of magic you'll ever see, rules for inventing new spells, creating charms, miscasting spells, magical divination, new spells, plus sorcerers such as the Fleshsculptor, Cybermage, Mirrormage, Channeller, monsters and more!), and the latest sourcebook, the **Nightbane® Survival Guide** (just shipped), with many more to come.**

Dead Reign™ RPG

The Zombie Apocalypse

Dead Reign™ is a role-playing game where the dead have risen, civilization has crumbled, and brave *human survivors* refuse to lie down and die! They battle the walking dead on all fronts, watch each other's backs, struggle to forge safe havens away from the zombie infested cities, rescue other survivors, and fight without respite.

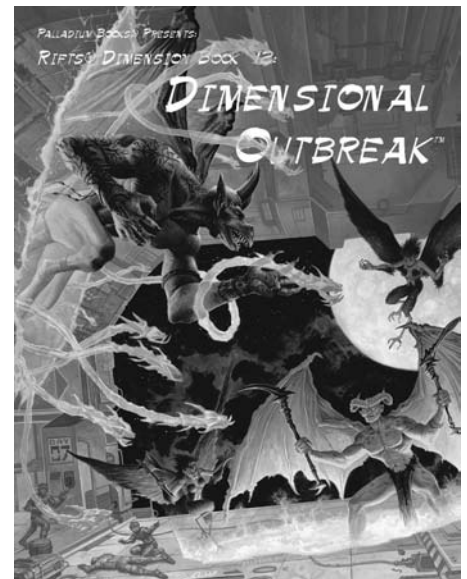
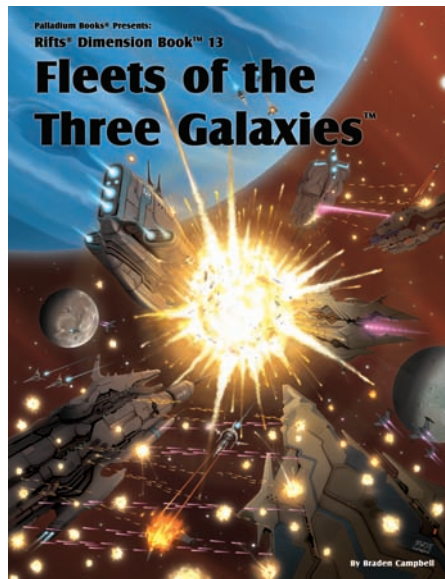
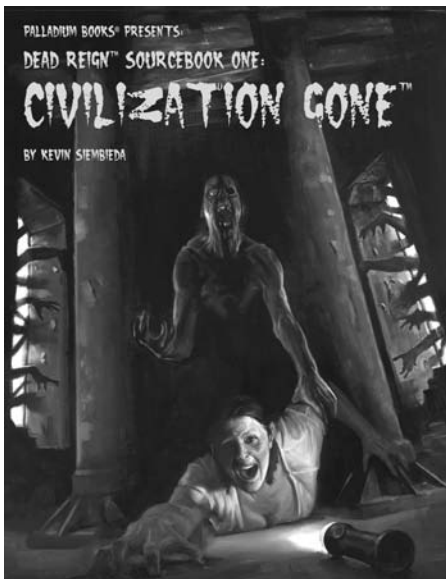
- **Everything you wanted to know about zombies but were afraid to ask.**
- **Seven types of zombies plus the *Half-Living*.**
- **Six Apocalyptic character classes including “ordinary people.”**
- **Tips on fighting zombies and point-blank zombie combat rules.**
- **Death cults, adventure ideas and a powerful setting.**
- **101 Random Scenarios, Encounter Tables, and much more.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda, with Josh Hilden & Joshua Sanford.**
- **224 pages – \$22.95 retail – Cat. No. 230. Available now.**

Dead Reign™ Sourcebook One:

Civilization Gone™

This sourcebook explores what happens when civilization is literally gone overnight, how people cope, where to find resources, ways to survive, and other menaces in addition to a few billion zombies! It was a smash hit at the Open House.

- **More resources and survival advice from Brad Ashley.**
- **More information on the world and zombies.**
- **Street gangs and protectors.**
- **Madmen & Psychopaths – new dangers and trouble.**
- **A few new zombie variants.**



- Many random tables, including Random Building Searches, Available Resources, Building a Survivors' Camp, and more.
- Adventure ideas galore.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda, additional text by Hilden and Sanford.
- 64 pages – \$12.95 retail – Cat. No. 231. Available now.

Rifts® Dimension Book™:

Fleets of the Three Galaxies™

With the *Minion War*™ heating up and a lot of action taking place at *Phase World* and spilling into the *Three Galaxies*, we thought releasing this book about the spaceships and warships of the Three Galaxies was good timing. Suitable for use with most other **Rifts® Dimension Books** set in *Phase World*® or outer space. Not only does *Fleets* provide a bunch of cool spaceships and gear, but there is a lot of history, information and adventure ideas for the *Three Galaxies*™.

We plan to do much more with this popular part of the Palladium Megaverse, with **Dimensional Outbreak**™ and **Heroes of the Megaverse**® to be released this summer and the manuscript for the **Thundercloud Galaxy**™ in hand.

- Spaceship creation guidelines.
- Ship classifications by size, features common to starships and more.
- Fleet formations and notable spacecraft of the *Consortium (CCW)*, *Imperial Armada (TGE)*, *the Warlock Navy (UWW)*, *the Altess Armoria*, *the Republikan Argosy*, *Splugorth*, and others. More than 20 different spacecraft, from fighters to cruisers and battleships.
- Missiles and weapon systems.
- Random Damage tables.
- Space tugs, lifeboats and special gear.
- Three Galaxies time-line and more.
- A stand-alone Dimension Book suitable for use with *Phase World*® and other Dimension Books set in the *Three Galaxies*™.

- Written by Braden Campbell.
- 128 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 880. Ships July 20.

Rifts® Dimension Book™ 12: Dimensional Outbreak™

Author Carl Gleba has created another masterpiece brimming with amazing ideas, new demons, new Deevils, new whacked out spaceships, new magic spells, more about *Phase World*, *Center*, the escalating *Minion War* and much more.

Dimensional Outbreak™ is another exciting and surprise filled book in the *Minion War*™ series as war spills into **Phase World**®, the **city of Center** and the **Three Galaxies**™. The epic scale of the *Minion War* just got bigger and even the *Worlds of Warlock*, the *Splugorth* and *Naruni* are involved.

- **Phase World's Center described and mapped.** Four new levels, including the *Gateland*, *Central Station*, the *Spaceport*, *Repo-Yards*, *Free Trade Zone*, *Warlock Market*, notable merchants and places of business, and much more.
- **Demon Knights, Star Slayers, demonic legions and more.**
- **Demonic spaceships, magic weapons and new horrors.**
- **Deevil fortifications and defenses.**
- **Demon Magic (new).**
- **Spaceships, power armor and other gear.**
- **The plot for conquering the Three Galaxies and more.**
- **A stand-alone Dimension Book that is also the third step in an epic, five book crossover that spills across the Palladium Megaverse®.**
- **Written by Carl Gleba.**
- 192-224 pages – \$24.95 retail – Cat. No. 875. Ships in August.

Rifts®/Phase World® Sourcebook:

Heroes of the Megaverse®

War factions from the *Hells*, *Hades* and *Dyval*, have discovered the existence of a great mystic artifact that has been hidden

and protected by the Cosmo-Knights of the Three Galaxies. And both sides want it.

The artifact is an ancient Rune Book that contains the names of the 2000 greatest heroes the Megaverse® has ever known. But it is more than a historical document, it is a magic item of unparalleled power.

According to legend, the tome has many great powers. One such power is that reading the name of any one person inscribed, while evoking the proper magic, will give the reader the knowledge and power of that great hero. And many are the powers of the 2000.

The artifact also has its dangers. It is said if the *List of Heroes™* is wrested from the Cosmo-Knights and kept locked in the pits of Hell, then the Knights and all heroes of the Three Galaxies will lose hope and flounder. If the book is destroyed, it is said, the Cosmo-Knights will cease to exist within a generation and the forces of Chaos shall reign. Needless to say, the Lords of Hell, the Splugorth and many others who serve Chaos would do anything to get their hands on the *List of Heroes*.

As circumstance would have it, the *List of Heroes* has fallen into the possession of the Player Characters. The question is, can they keep it safe from the forces of two Hells until it can be returned to the safekeeping of the Cosmo-Knights? Or will they misuse it for their own, personal gain? How will this scenario unfold? Who is on that list? Buy a copy, play out the scenario and find out.

- **Minion War tie-in adventure sourcebook.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda.**
- **Illustrated by various Palladium heroes.**
- **96 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 877. Fall release.**

Mysteries of Magic™ Book One:

The Heart of Magic™

This is the first of a series of magic books for the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** that explores the mysteries of magic: How it works, nuances and details about magic, historic revelations, and more.

Each book in the series will include additional information and details about magic, new and specialized areas of magic, and in most cases, new spells and types of magic. We want to get the first one out in July, but August is more realistic.

Book One: The Heart of Magic includes:

- **How magic works.**
- **The history of magic.**
- **Disciplines of magic.**
- **New approaches to magic and ways of acquiring P.P.E.**
- **Greater insight to magic and how different aspects work.**
- **Wizard sub-classes, split-class wizards, and more.**
- **New Wizard spells.**
- **New Warlock spells.**
- **Written by Mark Hall with additional text by Kevin Siembieda.**
- **96 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 472. Ships in August.**

Robotech®:

UEEF Marines Sourcebook

Jason Marker is writing up a storm for a new **Robotech®** sourcebook that will open up new realms of adventure and excitement: **UEEF Marine Corps.**

- **UEEF Marine Corps O.C.C. and M.O.S. skills.**
- **New weapons. New Mecha.**
- **New Marine Ground Vehicles.**
- **New Marine Aircraft and Marine specific spacecraft.**
- **History, training, and organization of the UEEF Marines.**
- **Cat. No. 553, manga size & format** – final page count and price not yet determined, but we are thinking 128-192 pages, \$14.95 retail and a September release.

Robotech® RPG Checklist:

- **Robotech®: The Shadow Chronicles® RPG** – manga size – core rule book – 336 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 550.
- **Robotech®: The Shadow Chronicles® RPG** – 8½ x 11 Deluxe Hardcover Edition – 224 pages – \$30.95 retail – Cat. No. 550HC. **Note:** Features new and additional art and text, including space combat rules.
- **Robotech®: The Shadow Chronicles® RPG “Collector’s” Gold Edition** – 8½ x 11 Deluxe Hardcover Edition – 224 pages – \$70 retail – Cat. No. 5500HC. **Note:** Limited to 500 signed and numbered copies, with 8 signatures including Kevin Siembieda, Jason Marker, Apollo Okamura and Tommy Yune. Makes an awesome gift.
- **Robotech® Macross® Saga Sourcebook** – manga size – 256 pages – \$15.95 retail – Cat. No. 551.
- **Robotech®: The Masters Saga™ Sourcebook** – manga size – 256 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 552.
- **Robotech®: UEEF Marines Sourcebook™** – manga size – coming September, 2009.
- **Robotech®: New Generation™ Sourcebook** – manga size – coming Fall 2009.
- **Robotech®: Book of Spaceships** – manga size – coming Fall/Winter 2009.

New Releases Coming Fall 2009

- **Warpath™: Urban Jungle™ RPG** (Modern Combat) – Palladium’s new game of modern combat inspired by Jeffrey Scott Hansen’s novel, *Warpath*, and additional ideas.
- **The Rifter® #48** – October.
- **Dead Reign™ Sourcebook 2** – October.
- **Robotech® New Generation™ Sourcebook** – October or November.
- **Armageddon Unlimited™** (HU2 *Minion War™*) – October or November.
- **Robotech® Book of Spaceships** – November or December.
- **Megaverse® in Flames** (*Minion War™*) – December (tentative).

Note: Other titles, such as **Mysteries of Magic Book 2**, may be added or substituted.

Cargo Cargo!

South Seas “Cargo Cults”

Optional Source Material for Rifts®

By John Philpott

Dr. Sam Berenski awoke to the soft sound of the waves lapping against the shore. Gritty sand chafed at his bearded face. He opened his eyes; a black volcanic sand beach and a grove of distant palm trees blurred slowly into focus. Where was he? He rolled onto his back and looked to his left. The small escape ship was battered, but beached. He saw many others sprawled out along the black sand; his fellow adventurers and the slaves they liberated from the Horune at such great risk and cost.

Sam turned back to the right. A man was walking towards him up the black beach. The man wore only a pair of khaki cut-off shorts. His skin was ebony and his sun-bleached hair stood up in a huge poof. As he got closer, Dr. Berenski noticed the man's tattoos, his shark tooth necklace, and the .30 caliber bullet through his nose. He also noticed a wooden pistol strapped to the man's hip. The odd little man leaned over Sam, his smile a friendly counterpoint to the bullet piercing and dangling shark's teeth.

“Wake-wake!” the man said. “Lazy mooks! Lay sand all day.”

“Wha...”

“Ha! Joke!” the tattooed man said, adding, “Eh, wise-guy? Nyuk, nyuk.”

Sam was delirious. He knew he was delirious. He rolled over and closed his eyes.

“Wake-wake!” the little man said loudly, gently prodding him with a calloused toe. “Good-fellow Mac-Mac take water.”

“What's going on?” Dr. Berenski asked, getting up slowly and feeling the aches and pains of the earlier conflict. “Where are we?”

“Ha! Wise-guy tok-tok now! Up-up! Wise-guy no blong sand! Monstah-fellas see! Up-up! Up-up!” he added, rousing the others.

Captain Garland, the mission's commander, did his best to rouse his sore, exhausted comrades to follow the strange native. With much moaning and complaining the crew and liberated slaves got up and Mac-Mac herded them into a forest of palms and pandanus. In the forest were more of the natives, these mean looking warriors holding weapons. Two held what looked like... Dr. Berenski did his best to recall his limited knowledge on ancient weaponry... M-1 rifles from the old American Empire. Three others held bamboo poles carved in a crude likeness of rifles. Three wore what seemed to be old-style American Empire “pot” helmets and the fourth wore a coconut shell cap like a helmet. Despite the ludicrousness of it all, the warriors looked dangerously fierce.

“Okay, bud!” Mac-Mac said sternly, looking Berenski right in the eyes. “Who blong you? You good-fella make peace, or

bad-fella make war?” The amicable old man was gone, replaced by a fierce, sharp-eyed warrior.

“Peace! Good-fellows here to make peace!” Berenski cried, startled at the sudden change of mood.

Mac-Mac smiled, the savage warrior gone as if he'd never been there. “Good! Mac-Mac blong this island, blong Akulu'ala Village. You blong who?”

Dr. Berenski attempted to discern the strange grammar. The language appeared to be some sort of pidgin of English. Before he could answer, Captain Garland walked up. “What is this guy saying, Sam?” he said.

“I'm not entirely sure. Mac-Mac here appears to be speaking some sort of mixed language. I think 'blong' is from 'belong,' which I think in this context means 'who are you with'? I'll try to talk with them.” He turned to Mac-Mac: “I Doctor Sam Berenski and this Captain Jim Garland. We blong Lazlo far from here,” he said. “We come in peace. We barely escape the Horune while rescuing these people. You blong Horune?”

“Hell no, bub,” Mac-Mac replied. “No blong Horune. You fight Horune you blong us! Smoke?” Mac-Mac continued, digging a crushed pack of cigarettes out of his back pocket.

Dr. Berenski nearly gasped when he saw the white pack with the red dot logo. No way; that brand must predate the Cataclysm! How could this nearly naked native have a pack? Surely they couldn't still be good...

Captain Garland thanked Mac-Mac and took the cigarette. The native lit it with a silver flip-top lighter bearing a pin-up girl logo. “Nice!” said Capt. Garland. “Where'd you get such quality smokes?”

“Cigs blong Ancestors gimme us,” Mac-Mac said. He offered one to Dr. Berenski who, despite the fact he didn't smoke, took one out a sense of diplomatic obligation. Surely such a pack must be exceedingly rare on this remote island and the cigarettes, as such, a significant sacrifice. He drew in the smoke and choked and coughed. Everyone, native and not, laughed, breaking the prevailing tension. “‘Smooth and flavorful,’ yea?” Mac-Mac said, “Give Samberensky and Captingarlin carton back village. So, where Lazlo?”

“Far to the east,” said the Captain. “In a huge land called North America.”

“America?” Mac-Mac said, his eyes lighting up. Even the savage looking warriors suddenly smiled like little children. “You blong America? We go-go!” he said, motioning for them to “come along.” “Back village! You good-fellas blong America! We blong America!” With few other options, they followed.

After a slow, sweaty stumble through gripping vines and sharp thorns and biting insects that seemed not to affect the natives but made travel hell for the rest, Mac-Mac seemed to pull aside the very jungle itself to reveal a clearing. Walking through the gap revealed the pulled-back “jungle” to be some sort of mystically endowed camouflage netting.

If the cigarettes were a shock, the village beyond nearly gave Dr. Berenski a heart attack. It was an open clearing shaded by more netting overhead. It featured both traditional-looking thatch huts and a couple of large structures that resembled, of all things, ancient American Quonset huts made from bamboo and thatch. The village was laid out in an organized grid pattern around a central clearing. In the middle of the clearing



were a crude bamboo tower and two flag poles. From the flag poles flew a Red Cross flag and an old American flag. The American flag, Dr. Berenski counted, had 48 stars placing her... well, pre Golden Age, possibly pre- Second World War. How could...

"This small village," Mac-Mac apologized with a shrug. "Only blong one Quonset, one Med hut, small dock – not even landing strip. Three island over blong runway and hangar." As they entered it seemed as if the entire village came out to greet them. Half wore what appeared to be native outfits (grass skirts on the women, little more than a strategically-placed leaf on the men) while others wore various collections of long out of date western-style clothing in amazingly good shape: dresses and nylons and pinstripe suits and fedoras. An honor-guard of warriors stood in formation with more rifles or bamboo facsimiles. Mac-Mac yelled out something in his strange pidgin too fast for Sam to follow (he caught only the word "America") and everyone cheered and began what appeared to be a native dance accompanied by slit-drums and strangely enough, a military bugle. Suddenly, coconut shells mounted on the tower in a facsimile of loudspeakers started blaring out horn-heavy music... ancient American jazz! Impossible!

A nearly naked woman walked up to Captain Garland. "You look need drink!" She handed the Captain a curved glass bottle of brownish liquid with a red and white label. It was an old form of cola from the ancient Golden Age. Impossible! The Captain, apparently unaware of the impossibility of the product, drank deeply and thanked her. "Wow, good! Beats Tolki-Cola any day." She handed one to Dr. Berenski, who drank the beverage numbly, his shock-addled mind just registered the extreme spicy-sweetness of the beverage.

The day got stranger still as it moved towards evening. The jazz... Big Band style if Sam recalled correctly... played on. At one point Mac-Mac came out with a trumpet and played Jazz with unimaginable skill. There was a seemingly endless supply of the cola and cigarettes. A feast was prepared consisting of wonderful slow-cooked pork, some sickly-sweet mashed purple vegetable, possibly taro, and, as the 'grand finale,' cans of potted meat. Dr. Berenski sat in disbelief as he turned an empty can over in his hands. It was rectangular with a blue label and friendly yellow lettering: "S-P-A..." No, absolutely impossible!

As the evening turned into night, out came bottles of rum and scotch. Then came coconut halves full of muddy-looking liquid. Those who partook in the muddy drink quickly took on a spacey demeanor. Mac-Mac sat down next to Dr. Berenski. "Swingin' party, eh bud?" he said, eyes swimming from the mud-drink. "Go-go Mac-Mac. Make newsreel Captingarlin fight Horune Monstah-fellas. Shoe-in Oscar, yea? Then baseball film. Old game: Yanks and Cubbies. You blong America; who won Series? Bogie win Oscar yet?"

* * *

Morning came in red splendor that lit the sky and gave the placid waters of the lagoon a pink tinge. Through the headache of the previous day's ordeal and the previous night's indulgence, Dr. Berenski stared in awe as the pink receded and the waters took on that ethereal blue only tropical waters can.

Mac-Mac joined him, handing him, of all things, a cup of coffee in a ceramic mug stamped 'USS Midway.' "Here; cup of Joe. Swingin' party, yea?"

"Um... yea, swingin'. Ol' Blue Eyes would be proud, like you said last night."

"Anything for Americans. Ancestors and Americans blong other world give Cargo. We help Americans blong this world. Today call Clipper, take Captinemo. Captinemo blong U.S. Navy, like U.S. General Mac-Mac name blong. You blong Captinemo?"

"No blong... uh, Nemo, but Sam sure find Nemo good-fellow if Mac-Mac say Nemo good-fellow."

A few hours later, the villagers, led by Mac-Mac, began a strange ceremony that was half native dance, half military drill. Mac-Mac went to a shack by the tower where he put two coconut shell halves on his ears like a headset and spoke into a coconut half mounted to a large wooden box: "Roger Roger, zero-niner-delta!" he said, along with other techno-gibberish.

Suddenly, a deep, distant droning filled the air. The natives cheered louder as the sound got louder. Soon he spotted a silver gleam in the distant sky. The gleam grew into a nimble silver shape, the distant drone into the unmistakable hum of propellers. Go figure, thought Dr. Berenski, why not top off the weirdness with a Pan Am Clipper? The sleek silver flying boat settled carefully into the placid ethereal-blue waters of the lagoon, throwing behind it a comet-tail of white spray. It was like a sight from centuries before even the Cataclysm. Dr. Berenski, though not a subject-area expert on the early American Era, knew the great flying boats ended with the Second World War. But after a pack of Luckies, a bottle of Cola-Cola, and the swinging sounds of Count Basie, why the hell not a flying boat?

The natives cheered and danced as the silver flying boat taxied up to the village's simple teak dock. A man in a white steward's uniform rose up from a hatch in the nose and threw a mooring line to the natives on the shore. The flying boat, an American Empire 48-star flag painted on the nose, docked and shut off the engines. An olive drab tanker truck Sam had never before seen drove out of the woods and up to the dock and began to ceremoniously refuel the Clipper. A door opened under the wing and a tall, elegant man in a white captain's uniform walked out onto the stubby sea wing below the left wing. "Welcome aboard the Tiki Clipper!" he said in fluent pre-Cataclysm American, "scheduled for rendezvous with the U.S.S. Ticonderoga!"

Mac-Mac sidled up to Dr. Berenski. "You like Clipper. Service the tops, bud!"

* * *

Minutes later, seated in a cushy bench inside the luxurious aircraft, in his hand a champagne flute of orange juice provided by a white-uniformed steward, Sam quit trying to understand the strangeness and just went with it. Perhaps he'd have that martini after all. With a vibrating shake and a few smooth bounds, the Tiki Clipper freed itself from the tropical waters and rose like an angel into the soft blue sky.

In 102 P.A., the USS Stingray spotted a strange surface ship identified (impossibly) as a US WWII-era Destroyer Escort! Submerged, they followed the ship from afar, witnessing it attack and destroy a small Horune outpost on a small atoll, and then followed it back to a remote island in the Solomons chain. There it was greeted by several Melanesian outrigger canoes that offloaded from the ship several crates and three Melanesians in native garb. The Melanesians waved goodbye to the apparently American (WWII-era) crew and walked into the island, where they disappeared in the foliage. The USS Stingray followed the Destroyer, only to see it vanish entirely once over the horizon!

This led to a series of observations of the Melanesian tribe, who seemed to get occasional visits from improbable WWII era boats and aircraft. Frogmen explored the island but were unable to locate any settlements or even where the aircraft were landing! Finally, Captain Nemo authorized contact with the tribe. The US sailors and Marines were greeted enthusiastically as long-lost friends!

They were taken through camouflage netting of a mystical nature to a large village with a small landing strip, a dock, a tower, and a few outbuildings... all constructed from wood and bamboo! A 48-star U.S. flag and a Red Cross flag flew proudly in the center. The chief and the “holy man” greeted the New Navy crew wearing an ensemble of mismatched military uniforms. An honor guard stood in formation with a mix of M-1 rifles and bamboo mock-ups. The realization dawned... they’d discovered one of the legendary Cargo Cults of Melanesia!

And strangest of all, their Cargo Magic “worked.”

The Cargo Tribes of Melanesia

The Cargo Tribes, a.k.a. “Cargo Cults,” are an enigma of cultural interaction. Encountering outside colonial powers for the first time after centuries of isolation, native Melanesians wondered where the colonials’ strange and magical creations – *Cargo* – came from. A strange intersection between native beliefs, the teachings of missionaries, and experiences with colonial powers and Cargo eventually led to the rise of Cargo Tribes, who sought to call down the Heavenly Cargo from the Ancestors. In an odd mix of native belief, consumerism, and mimicked misunderstanding of industrial and technological societies, the Cargo Tribes summon (“Call”) or even build from common island items, all of the Cargo they need or want!

Cargo Magic stems from a “ceremonial reinterpretation” of the actions taken by industrial/technological cultures. You see a man with a radio make a call and minutes later, an airplane appears “from Heaven” to deliver a load of food and supplies. Therefore, you make your own radio out of what’s available (coconuts, bamboo, palm wood, etc.), clear your own landing strip, ceremonially duplicate what you saw the radioman do, and wait with anticipation for the Cargo planes to arrive. Easy!

In the odd, magic-rich time of the Rifts®, this strange set of beliefs, as ludicrous as it seems to many outsiders, is now a viable and unique form of shamanic magic. Now the Cargo Priests lead the “Cargo plane ceremony” and actually see the visit of propeller-driven cargo planes loaded with Cargo. Need a cola? There’s a ceremony for that. Need a rifle? Ditto. Need fire support from an offshore destroyer? Guess what...

Needless to say, Cargo Tribes are a mystery to outsiders. The New Navy was flabbergasted, but pragmatic enough to see a powerful new set of allies. The Horune quickly went from laughing to cursing when the little near-naked humans with a coconut mock-up of a radio suddenly called in air support. While arguably not the “weirdest” thing on the face of Rifts Earth, there’s certainly nothing like the Cargo Tribes!

Origins and Salvation of the Cargo Tribes

The Cargo Tribes began among the Melanesian hunter-gatherer tribes of the South Pacific. These dark-skinned, curly-haired people (distant relatives of the Australian Aborigines) had hundreds of individual cultures and languages. Some were peaceful and content fishermen and gardeners; others were violent and expansionistic warrior cultures. Some practiced headhunting or even cannibalism! Some practiced bizarre tattooing and/or body piercing rituals. Others did not.

Things remained as they had been for centuries until the first European ships arrived in the 1700s. These impossibly huge boats and their odd crews were a major culture shock. Sometimes clashes happened. Other times there was trade for the strange men’s seemingly mystical “Cargo.” Some stayed and intermarried. Most left as suddenly as they’d come.

Here’s where fact met legend for the first time: Some cultures held legends that foresaw great godly figures coming from the sea bearing gifts from the Ancestors, sometimes at the start of the “end times.” Could these strange pale men be from the Ancestors, here to bring about the final paradise? Complicating matters were the eventual arrival of missionaries who told all new stories about the gifts of Heaven and the final deliverance.

Then came the colonizers and the plantations. Natives were effectively enslaved to work the great plantations while the “Mastahs” lived in great houses surrounded by Cargo. How had these men gotten all the Cargo? Where was the natives’ Cargo? Did these white men steal it? Were the Ancestors mad at the natives? Or did the white men simply know the right way to ask? The Mastahs said it came from hard work, but they never did any real work while the natives worked themselves nearly to death! No, the Mastahs were obviously hiding the truth!

The first proto-Cargo Tribes appeared in the 1800s, attempting to find the right balance between the white man’s ways and the traditional “Kastom” (Customs) of the Melanesian tribes. They explored many practices and ceremonies to beg the Ancestors to send them Cargo, but they soon realized they needed the exact right “ceremony.”

Then came WWII and, in seeming answer to their prayers, the Americans! The Americans arrived in huge numbers, bringing incredible amounts of Cargo. Ships full! Planes full! Buildings full! Compared to the Mastahs the Americans were friendly, open, and treated the Melanesians with something approaching equality. While the Mastahs yelled at you, expected you to serve them, and were stingy with the Cargo, the Americans sat next to you by the fire, let you call them by name, and tossed you a cigarette and a cola.

And oddest of all, many of the Americans – African Americans – looked like Melanesians! They sat in the same mess hall as the white soldiers and sailors, had the same outfits and Cargo, and, from the perspective of the Melanesians, were effectively

“equals!” Surely these were the prophesied men from the Ancestors!

And then, a mere few years later, the “good times” were over and the Americans left.

So, how to bring the Cargo back? “Obviously” the Americans knew the proper ceremony to bring down the Cargo, so the Cargo Tribes did all they could to duplicate the “ceremonies.” Landing strips were hacked from the jungles and control towers built to bring the airplanes. Flags were ceremonially raised and lowered. Men with coconut radios called to the Ancestors to send the celestial airplanes and ships just like they’d seen the Americans do.

For generations, this was to no avail. As the Golden Age dawned, many Cargo Tribes had disbanded or died out, while others had “secularized” into Melanesian nationalist and traditionalist organizations. Some of these became the basis of political parties or native Kastom revival societies. Few ardently believed that the Cargo would return through ceremony.

Then came the Cataclysm. When the volcanoes began to erupt violently, the Melanesians knew something was wrong. While most Cargo Tribes were gone, the remaining Cargo Priests throughout the scattered Tribes and Sects of the hundreds of islands all received a divine message that it was “time to call the airplanes.” All across the South Pacific, the Cargo Priests organized their followers to begin the ceremonies in earnest (they’d long since become simply “performance,” with few actually expecting payoff). As Atlantis reappeared and a great deluge of mega-tsunamis bore down, the Cargo Tribes called on their radios, did the dances as they suddenly, intuitively knew to do them, and, lo and behold, a deep, resonant hum marked the appearance of C-47 Cargo planes, or a deep thrumming marked the arrival of a Liberty Ship!

“Hey, guys! Climb on board!” called “American” crews.

The frightened Cargo Tribesmen and even hundreds of local nonbelievers pragmatically loaded into the various anachronistic vehicles and were carried away from their home islands just before the waves came crashing in. The airplanes, ships, and boats carried their confused Melanesian (and many non-Melanesian) passengers “beyond” the dying world (fulfilling the ancient apocalyptic prophesies) and into a beautiful new land of soft sunshine and calm, clear waters that lapped quietly upon sands of pure white or black. They were all taken to a large city in the form of an American WWII “rear area” headquarters camp with hangars, runways, Quonset huts, and all kinds of buildings – dance halls, bars, mess halls... even hospitals!

Waiting for them were all the Ancestors and all of the Americans! They were welcomed as long-lost family, given all the Cargo they ever wanted, and joined into the largest, flashiest, jazz-driven, Cargo-fueled party in the universe!

After an incomprehensible time, the Cargo Tribes were told it was time to return to their old islands, but they could “call for anything they needed.” They were loaded up into Liberty Ships and sailed off through the ether back into the world: Rifts Earth circa 62 P.A. Back on the greatly altered islands, the separate Cargo Tribes set about rebuilding their lives along the lines of Kastom, supplied with Heavenly Cargo.

The Cargo Priests arose as providers of the Cargo. They could Call or build not only consumables and radios but weap-

ons, aircraft and ships, and construct buildings and landing strips. When the dangers of Rifts Earth reared their heads, the Ancestors (via the Cargo Priests) provided the arms to fight back and protect themselves.

The “good times” were back again!

The Cargo Tribes Today

The Cargo Tribes are loose-knit groups of Melanesian tribes that live in small villages scattered among the islands of the South Pacific, mostly in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu), Solomon Islands, or New Guinea. Some villages support a landing strip or even runway. Some support a dock or port. Most have at least a tower and possibly a Quonset hut. None, however, maintain huge bases or stockpiles of weapons, since to do so might draw undue notice (most wisely believe in keeping hidden from their enemies).

The villages are centered on a chief and a Cargo Priest. Men and women perform separate traditional roles. Most live the “old Kastom way,” fishing, farming, gathering, hunting, building traditional huts and traditional ornamentation. Cargo, however, provides entertainment and consumer goods to sate their needs and desires: cola, cigarettes, movies, music, and the divine canned meat!

The main ally of the Cargo Tribes is the New Navy (see below), while the main enemy is the Horune. The slaver-pirates have often tried to prey upon the Cargo Tribes, but found quickly that these groups are often more trouble than they’re worth to enslave, and instead seek to annihilate the Cargo Tribes whenever they see them. A few minor interactions and short-term partnerships with Whale Singers and Cetaceans have occurred. So far, there have been no major interactions with Tritonia, the Naut’Yll, or the Lord of the Deep, though the former would be likely allies and the latter two likely enemies. No communications with Australia, Japan, or any other land power have occurred, and no one save the New Navy, the Horune, the Lord of the Deep, and (through the Horune) Atlantis know of the Cargo Tribes’ existence. The Lord of the Deep’s minions are occasionally monitoring them with mild concern, while Splynncryth is mildly curious, but cares little as they and their islands merit no real strategic consideration at the moment (“Let the Horune play with them, I care not.”).

Culture and Beliefs of the Cargo Tribes

Culturally, the Cargo Tribes are a strange mix between native Melanesian Kastom (custom) culture and, of all things, 1930s/40s American culture! The odd circumstances of their history and beliefs have created a strange, synthesized culture that has adopted both the traditional ways and the pop consumer culture of the American soldiers and sailors who visited the islands centuries ago and who still “interact” with the tribes through Cargo.

The Cargo Tribes are primarily genetically and culturally Melanesian: dark-skinned and curly-haired and more closely related to Australian Aborigines than to the neighboring Polynesian and Micronesian cultures typically associated with the Pacific. However, other cultural/ethnic groups are present in the tribes via adoption or initiation. There are even a few D-Bees, who are usually welcome but rare due to the remoteness of the

tribes. The tribes speak a variety of traditional languages and dialects (depending on the village), though all speak dialects of “Pigin” (*pij-in*), a pidgin trade language that incorporates native Melanesian words and grammar with American English words, particularly slang.

Traditional Kastom involves a tribal village culture centered on farming taro and sweet potatoes (and other crops), gathering coconuts, fruit, nuts, berries, and shellfish, raising pigs and chickens, hunting, and fishing. The tribes are highly skilled in building with bamboo, palm wood and fronds, and even coconuts. They are also very skilled boat builders (outrigger canoes) and very skilled navigators with their own unique astronomical tradition. They wear very little, typically just a grass or cloth skirt or sometimes little more than a strategically-placed leaf or gourd. Many tribes practice tattooing, from limited small tattoos up to intricate full-body tattoos (face included), depending on the specific tribe. Some practice simple to elaborate body piercing.

Meanwhile, the 1930s/40s American culture appears as a real shock to many outsiders, particularly scholars who may realize how out of place references to Babe Ruth and Bugs Bunny are among isolated tribesmen. The culture is taken from American servicemen and women and reflects a detailed knowledge of baseball (Lou Gehrig’s batting average in 1936), American movies (“Play it again... play ‘As Time Goes By’”), American music (“Goodman is ok, but I’m a Satchmo fan”), American fashions (“I’ll take a narrow-brim fedora, pal”), military songs (“From the halls of Montezuma...”), military lingo (“so we took the Higgins Boat up to the beachhead and wouldn’t you know it, the damn Sea Bees hadn’t cleared out all the Bouncin’ Betties; total SNAFU”), and other aspects one would expect from a U.S. serviceman from 1944 rather than a 109 P.A. remote island tribesman dressed like Adam.

These two disparate aspects have merged, producing a strange culture where American flags are raised to traditional chants and ancient ceremonies are punctuated with Benny Goodman tunes. Mindless consumerism is considered a “holy rite” where canned meat and a cola are a form of communion. The laid-back island life merges seamlessly with U.S. citizen-soldier laxness (“Yea yea, I’ll get to it.”), while the warrior traditions merge seamlessly with American military “band of brothers” professionalism (“Mack, covering fire on three; Joe, flank right around that bunker...go!”). The end result produces something surprising, somewhat comical, and always unexpected as the laughing, lounging, smoking men suddenly turn into an organized military force in the blink of an eye.

New Traditional Melanesian Skills and Modification Notes to Existing Skills

Add or modify the following skills to reflect Melanesian culture, noting that similar skills are available to non-Melanesian South Pacific cultures such as Polynesian, Micronesian, Indonesian, and Austronesian tribal cultures and chiefdoms.

Construct Bone, Shell, and Stone Tools & Weapons: (New to *Rifts*®; originally published in “A Walk on the Wild Side,” *The Rifter*® #31) [add to Domestic and Technical skills] This skill entails the construction of simple stone, bone, shell, or wood tools and weapons, from simple axes to intricate spear and

arrow points (depending on the technological abilities of the character’s home tribe/culture). This character not only knows how to chip the stone into usable shapes and edges, but also knows how to attach the blade to the shaft of a spear or arrow or handle of an axe/club (assuming high enough cultural tech level). If an Archery skill is also known, the character can attach fletching (feather guide fins) to arrow shafts. Non-stone items can also be used, such as shell or bone. Preferred stones include flint and obsidian for bladed/edged weapons (obsidian blades do +1 damage due to sharpness, as chipped obsidian is sharper than even good steel) and hard indigenous rock like granite for blunt weapons. Note that stone blades must be regularly re-chipped to preserve sharpness (-1 damage penalty per week without such maintenance) and blades will have to be replaced every 1D6 months as they wear down. Bladed stone weapons also have difficulty penetrating metal armor (treat as if the A.R. of the armor were two points higher to the stone blade) and will require immediate “sharpening” after they strike such metal (-1 damage per 4 strikes to metal). Construction Times for Stone Tools/Weapons: Simple stone clubs require 1D4 hours to construct; arrowheads require 2D6+20 minutes each, while the mounting takes 2D6 minutes and the fletching 2D6+10 minutes; knife blades and spear/hoe/axe heads require 3D6+30 minutes each and mounting takes 2D6 minutes; stone swords are not practical, though wooden war clubs with stone blades placed along the side edges take 2D6+20 minutes per blade (typically six or eight) to construct, while the “paddle” requires 1D6 hours to construct (requires Carpentry skill). **Base Skill Level:** 30% +5% per additional level of experience. If the Carpentry skill is also known, the character receives a one-time bonus of +5% to the Construct Stone Tools & Weapons skill for the construction of wooden “hafts” or similar items only. *South Pacific Materials Note:* Obsidian is readily available on volcanic islands, but coral atolls and cays will be limited to coral, so wood, bone, and shell tools and weapons will predominate. Shark’s teeth are common in war clubs.

Kava Brewing (New!): [add to Domestic and Technical skills] Skill in the harvesting and brewing of Kava, a traditional South Pacific intoxicant derived from the roots of a pepper relative native to the South Pacific islands. Kava is mildly narcotic, but not physically addictive and has few side effects save mild skin rashes from chronic use. Much ceremony and significance is attributed to Kava consumption. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience.

Melanesian Astronomy & Navigation (Modification): [add to Domestic and Science skills] This skill is identical to the standard skill of the same name only the astronomy is based on Melanesian myth and constellations and the navigation uses ancient Melanesian techniques rather than modern navigation. It also encompasses knowledge of oceanic currents, finding land via the appearance of animals and plants, and folk knowledge. This skill is a closely guarded ancient secret passed down via oral tradition, and navigators are considered mystical. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** Basic Math only; does not require Literacy, just memory!

Melanesian Boat Building (Modification): [add to Domestic and Technical skills] Identical to the standard skill of the same name. Note that the skill uses traditional, often bone tools

to create very sturdy, dugout outrigger canoes capable of long trans-oceanic travel! This skill only allows creation of such outrigger canoes (3D6 man-days of work). **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

Tattooing: (New to Rifts®; originally published in “A Walk of the Wild Side,” *The Rifter*® #31) [add to Domestic and Technical skills] This skill indicates proficiency in the design and creation of decorative tattoos and skin art, either as decoration/ornamentation or for religious, ceremonial, or status/position reasons. Tattooing as an art form varies from culture to culture, with some forms being simple to complex, abstract “tribal” tattoos and others being detailed pictures of animals, landscapes, etc. Tattoo art is created in a variety of ways (tapping ink/pigment into the skin with blades, threading ink-coated lines through the skin, rubbing ink/ash/dye into cuts made by blades, injection into the skin using a needle, etc.), but, regardless of the method of manufacture, Tattoos always result in a permanent design or picture in the character’s skin. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per additional level of experience. *Note:* This skill does not include the creation of Atlantean “Magic Tattoos,” Native American Tattoo Fetishes, or Danzi Spirit Tattoos, which are unique and mystical in nature. Only decorative, non-mystical tattoos can be created using this skill.

The New Navy and the Cargo Tribes

When the New Navy first discovered the Cargo Tribes they were as amazed as anyone. However, they recognized “kindred spirits” when they saw them. The Cargo Tribes see the New Navy as “fellow servants of the Ancestors.” It was a natural alliance and one that has proven very valuable to both sides. The Cargo Tribes have essentially filled the same niche that the native “coastal spotters” did for the U.S. military in WWII, providing reconnaissance and intelligence to the New Navy. The New Navy responds in kind, supplying intelligence on Horune movements and supplying advance warning and military support. When a Cargo Tribe has gathered enough “Mana” (P.P.E.) to summon a large military force they typically team up with the New Navy on raids or attacks against the mutually-hated Horune.

Trade is also common, with the Cargo Tribes sharing their “ancient treats” of cola, smokes and booze while the New Navy provides “real” weapons and equipment. Regular visits and liaisons (baseball games are a natural) have led to some cultural interactions, with Cargo Tribes adopting some New Navy slang and New Navy personnel using Melanesian words or American slang hundreds of years out of date (“Chief Johnson’s being such a mook today; what happened to the good-fella who let us off last Friday?”). Melanesian Tattoos are catching on with New Navy personnel and some have taken native spouses, creating difficulties on determining who lives where. Captain Nemo-2 has instituted a “Native Liaison Exchange” program as a way of dealing with this, but too much intermarriage runs the risk of overloading the needs of the program. Since the Cargo Tribes see “no difference” between them and the New Navy and see no reason why not to mix completely and seamlessly, this cultural juxtaposition demands that some sort of accommodation be made lest it drive a wedge into a seemingly natural alliance.

Headhunter Tribes (rare)

As is true of any culture, many of the ancient tribes practiced a variety of customs considered “savage” and cruel. Some of the more violent and expansionistic tribes practiced raiding and pillaging and took ghastly trophies such as shrunken heads (“head-hunting”). Many practiced cannibalism, either ceremonially or out of desperation (meat is rare in the tiny islands). Sometimes other tribes responded in kind, creating generational feuds of revenge killing and cannibalism that developed into cultural tradition.

While an overwhelming majority (99%) of modern Cargo Tribes have long since abandoned headhunting and cannibalism (who needs the “long pig” when a quick call to the Ancestors provides all the meat you need?), a tiny minority have reverted. This small number of Headhunter Tribes give a bad name to the peaceful majority.

O.C.C.s of the Cargo Tribes

In addition to the Cargo Priest O.C.C. (see below), Cargo Tribes are typically (80%) filled with agrarian tribesmen equivalent to the Pygmy Hunter R.C.C. (see *Rifts*® *World Book 4: Africa*). Psychic Character Classes are somewhat common (most typically Psi-Sensitives, Psi-Mystics, or Psi-Healers; almost never Mind Melters!). Other African O.C.C. equivalents possible include the Medicine Man, African Shaman, Rainmaker, and Pygmy Shaman. Also, equivalents to certain Native American O.C.C.s are possible, such as equivalents to Native American O.C.C.s from *Rifts*® *World Book 15: Spirit West*™. Recommended available *Spirit West*™ O.C.C. equivalents include the four Traditional Warrior O.C.C.s and the following Shaman O.C.C.s: Plant, Animal, Healing, Elemental, and Fetish. Be sure to substitute appropriate Melanesian weapons, Totem animals (sea animals!), and beliefs, and try to restructure the Fetishes to Melanesian equivalents. Whale Singers are possible, but rare. Also, “modern O.C.C.” equivalents, particularly oceanic, are available in the form of castoffs, refugees, and expatriate “beachcombers” who have joined the Cargo Tribe. A general O.C.C. breakdown would be Native Hunter (“Pygmy Hunter”) 75%, Endowed Warrior (Traditional Warrior O.C.C.) 10%, Psychic (Sensitive, Mystic, or Healer) 5%, Cargo Priest O.C.C. 5%, other mystical profession (Shaman, Medicine Man, Rainmaker, etc.) 4%, and Other 1%.

Cargo Gods, Ancestors, Americans, and the Spirit World

The key to Cargo Magic is the Ancestors, the spirits of long-dead Melanesians of the past. Like Voodoo, Native American Shamanism, and other spiritualist traditions, the belief in the afterlife is strong, and the Cargo Tribes believe not only that the Ancestors live on, but that they can be directly called upon for support and assistance.

The Ancestors live on in the *Azure Islands Spirit Realm*, a realm of the Spirit World much like the Native American Spirit Realm or the Voodoo Spirit Realm of Guinée (more on the Spirit World and Voodoo in the upcoming *Rifts*® *Voodoo and the Spirit World* sourcebook!). The Azure Islands are an ideal-

ized version of the South Seas Islands where waters are clear and glow with turquoise or emerald splendor, beaches are clean, soft white or black sand, clouds are pure white, the jungles green and full of life and absent of biting insects, disease, or predators, and the rains and winds are gentle and refreshing without drought or storm. Here the Ancestors live in ideal splendor in the Kastom manner. At the center of it all is the “Headquarters,” a giant, sprawling U.S. Military base of docks, runways, buildings, and Cargo, Cargo, Cargo.

At the Headquarters live the Americans, or a spiritual idealization of them. Some appear to be actual “True Ghosts” (the sentient spirits of the dead) while most appear to be Haunting Entities that have assumed the role of American Servicemen and -women. Some “mythic figures” that played central roles in Cargo Tribe mythology (“Captain Jim from America” or “Prince Albert” or ancient Cargo Priests and kings) are even of a divine or semi-divine nature (“gods” by Rifts® standards).

It was the Azure Islands to which the Cargo Tribes escaped during the cataclysm and it is the Azure Islands that supply the Cargo (much as the Nunnehi Spirit Realm provides the Native Americans with their powers). Cargo Priests, through their ceremonies, contact the Ancestors and Cargo Gods who bestow their divine blessing in the form of Cargo, much as a god will provide power to a Priest or the Elemental Intelligences will provide powers to a Warlock or Elemental Fusionist. In this way the Cargo Priest is not a traditional magic user, but a conduit through which divine favor is granted.

The Cargo Priest

The center of the Cargo Tribe is the Cargo Priest, typically a man, who calls upon the Ancestors to deliver Cargo or empower built objects. By calling Cargo and building the means of the tribe’s defense, the Cargo Priest is arguably more important and powerful than the chief of the tribe or council of elders. The Cargo Priest also provides the “standard” shamanic duties of tribal doctor (holistic medicine), spiritual advisor, and ceremonial leader.

The Cargo Priest is a conduit to the Ancestors in the Spirit Realm of the Azure Islands. Much like a Native American Shaman or Voodoo Priest, the Cargo Priest calls upon the power of the Spirit World and the ancestral spirits to supply the needs of the tribe. Unlike these other spiritual magic users, the Cargo Priest has a very strange and specialized form of magic that is very powerful, but oddly limited in scope. The Cargo Priest is incapable of directly summoning spirits like a Voodoo Priest and generally is limited in an ability to directly empower himself or other individuals like Native American Shamans. However, they have the ability to summon a variety of consumer goods and the ability to empower objects into consumer goods and weapons. Like a spiritual equivalent of a Techno-Wizard, they build the objects they need and like a spiritual equivalent of a mail-order catalog, they “send out” for the goods they desire.

Cargo Priest Powers, Abilities & Bonuses

Cargo Priests’ powers center on Cargo – providing it, empowering it, and distributing it. These powers manifest in the following abilities:



1. Build and Summon (“Call”) Cargo. The primary ability of the Cargo Priest is the creation and/or summoning (“Calling”) of Cargo or mystical consumer goods from the Ancestors. The Cargo Priest can either “Build” Cargo out of items commonly available on the islands (coconuts, bamboo, vines, etc.) by creating a replica of the item (the classic “coconut radio”) or can “Call” (summon) the Cargo by appealing to the Ancestors. The former will take more work but will create a permanent item while the latter will bring forth “finished” consumer goods that have a limited duration before they “return to the Ancestors” (vanish). Building Cargo requires the Carpentry and Rope Works skills; note that anyone can Build the Cargo, but the Priest must “enchant” it with the appropriate ability. Basic Cargo abilities are small, common items or consumables, Supercargo includes huge vehicles and weapons like ships or airplanes, and Engineering Projects are massive building efforts that create buildings, docks, runways, etc.

2. Initial Cargo Magic. The Cargo Shaman begins with the Basic Cargo abilities of Radio and Crew Call plus six (6) other Basic Cargo abilities, two (2) Supercargo abilities, and the Tower Engineering Project plus one (1) other Engineering Project.

3. Gaining New Cargo Magic. Additional Cargo abilities are granted through advancement in experience level (and *only* through advancement in experience level – see Penalties and Limitations!). The Cargo Priest gains two (2) new Basic Cargo abilities at levels 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15, gains one (1) new Supercargo ability at levels 4, 8, 10, and 14, and gains one (1) new Engineering Project ability at levels 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15.

4. The Ghosts of Cargo. Like Shamans, Mystics, and Voodoo Priests, Cargo Priests have regular interactions with spirits and the Spirit World. Unlike these more “mainstream” spiritualists, the Cargo Priests cannot directly summon, control, or interact with spirits except within a very limited scope. Instead, they contact the spirits via mystical-technology – a literal mystical radio to the Heavens (Radio Cargo ability)! When they do meet spirits face-to-face it is in the form of ghostly “Crew” of Called vessels: Haunting Entity pilots and crewmen that operate Called vehicles and vessels. The Cargo Priest and all others can see and interact with these spirits as if they were flesh-and-blood individuals and only Mystics, Voodoo Priests, Cargo Priests, Shamans, or other spiritualists can readily recognize them as spirits rather than mortals.

5. Discern Presence of Enchantment, Possession, or Curse. While not really trained in the arts of combating curses, possessions, and enchantments (despite their spiritual focus), the Cargo Priest has some experience in discerning when these afflictions or invasions have occurred. They will probably require the experience of a more traditional Shaman or Mystic in order to combat the affliction/invasion. Similarly, the Cargo Priest will likely have some idea that an object is enchanted or mystical in nature, although they are unlikely to know what, exactly, it does. **Base Skill Level:** 20% +5% per each additional level of experience.

6. P.P.E. Like more traditional practitioners of magic, the Cargo Priest is a living battery of magical energy. **Permanent Base P.P.E.:** 2D6x10+10 plus P.E. attribute number. Add 2D6 P.P.E. per additional level of experience.

Supplemental P.P.E.: The Cargo Priest can also draw P.P.E. from Ley Lines, nexus points, blood sacrifices, volcanoes, and willing participants. While blood sacrifices are rare outside of the handful of headhunter tribes, all of the Priest’s fellow tribe members are typically more than willing to donate P.P.E., and multiple participants can contribute P.P.E. through ceremonies, dance, rituals, and even during the course of building a Cargo item. This is particularly important as the Cargo Priest’s base P.P.E. is not nearly enough for most major Cargo Magic projects! Cargo Priests can also draw 10 P.P.E. once every melee round from active volcanoes (must be within 1000 yards/meters of the main caldera, a rather risky place to be!). **Note:** Double this value (20 P.P.E. once per melee round) if drawing from any volcanoes on the Cargo Tribe’s “home island” (volcanoes, particularly the home volcanoes, are considered holy gateways to the Ancestors).

7. O.C.C. Related Bonuses. +1 to roll with punch, fall, or impact, +1 to pull punch, +2 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 to save vs possession or mind control at levels 2, 4, 8 and 12, +1 to save vs magic at levels 1, 3, 6, 9 and 12, +1 to Perception Rolls at levels 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12 and 15, and +2 to save vs drugs, poisons, and toxins.

8. Penalties and Limitations. Cargo abilities may only be earned through level advancement and cannot be taught, traded, “granted by the gods,” converted into standard “invocation” or “shamanic” spells, transcribed into scrolls, books, or runes, imbued into magic items or Techno-Wizardry devices (though some Cargo creations such as the Radio can be separately TW modified for dual-use), or otherwise used in a manner other than written. Theoretically, Cargo ability-like spells can be created by other practitioners of magic if such is allowed by their specific O.C.C. (G.M.’s discretion), but this is unlikely to be encountered as few such “outsiders” have experiences with the isolated Cargo Tribes.

Cargo Priest O.C.C.

Also Known as Cargo Doctors, Cargo Shaman, or Kastom Callers.

Alignment: Any; Principled (20%), Scrupulous (30%), Unprincipled (20%), Anarchist (15%), Aberrant (10%), Miscreant (3%) or Diabolic (2%). Evil Cargo Priests and their tribes sometimes practice human sacrifice, headhunting, or even cannibalism! Most (90%) Cargo Priests and Melanesians abhor and reject these practices.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 11, M.E. 12, M.A. 12.

Racial Requirements: None, but are nearly always (98%) human.

Roll the Eight Attributes as normal for the character’s race.

Average level of Experience (NPC): 1D4 for Non-Player Characters, or as set by the Game Master. Player Characters start at first level.

O.C.C. Skills: Additional O.C.C. Skills may be available to certain Saintly Orders.

Language: Melanesian Native (1D4+5 Dialects; 95%)

Language: 1940s American English Pidgin (85%; can speak English or American or be interpreted by English/American speakers at -10%.)

Lore: 1930s/1940s American Pop Culture (*Special!* 35% +5% per level.)

Lore: Melanesian Oral Tradition (*Special!* “History/Mythology”; 45% +5% per level.)

Holistic Medicine (+15%)

Dance (+20%; native Melanesian.)

Sing (+15%; native Melanesian.)

Swimming (+15%)

Wilderness Survival (+10%)

W.P. Blunt or W.P. Spear or W.P. Knife or W.P. Sword (Machete)

W.P. Pistol or W.P. Rifle

Hand to Hand: Basic. Can upgrade to Hand to Hand: Expert for the cost of two O.C.C. Related Skills or Hand to Hand: Martial Arts (or Assassin if evil) for the cost of three.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select six starting skills at level one, and two additional skills at levels 3, 6, 9, 12 and 14. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5% on Radio: Basic, Language, Performance, or Public Speaking only).

Domestic: Any (+15%).

Electrical: Basic Electronics only (+5%).

Espionage: Any (+10% on Detect Ambush).

Horsemanship: General and Exotic only (very rare; no mount or pack animals on the islands).

Mechanical: Basic Mechanics and Automotive Mechanics only (+5%).

Medical: Brewing: Medicinal and First Aid only (+10%).

Military: Camouflage, Recognize Weapon Quality, or Trap/Mine Detection only (+10%).

Physical: Any (+5% where applicable) except Acrobatics.

Pilot: *Varies with Level of Experience:* Only Bicycling, Boat: Paddle (+15%), Boat: Sail (+5%), and Water Skiing & Surfing (+10%) until 3rd Level, and then (3rd to 6th level) allow Airplane, Automobile, Boat: Motor, Motorcycle, Truck, and Water Scooters. All other Piloting only allowed when 7th level or higher.

Pilot Related: *Varies with Level of Experience:* Navigation (+10%) only until 3rd level or higher; then Any.

Rogue: Cardsharp, Concealment, Gambling (Standard and Dirty Tricks), Imitate Voices & Sounds, Palming, Pick Pockets, Prowl, Seduction, and Tailing only (all +10%).

Science: Melanesian Astronomy & Navigation (+20%) and Mathematics: Basic (+5%) only.

Technical: Any (+10%); cannot take Computer skills or Cybernetics. +15% to Construct Bone, Shell or Stone Tools & Weapons, Kava Brewing, and Tattooing.

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any; +15% to Melanesian Boat Building and Carpentry, +10% to all others.

Cargo Priest Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select five Secondary Skills from the Secondary Skill List on page 300 of **Rifts® Ultimate Edition** at level one, plus one additional skill at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15. These additional areas of knowledge do not receive the benefit of the bonus

marked in parentheses and start at the base skill percentage. Secondary Skills are also limited (any, only or none) as per the previous list.

Cargo Priest Standard Equipment: One native Melanesian melee weapon (spear, club, etc.) to match W.P. selection, one “Built” rifle or pistol to match W.P. selection, one “heirloom” steel machete or knife, Melanesian native costume (loincloth, cloth skirt, loin leaf or gourd, or grass skirt, shell or shark tooth decorations and ornamentations, piercings, etc.; note that many Cargo Priests are intricately tattooed, some also on their faces), 1D4 items of “western” clothing (hats, jeans, shirts, etc.), 1-2 small “sacred heirloom” items from WWII era (flag, helmet, hat, gas mask, web belt, canteen, bandolier of bullets, fatigue or dungaree shirt/pants, etc.; no weapons or large equipment or vehicles!), traditional hut, 1D4 traditional blankets, 1D4 traditional pots/baskets/containers, one “heirloom” metal pot or pan, 1-2 carved idols (possibly of military vehicles), 1D6 pigs and 2D6 chickens (very wealthy!), and 3D6 assorted valuable small items (beads, shells, teeth, feathers, etc.).

Money: Equivalent of 6D4x100 credits in Cargo, livestock, raw materials, or black market items (see starting equipment).

Cybernetics: None; will avoid cybernetics if possible since they will adversely affect Cargo abilities.

Cargo Magic

Bizarre and seemingly ludicrous, Cargo Magic allows the Cargo Priest to “Call” (summon/conjure) or “Build” (construct from common island items such as bamboo, coconuts, and vines) a selection of “Cargo” (consumer) items! The weirdest thing is that, being based on a belief system, the Cargo behaves in the manner the Cargo Priest expects it to act rather than how it actually would act based on physics! For example, Cargo Called or Built vehicles will carry up to a set number of “Crates” of Cargo, regardless of the weight of the individual Crates! For example, a Jeep will carry 2-4 Crates without affecting the performance of the Jeep – this means 2-4 Crates of lightweight Stockings or 2-4 Crates of heavy Grenades!

Casting time for Called items will be a standard ½ melee round unless indicated otherwise under the ability description. Casting time to enchant Built items is a standard ½ melee round since the construction time is factored into the overall complexity.

Note on “Man-Hours” of Duration: A “man-hour” is the amount of work from one human or D-Bee working one hour. Therefore, an ability with a construction time of “30 man-hours” will take one person 30 hours, two people 15 hours total, five people 6 hours total, and so on. Generally speaking, the more people, the quicker the project. Note that most abilities will have a minimum construction time that will be required regardless of the number of workers.

Crewing Cargo Magic Creations: There are three ways to “Crew” or pilot Cargo vehicles and weapons. One is to crew it yourself (Cargo Priests have an innate ability to use Cargo; treat as automatically knowing the necessary skill(s) temporarily (and only using the Cargo object) at Base Skill Level +15%). The second way to crew Cargo is with tribesmen and/or allies. This

often requires specialized skills that may be unavailable to isolated islanders (what, do you think tank training is readily available on a 5 mile/8 km long atoll?). The third way is to Call for help in the form of ghostly U.S. Military personnel. See the *Crew Call Basic Cargo Ability* for more details.

Advantages and Limitations of Cargo Magic: As a bizarre intersection of priestly magic, spiritualism, Techno-Wizardry, and Conjuring, Cargo Magic is quite versatile, in a paradoxically limited way. Where else can you call up reserves from a ghostly “army,” “navy,” and “air force”? Who else can “call in the Marines,” as it were? And who else can call out for crates of rations, assuming everyone likes potted meat and cola? The primary advantage is this ability to summon military and logistical support, supplies, consumer goods, and amenities plus build mystical structures to support these endeavors. The main disadvantages are a) the limitations of what can be Called, b) the lack of “quick” offensive or defensive abilities (no fireballs, lightning bolts, or Armor of Ithan), c) the length of time and amount of effort necessary to Call or Build items, and d) how quickly the magic can become very costly in P.P.E., making “stockpiling” difficult and “standing armies” all but impossible. You can call in an air strike, yes, but you won’t be maintaining an air wing for very long.

Basic Cargo Abilities

These are the basic Cargo abilities, Building or Calling basic consumables, weapons, outfits, or other basic Cargo items that can sometimes be “crated” for storage.

Note: Any existing or restored (even “Cargo-restored” with coconuts and bamboo!) “real” items or vehicles can be enchanted as if they were “Built”; “heirloom” WWII vehicles, if any could be found, would be preferred.

Booze or Brew (Alcohol)

“Called” (Summoned) Item Only

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

P.P.E.: “Booze”: 5 per bottle (one fifth/25 oz/750 ml), 40 per box (8 bottles), or 300 per Crate (8 boxes or 64 bottles). “Brew”: 2 per bottle (12 oz (360 ml)), 40 per rack (24 bottles), 400 per Crate (12 racks or 288 bottles).

Duration: 3 days per level of the Cargo Priest or until consumed.

Effective Level: 1

Calls one or more bottles of alcoholic beverage, either “Booze” (distilled spirits) or “Brew” (beer). Beer is almost always in the American Pilsner style and will taste “watered down” to Europeans. Booze can be (in order of likelihood) Scotch, Bourbon, Rum, Gin, Vodka, or Tequila.

Camera

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 4 hours.

P.P.E.: 10 for Called or 8 for Built Camera.

Duration: 4 days per level of the Cargo Priest.

Effective Level: 2

Calls or Builds a handheld Camera, typically of the old WWII style. Aiming and adjusting the lens (even randomly) and clicking the button will cause a finished, fully developed black and white photograph to appear inside the Camera after 2 minutes. Up to 12 photos can be taken before the camera case needs to be cleared out (photos removed).

Camo Netting (Camouflage)

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 1 man-hour per square yard/meter; minimum time 4 hours per 10 square yards/meters.

P.P.E.: 2 per square yard/meter if Called, 1 per square yard/meter to enchant Built netting.

Duration: 5 days per level of the Cargo Priest. Built Netting can be “recharged” for another 5 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 1 P.P.E. per square yard/meter.

Effective Level: 2

Constructs or Calls camouflage netting that can be hung or draped over objects to be hidden. The netting creates the rough equivalent of the Chameleon spell, providing a 90% chance of concealing anything under it. Called net will appear as standard military camo netting while Built net is typically made from rope, twine, vines, and foliage (all of which is preserved and kept green by the magic).

Chainsaw or Power Tool

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 2 hours per power tool.

P.P.E.: 15 to Call a Power Tool, 10 to enchant a Built Power Tool.

Duration: 20 days per level of the Cargo Priest. Built Power Tools can be “recharged” for another 20 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 10 P.P.E.

Effective Level: 3

Calls or Builds a Chainsaw, Drill, Jigsaw, or other power tool. 15 Power Tools will fit in a Crate for hauling/storage purposes. Possessing the proper power tools (use discretion) will reduce total Building time on Cargo projects and Engineering Projects by 20%.

Cola-Cola (Bottled Beverage) or Cup of Joe

“Called” (Summoned) Item Only

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

P.P.E.: 2 per bottle (12 oz/360 ml), 40 per rack (24 bottles), 400 per Crate (12 racks or 288 bottles).

Duration: 5 days per level of the Cargo Priest or until consumed.

Effective Level: 1

Calls one or more bottles of a fizzy, sweet, caffeinated beverage in a tulip bottle with a red-and-white label. These are said to have mystical qualities. To receive a bottle is a great honor. A

variation of this ability (this same power, no need to take another) can summon a ceramic mug of coffee or tea.

Crew Call (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, & Marines!)

“Called” (Summoned) Only

Range (Called): Appears next to the Cargo Priest.

Casting Time (Calling): One full minute per 5 Crew.

P.P.E.: Crew cost 5 P.P.E. each for the first ten, 2 P.P.E. each for the eleventh through the 20th, and 1 P.P.E. each for the 21st through the 30th, 1 P.P.E. per 5 Crew for the 31st through 50th, and 1 P.P.E. per 10 Crew after that.

Duration: Based on the duration of the Cargo object they were Called to use. Crew will last the full duration of the Cargo ability’s duration and will disappear afterwards even if the Cargo ability is extended through Fuel, Maintenance, etc. If not otherwise specified, assume 3 days per level of the Cargo Priest or until “released.”

Effective Level: 5

Call in the Marines! This ability allows the Cargo Priest to summon (Call) ghostly personnel (“Crew”) to use Cargo objects, man Cargo vehicles or weapons, or staff Cargo buildings where applicable. This can be as simple as Calling up a squad of “Marines” to staff Called or Built Rifles or an Artillery piece in a time of need to as complex as staffing a Cargo Destroyer! Called ghost crew will be in the form of Haunting Entities assuming the roles of long-dead crewmen or even (rarely) the True Ghosts of fallen servicemen (the actual sentient spirits of departed people; more to come in *Rifts® Voodoo and the Spirit World*, until then treat as Haunting Entities for game purposes). Either way they are fully capable of fulfilling the requirements of their assigned task (i.e. skilled in the appropriate task), but Entities will have few to no other abilities. The Crew will appear whole, solid, and alive even though they are, indeed, Entities and Ghosts! Entities will have no requirements for food or sleep (but may start getting “hungry” for P.P.E. after a while if Called for too long), but are unable to interact with anyone beyond the simplest of “aye-aye, sir!” and reporting conversations. True Ghosts *will* be able to have conversations and will likely have additional skills beyond those necessary for the “job.” Crew Summoning costs for a few “milestone” numbers: 50 P.P.E. for a Crew of 10, 70 P.P.E. for a Crew of 20, 80 P.P.E. for a Crew of 30, 84 P.P.E. for a Crew of 50, 94 P.P.E. for a Crew of 100, and 99 P.P.E. for a Crew of 150. Note that there is a cumulative 1% chance of another (possibly more dangerous) type of Entity slipping through for every 5 Crew summoned in this manner up to a maximum of 30% at 150 Crew (the full complement for a Cargo Destroyer).

First Aid Kit (Healing)

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 12 man-hours (minimum 6 hours). Additional “uses” (maximum 6 total per kit) can be added to a Built kit for 2 hours of construction per use (the “bandages,” etc., are constructed separate from the kit).

P.P.E.: 30 to Call, 20 to enchant a Built First Aid Kit. Additional “uses” can be Called for 10 P.P.E. per use or enchanted if Built for 5 P.P.E. per use.

Duration: 6 days per level of the Cargo Priest or until used. Built Kits can be “recharged” for another 6 days duration per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 20 P.P.E.

Effective Level: 3

Calls or Builds a first aid kit capable of 6 “uses.” Each “use” will heal 2D6 S.D.C. and 2D4 Hit Points (or 2D4 M.D.C. if applicable). Additional “uses” can be Called or Built (see above). The “user” does not need any medical skills to use the “first aid kit” (it’s the “ceremony of application” that does the healing), though some Cargo Priests specifically Call “Medical Corpsmen” Crew to use the kits. Size/weight is negligible for hauling/storage.

Flag

“Called” (Summoned) Item Only

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

P.P.E.: 2

Duration: 10 days per level of the Cargo Priest.

Effective Level: 1

Calls a flag, typically either a 48-star U.S. flag, a “sacred” Red Cross flag, an individual U.S. State flag, or a military service or unit flag. Flags are useful as rallying points, symbols of status or authority, or points of ceremony. Size/weight is negligible for hauling/storage.

Fuel

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 4 hours for a Jerry Can or 12 man-hours for a Barrel (minimum 4 hours).

P.P.E.: 30 for a Jerry Can (5 gallons/640 oz/19 liters) or 250 for a Barrel (50 gallons or 10 “Jerry Cans” (189 l) – equivalent to a “Crate” for hauling and storage purposes). Half normal P.P.E. to refill existing or constructed containers (**Note:** Illogically enough, a Cargo Priest can refill former water containers with fuel and vice-versa without negative effect!).

Duration: 10 days per level of the Cargo Priest for a “Called” container, Fuel lasts 10 days per level of the Cargo Priest or until container vanishes or fuel is consumed.

Effective Level: 3

Creates a container of “Fuel” roughly equivalent to gasoline or diesel or kerosene, either a 50-gallon (189 l) “Jerry Can” or a 50-Gallon Drum or “Barrel.” **Effect of “Fuel”:** “Fuel” can be used to extend the duration of a vehicle such as a Jeep, Fighter, PT Boat, etc. by effectively “refueling” it! Each “refueling” will extend the duration by 100% (e.g. a “refueled” Jeep will last an additional 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built it) **Note:** Can only “refuel” within the last 24 hours of the duration and can only “refuel” once at a time – no double-fueling! The amount of Fuel necessary is based on the vehicle itself (see specific vehicle description under its Cargo

ability), but is set by the container type regardless of the size of the vehicle. For example, Jeeps and Trucks and Motorboats will require 1 “Jerry Can” of Fuel, PT Boats and all aircraft except the Superbomber and Super Flying Boat will require 1 “Barrel” of Fuel, the Superbomber and Super Flying Boat will require 3 “Barrels” of Fuel, and the Liberty Ship and Destroyer will require one entire Tanker Truck worth of Fuel. Remember, it is the ceremony of the refueling that works the magic, not the actual volumes of Fuel and engine consumption rates!



Gas Mask

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 9 man-hours (minimum 3 hours).

P.P.E.: 40 to Call, 30 to enchant a Built Gas Mask.

Duration: 10 days per level of the Cargo Priest. Built Masks can be “recharged” for another 10 days duration per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 30 P.P.E.

Effective Level: 2

Calls or Builds a Gas Mask that will protect the wearer from any inhaled poisons, gasses, or toxins, including smoke and magical gasses! **Note:** Existing “real” gas masks or air masks can be enchanted as if they were “Built” masks; “heirloom” WWII gas masks are preferred. Size/weight is negligible for hauling/storage.

Grenades

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 1 hour per grenade.

Casting Time (Calling): 1 full melee round.

P.P.E.: 10 per grenade, 160 per box (18 grenades), or 920 per Crate (6 boxes or 108 grenades) if Called, 8 per grenade to enchant Built grenades.

Duration: 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest or until used. Built grenades can be “recharged” for another 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 8 P.P.E. per grenade.

Effective Level: 3

Calls or Builds a hand grenade that does 4D6 M.D. or S.D.C. damage (as appropriate to the target’s damage capacity; damage is based on the perceptions of the Cargo Priest) to a 20 yard/-meter diameter. The grenade will explode after 5 seconds. W.P. Grenade will allow bonuses to throw, otherwise no bonuses (“wild throw”). **Note:** Existing “real” grenades can be enchanted as if they were “Built” even if disarmed or duds; “heirloom” WWII grenades are preferred.

Helmet (Protection)

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 3 hours.

P.P.E.: 30 to Call a Helmet or 20 to enchant a Built Helmet.

Duration: 3 hours per level of the Cargo Priest or until M.D.C. is depleted.

Effective Level: 4

A simple mystic enhancement that gives Mega-Damage protection. This creates or Calls a helmet that, through symbolic magic, creates an Armor of Ithan-like shield around the wearer even though the helmet itself only covers the head. This ability provides an invisible body shield that surrounds the wearer and provides 20 M.D.C. +5 M.D.C. per level of the Building or Calling Cargo Priest to anyone who puts on the helmet. Constructed helmets can be made from coconut halves, weaved hats, manufactured hats, or manufactured helmets. Called helmets will appear in the form of a 1930s/40s helmet, typically an American WWII “pot” helmet but possibly also a British style “Doughboy” helmet, a Japanese WWII helmet, or Pith Helmet, or potentially even a hat (fatigue hats, bush hats, or sailor hats are preferred). Once the M.D.C. of the shield is depleted, a Called helmet will vanish and a Built (or imbued) helmet will lose enchantment and need to be “recharged” by a full recasting of this ability. Size/weight is negligible for hauling/storage.

Instrument

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 4 hours.

P.P.E.: 10 for Called or 8 for Built Instrument.

Duration: 4 days per level of the Cargo Priest.

Effective Level: 2

Calls or Builds a Western-style musical instrument, typically of the brass, woodwind, or percussion style. The Cargo Priest or a Called Crew Musician will automatically be able to play the instrument at professional quality; otherwise requires the Play Instrument skill.

Jeep or Truck

Requires: Motor Pool, Radio.

Range (Called): Appears next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): Jeep: 80 man-hours; minimum 20 hours. Truck: 120 man-hours; minimum 30 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 10 minutes.

P.P.E.: 500 to Call, 300 to enchant a Built Jeep or Truck. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 4 days per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with "Fuel."

Crew Required: 1 "Driver" (Called or assigned) with Pilot Automobile skill.

Effective Level: 6

Builds or Calls a Jeep or a "Deuce and a Half" truck. Both will have a top speed of 70 mph (112 km) but will cruise off-road at a mere 10-30 mph (16-48 km). The Jeep will have 100 M.D.C. (plus 5 M.D.C. per tire; 4 tires; -3 to strike) and will seat four with two Crates of Cargo (Called separately; alternately seats two with four Crates of Cargo) or allows the mounting of a Machine-Gun (or similar crew-served weapon) instead of any Cargo Crates. Note that riders are not enclosed and can be individually targeted at -3 to strike. The Truck will have 150 M.D.C. (plus 5 M.D.C. per tire; 6 tires; -3 to strike) and will seat three plus room in the back for 24 people or 48 Crates of Cargo (**Note:** 2 people per 4 Crates if a mix of people and Cargo; Cargo Called separately). Note that the weight of the individual Crates is inconsequential since the Cargo Priests "know" how many Crates each will carry (it's a belief system!). Repairs take 5 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C. **Tanker Truck:** Alternately, the "Truck" can be a "Tanker Truck," the equivalent of a "Deuce and a Half" with a liquid storage tank instead of a passenger/cargo bed. It can hold either water or fuel (can hold either interchangeably without negative effect). It will hold 750 gallons (15 "Barrels"/2839 liters) of Fuel or Water, Called separately (1,500 P.P.E. for Water, 2,000 P.P.E. for Fuel). One "Tanker Truck" worth of fuel will "refuel" a Liberty Ship or Destroyer. **Note:** After at least 50 Mega-Damage the trailer leaks badly (fuel can burn!). **Refueling:** A Jeep, Truck, or Tanker Truck can have its duration increased by "refueling" it (see Fuel ability). One Jerry Can of Fuel will extend the duration of the Jeep/Truck for an additional 4 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 24 hours of the end of the refuel duration.

Lighter

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 1 hour.

P.P.E.: 5 to Call or 3 to enchant a Built Lighter.

Duration: 10 days per level of the Cargo Priest. Built Lighters can be recharged for another 10 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 3 P.P.E.

Effective Level: 1

Calls or Builds a cigarette lighter, useful not only for cigarettes but for cooking fires and other uses. Resembles an old Zippo or Ronson style lighter, typically with artwork such as flags, unit logos, or pinups.

Luckys (Cigarettes)

"Called" (Summoned) Item Only

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

P.P.E.: 4 per pack, 40 per carton (12 packs), 400 per Crate (120 cartons or 1,440 packs).

Duration: 2 days per level of the Cargo Priest or until consumed.

Effective Level: 1

Conjures a pack, carton (12 packs), or Crate (120 cartons) of "Luckys," a brand of American Golden Age cigarettes. They are a status symbol and very valuable form of Cargo that can serve as an ersatz currency. Since the "tar" vanishes at the end of the duration, there is conveniently no risk of lung disease.

Machine-Gun

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 6 man-hours (minimum 3 hours).

Casting Time (Calling): 2 full melee rounds.

P.P.E.: 50 for Called or 42 to enchant a Built Machine-Gun. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 2 days per level of the Cargo Priest. Built Machine-Guns can be "recharged" for another 2 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 42 P.P.E.

Crew Required: 2 (Called or assigned) with W.P. Machine-Gun or Heavy Weapons skill.

Effective Level: 5

Calls or Builds a Machine-Gun! Typically resembles a Browning .30 or .50 caliber (belt-fed internal magazine). Requires a crew of two to serve. It has a range of 1500 feet (457 m), fires belt-fed ammunition, and does 4D6 M.D. or 5D6 S.D.C. (as appropriate to the target's damage capacity). It can fire single-shot, or do 1D4+2 round bursts for 7D6 M.D. or 1D4x10 S.D.C. (as appropriate). Or a burst can be used to attack grouped multiple targets for standard damage to each (single attack, separate dodges). **Ammunition Note:** Requires the Pistol, Rifle, or Bullets Cargo ability to summon ammunition; this weapon will not come with its own ammunition.

Mortar

Range (Called): Appears next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 5 hours for the mortar tube and 1 hour each per mortar shell.

Casting Time (Calling): 2 full melee rounds.

P.P.E.: 100 to Call a Mortar Tube or 80 to enchant a Built Tube. 15 per Shell, 110 per Box (8 shells), or 400 per Crate (4 Boxes or 32 Shells) if Called, 12 per shell to enchant Built shells. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest or until used. Built Mortar Tubes can be “recharged” for another 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 80 P.P.E. Built shells can be “recharged” for another 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 12 P.P.E. per shell.

Crew Required: 2 (Called or assigned) with W.P. Heavy Weapons skill.

Effective Level: 5

Calls or Builds a Mortar Tube or Shells. Mortar will have a range of 820 yards (750 m) and do 6D6 M.D. or S.D.C. (as appropriate to the target’s damage capacity; damage is based on the perceptions of the Cargo Priest) to a 60 foot (18 m) diameter. Requires a crew of two to serve. W.P. Heavy Military Weapons is required for bonuses to strike, otherwise no bonuses (“wild fire”) with a -2 to strike due to indirect method of fire. A Crate will hold 4 Boxes of Shells, 2 Mortar Tubes, or one tube and two Boxes of shells. **Note:** Dud shells can be enchanted as if they were “Built.”

Motorcycle

Range (Called): Appears next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 40 man-hours (minimum 10 hours); 10 man-hours for an added sidecar.

Casting Time (Calling): 3 minutes.

P.P.E.: 300 to Call or 220 to enchant a Built Motorcycle, with or without sidecar. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 6 days per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with “Fuel.”

Crew Required: 1 “Driver” (Called or assigned) with Pilot: Automobile skill.

Effective Level: 6

Calls or Builds a motorcycle typically of the off-road capable U.S. WW2 Harley Davidson variety. A Sidecar can be added or removed at any time giving a 10% reduction in speed and added width in exchange for adding room for a second passenger or one Crate of Cargo (Called separately). The Motorcycle will have a top speed of 70 mph (112 km) but will cruise off-road at a mere 10-30 mph (16-48 km) or less. The main Motorcycle will have 65 M.D.C. (plus 2 M.D.C. per tire; 2 tires; -3 to strike) and the sidecar will have a separate 25 M.D.C. and a small wheel of 1 M.D.C. (-6 to strike). Repairs take 20 P.P.E. and 2 man-hours per 3 M.D.C. **Refueling:** A Motorcycle can have its duration increased by “refueling” it (see Fuel ability). One Jerry Can of Fuel will extend the duration of the Motorcycle for an additional 6 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the

vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 24 hours of the end of the refuel duration.

Motorboat

Range (Called): Appears in the water or Dry Dock next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 80 man-hours; minimum 20 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 5 minutes.

P.P.E.: 300 to Call or 220 to enchant a Built Motorboat. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 4 days per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with “Fuel”.

Crew Required: 1 “Pilot” (Called or assigned) with Pilot: Automobile skill. Navigator also useful.

Effective Level: 6

Creates a small outboard-style Motorboat with room for a pilot plus four passengers or four Crates of Cargo (Called separately; 1 Crate to 1 passenger exchange). The Motorboat will have a top speed of 15 knots (28 km) but will cruise at half that and will have 50 M.D.C. Repairs take 6 P.P.E. and 2 man-hours per 1 M.D.C. **Refueling:** A Motorboat can have its duration increased by “refueling” it (see Fuel ability). One Jerry Can of Fuel will extend the duration of the Motorboat for an additional 4 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 24 hours of the end of the refuel duration.

Movie Projector or Reels

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 5 hours per projector or 2 hours per each reel.

P.P.E.: 20 to Call a projector, 17 to enchant a Built projector; 7 per Called reel, 4 to enchant a Built reel.

Duration: Each projector or reel will last 7 days per level of the Cargo Priest. Built projectors can be “recharged” for another 7 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 17 P.P.E. Built reels can be “recharged” for another 7 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 4 P.P.E. each.

Crew Required: 1 “Cameraman” (Called or assigned) with TV/Video equivalent skill.

Effective Level: 4

Calls or Builds a Movie Projector or associated film Reels. Film will be in black and white and will typically show old 1930s/40s American movies or sports games (baseball is preferred) or old WWII newsreels. Each Reel is 30 minutes maximum and multiple reels will be required for movies and games. Built reels (made from carved reels and film made from palm strips or gut/sinew) can be “personalized” by the person who does the physical construction even if not a Cargo Priest. In this way individual tribe members can “tell their story,” and such reels are often an exaggerated tale of their success in battle, the hunt, or fishing (“Hmm, I’d swear that shark was a lot smaller

when I saw him bring it up!”). Note that a Crate will hold 2 projectors, 10 reels, or one projector and 5 reels for hauling and storage purposes.



Pistol, Rifle, or Bullets (Ammo)

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 2 hours for a Pistol or 3 hours for a Rifle. 20 Bullets per hour.

Casting Time (Calling): 1 full melee round.

P.P.E.: 20 to Call a pistol or 17 to enchant a Built pistol, 30 to Call a rifle or 26 to enchant a Built rifle. 4 per Bullet, 780 per Ammo Case (200 Bullets), or 6,000 per Crate (8 Cases or 1,600 Bullets) if Called, 2 per Bullet to enchant Built Bullets.

Duration: 4 days per level of the Cargo Priest. Built Pistols can be “recharged” for another 4 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 17 P.P.E. Built Rifles can be “recharged” for another 4 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 26 P.P.E. Built Bullets can be “recharged” for another 4 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 2 P.P.E. per Bullet.

Effective Level: 3

Calls or Builds a Pistol or Rifle or associated Bullets (ammo). Pistols and Rifles both use the “same” Bullets, regardless of relative caliber. Also, the Machine-Gun (see Ma-

chine-Gun ability) also uses the same Bullets Called or Built with this ability! Pistols typically resemble U.S. Colt .45 automatics or Browning .38 revolvers. Either way they have a range of 500 feet (152 m), hold 6 Bullets (yes, the 8-round magazine of the automatic only holds 6 rounds! Perceptions do weird things in magic), and do 3D6 M.D. or 4D6 S.D.C. (as appropriate to the target’s damage capacity; damage is based on the perceptions of the Cargo Priest). Rifles typically resemble M-1 Garand rifles (clip-fed internal magazine). They have a range of 1,500 feet (457 m), hold 8 Bullets, and do 4D6 M.D. or 5D6 S.D.C. (as appropriate to the target’s damage capacity). **Note:** Disarmed or dud Bullets can be enchanted as if they were “Built.”

Radio

Range (Called): Appears next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 5 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 1 full melee round.

P.P.E.: 30 to Call or 20 to enchant a Built Radio.

Duration: 30 days per level of the Cargo Priest. Built Radios can be “recharged” for another 30 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 10 P.P.E. Crew Called separately.

Crew Required: 1 “Radio Operator” (Called or assigned, typically the Cargo Priest) with Radio: Basic skill.

Effective Level: 4

The basic ability and principle “Calling” tool of the Cargo Priest is the Radio. Necessary for Calling many of the larger Cargo items (such as Supercargo) and an essential badge of office, the Radio is as central to the Cargo Priest as Ley Lines are to the Ley Line Walker. While a radio can be Called (resembles the AN/ARC-5 Command Radio), most Cargo Priests insist on constructing (“Building”) one. A halved coconut makes perfect headphones, bamboo strips make great antennas, and shells and nuts are great for buttons and dials. The insides of the radio are of no real concern since it is the belief and ceremony that make it work. The Radio will be able to communicate with any other Cargo Radio, Cargo Walkie-Talkie, or Cargo Handie-Talkie up to 25 miles (40 km), though this range is drastically increased to 100 miles (160 km) with the addition of a Cargo Tower. Note that two separate Tower-Radios can communicate up to 2,000 miles (3,200 km) if both Cargo Priests know of the other Tower’s existence! These ranges are fixed by the Cargo Priest’s belief and are unchanged by atmospheric or terrain. Ranges are doubled along a Ley Line. Adding the Tower will also allow the Radio to tune in to “stations,” celestial radio networks from the Ancestors in the Spirit World that play music, sports, and radio shows in the style of 1930s/1940s American entertainment, including jazz and big band music, traditional Melanesian folk, country, sports (baseball!), and radio shows and serials (“The Shadow!”). Since these signals are mystical in nature they will not be detectable by standard radios or monitoring equipment but will be detectable as “magic use” to Psi-Sensitives or Psi-Stalkers. Adding “Loudspeakers” made from coconut shells (5 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour each) will allow the music/shows or spoken announcements to be made to the surrounding area. Note that slight modification by a Techno-Wizard (200 P.P.E., the spells Tongues (12 P.P.E.) and Frequency Jamming (15 P.P.E.),

400 credits worth of quartz and sapphire, 12 days construction time) will allow the Cargo Radio to also function as a standard radio, including allowing it to relay between other Cargo Radios and standard radios and having the abilities of Tongues and Frequency Jamming.

Rations (Canned Meat!)

“Called” (Summoned) Item Only

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

P.P.E.: 2 for a single serving, 6 for a box (4 singles), or 50 for a Crate (16 boxes, 64 singles).

Duration: 3 days per level of the Cargo Priest or until consumed.

Effective Level: 1

Summons one or more servings of canned rations, typically “C-Rats,” including potted meat, beans, corn, peas, and a chocolate bar, but can be any single canned item. One particular brand of potted meat featuring a blue label with friendly yellow lettering and a four letter name starting with “S” is a particular favorite. Some of the rare outlaw headhunter tribes say its taste resembles the “long pig,” whatever that might be. Most outsiders consider the “food” horrendous, but the Cargo Tribes treat it as ambrosia from Heaven.

Record Player and/or Records

Range (Called): Appears next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 3 hours for the player, 1 hour for each record.

Casting Time (Calling): 1 full melee round.

P.P.E.: 10 to Call a player, 8 to enchant a Built player; 3 per Called record, 1 to enchant a Built record.

Duration: Each player or record will last 15 days per level of the Cargo Priest. Built Record Players can be “recharged” for another 15 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 8 P.P.E. Built Records can be “recharged” for another 15 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 1 P.P.E. each.

Effective Level: 2

Builds or Calls a record player or records for entertainment purposes. Record players will be in the old-fashioned wind-up style. Records will mostly play popular Big Band and Jazz music from 1940s America. Note that a Crate will hold 2 players, or 50 records, or one player and 25 records for hauling and storage purposes.

Scout/Observation Plane

Requires: Radio. A Landing Strip is recommended, but not necessary if a suitably open stretch of land (flat, no trees or brush) is available for landing.

Range (Called): Lands near the Cargo Priest at a nearby clearing or Landing Strip.

Construction Time (Built): 50 man-hours; minimum 10 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 2 minutes.

P.P.E.: 200 P.P.E. to Call or 120 to enchant a Built Scout Plane. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 5 days per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with “Fuel.”

Crew Required: 1 “Pilot” (Called or assigned) with Pilot: Airplane skill. Air-to-Air Combat skill is recommended.

Effective Level: 7

Calls or Creates a small single-engine, high-wing monoplane of the L-2 Grasshopper variety. Small and slow, the plane is useful for carrying small amounts of Cargo, scouting, or transporting two people. The small aircraft has room for one pilot and one passenger and one Crate of Cargo (Called separately; exchange passenger for 1 additional Crate of Cargo). The Scout Plane will have a top speed of 93 mph (149 km) but will cruise at 83 mph (133 km) and will have 50 M.D.C. Repairs take 4 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C. **Armament:** None! Scout only. **Refueling:** A Scout Plane can have its duration increased by “refueling” it (see Fuel ability). Two Jerry Cans of Fuel will extend the duration of the Scout Plane for an additional 5 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 24 hours of the end of the refuel duration. **Seaplane Modification (Optional):** For an additional 50 P.P.E. if Called (or 35 P.P.E. and 16 man-hours of work if Built), a Scout Plane can be modified with floats to be a Scout Seaplane capable of taking off or landing in water. The advantage is that a suitable flat area or Landing Strip is not required to land. The disadvantage is that speed is reduced 25% due to the added drag. Can be “stored” in either a Hangar or a Dry Dock. **Amphibious Modification:** For an additional 20 P.P.E. if Called (or 15 P.P.E. and 10 man-hours of work if Built), a Scout Seaplane can be made Amphibious by adding retractable landing gear, allowing it to land either in the water or on a Landing Strip or Runway (loses ability to land in fields).

Stockings

“Called” (Summoned) Item Only

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

P.P.E.: 12 per pair, 220 per Box of 20 pairs, or 2000 per Crate of 200 pairs or 10 Boxes.

Duration: 4 days per level of the Cargo Priest.

Effective Level: 1

Calls one or more pairs of silk stockings, a very valuable commodity and symbol of wealth!

Storage Shed

Requires: No prerequisites.

Construction Time: 40 man-hours; minimum time 8 hours.

P.P.E.: 650; 350 to “recharge” for an additional 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Duration: 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Crew Required: None.

Effective Level: 8

A Storage Shed is a very basic Engineering Project that allows the storage of up to 20 Crates in “suspended animation” (i.e. the “duration” of Cargo goods, *not including weapons/mu-*

nitions, vehicles, Crew, or fuel/water, is not expended when within a Storage Shed). This allows goods to be “stored” for months without disappearing (theoretically indefinitely with “recharges” of the Storage Shed). The facility will have 20 M.D.C. and remains serviceable until at least 75% of this is depleted (15 M.D.C.). Repairs take 4 P.P.E. and 2 man-hours per 1 M.D.C.

Tools

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 1 hour per tool.

P.P.E.: 10 to Call a tool, 8 to enchant a Built tool. Can Call a full kit of tools (either carpentry tools or gardening tools) for 25 or enchant a Built kit for 20 (individual tools Called or Built separately at 25% less P.P.E.).

Duration: 20 days per level of the Cargo Priest. Built tools can be “recharged” for another 20 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 10 P.P.E.

Effective Level: 1

Calls or Builds one or more (non-powered) hand tools for construction or gardening purposes. Possessing the proper tools (one full kit of 20+ tools) will reduce total Building time on Cargo projects and Engineering Projects by 10%. Two kits will equal a Crate for storage and hauling purposes.

Uniform or Clothing

“Called” (Summoned) Item Only

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

P.P.E.: 5 per uniform or set of clothing, 85 for a Crate of 20 uniforms or sets of clothing.

Duration: 6 days per level of the Cargo Priest.

Effective Level: 1

Calls a military style uniform (any type, but typically WWII U.S. uniforms and usually Army fatigues or Navy dungarees; helmets or other equipment not included) or set of 1930s/40s style clothing (stockings not included). Boots or shoes are included. These items are popular for ceremonial, celebratory, or status purposes.

Walkie-Talkie or Handie-Talkie (Portable Radio)

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 3 hours for a Walkie-Talkie or 2 hours for a Handie-Talkie.

P.P.E.: 20 to Call or 15 to enchant a Built Walkie-Talkie or 10 to Call or 8 to enchant a Built Handie-Talkie. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 20 days per level of the Cargo Priest. Built Walkie-Talkies can be “recharged” for another 20 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 15 P.P.E. while Built Handie-Talkies can be “recharged” for another 20 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 8 P.P.E.

Crew Required: 1 “Radio Operator” (Called or assigned) with Radio: Basic skill.



Effective Level: 2

Calls or Builds a backpack-carried “Walkie-Talkie” similar to the U.S. Army SCR-300 or a hand-carried “Handie-Talkie” similar to the SCR-536. The Walkie-Talkie has a range of 3 miles (4.8 km) and takes up ½ Crate of space while the Handie-Talkie has a range of 1 mile (1.6 km) and takes up 1/8 of a Crate of space. These ranges are fixed by the Cargo Priest’s belief and are unchanged by atmospheric or terrain. Ranges are doubled along a Ley Line. Handie-Talkies, Walkie-Talkies, and Radios can all communicate with each other regardless of “channel.” Since these signals are mystical in nature they will not be detectable by standard radios or monitoring equipment but will be detectable as “magic use” to Psi-Sensitives or Psi-Stalkers. Note that modification by a Techno-Wizard (100 P.P.E., the spell Tongues (12 P.P.E.), 180 credits worth of quartz, 3 days construction time) will allow one of these Cargo devices to also function as a standard radio, allowing it to relay between other Cargo Radios and standard radios and including the Tongues spell ability. **Note:** A Cargo Priest (and only a Cargo Priest) can use the Walkie-Talkie or Handie-Talkie to indirectly call in “support” that normally requires a full Radio, assuming there’s a central Radio in range to act as an intermediary. E.g. a Cargo Priest can call in a Bomber by calling up the central Radio and having the radioman call up the Bomber. This will add an additional melee round to the “casting time,” and P.P.E. will come from the Cargo Priest making the indirect Call.

Water

Range (Called): Appears in-hand or next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 2 hours for a Canteen, 4 hours for a Jerry Can, or 12 man-hours for a Barrel (minimum 4 hours).

P.P.E.: 2 for a Canteen (1 qt/32 oz/1 liter), 20 for a Jerry Can (5 gallons/640 oz/20 “Canteens”/19 liters), or 120 for a Barrel (50 gallons/10 “Jerry Cans”/189 liters – equivalent to a “Crate” for hauling and storage purposes). Half normal P.P.E. to refill existing or constructed containers (**Note**: Illogically enough, a Cargo Priest can refill former water containers with fuel and vice-versa without negative effect).

Duration: 10 days per level of the Cargo Priest for a “Called” container, Water lasts until container vanishes or water is consumed.

Effective Level: 2

Calls or constructs (and fills with water) the equivalent of a water storage device, either a “Canteen” (M-1910 style U.S. Army canteen with cup and web belt), a 50-gallon “Jerry Can,” or a 50-Gallon Drum or “Barrel.” Existing or constructed containers can be refilled for half the original Calling/Building P.P.E.

Water or Fuel Trailer

Requires: Radio and a Jeep or Truck is recommended to pull it!

Limitations: None.

Range (Called): Appears near the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 60 man-hours (minimum 20 hours).

Casting Time (Calling): 3 minutes.

P.P.E.: 200

Duration: 5 days per level of the Cargo Priest.

Effective Level: 4

Calls or Builds a Trailer with a liquid storage tank (can hold water or fuel interchangeably without negative effect) that can be pulled by a Jeep or Truck. It will hold 300 gallons (6 “Barrels”/1136 liters) of Fuel or Water, Called separately (500 P.P.E. for Water, 2,000 P.P.E. for Fuel). One “Fuel Trailer” worth of fuel will “refuel” six aircraft or PT Boats or two Superbombers or Super Flying Boats. It will have 70 M.D.C. and Repairs take 3 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C. **Note**: After at least 20 M.D. of damage, the trailer leaks badly (fuel can burn!).

“Standard” Invocation Spells

Available as “Basic Cargo” Abilities

In addition to the above, the following “standard spells” can be taken individually as a Basic Cargo selection (see the **Rifts® Ultimate Edition** main book or the *Rifts® Book of Magic*): [2nd Level] Chameleon, Climb, [3rd] Create Wood, [4th] Watchguard (takes the form of a ghostly armed guard), [5th] Escape, Instill Knowledge, Mend the Broken, Sustain, [6th] Frequency Jamming (must operate through a Cargo Radio), Magic Pigeon, Tongues, Words of Truth, [7th] Constrain Being, Negate Mechanics, [8th] Commune with Spirits, Exorcism, Oracle, and Power Weapon. Alternately (G.M.’s discretion), they can use the *Ocean Magic* spells [5th] Communicate with Sea Creatures, Ride the Waves, [6th] Change Current, Senses of the Shark, or

[8th] Summon Sea Friend, or the *Native American Shamanic Magic* spell Contact Spirits.

Supercargo Spells

These are greater Cargo abilities, typically the summoning or building of large field weapons or vehicles.

Casting time for Called items varies with the item (see individual ability descriptions). Casting time to enchant Built items is a standard 5 minutes.

Note: Any existing or restored (even “Cargo-restored” with coconuts and bamboo!) “real” vehicles or weapons can be enchanted as if they were “Built”; “heirloom” WWII versions, if any could be found, would be preferred.

Artillery

Requires: Motor Pool and Radio, and a Jeep or Truck is recommended to pull it.

Range (Called): Appears next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 15 man-hours for the artillery piece and 2 man-hours each per shell.

Casting Time (Calling): One full minute.

P.P.E.: 300 to Call an Artillery piece or 150 to enchant a Built piece. 25 per Shell, 150 per Box (4 shells), or 500 per Crate (4 Boxes or 16 Shells) if Called, 20 per shell to enchant Built shells. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest or until used. Built Artillery pieces can be “recharged” for another 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 150 P.P.E. Built shells can be “recharged” for another 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest who originally enchanted it for an additional 20 P.P.E. per shell.

Crew Required: 3; Commander, Firer, Shell Jerk (Called or assigned) with W.P. Heavy Weapons skill.

Effective Level: 7

Calls or Builds an Artillery piece (cannon, howitzer, etc.) or Shells. Artillery will have a range of 3½ miles (5.5 km; about half that of actual equivalent artillery) and do 1D4x10 M.D. or S.D.C. (as appropriate to the target’s damage capacity; damage is based on the perceptions of the Cargo Priest) to a 100 foot (30 m) diameter. Requires a minimum crew of two to serve (3-4 is better). W.P. Heavy Military Weapons is required for bonuses to strike, otherwise no bonuses (“wild fire”) with a -3 to strike due to indirect method of fire. A Crate will hold 4 Boxes of Shells; Artillery pieces are on wheels and must be towed by a Jeep or equivalent. Artillery will have 85 M.D.C. and Repairs take 4 P.P.E. and 2 man-hours per 1 M.D.C. **Note**: Dud shells can be enchanted as if they were “Built.” **Torpedoes and Bombs** can be constructed for ships and planes exactly as described for Shells.

Bomber

Requires: Landing Strip, Tower, Radio.

Range (Called): Lands near Cargo Priest at nearby Landing Strip.

Construction Time (Built): 300 man-hours; minimum 30 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 1 hour.

P.P.E.: 1,200 P.P.E. to Call or 900 to enchant a Built Bomber. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 2 days per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with "Fuel."

Crew Required: Minimum 3 up to 11 total (Called or assigned); *Required:* 1 "Pilot" with Pilot: Airplane skill (Air-to-Air Combat skill recommended), 1 "Navigator" with Navigation skill, 1 "Bombardier" with Weapon Systems skill; *Optional:* 1 "Co-Pilot" with Pilot: Airplane skill, 1 "Flight Engineer" with Airplane Mechanics skill (in-flight maintenance), 1 "Radioman" with Radio: Basic skill, and up to 4 "Gunnery" with W.P. Machine-Gun skill. All other Crew are recommended to also know W.P. Machine-Gun.

Effective Level: 10

Calls or Creates a twin- or four-engine medium to heavy bomber! Capable of delivering quite a powerful payload and often bristling with Machine-Guns, these "flying fortresses" are a very powerful weapon of war. They typically appear in the form of a medium bomber of the B-25 Mitchell, B-26 Marauder, G4M "Betty," or Wellington variety, or a heavy bomber of the B-17 Fortress, B-24 Liberator, Lancaster, or Halifax variety. Either way, the performance and payload are the same (remember, it's based on perceptions, not "reality"). The large aircraft has (in addition to its normal Crew) room for up to three passengers or one Crate of Cargo (Called separately; exchange passengers for Crew or three Crew for 1 additional Crate of Cargo). The Bomber will have a top speed of 300 mph (480 km) but will cruise at 180 mph (288 km) and will have 250 M.D.C. Repairs take 10 P.P.E. and 3 man-hours per 2 M.D.C. **Armament:** Up to twelve (12!) Machine-Guns and up to twenty (20!) Bombs (treat as Artillery Shells for Calling/Building; require Bombardier to use). Optionally ("Gunship Option"), the bombs can be replaced by one forward-firing Artillery piece (fired by pilot; replace Bombardier with 2 Heavy Weapons specialists to man Artillery) or up to six additional forward-firing Machine-Guns (fired by Pilot). **Refueling:** A Bomber can have its duration increased by "refueling" it (see Fuel ability). One full Barrel of Fuel will extend the duration of the Bomber for an additional 2 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 24 hours of the end of the refuel duration.

Bulldozer (Construction Equipment)

Requires: Motor Pool, Radio.

Range (Called): Appears next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 120 man-hours; minimum 30 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 10 minutes.

P.P.E.: 500 to Call, 300 to enchant a Built Bulldozer, etc. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 4 days per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with "Fuel."

Crew Required: 1 "Operator" with Pilot: Tracked & Construction Vehicles skill.

Effective Level: 7

Builds or Calls a Bulldozer or other construction vehicle (front-end loader, grader, dump truck, etc.). All will have a top speed of a mere 10-30 mph (16-48 km). The vehicle will have 250 M.D.C. (plus 20 M.D.C. per tread or 5 M.D.C. per tire; 2 treads or 4-6 tires; -3 to strike) and Repairs take 2 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C. It will seat one driver/operator (no room for Cargo). Note that drivers are not enclosed and can be individually targeted at a -3 to strike. **Refueling:** The vehicle can have its duration increased by "refueling" it (see Fuel ability). One Jerry Can of Fuel will extend the duration of the Bulldozer for an additional 4 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 24 hours of the end of the refuel duration. **Forklift:** An alternative application of this ability can create a Forklift capable of carrying up to 20 Crates simultaneously, making unloading or moving Cargo very quick and simple.

Cargo Plane

Requires: Landing Strip, Tower, Radio.

Range (Called): Lands near Cargo Priest at nearby Landing Strip.

Construction Time (Built): 150 man-hours; minimum 15 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 10 minutes.

P.P.E.: 800 P.P.E. to Call or 650 to enchant a Built Cargo Plane. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 3 days per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with "Fuel."

Crew Required: Minimum 3 (Called or assigned); *Required:* 1 "Pilot" with Pilot: Airplane skill (Air-to-Air Combat skill recommended), 1 "Navigator" with Navigation skill, and 1 "Loadmaster" with specialized logistical/packing skill; *Optional:* 1 "Co-Pilot" with Pilot: Airplane skill, 1 "Radioman" with Radio: Basic skill, and up to 3 "Gunnery" with W.P. Machine-Gun and/or W.P. Heavy Weapons skill (depending on armament, if any; skills may overlap).

Effective Level: 8

Calls or Creates a twin-engine, low-wing monoplane of the C-47 Sky Train (DC-3 "Gooney Bird") variety. The plane is useful for carrying passengers and/or Cargo, or can theoretically be equipped with weaponry. The aircraft has room for a crew of 3-5 and up to 28 passengers or 10 Crates of Cargo (Called separately; exchange 2 passengers per 1 additional Crate of Cargo). The Cargo Plane will have a top speed of 224 mph (358 km) but will cruise at 160 mph (256 km) and will have 120 M.D.C. Repairs take 8 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C. **Armament:** Normally none. Can ("Gunship Option") carry up to five Machine-Guns or one Artillery piece and two Machine-Guns (Called separately; require 3 Heavy Weapons specialists to man Artillery and/or Gunnery with W.P. Machine-Gun for Machine-Guns). **Refueling:** A Cargo Plane can have its duration increased by "refueling" it (see Fuel ability). One Barrel of Fuel will extend the duration of the Cargo Plane for an additional 3 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built

the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 24 hours of the end of the refuel duration.

Destroyer

Requires: Radio. Port is advised, otherwise boats are required for loading/offloading.

Limitations: Cargo Priest must be 8th Level or higher to cast.

Range (Called): Appears next to the Cargo Priest in water.

Construction Time (Built): 2500 man-hours; minimum 250 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 2 hours.

P.P.E.: 3000 to Call or 1800 to enchant a Built Destroyer. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with "Fuel".

Crew Required: Minimum 10 "Officers" and 50 "Crewmen" (Called or assigned) with skills to include Pilot: Ship, Navigation, Weapon Systems, Radio: Basic, Sensory Equipment, Mechanical Engineering, W.P. Heavy Weapons, W.P. Machine-Gun, and a variety of specialized skills. Full complement is 30 Officers and 120 Crew; degraded performance will occur with less than full complement (-5% to all skills and -1 to all combat actions per 5 Officers and 20 Crew not available).

Effective Level: 13

The ultimate in Cargo magic weaponry, this ability creates or Calls a WWI-era Destroyer or Destroyer-Escort! This is the most decisive and costly Cargo vehicle and is rarely, if ever, Called and almost never Built (the "operating costs" are too high for most Cargo Tribes to support for more than a few days). At the moment, this and the Liberty Ship are the supreme Cargo abilities, though rumors and legends persist of "Mega-Cargo" abilities like Cruiser, Battleship, Submarine, and even Aircraft Carrier, though these abilities, if they are possible, would require ungodly amounts of time and P.P.E. to achieve. This warship has room for hundreds of crew and passengers (minimum crew of ten) and fifty Crates of Cargo (Called separately). The Destroyer will have a top speed of 24 knots (27 mph/44 km) but will cruise at half that and will have 750 M.D.C. Repairs take 5 P.P.E. and 4 man-hours per 1 M.D.C. **Armament:** The Destroyer can have up to four(!) Artillery pieces and twelve Machine-Guns added on to it (all separately added for additional P.P.E. using the appropriate Cargo abilities), as well as up to four Torpedo launchers (see PT Boat and Artillery for rules on Torpedoes). **Refueling:** A Destroyer can have its duration increased by "refueling" it (see Fuel ability). One whole Tanker Truck (or 15 Barrels or two and a half Fuel Trailers) of Fuel will extend the duration of the Destroyer for an additional 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 24 hours of the end of the refuel duration. A Port is required to refuel from the Truck or Trailer, otherwise the slow process of Boats and Barrels is required.

Higgins Boat (Landing Craft)

Requires: Radio.

Limitations: Cargo Priest must be 5th Level or higher to cast.

Range (Called): Appears in the water or Dry Dock next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 200 man-hours; minimum 50 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 10 minutes.

P.P.E.: 800 to Call or 600 to enchant a Built Higgins Boat. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 2 days per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with "Fuel."

Crew Required: Minimum 3 (Called or assigned); *Required:* 1 "Pilot" with Pilot: Motorboat skill, 1 "Navigator" with Navigation skill, and 1 "Loadmaster" with specialized logistical/packing skill; *Optional:* 1 "Radioman" with Radio: Basic skill, 1 "Engineer" with Mechanical skills, and up to 3 "Gunners" with W.P. Machine-Gun and/or W.P. Heavy Weapons skill (depending on armament, if any).

Effective Level: 7

Creates a Higgins Boat (LCVP) style landing craft, a rectangular shallow-draft boat with a flip-down passenger door. Capable of carrying personnel, vehicles, or Cargo Crates, the Higgins Boat has room for a pilot plus thirty six passengers or 36 Crates of Cargo (Called separately; 1 Crate to 1 passenger exchange), or can carry one Jeep or Truck, one Tank or six Motorcycles (one Motorcycle with Sidecar equals two Motorcycles; one Motorcycle equals six passengers or Crates). The Higgins Boat will have a top speed of 9 knots (10.5 mph/17 km), but will cruise at half that and will have 80 M.D.C. Repairs take 10 P.P.E. and 3 man-hours per 1 M.D.C. **Refueling:** A Higgins Boat can have its duration increased by "refueling" it (see Fuel ability). Three Jerry Cans of Fuel will extend the duration of the Higgins Boat for an additional 2 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 24 hours of the end of the refuel duration.

Fighter

Requires: Landing Strip, Tower, Radio.

Range (Called): Lands near Cargo Priest at nearby Landing Strip.

Construction Time (Built): 150 man-hours; minimum 15 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 10 minutes.

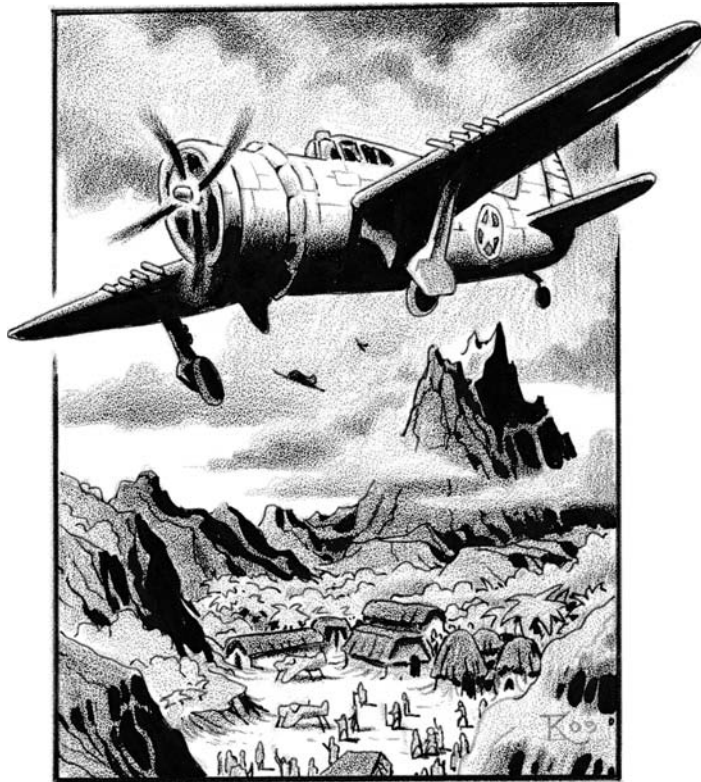
P.P.E.: 800 P.P.E. to Call or 650 to enchant a Built Fighter. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 2 days per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with "Fuel."

Crew Required: 1 "Pilot" (Called or assigned) with Pilot: Airplane skill and Air-to-Air Combat skill.

Effective Level: 9

Calls or Creates a single or twin-engine, low-wing monoplane fighter, typically of the P-40 Warhawk, F4F Wildcat, P-38 Lightning, P-47 Thunderbolt, F6F Hellcat, P-51 Mustang, F4U Corsair, Supermarine Spitfire, or even A6M Zero variety, but can also summon small "tactical" bombers of the SBD Daunt-



less or TBF Avenger type. Generally, the planes will be types used in the WWII Pacific Theater, but theoretically European theater planes are possible as well. Regardless of the “type” of Fighter, performance will be the same (remember, the magic is based on expectations, not realities). The plane is designed for war, either to attack air/surface targets or engage airborne threats. The aircraft typically has room for one pilot and no Cargo, but some (“tactical bombers”) can carry up to 3 crew/passengers or 1 Crate of Cargo (Called separately; exchange 1 passenger for 1 additional Crate of Cargo). The Fighters will have a top speed of 380 mph (608 km) but will cruise at 160 mph (256 km) and will have 150 M.D.C. Repairs take 6 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C. **Armament:** Up to eight (8!) Machine-Guns (typically 4-6) in the wings or nose (fired forward by the pilot) and up to two Bombs or one Torpedo (treat as Artillery Shells for Calling/Building, see PT Boat for more on Torpedoes). Tactical Bombers can also have one crew-served, swivel-mounted Machine-Gun facing aft, but typically will only have two forward-firing guns. All weapons Called/Built separately. **Refueling:** A Fighter can have its duration increased by “refueling” it (see Fuel ability). One Barrel of Fuel will extend the duration of the Fighter for an additional 2 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 24 hours of the end of the refuel duration. **Seaplane Modification (Optional):** For an additional 100 P.P.E. if Called (or 75 P.P.E. and 48 man-hours of work if Built), a Fighter can be modified with floats to be a Seaplane Fighter capable of taking off or landing in water. The advantage is that a Landing Strip is not required to Call or to land. The disadvantage is that speed is reduced 25% due to the added drag. Can be “stored” in either a Hangar or a Dry Dock. **Amphibious Modification:** For an additional 30 P.P.E. if Called

(or 20 P.P.E. and 18 man-hours of work if Built), a Seaplane Fighter can be made Amphibious by adding retractable landing gear, allowing it to land either in the water or on a Landing Strip or Runway.

Flying Boat

Requires: Tower, Radio. Dock is advised, otherwise boats are required to load/offload.

Range (Called): Lands near Cargo Priest in water.

Construction Time (Built): 300 man-hours; minimum 30 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 10 minutes.

P.P.E.: 800 P.P.E. to Call or 650 to enchant a Built Flying Boat. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 3 days per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with “Fuel.”

Crew Required: Minimum 2 (Called or assigned); **Required:** 1 “Pilot” with Pilot: Airplane skill (Air-to-Air Combat skill recommended), 1 “Navigator” with Navigation skill, and 1 “Loadmaster” with specialized logistical/packing skill (skills may overlap); **Optional:** 1 “Co-Pilot” with Pilot: Airplane skill, 1 “Radioman” with Radio: Basic skill, 1 “Flight Engineer” for in-flight repairs with Airplane Mechanics skill, and up to 3 “Gunners” with W.P. Machine-Gun and/or W.P. Heavy Weapons skill (depending on armament, if any).

Effective Level: 9

Calls or Creates a single- or twin-engine flying boat or amphibian, typically of the Grumman J2F Duck, Vickers Viking, Grumman G-21 Goose, Kawanishi H6K “Emily,” or PBX Catalina variety. The plane is useful for carrying passengers and/or Cargo, or can be equipped with weaponry. The aircraft has room for a crew of 2-5 and up to 10 passengers or 10 Crates of Cargo (Called separately; exchange 1 passenger per 1 additional Crate of Cargo). The Flying Boat will have a top speed of 185 mph (296 km) but will cruise at half that and will have 200 M.D.C. Repairs take 4 P.P.E. and 3 man-hours per 2 M.D.C. **Armament:** Normally none. Can carry up to five crew-served Machine-Guns located around the plane for maximum defensive coverage (Called separately). **Refueling:** A Flying Boat can have its duration increased by “refueling” it (see Fuel ability). One Barrel of Fuel will extend the duration of the Flying Boat for an additional 3 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 24 hours of the end of the refuel duration. **Amphibious Modification:** For an additional 80 P.P.E. if Called (or 55 P.P.E. and 48 man-hours of work if Built), a Flying Boat can be made Amphibious by adding retractable landing gear, allowing it to land either in the water or on a Landing Strip or Runway.

Liberty Ship

Requires: Radio. Port is advised, otherwise boats are required to load/offload.

Limitations: Cargo Priest must be 8th Level or higher to cast.

Range (Called): Appears near the Cargo Priest in water.

Construction Time (Built): 1,500 man-hours; minimum 150 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 30 minutes.

P.P.E.: 1,800 to Call or 1,000 to enchant a Built Liberty Ship. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with "Fuel."

Crew Required: Minimum 3 "Officers" and 10 "Crewmen" (Called or assigned) with skills to include Pilot: Ship, Navigation, Weapon Systems, Radio: Basic, Sensory Equipment, Mechanical Engineering, logistical/cargo/supply skill, W.P. Heavy Weapons, W.P. Machine-Gun, and a variety of specialized skills. Full complement is 5 Officers and 40 Crew; degraded performance will occur with less than full complement (-5% to all skills and -1 to all combat actions per 1 Officer and 10 Crew not available).

Effective Level: 12

The ultimate Cargo hauler! Creates or Calls a WWII Liberty Ship. This behemoth has room for hundreds of crew and passengers (minimum crew of ten) and hundreds of Crates of Cargo (treat as effectively "unlimited"; Cargo Crates called separately). The Liberty Ship will have a top speed of 11 knots (12 mph/20 km) but will cruise at half that and will have 600 M.D.C. Repairs take 3 P.P.E. and 4 man-hours per 1 M.D.C. **Armament:** The Liberty Ship can have up to one Artillery piece and six Machine-Guns added on to it (all separately added for additional P.P.E. using the appropriate Cargo abilities). It is designed more for Cargo than warfare. **Refueling:** A Liberty Ship can have its duration increased by "refueling" it (see Fuel ability). One entire Tanker Truck (or 15 Barrels or two and a half Fuel Trailers) of Fuel will extend the duration of the Liberty Ship for an additional 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 4 hours of the end of the refuel duration. A Port is required to refuel from the Truck or Trailer, otherwise the slow process of Boats and Barrels is required.

PT Boat

Requires: Radio. Dock is advised, otherwise boats are required to load/offload.

Limitations: Cargo Priest must be 6th Level or higher to cast.

Range (Called): Appears near the Cargo Priest in water.

Construction Time (Built): 250 man-hours; minimum 25 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 15 minutes.

P.P.E.: 800 to Call or 600 to enchant a Built PT Boat. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 2 days per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with "Fuel."

Crew Required: Minimum 3 (Called or assigned); *Required:* 1 "Pilot" with Pilot: Motorboat skill, 1 "Navigator" with Navigation skill, and 1 "Loadmaster" with specialized logistical/packing skill; *Optional:* 1 "Radioman" with Radio: Basic skill, 1 "Engineer" with Mechanics skill, and up to 3 "Gunners" with W.P. Machine-Gun and/or W.P. Heavy Weapons skill (depending on armament, if any).

Effective Level: 9

Creates a small, outboard-type patrol boat of the WWII "PT" style. The small, fast combat boat has room for up to 18 crew and passengers (minimum crew of three) and up to eight Crates of Cargo (Called separately; exchange passengers for Cargo at 1 Crate to 1 passenger). The PT Boat will have a top speed of 45 knots (51.5 mph/83 km), but will cruise at half that, and will have 150 M.D.C. Repairs take 6 P.P.E. and 2 man-hours per 1 M.D.C. **Armament:** The PT Boat can have up to five Machine-Guns added on to it (all separately added for additional P.P.E. using the appropriate Cargo abilities) and can add two racks for Torpedoes (treat "Torpedoes" as Artillery Shells for the sake of Calling/construction and damage purposes; Torpedoes can only engage floating targets and have a 3 mile (4.8 km) range; Torpedoes each use up one Crate of storage). **Refueling:** A PT Boat can have its duration increased by "refueling" it (see Fuel ability). One Barrel of Fuel will extend the duration of the PT Boat for an additional 2 days per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 24 hours of the end of the refuel duration. A Dock is required to refuel from the Trailer, otherwise the slow process of Boats and Barrels is required.

Superbomber

Requires: Runway, Tower, Radio.

Limitations: Cargo Priest must be 6th Level or higher to cast.

Range (Called): Lands near Cargo Priest at nearby Runway.

Construction Time (Built): 800 man-hours; minimum 50 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 2 hours.

P.P.E.: 2,000 P.P.E. to Call or 1,600 to enchant a Built Superbomber. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with "Fuel."

Crew Required: Minimum 3 up to 11 total (Called or assigned); *Required:* 1 "Pilot" with Pilot: Airplane skill and 1 "Navigator" with Navigation skill; *Optional:* 1 "Co-Pilot" with Pilot: Airplane skill, 1 "Bombardier" with Weapon Systems skill (required to drop bombs), 1 "Flight Engineer" with Airplane Mechanics skill (in-flight maintenance), 1 "Radioman" with Radio: Basic skill, and up to 4 "Gunners" with W.P. Machine-Gun skill. All other Crew are recommended to also know W.P. Machine-Gun.

Effective Level: 13

Calls or Creates a four-engine, super-heavy bomber! The ultimate offensive air weapon in the Cargo arsenal, this weapon can devastate anything under it. It appears in the form of a mighty B-29 Superfortress. This mammoth aircraft has (in addition to its normal Crew) room for up to six passengers or two Crates of Cargo (Called separately; exchange Crew for additional passengers or three passengers or Crew for 1 additional Crate of Cargo). The Superbomber will have a top speed of 350 mph (560 km) but will cruise at 220 mph (352 km) and will have 350 M.D.C. Repairs take 6 P.P.E. and 3 man-hours per 1 M.D.C. **Armament:** Up to twelve (12!) Machine-Guns and up to eighty (80!) Bombs (treat as Artillery Shells for Calling/Building; require Bombardier to use). There is no "Gunship Option" as with smaller aircraft; "flies too high/fast." **Re-**

fueling: A Superbomber can have its duration increased by “refueling” it (see Fuel ability). Three (3) full Barrels of Fuel (or one-half a Fuel Trailer) will extend the duration of the Superbomber for an additional 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 24 hours of the end of the refuel duration.

Super Flying Boat (Clipper)

Requires: Tower, Radio. Dock is advised, otherwise boats are required to load/offload.

Limitations: Cargo Priest must be 6th Level or higher to cast.

Range (Called): Lands near Cargo Priest in water.

Construction Time (Built): 300 man-hours; minimum 30 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 10 minutes.

P.P.E.: 800 P.P.E. to Call or 650 to enchant a Built Flying Boat. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with “Fuel.”

Crew Required: Minimum 4 (Called or assigned); *Required:* 1 “Pilot” with Pilot: Airplane skill (Air-to-Air Combat skill recommended), 1 “Navigator” with Navigation skill, and 1 “Loadmaster” with specialized logistical/packing skill; *Optional:* 1 “Co-Pilot” with Pilot: Airplane skill, 1 “Flight Engineer” for in-flight repairs with Airplane Mechanics skill, 1 “Radioman” with Radio: Basic skill, and up to 2 “Stewards” with Domestic skills for civilian Clippers or up to 3 “Gunners” with W.P. Heavy Weapons and/or W.P. Machine-Gun skills for military Flying Boats (depending on armament, if any; skills may overlap).

Effective Level: 11

Cargo luxury at its finest! Calls or Creates a large, multi-engine flying boat (“Clipper”). These can be civilian airliner models (such as the lovely Sikorsky S-42, Martin M-130, and Boeing B-314 Clippers of Pan Am, the luxurious Short Empire, Sandringham, and Solent of BOAC, or the colossal, six-engine Air France Latécoère 631), or they can be military models (such as the Martin Mars, Short Sunderland, and Kawanishi H8K “Emily”). Either way, this large yet graceful plane is useful for carrying large numbers of passengers and/or Cargo, or can be equipped with weaponry. The aircraft has room for a crew of 11 (including 2 Stewards) and room for passengers or Cargo. Passenger versions are exceedingly luxurious with room for up to 65 passengers (daytime, seated) or 35 overnight passengers with sleeping berths and up to 10 Crates of Cargo (Called separately; exchange 1 passenger per 1 additional Crate of Cargo). Cargo versions can hold up to 30 Crates of Cargo! The Flying Boat will have a top speed of 210 mph (336 km) but will cruise at 188 mph (301 km) and will have 300 M.D.C. Repairs take 3 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C. Rumors of an Ultimate Flying Boat of the Hughes H-4 Hercules (“Spruce Goose”) variety fly though the islands, but have yet to be proven. **Armament:** Normally none. Military models can carry up to five crew-served Machine-Guns located around the plane for maximum defensive coverage (Called separately). **Refueling:** A Super Flying Boat can have its duration increased by

“refueling” it (see Fuel ability). Three Barrels (or one half a Fuel Trailer) of Fuel will extend the duration of the Super Flying Boat for an additional 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 24 hours of the end of the refuel duration. **Note:** Cannot be made Amphibious; only capable of water takeoff & landing.



Tank

Requires: Motor Pool, Radio.

Range (Called): Appears next to the Cargo Priest.

Construction Time (Built): 300 man-hours; minimum 100 hours.

Casting Time (Calling): 30 minutes.

P.P.E.: 1,000 to Call, 700 to enchant a Built Tank. Crew Called separately.

Duration: 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest; can be extended with “Fuel.”

Crew Required: 4 (Called or assigned); 1 “Commander and 1 “Driver” with Pilot: Tank skill and 2 “Weapons Technicians” with W.P. Heavy Weapons and/or W.P. Machine-Gun skills.

Effective Level: 10

The ultimate in Cargo land warfare! Builds or Calls a Tank or similar armored vehicle (APC, Tank Destroyer, etc.). All will have a top speed of a mere 10-30 mph (16-48 km). The vehicle

will have 400 M.D.C. (plus 35 M.D.C. per tread; 2 treads; -3 to strike) and Repairs take 3 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C. It will seat one driver/operator, one weapon loader, one captain/commander, and up to two other passengers or weapons crew (no room for Cargo). Note that drivers and crew are normally enclosed within the Tank and cannot be individually targeted. **Armament:** The Tank can have one Artillery piece and up to two Machine-Guns (or up to four Machine-Guns and no Artillery) added on to it (all separately added for additional P.P.E. using the appropriate Cargo abilities). **Refueling:** The vehicle can have its duration increased by “refueling” it (see Fuel ability). Three Jerry Cans of Fuel will extend the duration of the Tank for an additional 1 day per level of the Cargo Priest who originally Called or Built the vehicle. Can only refuel within the last 24 hours of the vehicle duration and can only refuel once at a time. However, the vehicle can be refueled again within 24 hours of the end of the refuel duration.

“Standard” Invocation Spells Available as “Supercargo” Abilities

In addition to the above, the following “standard spells” can be taken individually as a Supercargo selection (see the **Rifts® Ultimate Edition** main book or the *Rifts® Book of Magic*): [10th] Control & Enslave Entity, Illusionary Forest, Magic Warrior (appears as a WWII soldier), Speed Weapon, [11th] Illusionary Terrain, Remove Curse, [12th] Calm Storms, Heavy Air (not difficult in the tropics!), Ironwood, and Summon & Control Entity. Alternately available (G.M.’s discretion) are the *African Ceremonial Magic* spells of Chant of Blessing and Dance to Chase Away Evil Spirits & Witches, or the *Ocean Magic* spells [12th] Calm Waters and [13th] Metamorphosis: Shark.

Cargo Engineering Projects

The Cargo equivalent of major construction, these buildings and projects provide additional capabilities for the tribe. All Cargo Engineering projects are constructed out of any available goods (typically bamboo or wood lashed with vines or sinew and a thatch roof, though sometimes old metal or plastic, if available). Most Supercargo abilities require one or more of these Engineering Projects to be in existence in order to be used (e.g. a Landing Strip or Runway is needed for most aircraft to be called). **Casting Time** to enchant an Engineering Project (once Built) is a standard 15 minutes regardless of scale or complexity, as much of the “magic” is in the construction itself (already factored into the Construction Time).

Cargo Engineering Projects cannot be “Called” (summoned), only “Built” (constructed). The Built structures will remain even after the magic (duration) has died out and can be recharged at any time if still in serviceable condition. However, things disintegrate quickly in the tropics and any structure will degenerate at a rate of 10% per month in terms of man-hours required to repair it (e.g. an Armory (80 man-hour structure) that has degenerated for 2 months will require 16 man-hours of work to restore to “serviceable” quality; 2 months = 20% of 80 = 16).

Armory

Requires: No prerequisites.

Construction Time: 80 man-hours; minimum time 16 hours.

P.P.E.: 1,250; 750 to “recharge” for an additional 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Duration: 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Crew Required: 1 “Munitions Chief” (Called or assigned) with Demolitions Disposal and logistical/supply skills.

Effective Level: 10

An Armory allows the storage of up to 40 Crates of Cargo Weapons and/or Munitions (Ammo, Shells, Bombs, etc.) in “suspended animation” (i.e. the “duration” of Cargo goods, *not including vehicles, Crew, fuel/water, or other Cargo*, is not expended when within an Armory). This allows weapons and ammo to be “stored” for months without disappearing (theoretically indefinitely with “recharges” of the Armory). The facility will have 200 M.D.C. and remains serviceable until at least 75% of this is depleted (150 M.D.C.). Repairs take 7 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C.

Dock

Requires: No prerequisites. Must be constructed at water’s edge.

Construction Time: 10 man-hours per 20 foot (6 m) section; minimum time 2 hours per section.

P.P.E.: 90 per 20 foot (6 m) section; 45 per section to “recharge” for an additional 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Duration: 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Crew Required: 2 “Dock Workers” (Called or assigned) with specialized skill to dock, load, and service boats. *Optional:* 1 “Crew Chief” (Called or assigned) with Airplane Mechanic skill to service Flying Boats.

Effective Level: 9

Creates a small Dock that small boats and seaplanes can tie up to for loading/unloading, fueling, and maintenance. Otherwise such actions require up to several trips with a boat carrying supplies or personnel. Motorboats, PT Boats, Higgins Boats, and (if a Crew Chief is included) Flying Boats or “seaplane” equipped Scout Planes or Fighters can be serviced with a Dock. Destroyers and Liberty Ships require a full Port. Note that the Dock provides no “storage” capabilities (duration of docked vessels still passes as normal); that requires a Dry Dock. The Dock will have 10 M.D.C. per 20 feet (6 m) and each section remains serviceable until at least 50% of this is depleted (need at a minimum a contiguous strip 50% of the length of the docked boat/ship/plane to service plus a clear path to shore). Repairs take 9 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C.

Dry Dock (Boat/Ship Storage)

Requires: Dock or Port. Must be constructed at water’s edge. Size and ability of Dry Dock is linked to the adjoining Dock or Port.

Construction Time: *Attached to Dock:* 280 man-hours; minimum time 40 hours. *Attached to Port:* 600 man-hours; minimum time 76 hours.

P.P.E.: *Attached to Dock:* 1,400; 850 to “recharge” for an additional 15 days per level of the Cargo Priest. *Attached to Port:* 2,200; 1,400 to “recharge” for an additional 15 days per level of the Cargo Priest.

Duration: 15 days per level of the Cargo Priest.

Crew Required: 1 “Harbor Chief” and 3 “Depot Workers” (Called or assigned) with Mechanical skills. *Optional:* 1 “Crew Chief” (Called or assigned) with Airplane Mechanic skill to service Flying Boats.

Effective Level: 10

A Dry Dock allows the storage of Cargo water vehicles (boats, ships, etc.) in “suspended animation” (i.e. the “duration” of Cargo vehicles, *not including weapons/ammo, land vehicles or aircraft, Crew, fuel/water, or other Cargo*, is not expended when within a Dry Dock). This allows vehicles to be “stored” for months without disappearing (theoretically indefinitely with “recharges” of the Dry Dock). The size and capacity are determined by whether it is attached to a Dock or to a full Port. If attached to a Dock the Dry Dock stores up to 3 Motorboats or 1 PT Boat or Higgins Boat. If attached to a full Port the Dry Dock stores up to 6 Motorboats, 3 PT Boats or Higgins Boats, 1 Destroyer or Liberty Ship or any combination thereof (1 PT Boat = 2 Motorboats). Alternately, Scout Seaplanes (equivalent to a Motorboat), Flying Boats and Seaplane Fighters (equivalent to a PT Boat), or Super Flying Boats (equivalent to ½ Destroyer, i.e. 2 will fit in a Port Dry Dock) can be maintained in a Dry Dock if a Crew Chief is present among the “Crew.” The facility will have 150 M.D.C. when serving a Dock or 300 M.D.C. if serving a Port and remains serviceable until at least 75% of this is depleted (113 or 225 M.D.C. respectively). Repairs take 10 P.P.E. and 2 (Dock) or 3 (Port) man-hours per 1 M.D.C. Damage can easily cause water to leak into an emptied Dry Dock if at least 25% damage has been sustained. **Note:** Motorboats (and only Motorboats) can alternately be stored in a Quonset Hut (equate to 20 Crates of Cargo).

Hangar (Airplane Storage)

Requires: Landing Strip or Runway. Must be constructed near Landing Strip/Runway.

Construction Time: 160 man-hours; minimum time 32 hours.

P.P.E.: 1,400; 850 to “recharge” for an additional 15 days per level of the Cargo Priest.

Duration: 15 days per level of the Cargo Priest.

Crew Required: 3 “Crew Chiefs” (Called or assigned) with Airplane Mechanics skill.

Effective Level: 11

A Hangar allows the storage of Cargo aircraft (Scout Planes, Fighters, Bombers, etc.) in “suspended animation” (i.e. the “duration” of Cargo aircraft, *not including weapons/ammo, boats/ships or land vehicles, Crew, fuel/water, or other Cargo*, is not expended when within a Hangar). This allows aircraft to be “stored” for months without disappearing (theoretically indefinitely with “recharges” of the Hangar). Stores up to 6 Scout Planes, 4 Fighters, 2 Cargo Planes or Flying Boats or Bombers, or 1 Superbomber or Super Flying Boat, or any combination thereof (1 Bomber = 2 Fighters = 3 Scout Planes). The facility will have 200 M.D.C. and remains serviceable until at least 75%

of this is depleted (150 M.D.C.). Repairs take 7 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C.

Landing Strip

Requires: No prerequisites. Must be constructed in a long, flat area at least 200 yards/meters long.

Construction Time: 100 man-hours; minimum time 24 hours.

P.P.E.: 1,250; 750 to “recharge” for an additional 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Duration: 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Crew Required: 1 “Crew Chief” (Called or assigned) with Airplane Mechanic skill.

Effective Level: 9

Constructs a suitable Landing Strip on which most small to medium aircraft can land. Scout Planes, Fighters, Cargo Planes, and Bombers can all land at a Landing Strip, but Superbombers require a full Runway. Note that Seaplanes (Scout or Fighter) and Flying Boats can land at a Landing Strip or Runway if made Amphibious. Super Flying Boats can never be made Amphibious and can only land in the water. The facility will have effectively 150 M.D.C. overall (roughly 5 M.D.C. per 20 feet/6 m) and remains serviceable until at least 33% of this is depleted (50 M.D.C.; it’s impossible to land at a hole-strewn Landing Strip). Repairs take 4 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C.

Medical Hut (Healing)

Requires: No prerequisites.

Construction Time: 80 man-hours; minimum time 16 hours.

P.P.E.: 1,250; 750 to “recharge” for an additional 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Duration: 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Crew Required: 1 “Doc” and 2 “Nurses” or “Corpsmen” (Called or assigned) with Medical skills (Medical Doctor, Paramedic, and First Aid minimum).

Effective Level: 8

A Medical Hut will allow for the treatment of sick or injured personnel (living, not ghostly “Called Crew”). The healing takes the form of a) the administrations of a “Doctor” to stabilize a critical patient (either the Cargo Priest or a Called Crew “Doc”; either will automatically have the equivalent of the Medical Doctor skill when within the Medical Hut), and b) a slow, automatic healing of stable “recovering” patients at a rate of 1D4 Hit Points or 1D6 S.D.C. per day (Hit Points heal first). Note that wisecracking, ironic and sardonic ghostly surgeons in the “OR” are a common side effect of this building. The facility will have 75 M.D.C. and remains serviceable until at least 75% of this is depleted (57 M.D.C.). Repairs take 2 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C.

Motor Pool (Vehicle Storage)

Requires: No prerequisites.

Construction Time: 80 man-hours; minimum time 16 hours.

P.P.E.: 1,250; 750 to “recharge” for an additional 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Duration: 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Crew Required: 1 “Mechanic” (Called or assigned) with Automobile Mechanics skill.

Effective Level: 10

A Motor Pool allows the storage of Cargo land vehicles (Jeeps, Tanks, Trailers, etc.) in “suspended animation” (i.e. the “duration” of Cargo vehicles, *not including weapons/ammo, boats/ships or aircraft, Crew, fuel/water, or other Cargo*, is not expended when within a Motor Pool). This allows vehicles to be “stored” for months without disappearing (theoretically indefinitely with “recharges” of the Motor Pool). Stores up to 50 Motorcycles, 40 Trailers (or Motorcycles with Sidecar), 20 Jeeps, 10 Trucks, or 5 Tanks or any combination thereof (1 Tank = 2 Trucks = 4 Jeeps = 8 Trailers = 10 Motorcycles). The facility will have 100 M.D.C. and remains serviceable until at least 75% of this is depleted (75 M.D.C.). Repairs take 14 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C.

Port

Requires: Existing Dock to upgrade. Must be constructed at water’s edge.

Construction Time: 28 man-hours per 20 foot (6 m) section; minimum time 4 hours per section.

P.P.E.: 140 per 20 foot (6 m) section; 85 per section to “recharge” for an additional 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Duration: 15 days per level of the Cargo Priest.

Crew Required: 1 “Harbormaster” (Called or assigned) with logistics/supply and organization skills and at least 3 “Longshoremen” with specialized skills to dock, load, and service ships. *Optional:* 1 “Crew Chief” (Called or assigned) with Airplane Mechanic skill to service Flying Boats.

Effective Level: 12

Upgrades a Dock to a full Port, allowing the servicing of Destroyers, Liberty Ships, or (if a Crew Chief is included) Super Flying Boats. Otherwise, such actions require up to several trips with a boat carrying supplies or personnel. Motorboats, PT Boats, Higgins Boats, and (if a Crew Chief is included) Flying Boats or “seaplane” equipped Scout Planes or Fighters can still be serviced with a full Port. Note that the Port provides no “storage” capabilities (Duration of docked vessels still passes as normal); that requires a Dry Dock. The facility will have 30 M.D.C. per 20 foot (6 m) section and remains serviceable until at least 50% of this is depleted (needs at a minimum a contiguous strip 50% of the length of the docked boat/ship/plane to service plus a clear path to shore). Repairs take 5 P.P.E. and 2 man-hours per 1 M.D.C.

Quonset Hut (Housing or Cargo Storage)

Requires: No prerequisites.

Construction Time: 80 man-hours; minimum time 16 hours.

P.P.E.: 900; 450 to “recharge” for an additional 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Duration: 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Crew Required: 1 “Quartermaster” (Called or assigned) with logistical/supply skills.

Effective Level: 9

Like a larger version of a Storage Shed, a Quonset Hut allows the storage of Cargo, or can serve as “barracks” housing for personnel or ghostly Crew (as per the Cargo ability). Up to 50 people or stores up to 200 Crates can be stored in “suspended animation” (i.e. the “duration” of Cargo goods or Crew, *not including weapons/munitions, vehicles, or fuel/water*, is not expended when within a Quonset Hut). This allows goods to be “stored” or Crew to be “housed” for months without disappearing (theoretically indefinitely with “recharges” of the Quonset Hut). The facility will have 100 M.D.C. and remains serviceable until at least 75% of this is depleted (75 M.D.C.). Repairs take 9 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C. **Note:** Motorboats (and only Motorboats) can alternately be stored in a Quonset Hut (equate to 20 Crates of Cargo).

Runway

Requires: Bulldozer and existing Landing Strip to upgrade. Must be constructed on a long, flat piece of land at least 500 yards/meters long.

Construction Time: 300 man-hours; minimum time 70 hours.

P.P.E.: 3,400; 2,500 to “recharge” for an additional 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Duration: 1 month per level of the Cargo Priest.

Crew Required: 3 “Crew Chiefs” (Called or assigned) with Airplane Mechanics skill.

Effective Level: 12

Constructs a suitable Runway on which any land-based aircraft can land. Scout Planes, Fighters, Cargo Planes, Bombers, and even Superbombers can all land at a Runway. Note that Seaplanes (Scout or Fighter) and Flying Boats can land at a Landing Strip or Runway if made Amphibious. Super Flying Boats can never be made Amphibious and can only land in the water. This is considered the ultimate of all Cargo Engineering abilities, even if a Port is arguably a greater achievement, and is considered a statement of ultimate status for a Cargo Tribe. The facility will have effectively 300 M.D.C. (roughly 20 M.D.C. per 20 feet/6 m) and remains serviceable until at least 35% of this is depleted (105 M.D.C.; it’s impossible to land at a hole-strewn Runway). Repairs take 4 P.P.E. and 2 man-hours per 1 M.D.C.

Tower

Requires: No prerequisites. Radio advised.

Construction Time: 60 man-hours; minimum time 8 hours.

P.P.E.: 350; 250 to “recharge” for an additional 2 months per level of the Cargo Priest.

Duration: 2 months per level of the Cargo Priest.

Crew Required: None, other than Crew to use the Radio.

Effective Level: 6

A Tower is a basic construction project necessary for any Landing Strip or Runway and extremely helpful for a Radio (increases Radio range and allows reception of “stations” – see the Basic Cargo ability of Radio). Also, Towers are an essential status symbol and mark of tribe pride for any Cargo Tribe. Towers may or may not have a small building at the top for 1-3 occu-

pants/lookouts. The facility will have 65 M.D.C. and remains serviceable until at least 50% of this is depleted (33 M.D.C.; teeters dangerously and can topple easily at this stage). Repairs take 6 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C. **Note:** Towers can be built on top of existing buildings or even sufficiently large vehicles (ships or very large land vehicles such as a Mountaineer ATV or larger).

Water Tower or Fuel Tank

Requires: No prerequisites.

Construction Time: 80 man-hours; minimum time 10 hours.

P.P.E.: 400; 350 to “recharge” for an additional 2 months per level of the Cargo Priest.

Duration: 2 months per level of the Cargo Priest.

Crew Required: None.

Effective Level: 7

This builds a liquid storage tank that can hold water or fuel interchangeably without negative effect. It will hold 2,500 gallons (10 Tanker Trailers, 3 and 1/3 Tanker Trucks, or 50 “Barrels”/9,464 liters) of Fuel or Water, Called separately (1,500 P.P.E. for Water, 5,000 P.P.E. for Fuel). One “Fuel Tank” worth of fuel will “refuel” a Liberty Ship or Destroyer three times. The facility will have 65 M.D.C. and remains serviceable until at least 75% of this is depleted (49 M.D.C.; leaks badly (fuel can burn!), teeters dangerously and can topple easily at this stage). Repairs take 6 P.P.E. and 1 man-hour per 1 M.D.C.

Integrating Cargo Magic into Rifts®

Cargo Magic and Cargo Priests add an odd and unique flavor to a Rifts® campaign, but integrating them into your campaign can prove... strange. Some players may find it “too weird” or “silly” while others may find the ability to summon “naval fire support” or theoretically build armies or fleets too powerful. Some G.M.s may worry that adding another “power bloc” to Rifts® could unbalance the Underseas “region.” As always, G.M.’s discretion is advised.

That said, here’s some general advice and insight that may assist:

1. Geographical Limitation and Isolation: Cargo Magic and Cargo Tribes are limited to the isolated islands of the South Seas, specifically an arc from New Guinea through the Solomon Islands “Slot” to Vanuatu (the “New Hebrides”). These islands have little strategic value in a world without international trade, and the abundance of uninhabited islands in the area gives those few groups with interest in the area plenty of places to stop without bothering any Cargo Tribes. Unless your campaign takes you to this remote area you are very unlikely to encounter Cargo Tribes or Cargo Magic.

2. Regional Power: The Cargo Tribes are content to stay where they’re at. They will not “seek out” enemies (will not send fleets to shell Atlantis, for example). They are, in fact, unlikely to send forces after anything that’s outside of their immediate area. If the Horune establish a resupply base on an atoll in the Solomons, you can bet the farm the Tribes will gather and send out a force to destroy it. However, they are not going to send a fleet to the Aleutian Islands, Hawaii, or even relatively nearby Samoa or Java, even against the hated Horune. Consider

them an “isolationist regional power” that cannot be counted upon to join a combined fleet to attack the Naut’Yll or Lord of the Deep, for example. The “Cargo Crescent” can serve as a “hard point,” resupply base, and fallback position for the New Navy or their allies, but otherwise will have little effect on the larger world.

3. Isolationist Tribes: Similarly, Cargo Priests and Tribesmen are unlikely to willingly leave their home island for longer than a short few days’ trip. They have few interactions with the outside world, even with other Cargo Tribes, other than a limited partnership with the New Navy, limited forays against the Horune, and occasional interactions with other groups like the Dolphins and Whales. Cargo Tribe Player Characters or NPCs encountered outside of the Melanesian arc are likely there against their will (slaves, prisoners, refugees, or victims of random Rifting events) or on a very specific quest (find “America,” rescue enslaved family, etc.).

4. Few Allies or Enemies: Only the New Navy has any regular contact with the Cargo Tribes. Only the Horune see any semi-regular combat with the Cargo Tribes. Few others even know they exist, and those who do have few interactions with the Tribes.

5. The High Cost of Cargo: Cargo Magic can take a lot of time and P.P.E. for anything beyond minor short-term summoning. Most large vehicles require some supporting infrastructure (Cargo Engineering Projects) such as Landing Strips or Motor Pools in order to accommodate even their Calling. Long-term summoning similarly requires infrastructure, such as Quonset Huts. Some of these projects require hundreds of man-hours of work and thousands of P.P.E. to perform. Your average Cargo Tribe is a small village (under 1000 people) and the relatively simple act of summoning a Cargo Plane full of Crates of Cargo to land at your Landing Strip and then storing the Crates in a Quonset Hut requires a considerable expenditure of time and resources and is often the culmination of years of building and ceremony and P.P.E. hoarding. This means:

6. No “Mega-Bases”: Few Cargo Tribes have the time or resources to build massive “mega-base” villages. The chances of encountering a giant “Cargo City” filled with Quonset huts loaded with arms, runways, dock facilities, scores of tanks, fleets of ships, and wings of aircraft is very unlikely except in a time of absolute total war crisis (say, if Atlantis was launching a major purge of the South Pacific). Such big bases are not only expensive and time consuming (and require large numbers of workers not supportable in the South Seas islands even with Cargo Magic – you reach a point where feeding or Calling the workers uses up all of your available food and P.P.E., leaving none for Engineering Projects), such big bases would also draw unwanted attention (“Dear Horune: bomb here”). Most (99%) Cargo Tribe villages are small (under 1000 people) and are unlikely to support more than a Tower, a Landing Strip and/or Dock, and a building or two. Few will have more than a single vehicle “in stock” and few will have more weapons than necessary to equip their warriors.

7. Fickle Ancestors: After a while, the Ancestors grow tired of “prodigal whining descendants” constantly begging for stuff. “Back in my day we made due with rocks and sticks; why do these kids need yet another bloody tank?” Remember: Cargo Magic is a “gift,” not an entitlement.

As a result of these factors and others specific to your campaign, your campaign is unlikely to be much affected by Cargo Magic unless your travels take you to Melanesia. If your travels do take you there, or if the G.M. feels the need to add a little “what the...?” factor to a bogged-down campaign, or if your group just feels like “going Cargo” and building their own Cargo campaign, then pop a cola, put on some Glen Miller, and join the fun. Otherwise, sail on – there’s a whole world out there.

The N.O.R.A.D. Duology

A Chaos Earth/Rifts Crossover Adventure

Optional Material for Rifts® Chaos Earth™

By Ed Emmer

Part One

The Fall of N.O.R.A.D.

Overview

The players are members of NEMA during the first few days of the Great Cataclysm and must defend N.O.R.A.D. against both an onslaught of demons from without and betrayal from within.

Background on N.O.R.A.D.

Prior to the Great Cataclysm

Situated in the heart of Cheyenne Mountain in southern Colorado not far from the city of Colorado Springs, N.O.R.A.D. (North American Aerospace Defense Command) was built during the Cold War era to monitor threats to U.S. and Canadian airspace by Soviet and other “Communist” nation threats (China, North Korea, etc.). Using data from ground based stations and satellites, the facility would track the skies overhead, looking for threats from both the air and space. Constructed inside a mountain, it was designed to withstand a global nuclear war, with provisions to last for months or years if necessary, providing the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada a safe haven to which they could retreat and still command their respective nations in the event of such a global war.

At the dawn of the 21st Century, however, the United States Air Force had decided to decommission the N.O.R.A.D. facility as a relic of the Cold War era, insisting that many of the Strategic Air Command functions could be fulfilled at other sites at much less cost than maintaining a vast underground complex that was designed to withstand a full scale global nuclear war, something no longer seen as likely as the main threat to the United States no longer came from a superpower but rather from

a series of terrorist states. Still, a small coalition of Air Force generals managed to pull a few strings to keep part of the facility open and running as a site for weapons research and development, citing that with the Area 51 Groom Lake facility no longer a well kept secret (both as a result of the former Soviet Union selling declassified spy photos of the facility and the increasing sophistication of digital media devices that would allow even an amateur photographer with a pair of hiking boots to take pictures of it), it would be wise to do R&D work in a location free from the prying eyes of photographers and satellites, deep within a mountain complex that most people already knew about but had dismissed as a relic of a bygone era of politics and war.

Thus N.O.R.A.D. was spared total decommissioning and was scaled back to a few select sublevels dedicated to weapons research and applications. Breakthroughs made at the complex would be sent to more developed facilities for full experimentation and implantation on a grander scale. The best example of this would be the Dimensional Vortex Generator that would be sent to the Lone Star R&D facility for further development (and would ultimately become the Doorway Project that Dr. Bradford would discover nearly 300 years later). Breakthroughs in high-tech alloys would allow for the development of Chromium Guardsmen and Silver Eagle power armor. Even the groundwork for genetic experiments that would also see further development and maturation in the Lone Star Complex began in Sublevel Seven of the N.O.R.A.D. facility. Cyberworks, through military contracts, would conduct their first experiments in artificial intelligence in N.O.R.A.D., experiments that would ultimately yield their crowning achievement: the A.R.C.H.I.E. series of artificial intelligence computers.

When the countries of Canada, Mexico and the United States ratified the treaty that created the Northern Eagle Military Alliance (NEMA), N.O.R.A.D. once again saw life beyond the small R&D section of Sublevel Seven. The mountain facility once again pulsed with life as NEMA took residence in most of the adjacent levels, still leaving Sublevel Seven for R&D purposes. The large number of 25+ sublevels were refurbished and expanded, often consolidating multiple levels in order to increase the ceiling height as it became more and more common for the military to employ large robot vehicles. The remodeling and consolidation of the complex resulted in nine levels – a main level and eight sublevels, each with a ceiling height averaging 30 to 35 feet (9.1 to 10.7 m) in order to accommodate

larger vehicles and equipment. (Yes, the author is aware that this is not the proper layout of the Air Force's N.O.R.A.D. facility, but this is nearly 100 years in the future and the N.O.R.A.D. of Chaos Earth serves a dramatically different purpose than it currently does in real life.)

New technologies continued to be researched and developed even as NEMA took over the strategic operations of most of North America in conjunction with the militaries of Canada, Mexico and the United States. Cyberworks hooked up A.R.C.H.I.E. Two within the facility to help monitor and coordinate the vast array of operations and data the complex oversaw. Even when the Earth first began to heave with the coming of the Rifts that heralded the Great Cataclysm, N.O.R.A.D. remained 85% intact and ready to emerge and rescue the world from extinction... or so it seemed.

O.C.C. Considerations

Because this adventure takes place literally at the onset of the Great Cataclysm, starting on the morning of December 22nd, 2098, there are certain O.C.C.s and skills that would be inappropriate to have this early in the Chaos Earth setting. Only standard NEMA or similar military O.C.C.s should be allowed. These can be any of the NEMA military characters presented in the *Rifts®: Chaos Earth™ RPG* as well as any from additional sources, including from the pages of *The Rifter®*. O.C.C. descriptions for two U.S.A.F. soldiers as well as Contracted Civilian Scientists are provided below. To create additional non-NEMA military personnel, use the descriptions for any of the military-related O.C.C.s presented in other *Rifts®* titles. For example, the Special Forces O.C.C. presented in *Rifts® Mercenaries* could be adapted to create an Army Ranger or Navy Seal Special Ops soldier. Simply replace any Rifts-era equipment with the NEMA equivalent and eliminate all skills representing knowledge of the supernatural, psionics, magic, or D-Bees. This adventure was designed for four to six, low to mid-level NEMA or other military O.C.C.s.

At this point, NEMA would not yet have developed the Para-Arcane division as those "experts" in the paranormal were not needed until after the Coming of the Rifts. Likewise, the Demon Witch Hunter O.C.C. has not yet been established for the same reason. Furthermore, none of the new psychic or magic-wielding O.C.C.s should be allowed as it would be several weeks to months before these burgeoning occupations truly begin to develop. Also, skills related to knowledge of the supernatural (typically Lore skills) should not be allowed for the same reason. Finally, no NEMA character should have any psionic abilities (yet) as the Great Cataclysm has only just occurred and these powers have not yet manifested themselves.

U.S.A.F. Optional Military O.C.C.s

As N.O.R.A.D. is still under joint command with the United States Air Force (U.S.A.F.), it is reasonable to expect that some of the people on Sublevel Seven would be Air Force personnel or civilian scientists and engineers contracted to either the U.S.A.F. or NEMA. What follows are a number of optional mil-

itary and civilian O.C.C.s that would be appropriate in both this adventure as well as the larger *Chaos Earth* setting in general.

U.S.A.F. Special Forces Soldier O.C.C.

Air Force Special Forces soldiers are considered to be among the elite in special operations personnel in the United States Military, on par with Army Rangers, Navy Seals and other Special Forces units. Specializing in all manner of out-of-the-ordinary scenarios, these soldiers are masters of covert operations, tactical planning, search and rescue, parachute operations, command and control set up and a host of other specialized skills. Even with NEMA taking over North American international police and military operations, the U.S.A.F. still found it necessary to maintain an elite corps of specialized soldiers whose mission dealt primarily with air-related strategic operations. Air Force Special Forces Soldiers are trained in military operations and special weapons uses as well as tactical intelligence and air operations skills. Special M.O.S. skill clusters are also available based on the particular area of focus that soldier's training emphasizes. The result is a well rounded, superior soldier who has a strong background in military and tactical training as well as specialization in a unique field of operations. A truly deadly combination.

U.S.A.F. Special Forces Soldier O.C.C. Stats

Alignment: Any.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 12, M.E. 10, P.P. 12, P.S. 11 and P.E. 14 or higher.

M.O.S.: Select one of the following areas of specialty. Gains all skills under that M.O.S.

Combat Controllers (CCTs): These S.F. specialists are trained to coordinate air operations from the ground as well as construct air strips and set up the complex computerized equipment required for ground-to-air coordination. These soldiers are also trained in capturing and taking over existing air strips from hostile forces.

Radio: Satellite (+25%. This is an understanding of the methods and operations of satellite relay technology. Base Skill: 25% +5% per level of experience.)

Read Sensory Equipment (+25%)

Military Fortifications (+20%)

Math: Advanced (+10%)

Basic Electronics (15%)

Mechanical Engineering (+10%)

Computer Operation (+10%)

Salvage (+10%)

Pararescue (PJs): These S.F. specialists have what many consider the most dangerous missions in the military: the rescue of downed pilots and other military personnel from hostile territory. Trained in aircraft piloting, close combat tactics and paramedic rescue, these soldiers are often the most welcome sight on the battlefield.

Paramedic (+20%)

Field Surgery (+15%)

Command Robots: Pup Scout

Radio: Satellite (+10%)
Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) Warfare (+10%)
Read Sensory Equipment (+10%)
Navigation (+10%)
Excavation and Rescue (+20%)

Special Operations Weather Technician (SOWTs): Far more glamorous than it sounds, these soldiers are charged with interpreting meteorological and oceanographic information to tactical planners, typically from hostile or denied locations. Basically, they will be part of a unit that scouts into enemy territory and reports conditions back to mission planners.

Meteorology (+20%. This is an in-depth understanding of weather and climate phenomena, including predicting weather patterns and associated effects on terrain. Base Skill: 45% +5% per level of experience.)

Oceanography (+15%. This is an in-depth understanding of ocean and coastal processes, including currents, erosion features and tides. Base Skill: 35% +5% per level of experience.)

Detect Ambush (+20%)
Read Sensory Equipment (+15%)
Command Robots: Flying Probe
Military Fortification (+20%)
Swimming (+15%)
S.C.U.B.A. (+10%)

Special Tactical Officer (STO) and Combat Rescue Officer (CRO): STOs are trained to lead teams made up of CCTs, PJs, and SOWTs as well as direct combat operations in the field. Sort of a Special Forces Jack-of-all-trades, they can serve as a mission commander as well as a direct combatant deep within hostile territory. CROs serve the same basic function, though with an emphasis on rescue and recovery from hostile territories. As a result, they mainly lead teams of PJs.

Electronic Countermeasures (+15%)
Detect Ambush (+25%)
Military Fortification (+15%)
Tracking (people) (+10%)
Trap and Mine Detection (+15%)
Excavation and Rescue (+15%)
Demolitions (STO only; +15%)
Demolitions Disposal (STO only; +15%)
Paramedic (CRO only; +25%)
Field Surgery (CRO only; +20%)

O.C.C. Skills: These are in addition to M.O.S. and reflect basic training.

Math: Basic (+10%)
Language, Native: Standard
Language, Other: Two of choice (+20%).
Literacy, Native: Standard
Literacy, Other: Two of choice (+15%).
Military Etiquette (+20%, +25% for STO and CRO)
Radio: Basic (+20%)
Radio: Scramblers (+15%)

Intelligence (+12%, +15% for STO and CRO)
Athletics: General
Running
Prowl (+15%)
Parachuting (+30%)
Pilot: One Aircraft of choice (+15%).
Pilot: Power Armor Basic (+7%)
Power Armor Combat Elite: Silent Soldier
Wilderness Survival (+25%)
Land Navigation (+15%)
W.P. Energy Pistol
W.P. Submachine-Gun
W.P. Knife
Hand to Hand: Commando

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select two Espionage or two Military, and two other skills of choice. Plus select two additional skills at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12 (one must always be from either Espionage or Military). All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+7%).
Domestic: Any.
Electrical: Basic only.
Espionage: Any (+10%).
Horsemanship: None.
Mechanical: Basic only.
Medical: First Aid only.
Military: Any (+10%).
Physical: Any.
Pilot: Any except tanks and robots (+5%, +10% to any additional Aircraft).
Pilot Related: Any (+5%).
Rogue: Any (+5%).
Science: Any (+5%).
Technical: Any (+5%).
W.P.: Any.
Wilderness: Any (+10%).

Secondary Skills: Select two Secondary Skills at level one, +1 additional Secondary Skill at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All start at the base skill level and normal restrictions apply. Optional: Characters may use the Secondary Skill list on page 300 of the *Rifts® Ultimate Edition* RPG.

Standard Equipment: Standard U.S.A.F. Heavy Combat Body Armor, Energy Pistol, P95 or P101 Submachine-Gun, 5 extra clips for each, Vibro-Knife, Vibro-Sword, survival knife, two plasma grenades, two smoke grenades, 2 tear gas grenades, 2 flares, first aid medical kit, pocket computer, language translator, flashlight, disposable cigarette lighter, notebook, 2 water-proof pens, utility belt, air filter and gas mask, walkie-talkie, U.S.A.F. uniform, dress uniform, covert ops black clothing, camouflage fatigues, combat boots, canteen, one pair of gloves, a dozen pairs of surgical gloves, 32 small to medium plastic specimen bags, 50 feet (15.2 m) thin

climbing rope, long-range radio, mini-binoculars, nightvision goggles, sunglasses and some other basic gear. Air Force Special Forces operatives are assigned a personal Silent Soldier SPPA Power Armor. Depending upon the assignment, PJs may be assigned a specially modified Pup Scout robot to aid in the search and rescue of personnel. SOWTs may be assigned a Flying Probe robot to assist in stealth reconnaissance missions.

Available Upon Assignment: A vehicle appropriate to the mission and character's skill (Game Masters may wish to use modified vehicle stats from the selection of Iron Heart Aircraft listed in *Rifts® Mercenaries*, all of which represent reverse engineered pre-Rifts military designs), explosives, heavy weapons, surveillance equipment, video equipment, disguises, fake I.D., robots, and any other special equipment approved by the character's commanding officer for the specific mission.

Money: All U.S.A.F. Special Forces Soldiers get a roof over their head, food, clothing and all other basics provided free as part of their service, as well as access to Air Force and other military offices and facilities (including NEMA). Monthly salary was 4750 credits, plus hazard pay. Under the circumstances of Chaos Earth, access to equipment, medical supplies and services may be limited. Pay is one tenth normal (475 credits a month), mainly as an incentive for morale. The character starts off with 6D6x100 credits.

Cybernetics: Gyro-Compass, Clock Calendar, and 1D4 additional implants of choice. S.F.s will typically not have a U.S.A.F. I.D. chip to avoid identification if captured and examined. Additional cybernetics and Bio-Systems might be available in extreme medical emergency, though in the Chaos Earth setting, such resources are increasingly rare.

U.S.A.F. Combat Pilot O.C.C.

Air Force Combat Pilots are the elite of the world's fighter jet pilots. Even NEMA has not yet developed a corps of combat pilots that mirrors the skill and expertise of these highly trained aerial warriors. Combat pilots are trained in a wide variety of military aircraft, from bombers and fighters to helicopters and hovercraft. Unlike Special Forces soldiers who are trained in both air and ground combat, Air Force Combat Pilots receive relatively little ground combat and weapons skills and instead become masters of using their aircraft with deadly accuracy and skill. Like Special Forces Soldiers, Combat Pilots must select a specialist M.O.S. area of training that represents the type of aircraft and combat situations they are most proficient at.

U.S.A.F. Combat Pilot O.C.C. Stats

Alignment: Any.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 11, P.P. 10, and P.E. 11 or higher.

M.O.S.: Select one of the following areas of specialty. Gains all skills under that M.O.S.

Aerial Combat: These pilots are the core of the Combat Pilot program and are trained in the highly maneuverable and deadly jet fighters that the Air Force is famous for.

Pilot Jet Fighters (+35%)

Navigation (+20%)

Read Sensory Equipment (+30%)

Weapon Systems (+30%)

Combat Flying (aerial equivalent of Combat Driving)

Electronic Countermeasures (+10%)

Military Fortifications (+10%)

Intelligence (+10%)

Air-to-Ground Assault: These combat pilots specialize in piloting fighter bombers and the larger strategic bombers that assail enemy installations from thousands of feet in the air.

Electronic Countermeasures (+20%)

Intelligence (+15%)

Military Fortification (+15%)

Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) Warfare (+15%)

Pilot Jet Aircraft (+20%)

Navigation (+25%)

Read Sensory Equipment (+35%)

Weapon Systems (+25%)

Ground Combat Aerial Support: These pilots fly the dangerous missions involving close combat support of ground troops, as well as pararescue operations. Their aircraft traditionally have been helicopters but now include a variety of hovercraft as well.

First Aid (+20%)

Pilot Helicopters (+20%)

Pilot Hover Craft (Ground) (+20%)

Navigation (+15%)

Read Sensory Equipment (+25%)

Weapon Systems (+20%)

Land Navigation (+15%)

W.P. Heavy Weapons or Heavy Energy Weapons

Urban Combat Aerial Support: A new specialization, these pilots are trained in the operation of the newly developed Air Force SAMAS units and one-manned Sky Hawk Sky Cycles:

Pilot Sky Cycles and Rocket Bikes (+15%)

Pilot Power Armor Basic (+15%)

Power Armor Combat Elite: Griffin Interceptor

Navigation (+15%)

Read Sensory Equipment (+15%)

Weapon Systems (+20%)

Land Navigation (+10%)

W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons

O.C.C. Skills: These are in addition to M.O.S. and reflect basic training.

Math: Basic (+10%)

Language, Native: Standard

Language, Other: One of choice (+10%).

Literacy, Native: Standard

Literacy, Other: One of choice (+10%).

Military Etiquette (+17%)

Radio: Basic (+15%)

Athletics: General

Running

Parachuting (+15%)

Pilot: Two other Aircraft of choice (+15%).

W.P. Automatic Pistol

W.P. Energy Pistol

Hand to Hand: Basic, which can be changed to Expert at the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill or Martial Arts at the cost of two O.C.C. Related Skills.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select five other skills. Plus select two additional skills at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%).

Domestic: Any.

Electrical: Basic only (+5%).

Espionage: None.

Horsemanship: None.

Mechanical: Basic (+5%) and Aircraft Mechanics only.

Medical: Paramedic only.

Military: Any (+8%), except Command Robots, Trap Construction and any Naval Skills.

Physical: Any.

Pilot: Any except tanks, robots and submersibles (+5%, +10% for any additional Aircraft).

Pilot Related: Any.

Rogue: Cardsharp, Gambling (Standard) and Streetwise only.

Science: Advanced Math (+10%), Astronomy (+10%) and Oxygen Systems only.

Technical: Any (+5%).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

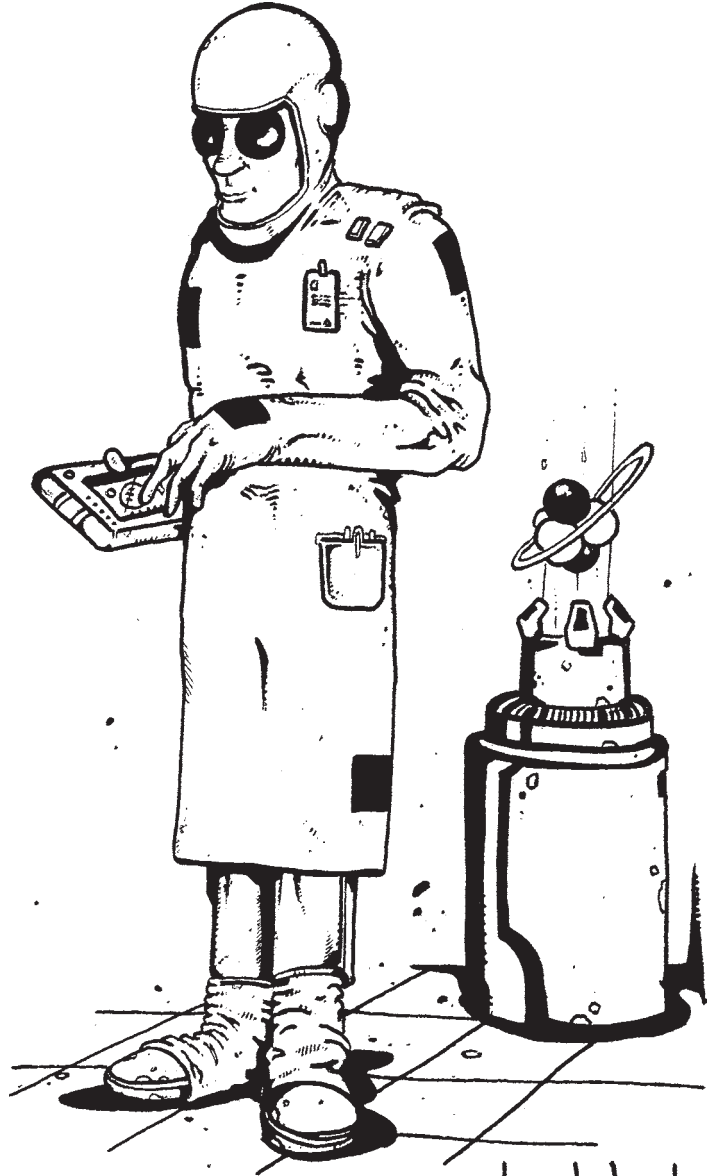
Secondary Skills: Select three Secondary Skills at level one, +1 additional Secondary Skill at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All start at the base skill level and normal restrictions apply. Optional: characters may use the Secondary Skill list on page 300 of the *Rifts® Ultimate Edition* RPG.

Standard Equipment: Standard U.S.A.F. Light Pilot's Body Armor, Energy Pistol, Automatic Pistol, 4 extra clips for each, Vibro-Knife, survival knife, first aid medical kit, pocket computer, flashlight, disposable cigarette lighter, utility belt, air filter and gas mask, walkie-talkie, U.S.A.F. uniform, dress uniform, combat boots, canteen, and some other basic gear. Vehicle assignment will depend upon the pilot's M.O.S. specialty. Bomber and Fighter Pilots will be assigned a high-tech aircraft while Ground Support Pilots will be assigned a combat helicopter or hover craft (Game Masters may wish to use modified vehicle stats from the selection of Iron Heart Aircraft listed in *Rifts® Mercenaries*, all of which represent reverse engineered pre-Rifts military designs). Urban Combat Aerial Support Pilots will be assigned a Griffin Interceptor SAMAS and/or FE-201 Sky Hawk Rocket Bike.

Money: All U.S.A.F. Pilots get a roof over their head, food, clothing and all other basics provided free as part of their service, as well as access to Air Force and other military offices and facilities (including NEMA). Monthly salary was 4500 credits, plus hazard pay. Under the circumstances of Chaos

Earth, access to equipment, medical supplies and services may be limited. Pay is one tenth normal (450 credits a month), mainly as an incentive for morale. The character starts off with 6D6x100 credits.

Cybernetics: Typically has a U.S.A.F. identification implant (under the skin of the forearm or back of the neck, basically identical to the NEMA ID implant), Gyro-Compass, Clock Calendar, Radar Sensor and Speedometer implant. Additional cybernetics and Bio-Systems might be available in extreme medical emergency, though in the Chaos Earth setting, such resources are increasingly rare.



Civilian Scientist O.C.C.

Like most branches of the Armed Services, the Air Force will often contract out to civilian agencies to perform certain specialized jobs for which they either do not have the resources to perform themselves or individuals who possess unique skills that the Air Force has need of. These civilians are required to sign top secret non-disclosure statements that make it a crime (if not treason) to divulge any information about what they have

worked on for the military. Most do not receive any combat training and have little knowledge of military protocols or procedures. They do, however, represent some of the best and brightest minds in aerospace science and engineering and this earns them a special place amongst the world's scientific elite: the chance to work on top secret projects with technology that is typically far ahead of anything in the academic or civilian sector. In the Air Force, most of these civilian scientists and engineers possess skills related to Astronomy, Astrophysics, Physics, Aerodynamics, Mechanical Engineering, Aerospace Engineering, Advanced Mathematics, etc., as these represent the areas of science that the Air Force traditionally looks for military applications from. NEMA, with its broader mandate, will also contract out to scientists with advanced degrees in Biology, Medicine, Genetics, Chemistry and Robotics.

Civilian Scientist O.C.C. Stats

Alignment: Any.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 12, M.E. 10 or higher.

Scientific Area of Expertise: Similar to an M.O.S., this represents the particular field of science or engineering that the civilian possesses. Select one of the following areas of specialty. Gains all skills under that field of study.

Astronomy and Astrophysics: These scientists helped the Air Force maintain their vast array of communication and surveillance satellites as well as monitor their network of orbital defense platforms. They also worked in concert with the growing orbital community to coordinate Earth to Orbit traffic patterns and anticipate space-borne threats such as solar flares and meteor showers.

Astronomy (+35%)

Astrophysics (+25%)

Read Sensory Equipment (+25%)

Math: Advanced (+30%)

Radio: Satellite (+20%)

Laser Communications (+15%)

Physics (+20%. This is a general understanding of the Laws of Motion, forces and energy. Base Skill: 35% +5% per level of experience.)

Biological Sciences: These scientists are contracted by NEMA to assist in the development of and protection from chemical and biological agents.

Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) Warfare (+10%)

Biology (+35%)

Botany (+30%)

Chemistry (+20%)

Chemistry: Analytical (+15%)

Math: Advanced (+10%)

Pathology (+15%)

Geological Sciences: Though seldom used, these scientists are contracted by NEMA to assist in the construction of underground structures and analysis of seismic data.

Geology (+35%. This is an understanding of the composition of the Earth, its minerals and rocks. Provides a +5% bonus to Gemology. Base Skill: 30% +5% per level of experience.)

Seismology (+20%. This is a more specialized geological science that deals with the study of plate tectonics, mountain building forces and earthquakes. Base Skill: 25% +5% per level of experience.)

Paleontology (+20%. This is a specialized branch of geology that deals with fossils and the geologic record of the planet. Base Skill: 25% +5% per level of experience.)

Chemistry (+10%)

Physics (+15%)

Gemology (+20%)

Math: Advanced (+10%)

Medical Doctor: All branches of the Armed Forces employ highly trained Medical Doctors either as commissioned officers or civilian contracted practitioners.

Medical Doctor (+15%)

Chemistry (+20%)

Chemistry: Pharmaceutical (+15%)

Biology (+20%)

Genetics (+15%)

Psychology (+15%)

Math: Advanced (+20%)

Climate and Oceanography: Both the Air Force and NEMA employ these scientists to analyze weather and ocean patterns. This often involves interpreting satellite imagery and programming complex computer models.

Meteorology (+35%)

Oceanography (+25%)

Math: Advanced (+15%)

Read Sensory Equipment (+20%)

Radio: Satellite (+15%)

Computer Programming (+10%)

Navigation (+10%)

Engineering: These civilians are general engineering experts who are often called upon to work with other specialists to develop and/or modify equipment as needed.

Math: Advanced (+35%)

Electrical Engineer (+20%)

Mechanical Engineer (+20%)

Computer Programming (+15%)

Jury Rig (+15%)

Two additional Mechanical or Electrical Skills of choice (+15% each).

O.C.C. Skills: These are in addition to the scientist's area of specialty and reflect a more general science background.

Math: Basic (+25%)

Language, Native: Standard

Language, Other: One of choice (+10%).

Literacy, Native: Standard

Literacy, Other: One of choice (+10%).

Technical Writing (+20%)

Wardrobe and Grooming (+10%)

Pilot: Automobile

Computer Operation (+15%)

Research (+35%)

Two additional Science, Medical or Mechanical/Electrical skills or choice (+15% each).

Hand to Hand Combat must be selected from O.C.C. Related Skills.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select seven other skills. Plus select two additional skills at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+10%).

Domestic: Any (+5%).

Electrical: Basic (+5%) only. Any (+15%) for Engineering Specialist.

Espionage: None.

Horsemanship: General only.

Mechanical: Basic (+5%) only. Any (+20%) for Engineering Specialist.

Medical: First Aid only. Any for Medical Doctor (+15%) and Biological Sciences (+10%).

Military: None.

Physical: Any except Acrobatics, Boxing, Kick Boxing, and Wrestling.

Pilot: Any except military vehicles and robots/power armor.

Pilot Related: Any except Weapon Systems.

Rogue: Computer Hacking, (+3%), Gambling (Standard) and Streetwise only.

Science: Any (+15%).

Technical: Any (+10%).

W.P.: Any except Heavy Weapons and Heavy Energy Weapons.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: Select six Secondary Skills at level one, +2 additional Secondary Skill at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parentheses. All start at the base skill level and normal restrictions apply. Optional: Characters may use the Secondary Skill list on page 300 of the *Rifts® Ultimate Edition RPG*.

Standard Equipment: Once the dangers of Chaos Earth become apparent, Civilian Scientists sent out to advise and assist U.S.A.F. or NEMA teams will typically be issued a Light M.D. Vest and Overcoat as well as an Energy Pistol side arm with 4 extra clips. Additional weapons may be available depending upon the training of the individual and the details of the mission. Additional common equipment will also include first aid medical kit, pocket computer, flashlight, disposable cigarette lighter, utility belt, air filter and gas mask, walkie-talkie, portable computer, laser distancer, 10 small and medium sample jars, 32 small and medium plastic specimen bags, a dozen pairs of plastic gloves, canteen, and any additional basic items. Specific scientists will also have access to field equipment and/or medical equipment appropriate to their profession as well as laboratory facilities where available. Vehicle assignment will depend upon the scientist's skill and the mission.

Money: Prior to the Great Cataclysm, military contracted civilian scientists were typically paid well, earning between 4000

and 5000 credits per month. Now, after the onset of the Great Cataclysm, scientists, like all survivors, are lucky to get a roof over their head, food, clothing and all other basics provided free as part of their service, as well as access to Air Force and other military offices and laboratory facilities (including NEMA). Under the circumstances of Chaos Earth, access to equipment, medical supplies and services may be limited. Pay is one tenth normal (400-500 credits a month), mainly as an incentive for morale. The character starts off with 1D4x1000 credits.

Cybernetics: Cybernetics were usually reserved for military purposes or medical necessity. Therefore it is unlikely that a civilian scientist or engineer will have any. At the Game Master's discretion, however, one or two cybernetic sensors might be allowed. Access to future implants will be severely limited as the Great Cataclysm continues.

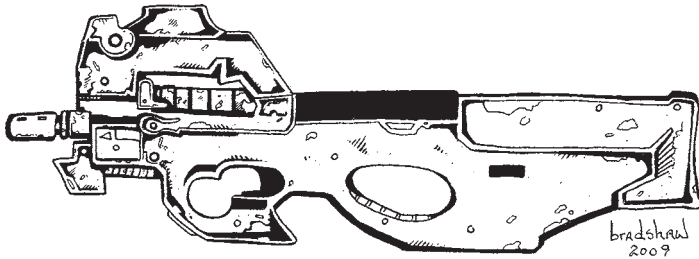
U.S.A.F. Weapons, Armor, Vehicles and Power Armor

Though NEMA has by far the most advanced power armor and robots on the planet at the time of the Great Cataclysm (with the German company TRIAX coming a close second), other branches of the United States military also developed their own specialized power armor and robot units. The best example of this is the U.S.M.C. (Marine Corps) "Semper Fi" APA-15 Power Armor, as well as the SAMAS variants being developed at Area-51 that would later be discovered over 200 years in the future by the Bandito Arms division of the Black Market in the *Rifts* setting. With NEMA taking over the bulk of the peace-keeping operations for the three North American countries, both the Marine Corps and the U.S. Army saw massive reductions in their funding, personnel and resources. This generated a great deal of resentment between NEMA and these two branches of the United States military. By contrast, the Air Force and Navy, both of which were more specialized and, therefore had not seen NEMA take over the bulk of their operations, did not develop as strong of an adversarial relationship with the international military force, even though they, too, saw much of their support get reallocated towards NEMA. In fact, with NEMA setting up their United States headquarters in N.O.R.A.D., an Air Force facility, the U.S.A.F. was able to form a relationship with the international force that resulted in an unofficial sharing of technology breakthroughs. This would allow the Air Force to develop a variety of high-tech military hardware that they would not have otherwise had the ability to achieve. The culmination of this relationship was they developed their own power armor and vehicle units with their specific missions in mind. In addition to the development of personal M.D.C. body armor and high-tech weapons unique to the Air Force, two specialized suits of power armor were also deployed, as was a small one-man aircraft that would one day be the model for the future Coalition States' Sky Cycle aircraft.

U.S.A.F. Firearms

While most branches of the Armed Services have access to basic NEMA firearms, each has been reluctant to abandon entirely the tradition of developing and using their own unique

variants of weapons and armor. The Air Force is no exception to this. While most U.S.A.F. soldiers and personnel will have access to weapons such as the NEMA Automag Pistol (which has become something of a standard side arm for all branches of the military) and basic M.D. weapons (like the PLP-20 Laser Pistol or LSR-250 Laser Rifle, a favorite amongst the Special Forces as a sniper rifle) for special missions, the Air Force still issues its own set of proven weapons.



U.S.A.F. P95 Submachine-Gun

An upgrade of the P90 used by Special Forces units at the beginning of the 21st Century, this ultra-modern S.D.C. weapon features many of the trademark designs that made the P-90 a favorite for Black Ops missions and anti-terrorist squads for years. These include the classic bullpup design that places the magazine behind the trigger to effect a longer barrel length while actually resulting in a shorter overall weapon length and reduced weight. The weapon features a laser sight and black-light illumination that lights a target with UV light (this creates no ambient light while making a target visible to anyone with UV optics). The weapon can fire single rounds, short controlled bursts or continual fire either concentrated at a single target or used to strafe multiple targets. The weapon is made of lightweight plastic and polymer designs and can readily break down into multiple parts for easy transport. With such a reliable weapon, the only major upgrade was an improvement in accuracy and increased firepower.

Weight: 6 pounds (2.7 kg).

Damage: 4D6 S.D.C. per single shot or 1D4x10+6 S.D.C. per three round burst. A full melee of concentrated fire on a single target will inflict 4D4x10 S.D.C. (or roughly 1 M.D. point of damage). Alternately, a full melee round strafe will inflict 6D6 S.D.C. to 1D6+1 targets (no strike bonuses).

Rate of Fire: Single shot, three round burst, or full melee fire (expends half of the weapon's ammunition).

Maximum Effective Range: 700 feet (213 m).

Payload: 50 round magazine.

Bonuses: +2 to strike on a single, aimed shot and +1 to strike on a three round burst. No bonuses for a full melee round of continuous fire.

Market Cost: 5500 credits for the weapon plus 75 credits per box of 144 rounds. Poor availability outside of the U.S.A.F. and other military organizations. Any found outside the Air Force was either found or stolen.

U.S.A.F. P101 Heavy Submachine-Gun

Though few nations possessed Mega-Damage capable weapons and armor at the time of the Great Cataclysm, the Air Force still wanted a weapon that would be able to handle the few that

did, not to mention terrorist organizations that might come to acquire M.D. technology through the black market sources of the day. Capitalizing on the successful design of the P95 upgrade, Air Force weapons engineers developed a heavy submachine-gun that incorporated most of the same design features but fired high explosive rounds capable of inflicting Mega-Damage. Basically, the P101 possesses all of the same design features of the P95 except that the P101 cannot fire a continual, prolonged strafe or burst of fire. Tests with the prototype found that the weapon tended to jam with deadly, explosive results when fired continuously more than a melee action or two. Also, the heavier rounds reduced the range and accuracy of the weapon slightly. Still, despite these design flaws, the weapon is almost as efficient as its predecessor.

Weight: 7 pounds (3.15 kg).

Damage: 3D6 M.D. per single shot or 1D4x10 M.D. per three round burst. A full melee of concentrated fire on a single target will inflict 3D4x10 M.D. and a full melee round strafe will inflict 5D6 M.D. to 1D6+1 targets (no strike bonuses). However, there is a 75% chance that such intense, prolonged fire will result in the weapon jamming and a 50% chance that it will explode, inflicting 3D6 M.D. per round still in the weapon's magazine.

Rate of Fire: Single shot, three round burst, or full melee fire (expends half of the weapon's ammunition but likely to result in the weapon jamming and/or exploding).

Maximum Effective Range: 650 feet (198.1 m).

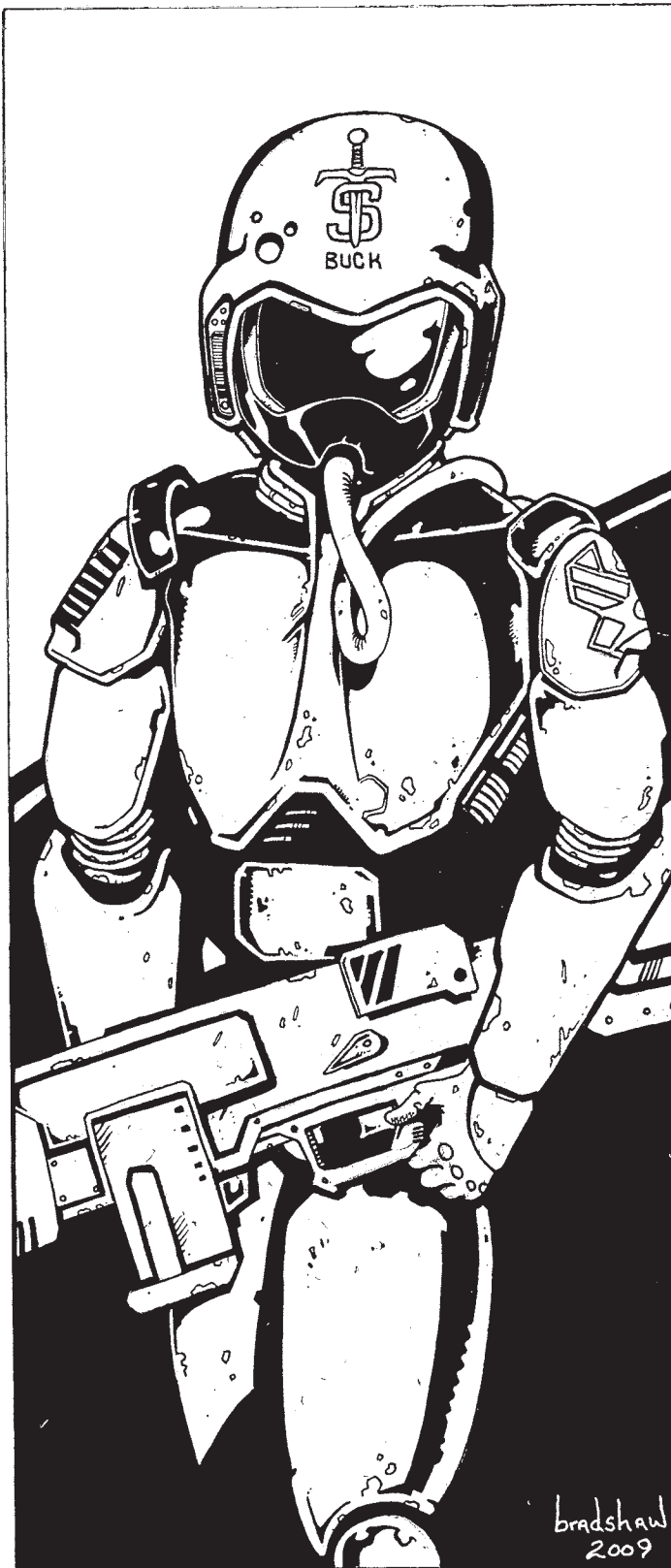
Payload: 50 round magazine.

Bonuses: +1 to strike on a single, aimed shot. No bonuses for a burst or a full melee round of continuous fire.

Market Cost: 27,000 credits for the weapon plus 1000 credits per box of 144 rounds. Virtually nonexistent outside of the U.S.A.F. Special Forces. Any found outside the Air Force was either found or stolen.

U.S.A.F. EBA Environmental Armor

There is little difference between the Air Force's environmental body armor and the NEMA Standard armor. Both afford the standard degree of protection from environmental conditions (heat, radiation, cold, etc.), both styles provide air filtration and limited oxygen supplies to operate in toxic or vacuum environments and both afford the wearer a degree of physical protection two to three times that of a 20th century tank. Despite these similarities, there are two main differences. Rather than being standardized, U.S.A.F. Mega-Damage armor is customized for the specific missions that the soldiers wearing them are likely to face. The Heavy Combat Armor, designed to be worn by Special Forces soldiers on Black Ops missions, has a special, experimental adaptive camouflage that subtly alters the shading and color of the armor to its environment. The Light Body armor, designed to be worn primarily by pilots, allows the pilot to "jack" directly into his or her aircraft to allow nearly split-second reactions while flying. And both suits are designed to allow the wearer to withstand the extreme G-forces typically encountered by Air Force pilots during combat and high speed flights.



U.S.A.F. HCBA-04 Heavy Combat Body Armor

The U.S.A.F. HCBA-04 Heavy Combat Body Armor possesses all of the usual characteristics of the standard NEMA EBA Body Armor (see pages 62 and 63 of the *Rifts® Chaos Earth™ RPG*). Like the NEMA variant, the Air Force armor is a completely sealed, environmental suit. However, unlike the NEMA suit which is designed to be an all-purpose, general use

armor, the HCBA is designed with the Air Force Special Forces units in mind. Designed to support the Special Forces operative's need to be a one man platoon, the armor comes equipped with a number of built-in weapons and features, along with an experimental adaptive camouflage coating that helps the soldier hide in a wide variety of terrain.

Class: U.S.A.F. HCBA-04 Heavy Combat Body Armor.

Size: Human equivalent.

Weight: 15 pounds (6.75 kg).

M.D.C. by Location:

Head/Helmet – 65

Arms – 60 each

Legs – 75 each

Main Body – 110

Mobility: Excellent; -5 to Climb, Swim and perform Acrobatics and similar Physical skills; -10% to Prowl without Adaptive Camouflage (see below).

Special Weapon Systems and Features:

1. Retractable Vibro-Blade concealed in the right forearm: 1D6 M.D.

2. Concealed garrote cord/climb cord concealed in the left wrist: Can be used to strangle S.D.C. opponents or to climb, with up to 30 feet (9.1 m) of ultra-thin, high-strength climb cord with a Vibro-piton to bore into M.D.C. or S.D.C. structures.

3. Multi-optics capabilities: Helmet is a standard, multi-optics helmet with all of the usual features.

4. Short-range radio: 5 mile (8 km) range. Designed to scan for and unscramble enemy/unknown transmissions. Outgoing transmissions can also be scrambled.

5. Environmental Adaptive Camouflage: This experimental design features a special coating on the exterior of the armor that adjusts the shading and color of the suit to adapt to its surroundings. Not only does this feature eliminate the penalty to Prowl described above, it also provides a +15% bonus to Prowl and Camouflage skill rolls (as well as reducing an opponent's Detect Ambush skill roll by -15%). The main design flaw of the adaptive camouflage is that even minimal damage to the armor will render it useless. Once the Main Body has lost 30 or more M.D.C., the adaptive camouflage feature is useless (too much of the adapting coating will have been damaged). Furthermore, the intense heat from M.D. flame and plasma weapons will burn away this coating even faster (destroying it after only 15 points of M.D. flame or plasma damage). Finally, with the onset of the Great Cataclysm and the loss of most of the nation's Armed Forces, the facilities and expertise to construct and repair this feature will be nearly impossible to find.

Cost and Availability: Exclusive to U.S.A.F. Special Forces units. Any found outside the Air Force was either found or stolen and will likely sell for upwards of 120,000 in credits or trade equivalent with weapons and adaptive camouflage intact (45,000 without these features).

U.S.A.F. LPBA-02 Light Pilot's Body Armor

Unlike the HCBA suit, the U.S.A.F. LPBA-02 is designed for Air Force pilots. Although it is considered an environmental suit with all of the usual features, it possesses none of the tactical enhancements of the heavier, Special Forces body armor. It

is designed to provide pilots with a degree of protection without a significant loss of mobility or comfort. After all, a pilot may be required to wear this armor for hours in a cramped cockpit.

Class: U.S.A.F. LPBA-02 Light Pilot Body Armor.

Size: Human equivalent.

Weight: 12 pounds (5.4 kg).

M.D.C. by Location:

Head/Helmet – 50

Arms – 45 each

Legs – 65 each

Main Body – 95

Mobility: Good; -10 to Climb, Swim and perform Acrobatics and similar Physical skills; -15% to Prowl.

Special Weapon Systems and Features:

1. **Built-in Speedometer, Gyro-Compass and Altimeter:** Essentially identical to the cybernetic equivalents of these systems.

2. **Pilot Flight Systems Helmet Jack:** This feature jacks the flight system of whatever vehicle the pilot is flying directly into the heads-up display of the body armor. This provides for a slightly quicker response time on the part of the pilot (+5% to piloting skill rolls). This feature is usually only available on U.S.A.F. aircraft.

Cost and Availability: Exclusive to U.S.A.F. Pilots. Any found outside the Air Force was either found or stolen and will likely sell for upwards of 45,000 in credits or trade equivalent.

U.S.A.F. Power Armor and Vehicles

Prior to the Great Cataclysm, the Air Force still maintained an array of high-tech combat, bomber and support aircraft unrivaled by any other world power. Even NEMA, whose role was more of an international police and counter-terrorism force and who did maintain their own arsenal of advanced aircraft, could not match the U.S.A.F. in speed, power and, most importantly, expertise. This is why, perhaps, Air Force personnel and commanders did not see the creation of NEMA as a challenge to its own authority and autonomy, unlike the Marine Corps and U.S. Army, who found themselves increasingly obsolete and usually called upon in much the same capacity as the 20th Century National Guard and Reserve units were. As a result of this close relationship, the Air Force was able to, with NEMA's aid, develop a series of high-tech vehicles and power armor units. Unlike NEMA's large robots and general purpose *Chromium Guardsman* and *Silver Eagle SAMAS*, the Air Force's units would be designed with the traditional Air Force role in mind: maintain air superiority and support ground operations when necessary. The two U.S.A.F. power armor units, the *Silent Soldier* and the *Griffin SAMAS*, directly reflect the traditional role the Air Force has played for over a century in the United States Armed Forces. The *FE-201 Sky Hawk* reflects only a slight departure from this traditional role as it is designed as much for urban combat as air superiority.

Game Master's Note: While the U.S.A.F. did maintain a wider variety of aircraft than presented here, the environmental chaos caused by the freak storms, the ash fallout from the eruption of the Yellowstone Super Volcano and the increasing number of flying demons, monsters and dragons make flying at altitudes more than a few hundred feet above the ground nearly

impossible. By the time the worst of the ash fallout had settled and the storms had subsided (slightly), few Air Force vehicles remained that had not been destroyed in the initial onset of the Great Cataclysm, lost or buried under tons of debris or cannibalized for spare parts for other vehicles or equipment. For those Game Masters who want to introduce 21st Century aircraft into their *Chaos Earth* setting, feel free to incorporate the Grey Falcon Jet, Air Castle Bomber, and Iron Eagle Helicopter from the Iron Heart aircraft listed on pages 112 through 117 from *Rifts® Mercenaries*.

Armor Note: Both suits of power armor are designed to insulate the pilots from the extreme G-forces they experience while flying at supersonic speeds.

U.S.A.F. Silent Soldier Power Armor SSPA-14

The Silent Soldier Power Armor was designed with Special Forces covert "Black Ops" missions in mind. As technology became more sophisticated, so, too, did warfare. At the same time as NEMA took over the bulk of the international peacekeeping operations for most of North America, funding and personnel in the traditional branches of the Armed Services were cut dramatically to divert funds and resources to NEMA. As a result, the U.S.A.F. wanted a way to turn an individual Special Forces soldier into a one man platoon. This was accomplished through the development of the SSPA-14, more commonly known as the "Silent Soldier." Designed with the same adaptive camouflage as the HCBA armor as well as sensor masking equipment and sound-reduction technology, the SSPA is not designed as a front line, heavy combat power armor unit, though it does sport a variety of lethal energy and explosive weapons. The Silent Soldier is primarily designed with the U.S.A.F. Special Forces soldier in mind: missions that require speed, stealth, quick insertion into enemy territory, and reconnaissance. They are also designed with the idea that a Special Forces soldier would most likely be on his or her own in hostile territory and would need to rely on the SSPA and his or her skills for support. The Silent Soldier Power Armor will only ever be found in the hands of Air Force Special Forces units unless it was stolen or looted from an Air Force base after the onset of the Great Cataclysm.

U.S.A.F. Silent Soldier Power Armor

Model Type: SSPA-14-SA.

Class: Strategic Assault Power Armor.

Crew: One pilot.

M.D.C. by Location:

Shoulder Wings (2) – 120 each

* Main Jet Thrusters (4; upper rear) – 75 each

* Secondary Maneuvering Thrusters (4; lower rear) – 45 each

* Jet Intake (2; shoulders) – 40 each

* Heavy Forearm Laser (left) – 100

* Forearm Sniper Laser (right) – 125

* Mini-Missile Pods (2; legs) – 80 each

* Vibro-Saber (concealed in right forearm) – 100

* Forearm Mini-Computer – 25

* Head – 100

** Sensor Package (rear, behind the head) – 90

*** Main Body – 375

* Targets with a single asterisk indicate small, difficult to hit targets that require a Called Shot at -4 to strike. Destruction of the head will most likely kill the pilot.

** The sensor package consists of a small suite of sensors and transmitters mounted above the main thrusters directly behind the armor's head. It is also a small target, requiring a Called Shot at -5 to strike. Destruction of the sensor package will eliminate all of the power armor's sensors, optics, and communications (effectively eliminating all power armor combat bonuses). This will also eliminate the adapted camouflage and the sensor masking technology. The pilot will be forced to rely on his own vision and senses.

*** Destruction of the main body will destroy the power armor and leave the pilot inside vulnerable, assuming he survived. Note that the SSPA does *not* employ the same laser resistant armor as the NEMA *Chromium Guardsman* and *Silver Eagle SAMAS*.

Destruction of the wings will make flight impossible, though the SSPA can still make impressive, jet assisted leaps.

Speed:

Running: 80 mph (128 km) maximum. Note that the act of running does tire out its operator, but at 10% the usual fatigue rate thanks to the robot exoskeleton.

Leaping: The powerful robot legs can leap up to 20 feet (6.1 m) high or across unassisted by the thrusters. A jet thruster assisted leap can propel the SSPA up to 120 feet (36.6 m) high and 240 feet (73.2 m) across without attaining flight.

Flying: The four main rockets enable the SSPA to hover stationary up to 1250 feet (381 m) with its wings deployed (only 20 feet/6.1 m without wings). Maximum flying speed is 360 mph (576 km), but cruising speed is considered to be 180 mph (288 km). Maximum altitude is 5000 feet (1524 m).

Flying Range: The nuclear power supply gives the SSPA decades of life, but the jet rockets heat up and need to cool after a maximum of 10 hours of flight when operating at speeds above cruising (24 hours at cruising speed). Can go indefinitely with intermittent rest stops.

Underwater Capabilities: 4 mph (6.4 km/3.4 knots) using arms and legs to paddle. 70 mph (112 km/61 knots) using its jets thrusters to skim across the surface of the water and only 40 mph (64 km/35 knots) using thrusters underwater. Maximum ocean depth: 750 feet (228.6 m).

Statistical Data:

Height: 7.5 feet (2.3 m).

Width: Wings down 3.5 feet (1.06 m).

Wings extended 8 feet (2.4 m).

Length: 4.25 feet (1.3 m).

Weight: 340 pounds (153 kg).

Physical Strength: Equal to an Augmented P.S. of 25.

Cargo: Only what can be carried.

Power System: Nuclear, average SSPA energy life is 20 years.

Cost and Availability: Exclusive to the U.S.A.F. Any SSPA units outside the Air Force Special Forces were found or stolen and would sell for upwards of 21 million credits or its equivalent in trade.

Weapon Systems:

1. SSPA-HL-01 Heavy Forearm Laser (1): Mounted on the left forearm, this weapon is intended for close combat against powerful opponents. Designed more for power and punch rather than range and accuracy, the heavy laser is considered a backup weapon for those rare circumstances when a Special Forces soldier is in a situation where stealth is no longer an option. The weapon fires only intense, single shots and is incapable of bursts.

Primary Purpose: Assault and Defense.

Mega-Damage: 6D6 M.D. per single shot.

Rate of Fire: Equal to number of combined hand to hand attacks (usually 4-6).

Maximum Effective Range: 1,000 feet (305 m).

Payload: Effectively unlimited, tied to the armor's power supply.

2. SSPA-SL-04 Forearm Sniper Laser (1): Mounted on the right forearm, this weapon is considered the primary armament of the Silent Soldier. It is designed for long range, precision fire against single targets.

Primary Purpose: Sniper and Assault.

Mega-Damage: 4D6 M.D. per single shot.

Rate of Fire: Equal to number of combined hand to hand attacks (usually 4-6).

Maximum Effective Range: 4,000 feet (1,219 m).

Payload: Effectively unlimited, tied to the armor's power supply.

Bonus: In addition to all other bonuses, this precision laser gains another +2 to strike on Called Shots only.

3. SSPA-MML-02 Mini-Missile Launchers (2): Mounted on the thighs of the SSPA, these narrow protrusions house four mini-missiles each. Typical payload will include half smoke missiles and half armor piercing or plasma.

Primary Purpose: Assault and Anti-Armor.

Mega-Damage: Varies with missile type.

Rate of Fire: Equal to number of combined hand to hand attacks (usually 4-6). Missiles can be fired individually or in volleys of 2 or 4.

Maximum Effective Range: About 1 mile (1.6 km).

Payload: 4 missiles per launcher for a total of 8.

4. Forearm Vibro-Saber (1): Housed in the right forearm, the Vibro-Saber cannot be used when the Sniper Laser is in use and vice-versa.

Primary Purpose: Assault and Defense.

Mega-Damage: 2D6 M.D.

Rate of Fire: Equal to number of combined hand to hand attacks (usually 4-6).

Maximum Effective Range: 18 inches (0.45 m).

Payload: Effectively unlimited, tied to the armor's power supply.

Bonus: Adds +1 to parry when Vibro-Saber is extended.

5. SSPA Sensor Package (1): Located directly behind the head and above the four main thrusters, the SSPA Sensor Package contains the array of optics and radio detection equipment needed for covert missions. It also houses the computer system that controls the adaptive camouflage system. In addition

to the standard features common to most NEMA power armor (see page 89 of the *Rifts® Chaos Earth™ RPG*), the following sensors are part of the SSPA's arsenal:

Multi-Optics System: The SSPA can detect both IR and UV images up to 4,000 feet (1,219 m) away. Also includes passive nightvision up to 2,000 feet (610 m).

Telescopic Zoom Lens: Range 3,000 feet (914.4 m).

Thermo-Optics: Detects heat up to 1,000 feet (305 m).

Laser Distancer: Accurately measures distance up to 1 mile (1.6 m).

Radar (enhanced): Can identify 96 targets and track up to 60 simultaneously at a range of 15 miles (24 km).

Amplified and Ultra-Ear Hearing: Equal to the cybernetic versions of Amplified Hearing and Ultra-Ear.

Radio Signal Detection: Identical to the radio system in the HCBA armor with a range of 20 miles (32 km).

Environmental Adaptive Camouflage: This experimental design features a special coating on the exterior of the armor that adjusts the shading and color of the suit to adapt to its surroundings. This system, coupled with other systems makes it possible to Prowl in the SSPA (something ordinarily impossible in power armor) and it also provides the same +15% bonus to Camouflage skill rolls (as well as reducing an opponent's Detect Ambush skill roll by -15%). Like the armor, it possesses the same design flaw in that the adaptive camouflage is rendered useless if even minimal damage to the armor is sustained. Once the Main Body has lost 50 or more M.D.C., the adaptive camouflage feature is useless (too much of the adapting coating will have been damaged). Furthermore, the intense heat from M.D. flame and plasma weapons will burn away this coating even faster (destroying it after only 30 points of M.D. flame or plasma damage). Finally, with the onset of the Great Cataclysm and the loss of most of the nation's Armed Forces, the facilities and expertise to construct and repair this feature will be nearly impossible to find.

Sensor Masking Signal: Perhaps the most impressive innovation of the SSPA is the sensor-masking technology. The sensor package is designed to interpret incoming active sensor frequencies (typically radar) and broadcasts a scrambled signal back. What this results in is a garbled or distorted return signal that most radar operators would interpret as some form of ground clutter or dense cloud formation interference (results in a -30% on Read Sensory Equipment skill roll). This, coupled with heat dampening technology, makes the SSPA extremely difficult to detect when approaching by air and almost impossible when hidden amongst ground clutter. Like the adaptive camouflage, this system is experimental and susceptible to malfunction if the sensor package suffers damage (10% cumulative chance of failure per successful strike to the sensor package).

6. Hand to Hand Combat: Available only to those who take *Power Armor Combat Elite: Silent Soldier*. Those not skilled in "Elite" use the *Power Armor Basic* stats. **Note:** All bonuses are in addition to the pilot's own hand to hand combat training and attribute bonuses. They do *not* apply to the pilot's physical abilities outside the power armor.

+1 extra attack/action per melee round, *plus* those of the pilot at level one, +1 additional attack at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12.

Critical Strike is the same as the pilot's.

+3 on initiative.

+2 to strike with long-range and energy weapons.

+3 to strike in hand to hand combat.

+3 to parry.

+2 to dodge on the ground.

+4 to dodge while flying or leaping.

+2 to disarm.

+3 to pull punch.

+4 to roll with impact.

Punch Damage: 6D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 1D4 M.D. on a full strength punch.

Power Punch: 2D4 M.D., but counts as two melee attacks.

Kick Damage: 1D6 M.D.

Power Kick: 2D6 M.D., but counts as two melee attacks.

Running Leap Kick: 2D4 M.D.

Tear or Pry with Hands: 1D6 M.D.

Body Block/Ram: 2D4 M.D.

Full Speed Running Ram: 3D6 M.D., 6D6 M.D. Full Speed Flying Ram, but both full speed rams use up three melee actions.



U.S.A.F. SAMAS Griffin Interceptor SIPA-03

At the same time as the Air Force was developing their Silent Soldier Power Armor for their diminishing Special Forces Units, their engineers were also developing power armor units with the more traditional Air Force mission in mind: aerial combat and support. Adapting the basic SAMAS design pioneered by NEMA, the Air Force created a variant with both high speed, high altitude combat and urban aerial pacification in mind. The Griffin Interceptor was designed to fill those needs. Though at first glance, the power armor appears to be similar to the *Silver*

Eagle SAMAS of NEMA fame, there are several obvious differences upon closer examination. First, the Griffin does not employ the famous laser resistant armor. Second, the main thruster is actually pointed downward while two smaller thrusters mounted above it are pointed straight back. The wings are also designed to sweep backwards to improve airflow when in high altitude, high speed flight. Finally, the Griffin does not have the large, handheld rail gun that the NEMA model uses. Instead, a snub-nose rail gun is mounted between the two upper thrusters between the power armor's shoulders in a fixed forward firing position that allows it to only be used while in horizontal flight. For close, urban combat, the Griffin SAMAS employs a pair of arm-mounted lasers as well as wing-mounted mini-missile pods.

U.S.A.F. Griffin Interceptor

Model Type: SIPA-03-SAMAS.

Class: Strategic Armor Military Assault Suit.

Crew: One pilot.

M.D.C. by Location:

Shoulder Wings (2) – 150 each

Main Horizontal Flight Jet Thruster (1; middle rear) – 125 each

* Secondary Vertical Flight Jet Thrusters (2; upper rear) – 95 each

* Maneuvering Thrusters (2; lower rear) – 45 each

* Jet Intake (2; shoulders) – 40 each

* Main Rail Gun (upper rear) – 125

* Ammo Drum – 50

* Forearm Lasers (2) – 50 each

* Mini-Missile Pods (2; wings) – 80 each

* Short-Range Missile Tubes (2) – 30 each

* Head – 100

** Main Body – 350

* Targets with a single asterisk indicate small, difficult to hit targets that require a Called Shot at -4 to strike. Destruction of the head will most likely kill the pilot. Even if it does not, this will eliminate all of the power armor's sensors, optics, and communications (effectively eliminating all power armor combat bonuses). The pilot will be forced to rely on his own vision and senses.

** Destruction of the main body will destroy the power armor and leave the pilot inside vulnerable, assuming he survived. Note that the Griffin does *not* employ the same laser resistant armor as the NEMA *Chromium Guardsman* and *Silver Eagle SAMAS*.

Destruction of the wings will make flight impossible, though the Griffin can still make impressive, jet assisted leaps.

Speed:

Running: 60 mph (96 km) maximum. Note that the act of running does tire out its operator, but at 10% the usually fatigue rate thanks to the robot exoskeleton.

Leaping: The powerful robot legs can leap up to 15 feet (4.6 m) high or across unassisted by the thrusters. A jet thruster assisted leap using the main horizontal engine can propel the Griffin up to 300 feet (91.4 m) high but only 200 feet (61 m) across with the secondary thrusters.

High Altitude Flying: Using the main rocket thruster, the Griffin SAMAS can hover at a height of 2500 feet (762 m). The main rocket thruster mounted on the center back of the Griffin enables the SAMAS to fly horizontally at speeds up to Mach One or 770 mph (1232 m), however this can only be accomplished when the wings are swept back and the arms and legs are held perfectly parallel at the pilot's sides. Cruising speed while flying horizontal with wings swept back is still an impressive 510 mph (816 km). Maximum altitude flying with swept wings is an astounding 10,000 feet (3,048 m). Maximum flying speed with the pilot in an upright position (the traditional SAMAS flying pose) is much slower at 250 mph (400 km), with a cruising speed of 150 mph (240 km). Maximum altitude flying upright is 7,500 feet (2,286 m).

Flying Range: The nuclear power supply gives the Griffin decades of life, but the main jet rocket heats up and needs to cool after a maximum of 5 hours of flight when operating at speeds above cruising (12 hours at cruising speed). The secondary upright thrusters can function up to 10 hours at maximum and 24 hours at cruising speeds. Can go indefinitely with intermittent rest stops.

Underwater Capabilities: 4 mph (6.4 km/3.4 knots) using arms and legs to paddle. 110 mph (176 km/95 knots) using its jet thrusters to skim across the surface of the water and only 65 mph (104 km/56.5 knots) using thrusters underwater. Maximum ocean depth: 500 feet (152.4 m).

Statistical Data:

Height: 8 feet (2.4 m).

Width: Wings down 3.5 feet (1.06 m).

Wings extended 10 feet (3.05 m).

Wings swept back 6 feet (1.8 m).

Length: 4.5 feet (1.4 m).

Weight: 495 pounds (222.75 kg)

Physical Strength: Equal to an Augmented P.S. of 25.

Cargo: Only what can be carried.

Power System: Nuclear, average Griffin energy life is 20 years.

Cost and Availability: Exclusive to the U.S.A.F. Any Griffin units outside the Air Force were found or stolen and would sell for upwards of 20 million credits or its equivalent in trade.

Weapon Systems:

1. SIPA-42R SAMAS Rail Gun (1): Mounted on the back between the upper thrusters, this weapon is the primary weapon while in high altitude, high speed flight. The weapon has a fixed-forward firing position and can only be fired while the pilot is horizontal (flying flat). To aim the weapon, the pilot must maneuver to aim straight ahead at its target.

Primary Purpose: Assault and Defense.

Mega-Damage: A short burst is 20 rounds and inflicts 4D6 M.D. A heavy burst is 40 rounds and inflicts 1D4x10 M.D. One round does 1D4 M.D.

Rate of Fire: Equal to number of combined hand to hand attacks (usually 4-6).

Maximum Effective Range: 4,500 feet (1,371.6 m).

Payload: 2,000 round drum provides 50 heavy bursts or 100 short bursts. Reloading the drum takes about 5 minutes for those not trained but a mere one minute by somebody trained in the

use of SAMAS power armor. Due to the numerous thrusters, a second ammo drum cannot be mounted on the Griffin SAMAS.

2. SIPA-ML-01 Forearm Medium Lasers (2): Mounted on the forearms, these weapons are the primary armaments when the power armor is flying upright.

Primary Purpose: Assault and Defense.

Mega-Damage: 4D6 M.D. per single shot or 8D6 M.D. with both arms aimed at the same target. Both count as a single attack regardless of whether one or two lasers are used.

Rate of Fire: Equal to number of combined hand to hand attacks (usually 4-6).

Maximum Effective Range: 4,000 feet (1,219 m).

Payload: Effectively unlimited, tied to the armor's power supply.

3. SIPA-MML-01 Mini-Missile Launchers (2): Mounted on the wings of the Griffin, these pods house four mini-missiles each. Typical payload will include high explosive or plasma mini-missiles.

Primary Purpose: Assault and Anti-Aircraft.

Mega-Damage: Varies with missile type.

Rate of Fire: Equal to number of combined hand to hand attacks (usually 4-6). Missiles can be fired individually or in volleys of 2 or 4.

Maximum Effective Range: About 1 mile (1.6 km).

Payload: 4 missiles per launcher for a total of 8.

4. Short-Range Missiles (2): Two short-range missiles, one mounted on each side of the rail gun, are designed for long-range strikes while in high altitude flight.

Primary Purpose: Assault and Anti-Aircraft.

Mega-Damage: Varies with missile type

Rate of Fire: Equal to number of combined hand to hand attacks. Missiles can be fired either one at a time or both together at a single target.

Maximum Effective Range: Typically between 3 and 5 miles (4.8 to 8 km).

Payload: Two short-range missiles.

5. Sensor Note: The Griffin SAMAS possesses all of the standard sensors common to power armor with the notable exception of the armor's radar. The Griffin's radar has an effective range of 20 miles (32 km) and can identify and track up to 100 targets simultaneously.

6. Hand to Hand Combat: Available only to those who take *Power Armor Combat Elite: Griffin Interceptor*. Those not skilled in "Elite" use the *Power Armor Basic* stats. **Note:** All bonuses are in addition to the pilot's own hand to hand combat training and attribute bonuses. They do *not* apply to the pilot's physical abilities outside the power armor.

+1 extra attack/action per melee round, *plus* those of the pilot at level one, +1 additional attack at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12.

Critical Strike is the same as the pilot's.

+2 on initiative.

+2 to strike with long-range and energy weapons.

+2 to strike in hand to hand combat.

+3 to parry.

+2 to dodge on the ground.

+5 to dodge while flying or leaping upright.

+7 to dodge while flying horizontally.

+2 to disarm.

+2 to pull punch.

+3 to roll with impact.

Punch Damage: 6D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 1D4 M.D. on a full strength punch.

Power Punch: 2D4 M.D., but counts as two melee attacks.

Kick Damage: 1D6 M.D., but counts as two melee attacks.

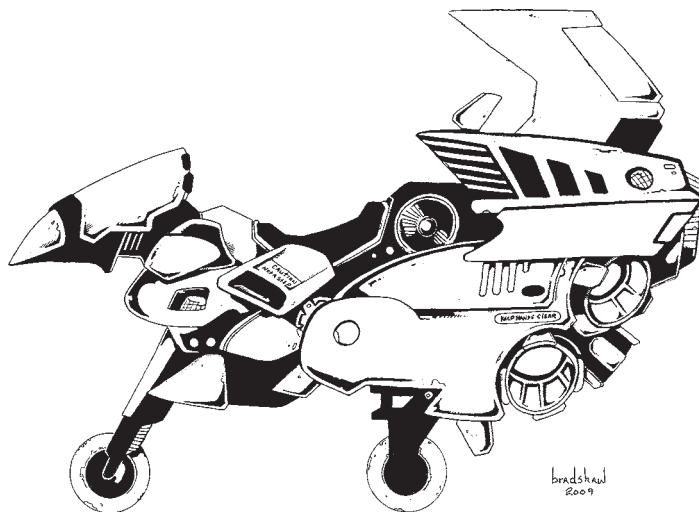
Power Kick: 2D6 M.D.

Running Leap Kick: 2D4 M.D.

Tear or Pry with Hands: 1D6 M.D.

Body Block/Ram: 2D4 M.D.

Full Speed Running Ram: 3D6 M.D., 6D6 M.D. Full Speed Upright Flying Ram and 2D4x10 M.D. flying at ballistic speeds (using main horizontal flight thruster), but all three high speed rams use up three melee actions. At maximum speed, the Griffin SAMAS also suffers 6D6 M.D. from the impact.



U.S.A.F. FE-201 Sky Hawk Rocket Bike

The FE-201 Sky Hawk Rocket Bike was designed to give the new Air Force a multi-purpose vehicle that would combine the benefits of speed and mid-altitude flight capabilities with the maneuverability and flexibility of an urban air support platform. The Sky Hawk was designed as a support vehicle to the Air Force's new Griffin Interceptor SAMAS. Together, these two high-tech vehicles can fly at high altitudes to strike targets hundreds of miles from their bases as well as operate in close-combat urban settings, a prerequisite as modern warfare became more a game of anti-terrorism in which the enemy would not necessarily be fought on the open field while wearing easily identifiable uniforms but instead would be hiding in the midst of the concrete canyons of a modern city and striking from sniper perches on rooftops or from abandoned buildings. Both sets of wings are designed to fold down to allow the Rocket Bike to be stored easily, as well as allowing the pilot to land and maneuver the vehicle on its landing wheels. Both the dorsal and ventral fins can also fold into the aircraft for easy storage. In addition to

the mini-missile pods and forward firing lasers, the Sky Hawk is equipped with four short-range missiles, two mounted on either side of the dorsal fin and two mounted on either side of the ventral fin. This design would later be resurrected over 200 years in the future as the first generation of Coalition Sky Cycles.

U.S.A.F. Sky Hawk Rocket Bike

Model Type: FE-201-UARB.

Class: Urban Assault Rocket Bike.

Crew: One pilot. Can possibly seat one passenger, but it is dangerous and uncomfortable for the passenger.

M.D.C. by Location:

- * Forward Mounted Laser Turret – 75
- * Mini-Missile Pods (2) – 75 each
- * Short-Range Missile Tubes (4) – 50 each
- * Rear Smoke Dispenser – 45
- * Main Rocket Thrusters (2) – 80 each
- * Secondary Maneuvering Thrusters (3) – 50 each
- * Ventral/Dorsal Fins – 50 each
- * Main Wings (2) – 100 each
- * Stabilizing Wings (2) – 50 each
- * Air Intake (2) – 40 each
- * Retractable Landing Wheels (3) – 40 each
- * Windshield – 30
- ** Main Body – 175

* Targets with a single asterisk indicate small, difficult to hit targets that require a Called Shot at -3 to strike. Destruction of the wings and/or maneuvering thrusters will not eliminate flight, though it will eliminate all of the vehicle's bonuses, and all special maneuvers requiring skill rolls will be made at -10% for each missing wing/thruster. Destruction of both of the main thrusters will make flight impossible.

** Destruction of the main body will destroy the vehicle and knock it out of the sky.

Speed:

Driving on the Ground: Ground speed is a paltry 35 mph (56 km) maximum. The Sky Hawk does have limited ground capabilities for parking and maneuvering, but it is designed as an aircraft.

Flying: The rocket propulsion system enables the Sky Hawk to hover stationary up to 2,000 feet (610 m) or fly. Maximum flying speed is Mach One or 770 mph (1,232 m), but cruising speed is considered to range between 100 and 150 mph (160 and 240 km). Maximum altitude is 7,500 feet (2,286 m).

Flying Range: The nuclear power supply gives the Sky Hawk decades of life, but the main jet rocket heats up and needs to cool after a maximum of 20 hours of flight when operating at speeds above cruising. Can go indefinitely with intermittent rest stops and/or at or below cruising speed.

Statistical Data:

Height: 10 feet (3.05 m).

Width: Wings down 4 feet (1.2 m).

Wings extended 8 feet (2.4 m).

Length: 9.5 feet (2.9 m).

Weight: One ton fully loaded.

Cargo: Minimal storage space, three feet (0.9 m) behind the seat.

Power System: Nuclear, average Sky Hawk energy life is 20 years.

Cost and Availability: Exclusive to the U.S.A.F. Any Sky Hawk units outside the Air Force were found or stolen and would sell for upwards of 10 million credits or its equivalent in trade.

Weapon Systems:

1. SHRB-3T Laser Turret (1): This triple-barrel, heavy laser turret is mounted on the forward section of the Sky Hawk, directly beneath the nose of the aircraft, between the air intakes. It is capable of 180° rotation side to side but has no up and down movement.

Primary Purpose: Anti-Personnel and Defense.

Mega-Damage: 1D4x10 M.D. triple blast, 6D6 M.D. dual blast and 3D6 M.D. single blast.

Rate of Fire: Each blast, single, dual or triple, counts as one of the pilot's attacks per melee round (usually 4-6).

Maximum Effective Range: 4,000 feet (1,219 m).

Payload: Effectively unlimited (tied to the Sky Hawk's nuclear reactor).

2. SHRB-10MM Mini-Missile Pods (2): Mounted on either side of the rocket bike's lower fuselage, near the landing gear, these pods each contain ten mini-missiles.

Primary Purpose: Anti-Personnel and Anti-Armor.

Mega-Damage: Varies with mini-missile type. Missile types typically depend on the nature of the mission, but the typical mix would be Fragmentation and Armor Piercing or Plasma.

Rate of Fire: Missiles can be fired individually or in volleys of two, three, four or five per launcher. Equal to number of combined hand to hand attacks (usually 4-6).

Maximum Effective Range: Approximately one mile (1.6 km).

Payload: 10 mini-missiles per pod, for a total of 20.

3. SHRB-SRM-04 Short-Range Missile Tubes (4): Four single shot rocket tubes are armed with short-range missiles. These tubes, located on either side of the dorsal and ventral fins, are used primarily for anti-aircraft and anti-armor operations.

Primary Purpose: Anti-Armor and Anti-Aircraft.

Mega-Damage: Varies with missile type.

Rate of Fire: Equal to number of combined hand to hand attacks (usually 4-6). Missiles can be fired individually or in volleys of two, three or four.

Maximum Effective Range: Varies between 3 and 5 miles (4.8 to 8 km).

Payload: 1 missile per tube for a total of 4 missiles.

4. Smoke Dispenser (1): A smoke dispensing unit in the rear undercarriage can release a dense cloud of smoke that will cover an 80 foot (24 m) area behind the rocket bike. It can also release tear gas for the purposes of crowd control.

Payload: Six loads total. The usual mix is three rounds of smoke and three of tear gas.

5. Sensor Note: The FE-201 Sky Hawk Rocket Bike possesses all of the standard sensors common to power armor with the notable exception of the rocket bike's radar. The Sky Hawk's

radar has an effective range of 20 miles (32 km) and can identify and track up to 100 targets simultaneously. Special Bonuses: +3 to dodge when flying at cruising speeds and +5 to dodge when flying over 250 mph (400 km). Trained Air Force Pilots get an additional +10% to pilot the Sky Hawk Rocket Bike. Note that special maneuvers, including urban combat, dog-fighting, and high speed maneuvers, require a piloting skill roll.

6. Hand to Hand Combat: None.

Psychic or Magic Manifestations

Despite the inappropriateness of playing any of the magic wielding characters, this does not mean, however, that Game Masters cannot take advantage of the sudden surge of magic energy to create even more confusion for the players. Since the N.O.R.A.D. secret complex has become a region of dimensional instability as a result of the earlier experiments conducted in the facility, the region is similar in power to a Ley Line Nexus. The super saturation of the environment with magic energies can have random and dramatic effects on the characters trapped in N.O.R.A.D. These “mutations” will most likely manifest themselves during periods of intense stress. Game Masters should feel free to use the following table to determine the random manifestations of magic or psychic powers that occur in the players or may make up their own.

The resurgence of magic and psychic powers amongst the human population can be seen in some respects as a sort of magical or psionic defensive reflex or instinct, almost like a primitive part of the human brain knows what it can do and for the first time in millennia, it has the power to do it. These powers are most often beyond the control of the players who exhibit them, with only 1% actually retaining them permanently. However, the nature of the power that occurs will reflect the needs of the situation that caused the manifestation. It may not be enough to save the character, but it might just give him or her the edge needed... at least this time. After the initial shock of the manifestation, for the duration that the character exhibits the power or ability, he or she instinctively knows how to use it and when to draw upon it. Psionic powers require two melee actions of concentration to activate while magical manifestations require an entire melee round of concentration to empower. This only applies for manifestations that linger longer than one melee action or melee round.

Game Masters should also take advantage of the fact that as these powers manifest themselves, at first, it should really freak the characters out, perhaps once the adrenaline rush is over, when they have a chance to process the fact that they just used powers similar to the ones possessed by the demons they now face.

These powers do draw upon the character’s own P.P.E. to fuel, as well as the ambient P.P.E. pulsing throughout the N.O.R.A.D. complex (at least after the dimensional rupture occurs). Magical effects will first draw upon the ambient power leaking from the dimensional rupture in the heart of the complex

which produces 1D6x10 P.P.E. per melee round (essentially like being in a Blue Zone). The magical manifestation can also draw upon a character’s augmented P.P.E. which is determined by taking the player’s base P.P.E. plus his or her P.E. This surge in P.P.E. only occurs when a power manifests itself. For effects lasting more than a few melee rounds or minutes, this enhanced P.P.E. recharges at a rate of 4 points per hour of activity or 12 per hour of rest (not that the character is likely to get any). Once the manifestation ends, the character’s P.P.E. base returns to normal until another manifestation occurs.

For psychic effects, the base I.S.P. is determined by taking the P.P.E. plus his or her M.E. and multiplying this total by 4. Psychic effects cannot draw upon the ambient energy of the dimensional rupture but are augmented as usual by close proximity to a dimensional nexus. I.S.P. retained for any period of time will recharge at a rate of 5 per hour of activity or 20 per hour of rest. As with augmented P.P.E., this I.S.P. only remains as long as the manifestation lasts and dissipates when the effect vanishes.

Precipitating Event

This chart reflects the likelihood of a manifestation occurring depending upon whatever circumstance the character finds himself in. These rolls are typically made just once during the event or encounter.

- Combat – Players have the advantage: 5%.
- Combat – Evenly matched: 10%.
- Combat – Enemy has the advantage: 15%.
- Combat – Overwhelming odds against the players: 20%.
- Combat – Player is near death, taking direct Hit Point damage or M.D.C. armor gone or almost gone: 40%.
- Hiding – Player is being followed but is safely hidden: 8%.
- Hiding – Player is cornered and the enemy is looking for the player and will find him in 1D4 minutes: 18%.
- Horror Factor – Frightened (Failing a Horror Factor roll by only 1 or 2 points): 3%.
- Horror Factor – Scared (Failing a Horror Factor roll by more than 5 points): 7%.
- Horror Factor – Terrified (Rolling a 5 or less on a Horror Factor roll): 15%.
- Stress (non-combat) – Non-critical skill use: 8%.
- Stress (non-combat) – Critical skill use: 16%.
- Stress (non-combat) – Life or death situation: 32%.
- Helping others – No immediate danger: 5%.
- Helping others – Danger is near or treating a person who is injured but not critically: 10%.
- Helping others – Danger is present or treating person who is seriously wounded: 20%.
- Helping others – Sacrificing oneself to defend others or treating a person who is critically injured and will die within 1D4 minutes if not saved: 35%.

Duration of Manifestation

This represents how long the character retains the ability to call upon the manifestation. For powers that have longer durations, they will remain in effect (determined as they would nor-

mally be for each power) until the duration elapses. For example, if a player manifests the psionic ability Mind Bolt for 3 melee rounds, then he or she may use the newly found Mind Bolt power for up to 3 melee rounds or until the temporary I.S.P. pool is depleted. A character who suddenly finds that he can Fly Like a Superhuman will be able to do so for 5 minutes per level of experience even if the power only manifests itself for one melee action (this means that after the spell elapses, it cannot be called upon again unless the duration of manifestation is longer than the 5 minutes).

01-35% One melee action.

36-55% One melee round (15 seconds).

56-80% 1D4+1 melee rounds.

81-90% 2D4 minutes.

91-96% 1D4 hours.

97-99% 1D4 days.

00% Permanent!

Type of Manifestation

01-75% Psychic Power.

76-00% Chaos Magic Spell Effect.

Psychic Powers

The type of psychic power that manifests itself will depend greatly upon the exact circumstances that cause the manifestation to occur. Therefore, the Game Master should be the one to determine which power occurs. For the purposes of determining damage for certain abilities, treat as if on a Ley Line anytime after the dimensional rupture (*Evening, December 23rd*). Prior to that point in the adventure, treat all psionic powers as normal.

Combat – Intended to help defend against some supernatural threat: Exorcism (10), Ectoplasm (6, 12), Impervious to Cold (2), Impervious to Fire (4), Impervious to Poison/Toxins (4), Mind Block (4), Resist Fatigue (4), Summon Inner Strength (4), Telekinesis (varies), Telekinetic Punch (6), Telekinetic Leap (8), Intuitive Combat (10), Sixth Sense (2), Bio-Manipulation (10), Electrokinesis (varies), Mind Bolt (6-40), Psi-Shield (30), Psi-Sword (30), Psychic Body Field (30), Pyrokinesis (varies), Telekinetic Acceleration Attack (10, 20), Telekinetic Force Field (30).

Hiding – Intended to help the person remain hidden or escape a pursuer: Bio-Regeneration (6), Suppress Fear (8), Alter Aura (2), Deaden Senses (4), Death Trance (1), Ectoplasmic Disguise (12), Mind Block (4), Nightvision (4), Mask I.S.P. & Psionics (7), Mask P.P.E. (4), Presence Sense (4), See Aura (6), See the Invisible (4), Sense Evil (2), Sense Magic (3), Sixth Sense (2), Group Mind Block (22), Hypnotic Suggestion (6), P.P.E. Shield (10), Psionic Invisibility (10), Psychic Omni-Sight (15), Radiate Horror Factor (8).

Horror Factor – Intended to help the person make a quick attack or escape: Suppress Fear (8), Mind Block (4), Summon Inner Strength (4), Telekinetic Leap (8), Telekinetic Push (4), Sixth Sense (2), Empathic Transmission (6), Hypnotic Suggestion (6), Psi-Shield (30), Telekinetic Acceleration Attack (10, 20), Telekinetic Force Field (30).

Stress – Intended to help the person overcome the stress of the moment and perform the task at hand: Detect Psionics (6), Resist Fatigue (4), Resist Hunger (2), Resist Thirst (6), Summon Inner Strength (4), Telekinetic Lift (6), Clairvoyance (4), Commune with Spirits (6), Empathy (4), Machine Ghost (12), Object Read (6), Speed Reading (2), Telepathy (4), Total Recall (2), Mind Bond (10), Psychic Omni-Sight (15), Telemechanics (10).

Helping Others – Intended to help the person provide aid to others: Deaden Pain (4), Healing Touch (6), Increased Healing (10), Induce Sleep (4), Psychiic Diagnosis (4), Psychic Purification (8), Psychic Surgery (14), Stop Bleeding (4), Suppress Fear (8), Empathy (4), Object Read (6), Presence Sense (4), Remote Viewing (10), Sense Evil (2), Sense Time (2), Telepathy (4), Empathic Transmission (6), Group Mind Block (22), Hypnotic Suggestion (6), Mind Wipe (10, 50).

Again, it is up to the Game Master to determine what psychic power manifests itself given the specific situation the character finds him or herself in.

Magic Effect

The type of magical effect that occurs will depend greatly upon the exact circumstances that cause the manifestation to occur. Therefore, the Game Master should be the one to determine which power occurs. The magical effects that manifest themselves come from the *Rifts® Chaos Earth™ Sourcebook, Rise of Magic™*, pages 31 to 48, though the Game Master can add to or substitute any of these with comparable spells from the *Rifts® Book of Magic*. For the purpose of determining P.P.E. cost and damage, treat all spells as if they were being cast within a Blue Zone (Ley Line) any time after the dimensional rupture has occurred (*Evening, December 23rd*). Prior to that, treat as if cast away from a Blue Zone (typically double or triple P.P.E. cost).

Combat – Intended to help defend against some supernatural threat: Blaster Hands (5), Big (10), Blue Zone Lightning (8), Boom Box (3), Cherry Bomb (8), Chill (4), Demon Strength (5), Debris Barrage (15), Debris Cloud (3), Dust Blast (4), Fast Fist (10), Firecracker (3), Ghetto Blaster (6), Hot Foot (4), Magic Shield (5), Noise Maker (3), Power Fists (8), Smoke Bomb (2), Split Second Timing (15), Sparkler (4), Super-Charge (15), Stink Bomb (8), Transmutation: Weapon (30).

Hiding – Intended to help the person remain hidden or escape a pursuer: Blind Man's Bluff (8), Break Glass (3), Bubbles (2), Call Out (8), Call Waiting (2), Cat Drop (4), Eavesdrop (6), Eye Spy (6), Ghost (30), Go (7), Hide (3), Home Free (12), Hot Foot (4), Jackrabbit (4), Lookout (4), Move Debris (6), Out of Place (6), Poof (25), Quiet Walk (5), No Trace (7), Racket (4), Sharp Eyes (5), Shimmy (2), Small (7), Smoke Bomb (2), Split Second Timing (15), Sparkler (4), Spider Leap (6), Spider Walk (15), Squirrel Run (12), Stupid (12), Trip (4), Unlock (15).

Horror Factor – Intended to help the person make a quick attack or escape: Air-Climb (4), Blaster Hands (5), Blue Zone Lightning (8), Call Out (8), Demon Strength (5), Debris Barrage (15), Debris Wall (8), Dust Blast (4), Fast Fist (10), Fly Like a Superhuman (20), Ghost (30), Go (7), Home Free (12), Jackrabbit (4), Leap Frog (2), Poof (25), Power Fists (8), Ring Around the Rosy (8), Shield Bubble (30), Shield Wall (20), Shimmy (2),

Smoke Bomb (2), Speed Demon (30), Split Second Timing (15), Sparkler (4), Spider Leap (6), Stupid (12), Trip (4).

Stress – Intended to help the person overcome the stress of the moment and perform the task at hand: Air-Bridge (3), All-Nighter (2), Big (10), Call Out (8), Call Waiting (2), Case (4), Chillin' (4), Come Over (12), Double Dare (10), Eavesdrop (6), Eye Spy (6), Go (7), Heat Up (4), Go Seek (6), Hitcher (4), Hot Rod (6), Life Line (4), Lookout (4), Magic Box (8), Magic Wheel (7), Move Debris (6), Out of Place (6), Pinch (12), Reverse (6), Sharp Eyes (5), Shadow (10), Shine (2), Shimmy (2), Small (7), Soothe Anger (10), Transmutation: Object (40), Twenty Questions (12), Unlock (15), Video Pirate (15), Video Transfer (10).

Helping Others – Intended to help the person provide aid to others: All-Nighter (2), Call Out (8), Campfire Sphere (4), Cat Drop (4), Chillin' (4), Come Over (12), Environmental Protective Cloak (5), Fast Food (15), Heat Up (4), Home Free (12), Life Line (3), Magic Box (8), Renew (15), Shield Bubble (30), Shield Wall (20), Soothe Anger (10), Soothe & Heal Buns & Itching (25), Soothe Hunger (10), Soothe Pain (12), Warm (4).

Again, it is up to the Game Master to determine what magic effect manifests itself given the specific situation the character finds him or herself in.

It is entirely up to the Game Master if, after this adventure, any of the surviving characters are able to abandon their current occupations in NEMA to attempt to develop any of the psychic or magical powers they have begun to manifest, though doing so will not be easy for full grown adults who already have developed a narrow view of the world and its possibilities. Then again, they have just witnessed firsthand the possibilities that are now available...

A Note on Running

“The Fall of N.O.R.A.D.”

This adventure is designed to start somewhat slow, with the characters facing fairly manageable challenges with a few frightening, tantalizing hints of things to come. As the adventure progresses, especially during and after the Dimensional Rupture, the storytelling should begin to get more fast paced, broken intermittently by tense moments of fear and anxiety. Think of it as a *Chaos Earth* horror movie in which events start out well within the control of the characters but as the story develops, things steadily devolve out of control until the end is a “run for your life,” fast paced adventure in which the players risk one last gamble to prevent a demon horde from overrunning N.O.R.A.D. and sweeping the nation (a gamble they will ultimately lose in classic horror movie fashion).

December 22nd:

The Day Hell Came to Earth

Game Master's Note: Prior to the events of the *Evening of December 23rd*, as the dimensional rupture has not yet occurred, the chance of a psychic or magical power manifesting itself

should be reduced by half. And even then such powers will only linger for one melee action (01-50%), one melee round (51-90%) or one minute (91-00%). Furthermore, the 1D6x10 P.P.E. available each melee round is not present until after the rupture, meaning magical manifestations can only draw upon the base P.P.E. plus P.E. of the character to empower the effects. Also, the available I.S.P. for psychic power manifestations is only the character's base P.P.E. plus M.E. attribute (does not multiply x4 until after the dimensional rupture occurs).

It has been several hours since all manner of bizarre reports began to flood the installation. Weird channels of blue light, massive tsunamis, earthquakes off the chart, freakish weather outbreaks, and volcanic eruptions on a global scale. NEMA High Command on the upper levels of N.O.R.A.D. has had their hands full coordinating the communications. To complicate this, a sudden surge in solar flare activity has begun to decimate satellite communications and contact with the orbital communities has begun to collapse. No one knows what precipitated this freakish cataclysm, though one analyst points out that a nuclear exchange took place somewhere in South America at about the same time as the sudden outbreak of natural disasters, but he admits that it may have been triggered by the disasters rather than happening before them. Just a few hours ago, contact with the Mexico City NEMA headquarters was lost. Spotty satellite communications suggest that the entire Mexico City region is covered in a thick cloud of volcanic ash. The last reliable radio communication from outside N.O.R.A.D. was that the President, who just happened to be in Colorado to give a speech, was being Air EVAC-ed to the complex. The President's family, along with the Vice-President and the Joint Chiefs, were killed when the entire Eastern Seaboard was swallowed in a series of tsunamis. Exactly when the President will arrive at N.O.R.A.D. is not clear since the highly erratic weather patterns that have engulfed the planet mean even a short trip could still take a long time and be potentially disastrous.

The events of this adventure begin as a recent series of earthquakes has just shaken the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, causing even some of the hardened structures deep within N.O.R.A.D.'s mountain complex to collapse. The players will find themselves cut off from the rest of N.O.R.A.D. within a section of the complex dedicated to weapons applications, research and design. Distress calls from panicked civilian scientists and engineers crackle over the radios, begging for help to get them out.

As personnel outside the R&D labs on Sublevel Seven attempt to remove the rubble that has sealed them in, the players are the only ones on that level capable of performing any form of rescue mission. As Sublevel Seven has its own armory and power armor storage area, it is not unreasonable for the players to gain access to their armor for this adventure. After all, while combat is not anticipated deep within Cheyenne Mountain, the Augmented or Robot P.S. their armor units could provide in rescue operations would come in handy.

Power throughout Sublevel Seven will function for the most part as the R&D section has its own series of micro-fusion reactors dedicated to meeting the high power requirements of the DVG program, amongst other projects. As a result, in any given section, power will function 60% of the time (01-60% power is

working, although it may be intermittent; lights flickering, small electrical short, etc.). The exception to this is the mess hall in Encounter B; the power is out in that scenario. The following events will occur during the characters' rescue operation mission:

A. The Observation room overlooking the Dimensional Vortex Generator (DVG) has been blocked by rubble. While the scientists within will indicate that they are all uninjured except for minor cuts and bruises, they will need to be rescued at some point. The debris will require several skill rolls under any of the following rescue skills to free the civilians: Mechanical Engineering, Military Fortifications, Excavation and Rescue, General Repair and Maintenance, Masonry, and Mining. All the while, the engineers will continue to monitor the situation. Occasional garbled radio chatter coming from within will include words like "...amazing readings..." "...unprecedented event..." "...not occur... any other trials..." "...can't shut it down..." and a final, ominous, "...looking at a full-scale rupture in..." Despite this, when the players remove enough rubble to rescue the scientists and engineers, nothing dire will seem to have happened. All of them will be looking nervously at various screens, most of which show erratic wave patterns or fast scrolling streams of data. One or two will be gazing nervously into an empty circular room beyond a thick blast screen window. To the players' eyes, the room appears to be empty except for a pair of blast doors on opposite sides of the chamber and a number of odd looking mechanical devices hanging from the roof and protruding from the floor.

Other than one or two scientists who need immediate medical attention for broken bones, the rest of the engineers will want to stay, saying that "something is happening in there," gesturing into the empty room, and they "need to stay to monitor the situation." Any further questions about this will be brushed aside with comments like "You don't have clearance for this project," or "We are alright... just go see if there are others who need help." No amount of persuasion will convince them that they need to leave and, as the players do not have security clearance for the DVG project, they do not need to be told anything. While they might find it odd that as the entire world seems to be collapsing this group seems to care only for their work, there is nothing else here that the players can do.

B. Distress calls coming from the mess hall begin with panicked cries for help and confused reports of a possible ceiling or wall collapse that has buried some of the personnel trapped inside. As the players begin to dig the entrance to the mess hall out, the radioed cries for help will become punctuated by coughing and gagging, with a remark about a strange smell. The last signal from the trapped personnel will suggest that some sort of gas is leaking into the room. No further communication will come from within the mess hall. It will not take the players much longer to remove enough of the debris to access the hall (requires successful skill rolls under the various excavation skills described above), though as they do, any player not in air-tight environmental armor or wearing a gas mask will detect a very strong scent of natural gas (immediately recognizable to any character with the Excavation and Rescue or Fire Assessment and Response skills). Any character who does not have an independent air supply will not be able to enter the mess hall

without succumbing to the suffocating effects of the gas leak. Environmental indicators on their armor will show that the amount of gas within the mess hall is near toxic level. This would be a good place for characters who have access to any of the smaller robot drones (such as the Spider Probe, Flying Probe or Pup Scout) to use them to assess the situation before putting their lives at risk.

What they will find as they crawl over the debris is that half of the ceiling has collapsed. The entire room is dark and they will need to use flashlights to search for survivors. The occasional appendage sticking out from the rubble will suggest that several people have been crushed beneath the rubble, though some might still be alive. Another six are lying prone on the ground near where the players emerge, with piles of rubble stacked around them. From the evidence, it looks as if they were trying to dig themselves out when they were overcome by a gas leak, though a quick medical examination (successful First Aid or similar skill roll) will indicate that they are alive, though just barely. Three more personnel are lying in the mess hall away from the rubble, two appearing to have been hit in the head by debris (one is still alive with a concussion, the other is dead with a severe skull fracture) and the third lying some feet away from the rubble with a radio still clutched in his hand (also still barely alive).

The players will need to be very careful as they rescue the surviving personnel, as well as search the debris for others. A small spark will have a 50% chance of igniting a fireball that will incinerate anyone not in M.D.C. full environmental armor (this would be all of the unconscious personnel in the mess hall as well as any players not so equipped). A large spark or lighting a match or lighter will have a 75% chance of igniting the fireball, and firing a weapon in the room will have a 100% chance of igniting the fireball. Fortunately, power was cut during the collapse so none of the damaged light fixtures will spark. Of further consideration is that the gas leak will continue until the players find it and repair it or shut the main valve off, requiring successful skill rolls in Basic Mechanics, Mechanical Engineer, Fire Assessment and Response, General Repair and Maintenance, or Excavation and Rescue. As the players have opened a passage between the mess hall and the rest of the complex, the gas will begin to spread if something is not done to stop it. If the players take the time to look for survivors under the debris, there is only a 10% chance of finding one person alive but critically injured.

C. A fire, triggered by an electrical explosion, is burning out of control near one of the weapons lockers. Signs indicate that the personnel on site when the explosion occurred tried to combat the blaze, but were quickly overcome by the flames and killed. By the time the players arrive, the fire will have consumed much of the hallway. Exactly what is burning is difficult to determine; it looks as if the very air itself is on fire. A successful Fire Assessment and Response, Fire Damage Assessment, Fire Forensics or Excavation and Rescue skill roll will suggest that it is some form of combustible gas, but why the gas cloud has not burned itself out or exploded entirely is a mystery. The heat from the fire is so intense that anyone not in full environmental armor will not be able to stand within 15 feet (4.6 m) of the blaze without suffering 2D6 S.D.C. damage per melee round of exposure.

Vast amounts of fire suppressant will be able to extinguish the blaze, though the nearest hose is over 1000 feet (305 m) down the hall and around the corner. The edge of the blaze, however, is only 50 feet (15.2 m) from the open door to the weapons locker and it is advancing at a rate of 5 feet (1.5 m) per melee round. Even though most munitions are designed not to cook off easily in the event of a fire, the intense heat and unusual nature of this blaze should make the characters wonder what will happen if the fire reaches the ammunition in that locker.

A successful Fire Assessment and Response or Excavation and Rescue skill roll will indicate that the best way to prevent the fire from reaching the weapons locker is to collapse the tunnel on the fire or in front of it, blocking its route. This can easily be done with the Mega-Damage weapons the players possess but to do it successfully, a Weapon Systems, Military Fortifications, Mechanical Engineering, or Masonry skill roll will be required. A failed roll could mean that there is still a passage for the fire to get through, that some of the ceiling above the players collapsed instead or simply that more of the ceiling was destroyed than was absolutely necessary (while this will stop the fire, it will also block the rest of the passage, trapping anyone on the other side with the still-raging fire). If the players are careful (and clever), they will only collapse enough of the ceiling to block the entrance to the locker. They will then have enough time to get the fire suppressant hose and extinguish the flames. If not, they can still collapse the entire hall and block the fire. But this will trap anyone who might be alive on the other side with the fire still blazing.

D. The sounds of laser fire can be heard coming from the Weapons Testing Center. Shouts for help over the radio and screams emanating from down the hall can be heard as the players approach. Carefully peering around the corner, the players will be able to see that a single armored individual has barricaded himself in a small observation room off to the side of the Testing Center. Several dead bodies litter the Testing Center floor while the man in the observation room continues to shout and scream hysterically, all the while firing wildly into the larger room. Through the blast screen view port the players can see there appear to be four or five hostages trapped in the room with the hysterical gunman.

If the players take the time to listen to what the gunman is ranting about, it seems that he is shouting about something or someone “coming out of the walls! Man... they’re everywhere!!! Can’t you see ‘em?” He fires several more shots from his laser pistol in random directions then looks over to where the players are watching. “Good!” he shouts. “Reinforcements!” Turning back to the empty Testing Center he shouts “Gonna send you all back to Hell now!!!” and once more he fires several more bursts into the walls. This will empty his clip but he will be able to reload in one action (roll initiative if the players plan to take action at this point).

The gunman is a NEMA soldier who was using the Testing Center for some firing range practice when he starting seeing things coming out of the walls. When several others tried to stop him, he opened fire on them, believing them to be possessed by the “ghosts” he was seeing. Forcing five scientists into the observation room, he barricaded them in, claiming that he was going to save them from the demons that were coming after them.

Nothing can convince this man that he is hallucinating and the players will not be able to talk him down (though this does not mean that they will have to kill him if they can think of a non-lethal way to take him out and avoid harming the hostages).

In truth, the young soldier is not hallucinating. He is seeing a variety of Entities that have already begun to enter the complex, attracted to the imminent dimensional rupture that will take place in a matter of hours in the DVG test facility. At this point, they are invisible and merely floating in and out of the walls as they wait for the coming disaster. If any player has manifested the psionic ability to See the Invisible, he or she will be able to confirm this.

NEMA Soldier Quick Stats: Equivalent to a 3rd level Soldier. Wearing Standard NEMA Body Armor: 120 M.D.C. 25 Hit Points, 38 S.D.C. Temporary I.S.P.: 20 (has used 4 to empower See the Invisible). Has currently manifested the psionic power See the Invisible. Four attacks per melee, +3 to parry and dodge, +3 to roll with punch, W.P. Energy Pistol (+2 strike) and Energy Rifle (+1 strike). Armed with a PLP-20 Laser Pistol (2D6 M.D. single shot or 5D6 M.D. triple burst, +2 to strike on aimed shots only) and an LSR 250 Laser Rifle (2D6 or 4D6 M.D., single shot settings only, +3 to strike on aimed shots). Has four clips for each weapon.

E. For any additional sections of Sublevel Seven that the players wish to explore as they search for personnel to save, Game Masters may use the following tables to determine the condition of the room or chamber the characters enter as well as any possible survivors. Game Masters should keep track of the damage to rooms the characters explore for later encounters. Obviously, the condition of them can worsen but should not improve any.

Condition of the Room

- 01-50% Undamaged.
- 51-65% Small electrical fires.
- 66-75% Minor structural damage (displaced furniture, ceiling panel collapse, minor wall damage).
- 76-83% Large fire (can be chemical or electrical).
- 84-90% Major structural damage (large sections of the wall and ceiling have collapsed).
- 91-95% Consumed by fires (entire room is an inferno).
- 96-00% Entire chamber has collapsed (90% of the room is filled with rubble and debris).

Survivors

- 01-65% Empty.
- 66-73% 1D6 people, trapped but in good condition.
- 74-80% 1D4 people, trapped and in need of medical attention (non-critical, First Aid skill sufficient).
- 81-85% 2D4 people, trapped and in need of immediate medical attention (half are unconscious, most are in critical condition; Surgery or Medical Doctor skill required).
- 86-90% 2D6 people, trapped and in need of immediate medical attention (half are unconscious, most are in critical condition; Surgery or Medical Doctor skill required).
- 91-95% 1D6 people, trapped and in need of immediate medical EVAC (most or all are unconscious, all are in life threaten-

ing condition, Surgery or Medical Doctor skill required to stabilize for EVAC).

96-98% 2D6 people, trapped, unconscious and in need of immediate medical EVAC (all are in life threatening condition, Surgery or Medical Doctor skill required to stabilize for EVAC).

99-00% 2D4 people, dead or dying (as many as half are in life threatening condition as described above, the rest are dead).

Morning, December 23rd: The Uneasy Calm

After the initial series of quakes, things will become relatively calm. By the early morning hours of December 23rd, the rubble blocking the entrance to the R&D facility had been cleared, allowing the dead and injured to be cleared. Rumor has it that contact with Air Force One has been established and that the President will be arriving within the hour. The atmosphere within the complex is guardedly optimistic as the soldiers tend to the needs of the injured and make plans to launch a series of rescue and reconnaissance missions based out of N.O.R.A.D. There is even hope that despite the overall cataclysm, at least with NEMA High Command still operational in the United States and with the President arriving, they might be able to show the beleaguered people of the world that there is still hope and that help is on the way.

In the meantime, while all non-essential personnel have been removed from the R&D wing of Sublevel Seven, a flood of civilian scientists and engineers, as well as other support personnel, have been sent to an adjacent section of Sublevel Seven that once housed barracks and living facilities for officers and military staff during the Cold War era. Only the team of scientists and engineers in the DVG Observation Room refuse to leave the R&D wing. The players have been assigned to help coordinate efforts on Sublevel Seven while the bulk of NEMA's resources are being made ready for the soon-to-be launched recon and rescue ops once the President arrives and has been briefed. During the uneasy calm, repair teams have been working to restore basic functions to damaged sections of the complex. Power is now functioning in 80% of Sublevel Seven (01-80%: power is functioning).

One bit of disturbing news, however, is that more and more reports coming in from places like Detroit, St. Louis, Calgary, and cities in the Ohio Valley area, all places initially spared the worst of nature's wrath ironically, are describing encounters with what can only be described as "demons from Hell." Already, rumors are spreading throughout both the NEMA personnel and the civilians on the base as to what this all might mean.

Initially, this time will be spent with the players babysitting panicked scientists and engineers who do not like being kept in the dark about what is happening. Game Masters may want to role-play out events during this lull or may want to skip directly on to the next major crisis. If wishing to role-play some of this waiting, the following suggestions are offered:

A. The civilians in Barrack C have appointed a team of three scientists to speak for them and are demanding to meet with "whoever is in charge down here!" At present, that would be the

highest ranking character in the party. These civilians want to be updated on what is going on and to know why they are being shut away when their expertise might prove valuable in helping understand these bizarre events. The players are under strict orders that none of the civilian personnel are allowed to leave their assigned areas unless summoned by the base's commander. This "meeting" will quickly degenerate into an argument in which the scientists claim that this is some sort of conspiracy, otherwise why would they be kept from helping? Resentment towards the military from the scientists will come out in this encounter. Depending upon how the players react to this, it could get ugly as many of the scientists in the room (there are 32 in all) agree with their representatives.

B. Screaming coming from one of the mess halls (not the one destroyed during the fires) alerts the players to another person seemingly having hallucinations. Though not armed or as dangerous as the soldier in the previous encounter, he seems to be attempting to harm himself (gouging his eyes out, ripping at his tongue, scratching his skin). Several other personnel are attempting to restrain him, but he seems to be fighting with a ferocious strength (he has manifested Summon Inner Strength in response to the threat he has perceived). The players should be able to easily restrain him, but if they are not careful, the man will manage to grab one of their side arms. If not stopped first (initiative roll), he will use the weapon to kill himself.

C. The highest ranking character in the party will be ordered to assemble a four man team and meet the base's second in command, Colonel Marcus Atmon, at the entrance to Sublevel Seven in order to escort him to the DVG Observation Room. While waiting for the arrival of the XO, the players will get to see how the locking mechanism works for the blast doors that effectively seal off the entire wing of the Sublevel from the rest of the complex. When Colonel Atmon arrives, he will seem to be absorbed in something on his Personal Data Device and will be muttering the entire time about "having to see what a bunch of whiny scientists want" when he needs to be "up there with the President and General Hammerick (N.O.R.A.D.'s commanding officer) planning the recon and rescue op."

The players will be asked to wait outside the Observation Room door, but as it will be left open, they will be able to hear the bulk of what is going on inside. Basically, the head scientist on the project, Karen Howe, is deeply troubled by readouts she is receiving from the DVG chamber, indicating some sort of "dimensional buildup." When asked by Colonel Atmon what that means, the only answer she is willing to give involves lots of talking fast and the use of highly technical language. When the Colonel asks her to put it in plain, simple English, it is obvious by the tone of her voice that she has nothing but disdain for the soldier (actually, she sees herself as intellectually superior to all of the NEMA personnel). She explains, in only slightly slower terms, that a "dimensional rupture is imminent if these readings do not change." When asked to explain what that means, she replies, once again with notable disgust for the man, "We don't know. The DVG is used experimentally to send probes into other dimensions on a one-way trip. It was never meant, at least not at this phase of development, for something to come through from another dimension."

Colonel Atmon will bark angrily about having his time wasted when he needs to be “up there helping fight back whatever the hell has happened to the rest of the world, not worrying about some ‘theoretical’ threat from an experimental device.” With that, he turns and leaves, gesturing to the players to follow as he heads back to the exit to Sublevel Seven. Immediately after he leaves Sublevel Seven, the events described under letter **D** will occur.

D. While some of the players are on patrol (perhaps the ones who are not on escort duty), they will notice in the dark hallway outside the backup generator room a shadowy figure is curled up on the floor. As they approach, they will clearly hear sobbing. Oddly, if any of the players use any sort of thermal optics, nothing will show up, as if the figure was not even present. If they call out to the person, a thin, pale woman, dressed in blood-stained, tattered gray robes will rise slowly, still sobbing. Her general appearance will generate a Horror Factor of 14. Her face is pale, thin and drawn with streaks of blood running from her mane of black hair, down her face and neck and vanishing beneath her robes. She will begin speaking in a hollow whisper while holding out her arms, which are also streaked with blood. She will ask over and over again “Why did you let it happen? Why?” Nothing the players say in response will stop her. Then, she will point in the direction of the wall and scream (a successful Perception Roll 12+ will indicate that the direction she is indicating includes the Infirmary, the Weapons Locker and the DVG Chamber). Players who hear the scream must roll to save versus psionics or be stunned for 1D4 melees (-2 to strike, parry, and dodge, -1 melee attack). With that, she will appear to explode in a shower of blood that will vanish before it actually splatters on anything or anyone. An instant after she vanishes, the entire complex will begin to shake violently.

Evening, December 23rd: The Rupture

At precisely 9:45 PM EST (7:45 PM for the people in N.O.R.A.D.), three things happen almost simultaneously that will spell doom for most of the people in the underground complex.

First: The Yellowstone Super Volcano erupts. While nearly 700 miles north of N.O.R.A.D., the shock wave shakes the entire Midwest with record tremors. A plume of ash and lava rockets 20 miles (32 km) into the atmosphere, where it begins to spread out and ultimately blanket the entire Earth. While the lighter ash remains suspended in the air (and will remain so for over a year), the heavier ash, pumice and rock falls to earth, burying the Midwest in a relatively short amount of time. Soon, much of Wyoming, Utah, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska and Colorado will be buried under several meters of ash. Within hours, N.O.R.A.D. will find itself buried.

Second: The eruption of the super volcano will trigger another series of earthquakes and aftershocks that will tear through the Rocky Mountains. Already shaken by the initial onset of quakes, this second round of tremors will utterly devastate sections of the underground complex at N.O.R.A.D. This is what the players feel first as described above under event **D**. Every-

one not anchored in some manner will need to make a roll to maintain balance or be thrown to the ground. These aftershocks will occur throughout the remainder of this adventure. The likelihood of an aftershock shaking the complex during any given encounter is 01-40%, requiring all characters (and monsters/demons) to make a saving throw to maintain the balance (14+, P.P. bonuses only apply).

Alarms will begin to go off throughout the complex, screams and cries for help will ring out, both over the radio and intercoms as well as out loud. The sound of electrical systems shorting out will herald a new round of fires that will spring up throughout the complex. Distant explosions from other sections of N.O.R.A.D. will further shake the installation. The players will need to decide where first to try to help, but before they get a chance...

Third: Dr. Karen Howe’s predicted “dimensional rupture” occurs at almost the precise moment the Yellowstone Super Volcano erupts. Whether it was triggered by the event almost 700 miles (1,120 km) away or merely coincidence is irrelevant. There is a sudden arcing of blue lightning that streams through the corridors of Sublevel Seven. The lightning will inflict 4D6 S.D.C. damage to everyone in the complex, regardless of whether or not they are wearing Mega-Damage armor or in any power armor or robot vehicles. This will be followed immediately by a frantic shouting over radio for someone to “get the hell down to the DVG right away!!!”

As the players enter the Observation Room, they will notice that the air is heavy with the smell of ozone and that a bluish haze lingers above the consoles. Every now and then, one of them will short out with a loud ‘POP’ and cascade of sparks. No one in the Observation Room seems to notice, however, as they are all staring out the window into the DVG Chamber.

Suspended 20 feet (6.1 m) in the air is a crackling sphere of blue-white lightning (10 feet/3.05 m in diameter), not unlike the lightning that arced through the complex moments before. Tendrils of lightning still arc from the sphere, splashing against the walls, some leaving scorch marks, others seemingly passing straight through. Standing on the platform directly beneath the sphere of energy is what can only be described as a “monster” or “demon.” This thing (described below) will seemingly survey its surroundings for several seconds before it leaps 20 feet (6.1 m) into the air and lands against the blast shield view port and begin raking at it with two of its clawed limbs while clinging to the wall with its other three limbs. Although the view port is made of M.D.C. material (150 M.D.C.), it is evident that the thing is capable of damaging it as its claws leave long gouges in the surface. If the players do not react, Dr. Howe will point to blast doors that exit the DVG Chamber and order them to get in there and kill that “thing!” When the players enter, Dr. Howe will close and lock the blast doors behind them.

Penta Demon

Lesser Chaos Demon. Also known as *The Five-Armed Madness*.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4+2 (low human intelligence), M.E. 3D6, M.A. 1D6+1, P.S. 1D6+30 (Supernatural), P.P. 18+1D6, P.E.



2D6+16 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D4, Spd 3D6+10 running, 2D6+10 climbing.

Size: 8 feet (2.4 m) tall; 800 pounds (360 kg).

M.D.C.: P.E. number +80 +2D4x10. (On S.D.C. worlds, the Penta-Demon has an A.R. of 13, 1D6x10+ P.E. attribute number of Hit Points and 2D4x10 S.D.C.)

P.P.E.: P.E. number +1D6x10. **L.S.P.:** M.E. number +4D6.

Horror Factor: 16

Equivalent Level of Experience: 1D6

Attacks per Melee: 7

Bonuses (in addition to likely attribute bonuses): +5 on initiative, +2 to strike, +4 to strike with resin (see below), +4 to parry, +1 to dodge, +4 to roll with punch, +2 to pull punch, +2 to save versus magic, +1 to save versus psionics, +5 to save versus possession, +8 to save versus Horror Factor.

Damage: Bite: 3D6 M.D., Punch, Power Punch and Kick as per Supernatural P.S. Claws: Punch damage +2D6 M.D.

Natural Abilities: Bio-regenerates 2D6 M.D.C. per melee, has 360° vision, cannot be surprised. Excellent vision, Nightvision 1000 feet (305 m), See the Invisible, Impervious to Fire (including Mega-Damage flames, plasma, nuclear and magic fire), can leap 30 feet (9.1 m) high or across, magically knows and can speak all languages at 85%, but cannot read or write.

Insect Prowl (special): The Penta-Demon can cling to surfaces like an insect, giving the demon the equivalent of Climbing at 95%. Also, in this way, it can move silently (Prowl 80%).

Resin Spit (special): Each of the demon's two mouths can spit a resin-like secretion twice per melee that hardens to 30 M.D.C. within 1D4 minutes. A strike to a limb (requires the

Penta-Demon to make a Called Shot) will immobilize that arm or leg until it can be broken free. A character enveloped with 100 or more M.D.C. is considered to be covered and cannot move until freed (will suffocate in 1D4+1 minutes if not wearing environmental armor).

R.C.C. Skill Equivalents: Detect Ambush (45%), Wrestling, Wilderness Survival (86%), Land Navigation (65%), Track Animals (78%), Track Humanoids (45%). These skills do not increase with experience but instead represent instinctive skills known to the demon.

Vulnerabilities: 1) Canines are a natural enemy of the Penta-Demon. Canine attacks inflict M.D.C. damage and attacks leveled against canines by the demon inflict the equivalent S.D.C. damage. A lone dog is frightening to the demon (H.F. 13), while a pack (six or more) will terrify the Penta-Demon (Horror Factor of 18).

2) Sunlight and daytime (including the light from a Globe of Daylight spell) dramatically reduce the demon's abilities (as per usual for Night Demons; see page 44 of *Rifts® Chaos Earth™ Sourcebook, Creatures of Chaos™*). As long as it is underground or otherwise sheltered from the sunlight, it can continue to function even if it is daytime.

3) Penta-Demons are susceptible to the cold, reducing all bonuses by half when exposed to freezing or below freezing temperatures. Cold based attacks inflict double damage.

Magic: Limited to the following spells: Chameleon (6), Breathe without Air (5), Fuel Flame (5), Impervious to Poison (5), Invisibility: Simple (6) and Mystic Fulcrum (5).

Psionics: Considered a Minor Psychic with the following abilities: Empathy (4) and Sixth Sense (2).

Appearance: The Penta-Demon is completely hairless with mottled white-brown, moist-looking skin. It has two mouths, one on the front and one on the back of its head, with rows of small, needle-like teeth in each. This often makes it difficult to tell which is the front of the creature and which is the back (there are no other anatomical features to help identify the front or back). It has no nose or ears (though it does manage to smell and hear somehow) but it has ten eyes evenly spaced around the skull. Its five limbs consist of two thicker, leg-like lower limbs and three upper limbs evenly spaced around the torso. There are five finger-like appendages on the demon's hands and feet, though they are all equal in length and evenly spaced in a circle around a central palm, making all five limbs capable of prehensile movement. Each finger or toe is tipped with a long, wicked-looking claw. The Penta-Demon is an aggressive, animalistic hunter that delights in games of cat and mouse, using its natural and magical stealth abilities to sneak up on its prey, attack, then withdraw to continue the game. It cares little for wealth and power; it seems to exist only to hunt and feed.

Following the defeat of the Penta-Demon, the players will be ordered by Dr. Howe to remain in the chamber in case something else comes through while they try to figure out how to shut the thing down. Any attempts to use their radios to contact anyone else in N.O.R.A.D. will not work. The close proximity to the dimensional rupture is disrupting all radio communications. Any attempt to argue with Dr. Howe about being ordered to stay locked in the DVG Chamber will meet with deaf ears as

she attempts to figure out how to shut the rupture. If they begin shooting at the blast door or the view port, Dr. Howe will angrily demand that they stand down or else they will only make a hole that something else can get through.

As if on cue, the sphere of energy surges with more lightning (this time doing no harm) and with a series of flashes, three more “demons” appear in the room, dropping out of the air.



Three Dino-Spiders

Monsters from the Rift

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4+1 (high animal intelligence), M.E. 2D6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 1D6+10 (Supernatural), P.P. 22+1D4, P.E. 1D6+8, P.B. 1D4, Spd 4D6+20 running or climbing.

Size: 3 feet (0.9 m) diameter body; 100 pounds (45 kg).

M.D.C.: P.E. number +1D4x10. (On S.D.C. worlds, the Dino-Spider has an A.R. of 12, 4D6 + P.E. attribute number in Hit Points and 6D6 S.D.C.)

P.P.E.: P.E. number +2D6. **I.S.P.:** 0

Horror Factor: 14

Equivalent Level of Experience: 1D4

Attacks per Melee: 4

Bonuses (in addition to likely attribute bonuses): +4 on initiative, +2 to strike, +1 to parry, +2 to automatic dodge (the act of dodging does not use up one of the monster's attacks per melee), +8 to roll with punch, +1 to save versus magic, +4 to save versus Horror Factor.

Damage: Bite: 2D4 M.D., Jab with Leg: 1D4 M.D., Swat with Tail: 1D6 M.D.

Natural Abilities: Bio-regenerates 1D6 M.D.C. per melee, has polarized vision that can see both in the infrared and ultraviolet spectrum as well as visible light, Nightvision 300 feet (91.4 m), Impervious to Cold (natural and magical cold).

Insect Prowl (special): The Dino-Spider can cling to surfaces like an insect, giving the monster the equivalent of Climbing at 98%. Also, in this way, it can move silently (Prowl 75%).

Natural Camouflage (special): Though not as effective as the Chameleon spell, the Dino-Spider possesses a natural camouflage ability that allows it to blend in exceedingly well to its environment. Equivalent to the skill Camouflage at 80% when motionless and Prowl at 75% when moving.

Excellent Leapers (special): The Dino-Spider is an excellent leaper, having the ability to leap 30 feet (9.1 m) straight up or across without any sort of running start. When it attacks in this manner, it gains an additional +2 to initiative and +1 to strike. However, if attacked in mid-leap, it cannot use its ability to automatic dodge.

Poison Bite (special): Rather than inflicting killing damage with its fangs, the Dino-Spider can inflict less severe damage (5D6 S.D.C.) in order to inject a paralyzing poison into the bloodstream of its victim. This poison, requiring a save vs non-lethal poison of 16 or higher, is extremely painful to the victim for 1D6 melee rounds (-3 to strike, parry and dodge; reduce attacks per melee by two) before total paralysis occurs. Paralysis lasts 1D4 hours, usually enough time for the monster to drag the body back to its lair and feed. Characters who successfully save versus poison are not paralyzed but still suffer some of the effects of the pain (-1 to strike, parry and dodge).

R.C.C. Skill Equivalents: Wilderness Survival (90%), Land Navigation (78%), Track Animals (60%). These skills do not increase with experience but instead represent instinctive skills known to the monster.

Vulnerabilities: 1) Reptiles are a natural enemy of the Dino-Spider, despite its partial reptilian appearance. Reptile attacks inflict M.D.C. damage.

2) Fire can drive the Dino-Spider away. While it does no additional harm to the thing, the monster simply does not like fire and will react to it as if it possessed a Horror Factor of 8 for small fires, 12 for large fires, and 18 for raging infernos.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Appearance: The Dino-Spider looks like someone took a giant, nasty looking spider and tried to graft a dinosaur's head and tail to it and then tried to cover the whole thing in reptile skin. The central body looks like the bulbous abdomen of a giant spider. Eight needle-like legs radiate from this central body, each three times the length of the central body itself (9 feet/2.7 m long). A short, thick neck sticks out where the spider's head would normally be and ends in a head that resembles a carnivorous dinosaur (such as an Allosaurus or T-Rex type dinosaur). However, instead of dinosaur teeth, when the monster opens its mouth to bite, it attacks with a pair of spider-like fangs. Also, the eyes, while appearing reptilian at first, are segmented like an insect's. On the rear end of the spider abdomen, a five foot long (1.5 m) dinosaur tail protrudes. Finally, the entire thing, including the spider abdo-

men, is covered in a mottled dark blue and black, reptile-like skin. The Dino-Spider is not a true demon but rather a bizarre monster from an alien world. It has an animal-like cunning and exists only to hunt and eat. Unlike true spiders, the Dino-Spider does not possess the ability to spin a web. Rather, the thing builds a lair out of whatever garbage or rubbish it can gather.

Following the defeat of these monsters, the blast doors will open and a squad of eight Gunbuster power armor units, one Bulldog robot and a pair of Silver Eagle SAMAS will enter the DVG Chamber. The squad leader, Captain Harman, will tell the players to stand down and report. Then, after taking it all in with no visible indication of surprise, he will compliment them on a job well done and explain that reinforcements have arrived. They will handle it from here. The players are to report to the Sublevel Seven Infirmary to coordinate rescue operations in the damaged sections of the complex.

December 24th: Monsters, Monsters, Everywhere!

The sound of weapons fire will periodically reverberate throughout the complex with increasing frequency as new “things” emerge from the rupture only to face the NEMA soldiers in the DVG. For the time being, however, the power armor squad seems to have things under control. News from the upper levels of N.O.R.A.D. is that some sort of massive volcanic eruption north of the Cheyenne Mountains caused the latest series of earthquakes (with aftershocks still shaking the complex periodically). No word on how the rest of the facility is doing, much less the rest of the country or world. Power is failing throughout the mountain. Even with the independent power supply on Sublevel Seven, power is now only functioning 35% of the time (01-35%). The rest of the time, any given room or hall will only be lit by minimal emergency lighting or the flashes of shorting wires or circuits. The notable exceptions to this are the DVG Chamber and Observation platform, and the Infirmary (which also has its own emergency generator).

In the meantime, the characters will arrive in the Infirmary to receive their orders. When the players arrive, the Infirmary will be a madhouse of doctors running around, tending to countless wounded. While watching, more arrive, some stumbling in under their own power, others being carried in by other NEMA rescue teams who have arrived to help with the damage control. Major Lcomb (5th level Military Specialist) is coordinating the rescue operations and orders the players to look for survivors in the Barracks and Personnel Quarters wing of Sublevel Seven. He will explain that there has been little to no contact from that section since the major quakes began a short while ago and that a major collapse has blocked it off. If the players express concern over what happened in the DVG Chamber, the Major will assure them that with the armored platoon now destroying anything that emerges from “...whatever the hell that thing is in there...” that there should be no immediate threat to the rest of the complex.

After the players clear the rubble away from the hallway that leads to the barracks, they will find it eerily silent within, except

for the distant rumble of aftershocks and occasional shorting of exposed wires. The lights flicker intermittently and the air is heavy with dust and smoke. As a result of the renewed earthquakes and aftershocks from the eruption of the super-volcano, in any given section, power will function only 35% of the time (01-35% chance power is working, although it may be intermittent; lights flickering, small electrical short, etc.). If not functioning, then the room will be lit only by emergency lighting and no computer terminals or intercom systems will be working.

The following encounters will occur during this rescue op:

A. Barrack C is in fairly good condition, with only 10% casualties. With only minor structural damage and no fires (those that broke out were quickly extinguished by the scientists), this barracks makes the perfect location for any injured to be evacuated to since the Infirmary is already overwhelmed. Once the condition is reported to the infirmary command post, Major Lcomb will order several medics to Barrack C to establish a triage unit. Only the most critically injured are to be removed from the Barracks wing of Sublevel Seven to the Infirmary. The scientists will still be resentful of how they are being treated by the military, insisting that they be immediately evacuated from this “dangerously unstable hole in the ground!” Players will need to convince them to remain at least until the triage unit arrives. If not, the scientists will begin to wander the complex, looking for a way out. If the players can convince them to remain until the triage unit arrives, the doctors (being somewhat more respected by the scientists than the military) will be able to convince them they need to remain and help.

B. In Barrack B, at first glance, it appears as if everyone in the room (some 8 bodies) is either dead or unconscious. Eight bodies are lying around the room, some on beds, others across tables and the rest lying prone on the floor. A cursory examination of the bodies will reveal that they are not in fact dead but appear to be in some form of paralysis. Despite their limp limbs, their eyes are wide with terror and obviously conscious. A close examination (requires a successful Medical skill roll) will reveal that half of these paralyzed victims have small, pin prick-sized wounds somewhere on their bodies (hand, leg, neck, etc.). The other half, though paralyzed, do not appear to have any obvious injuries. Three of the eight bodies are, in fact, dead. In addition to the minor wounds, a series of four slightly larger wounds are found in a row on the neck or wrist (always near a major artery). A detailed examination of these three bodies (requiring another successful Medical skill roll) will indicate that they have been drained of blood. Also, this examination (with a successful Perception Roll of 16+) will indicate that all three are missing any obvious signs of jewelry (wedding rings, necklaces, dog tags, watches, etc.). Hiding in a corner of the room is a Razoredged Prowler. So far, it has managed to discreetly (via psionics and poison) immobilize everyone in the room and drain three of the fourteen of blood. In typical Razoredged fashion, it has already begun to hoard minor valuables from its victims. Unless the players do a thorough search of the barracks, including looking under beds, tables and desks, they will not find the demon. If they do, they will have undeniable evidence that something has somehow managed to breach the defense team in the DVG Chamber (actually, as time passes, more demons and monsters will emerge throughout Sublevel Seven, though the scientists

and NEMA personnel in the DVG Chamber and Observation Room will not know this at first). If they do not discover the demon, it will remain in Barrack B and continue to feed (01-75%) or quietly follow the team to see what else they do (76-00%).

Razoredged Prowler Quick Stats: M.D.C.: 52, P.P.E.: 26. Transfixed by mirrors and reflective surfaces. Impervious to poison, disease, and normal fire and cold. Half damage from Mega-Damage and magic fire and cold. Four attacks per melee, +2 on initiative, +5 to strike, +2 to parry, +4 to dodge, +2 to disarm, +3 to pull punch, +2 to roll with impact, +4 to save versus Horror Factor, +5 to save versus magic, +2 to save versus psionics. Fingernail Attack: 1D4 M.D., Four Fingernail Slash: 4D4 M.D., Stinger: 1D6 M.D. plus victim must save versus poison (16+) or become paralyzed for 1D4x10+30 minutes (can be used 6 times per 24 hours; four have already been used today, leaving two possible paralysis attacks). Bio-regenerates 2D6 M.D.C. per melee. Each of the four eyes can see in a different spectrum: (1) Invisible, (2) Nightvision (2000 feet/610 m), (3) Infrared and Ultraviolet, and (4) Telescopic Vision (30x magnification). Insect crawl (Spd 30), leap six feet (1.8 m) high or across, Prowl (80%), Tailing (70%), Climb (90%). Possesses the following psionic abilities at 4th level strength: Commune with Spirits (6), Mask I.S.P. and Psionics (7), Mind Block (4), Object Read (6), Presence Sense (4), See Aura (6), Sense Evil (2), Sense Magic (3), Sixth Sense (2), Telepathy (2), Ectoplasm (6-12), Deaden Sense (4), Telekinesis (varies), Telekinetic Punch (6), Telekinetic Push (4) and Bio-Manipulation: Paralysis (10). I.S.P.: Only 43 remaining (possessed 83, but has used 40 in its attempts to paralyze its victims). The Razoredged Prowler looks like an oversized (about 1 foot/0.3 m diameter), demonic-looking severed hand that skitters around on its razor-sharp fingertips. Each of the four finger-knuckles has a piercing blue eye on it and the bone-like protrusion that sticks out of the wrist is actually a stinger. The fingernails are a dirty yellow color and the skin is a lumpy, mottled brown and green. Horror Factor: 13. For a full description, see pages 23-24 of *Creatures of Chaos*TM.

C. Barrack E is a graveyard – literally. Nine personnel were in this room when a fire broke out, killing them all. While the fire has burned itself out, the bodies are all charred to a crisp. Characters who do not possess Criminal Science and Forensics, Field Surgery, Medical Doctor, or Paramedic must save versus Horror Factor 16+ or become ill at the sight and smell of the charred cadavers (incapacitated for 1D4 melee rounds before attempting another saving throw). If the players linger for more than a minute or so looking for survivors, the corpses will begin to slowly show signs of life (an arm twitching, a head swiveling, etc.). At first, characters will need to make a successful Perception Roll (14+) to notice this. (Game Masters: Play this out to be potentially terrifying, with the players jumping at shadows, not sure if they are really seeing movement or if it is just their imagination playing tricks on them.) However, within a few minutes, the nine bodies will begin to rise and attack the players. The P.P.E. energy from the dimensional rupture in the DVG has begun to permeate the rest of Sublevel Seven. A recent surge of energy from the dimensional rupture (which also dumped about a dozen more monsters throughout the level) has animated these corpses. Treat as mindless animated dead, though as a result of

the intense level of P.P.E. energies at the dawn of the Great Cataclysm, these animated corpses are M.D.C. creatures and can inflict minor Mega-Damage with their strikes.

Animated Dead Quick Stats: M.D.C.: 80, P.P.E.: 0, Spd: 8. Impervious to poison, disease, heat, cold, illusion, gases and mind attacks. Four attacks per melee round. All attacks (claws, bites, kicks, etc.): 1D6 M.D. Horror Factor: 16 (higher than normal as these are the first animated dead these characters have ever seen outside of a B-grade horror movie).

D. From the corridor leading to the individual quarters, the players hear the sound of something being smashed (furniture being broken, glass shattering, metal being bent, etc.). As the players cautiously investigate, they will notice in one of the rooms a large robot methodically destroying anything it can get its armored claws on. The ‘bot is immediately recognizable as a variant of the NEMA Combat Drone Soldier. Actually, it is a prototype designed to address the increasing unease that was growing amongst the nations of the world just prior to the Great Cataclysm. This particular drone had been deactivated to work on some programming glitches when all hell broke loose around the globe. After the dimensional rupture began to allow other-worldly creatures into Sublevel Seven, a Tectonic Entity inhabited the deactivated robot and began to run amuck. Fortunately, the Entity has no ability to activate or use any of the drone’s advanced weapons. Still, the robot has a formidable amount of M.D.C. as well as the Entity’s Supernatural P.S. Unless one or more of the player characters has manifested a psionic or magic power that would allow them to detect the Entity, they should have no reason to suspect that this is anything more than a malfunctioning robot drone.

Tectonic Entity Quick Stats: Robot M.D.C.: 210, Entity M.D.C.: 90, P.P.E.: 10. Robot body is impervious to pain, cold, disease, poison, gases and does not need air. Entity is impervious to all physical and energy attacks and can only be affected by magic or psionics. Entity is invisible and intangible in its natural form and can fly at a speed of 20 mph (32 km). Four physical attacks or three psionic attacks per melee round. +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, +2 to parry, +2 to dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 to save versus magic, +1 to save versus psionics, +10 to save versus Horror Factor. Punch: 5D6 M.D., Power Punch: 1D6x10 M.D. (counts as two melee attacks), Kick: 5D6 M.D. Once its drone body is destroyed, the Entity cannot inhabit or create a new body for 12 hours. Possesses the following psionic abilities at 4th level strength: Empathy (4), Mind Block (4), Presence Sense (4), See the Invisible (4), See Aura (6), Sixth Sense (2), and Telekinesis (varies). I.S.P.: 20+1D6x40 drawn from ambient P.P.E. per melee round (the 1D6x10 P.P.E. surge per melee round converted at a rate of four I.S.P. per one P.P.E.). Looks like an advanced (and somewhat more menacing) version of the standard NEMA Combat Drone. The Entity itself looks like a translucent sphere of energy (though this will only be visible to characters who can see the invisible).

E. Game Master Note: This event should take place towards the end of the search and rescue operation, or at least at some point following the encounter in Barrack C.

At some point, as the characters are still searching rooms looking for survivors, they will hear screams coming from the natatorium (swimming area). As the players approach, the

screams will be abruptly cut off followed by a loud splashing sound. By the time the players arrive, the natatorium is dark except for a few small electrical fires. Characters with enhanced vision will notice that five cocoon-like sacks are floating in the shallow end of an Olympic-sized swimming pool (requires a Perception Roll of 12+ to notice). Two of them are motionless while the other three are squirming slightly and emitting faintly muffled sounds. Hiding in the deep end of the pool is a Cephalo-Arachon, a Greater Night Demon. Appearing in one of the first bursts from the dimensional rupture, the demon found a nice dark place to build its nest. Now, it simply waits for more unsuspecting prey to wander into its grasp. So far, it has managed to capture and feed on two other NEMA personnel who were engaged in an earlier search and rescue mission as well as three scientists who had managed to sneak out of Barrack C and had just stumbled into the natatorium. Unlike most other Greater Demons that want to carve out niches of power, the Cephalo-Arachon cares more for hunting and manipulating mortals from the shadows for its own pleasure. The only race that it seems to remotely care about, in so much as any demon can care about mortal beings, are an obscure race of swamp-dwelling octopus-like creatures known as Cephalomorphs. These beings worship the Cephalo-Arachon demons as gods in whose image they were created. This particular Cephalo-Arachon will use its cunning and powers to attack the players from the shadows of the deep end of the pool unless it perceives them to be a threat, at which point it will flee via teleportation. If the demon is driven off, the three civilian scientists can be rescued.

Cephalo-Arachon

Greater Chaos Demon. Also known as *The Demon Octopus* or *Demon Squid*.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+15, M.E. 1D6+10, M.A. 1D6+4, P.S. 2D6+25 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+14, P.E. 1D6+22 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D6, Spd 1D6+10 running, 1D4x10+20 swimming.

Size: 12 foot (3.6 m) diameter body, 100 foot (30.5 m) tentacles; 1 ton.

M.D.C.: P.E. number x4 +1D4x100 M.D. (On S.D.C. worlds, the Cephalo-Arachon has an A.R. of 14, 2D6x10+ P.E. attribute number of Hit Points and 2D6x10 S.D.C.)

P.P.E.: 1D4x100+150. **I.S.P.:** M.E. number x4 +1D6x10.

Horror Factor: 16

Equivalent Level of Experience: 1D4+4

Attacks per Melee: 8

Bonuses (in addition to likely attribute bonuses): +3 on initiative, +3 to strike, +4 to parry, +1 to dodge, +4 to dodge underwater, +8 to roll with punch, +4 to pull punch, +2 to save versus magic, +3 to save versus psionics, +8 to save versus possession, +10 to save versus Horror Factor.

Damage: Bite: 2D6 M.D., Restrained Tentacle Strike: 5D6+25 S.D.C. Full Strength Tentacle Strike as per Supernatural P.S. number for each tentacle. The demon can strike with as many as three tentacles at the same target (P.S. damage x3; counts as two melee attacks). Constriction damage: 3D6 M.D. per melee action. Grappling: No damage but the victim is

grabbed with two or more tentacles. Kicks and Power Punches are not possible.

Natural Abilities: Bio-regenerates 3D6 M.D.C. per melee, poor day vision, excellent Nightvision: 5,000 feet (1,524 m), can see in total darkness. See the Invisible, impervious to cold (normal and magical cold), impervious to ocean depths. Can survive on both land and in the sea indefinitely, though extremely dry conditions will cause the demon some discomfort. Teleport Self 45%. Dimensional Teleport 25% (+15% at a ley line nexus). Magically knows and can read all languages at 90%, cannot speak out loud. Communicates via Telepathy and Empathy (constant and unlimited; costs 0 I.S.P.).

Natural Chameleon (special): Identical to the 2nd level spell invocation of the same name. Costs no P.P.E. and can be maintained indefinitely.

Ink Cloud (special): When in the water, the Cephalo-Arachon can emit a cloud of toxic, blinding black ink that will cloud the area around it (50 foot/15.2 m), preventing its detection by not only ordinary vision but also sonar, radar and infrared. Attackers are -10 to strike, parry and dodge while within the cloud while its creator is unaffected. Furthermore, the cloud is a toxic poison that paralyzes anyone who takes the ink into their lungs or gills for 4D4 minutes (save versus poison 14+). Out of the water, the ink can be sprayed up to 40 feet (12.2 m) in an attempt to blind an opponent, but requires a Called Shot on the part of the demon (typically made at -3 for trying to strike such a small target). If a concentrated burst of ink gets in someone's unprotected eyes, the victim must save versus poison at 16+ or suffer permanent eye damage (-2 to strike, parry and dodge). Surgery, magic or psionic restora-



tion or cybernetic replacement is the only way to correct this permanent damage.

Slime Cocoon (special): Once its victims have been successfully neutralized, the demon will typically encase them in a cocoon that appears to be made of thick, white mucus. Despite being enclosed, victims can still breathe with some difficulty (even if underwater). Escaping typically requires a combined P.S. of 35 and 1D4 minutes of struggling. Victims will find themselves covered in a foul smelling slime that will cause vomiting in all who smell it and do not save versus poison at 16+ until all of the slime is washed away (typically taking at least an hour of scrubbing). This slime can also be used as a weapon by the demon, though not a terribly effective one. In order to “slime” someone, the victim must be brought within 3 feet (0.9 m) of the demon’s body, which means a successful grappling strike must be made by two or more tentacles. Sliming takes one action after the struggling victim is brought close. Slimed victims are -4 to strike, parry and dodge and lose two melee attacks as they are caught in the sticky substance (to completely trap someone in a slime cocoon while not incapacitated typically takes 2 full melee rounds of effort).

Summon Sea Creatures (special): The Cephalo-Arachon possesses the ability to summon sea creatures to its aid. The demon can summon 1D4x100 smaller creatures, typically small fish, jellyfish, or smaller cephalopods (octopus and squid), 1D4x10 larger creatures, such as sharks, larger fish, larger cephalopods or 1D4 giant or Mega-Damage sea creatures, giant sharks, giant squid or octopus, etc. Supernatural sea creatures (including sea serpents) cannot be summoned. Once summoned, these creatures will remain in the thrall of the demon for 1 hour per level of experience.

Sense Vibrations (special): The demon can sense the slightest vibration while underwater, sensing movement up to one mile (1.6 km) distance. The demon can tell with a great degree of accuracy (85%) how large the thing is making the vibrations as well as how many are present. This makes it nearly impossible to sneak up on the demon when underwater. On land, the demon can also sense vibrations through the ground, but only up to 1,000 feet (305 m) and with reduced accuracy (35%).

Invertebrate Physiology (special): This greater demon does not possess any form of internal skeleton. This makes the creature very adept at squeezing through small places (roughly 10% of the demon’s size), and escaping attempts to capture and hold it (attackers attempting to entangle, pin or hold the Cephalo-Arachon are made at -5).

R.C.C. Skill Equivalents: Swimming (98%), Escape Artist (95%), Detect Ambush (65%), Detect Concealment (50%), Palming (60%), Concealment (55%), Camouflage (75%), Tailing (68%), Wrestling, Wilderness Survival (50%), Land Navigation (40%), Undersea Navigation (90%), Underwater Tracking (90%), Tracking on land (30%). Underwater Prowl (95%), Prowl (40%). These skills do not increase with experience but instead represent instinctive skills known to the demon.

Vulnerabilities: 1) Fire: Ordinary fires inflict Mega-Damage to the demon while Mega-Damage plasma, nuclear and magical fires inflict double damage.

2) Sunlight and daytime (including the light from a Globe of Daylight spell) dramatically reduce the demon’s abilities (as per usual for Night Demons; see page 44 of *Creatures of Chaos*™). As long as they are underground or otherwise sheltered from the sunlight, they can continue to function even if it is daytime. During the daylight, the Cephalo-Arachon typically descends into deeper water well below the ability of sunlight to penetrate.

3) Cephalo-Arachons are relatively slow moving and ponderous on land, though far from immobile. They can move along by either dragging their bulk with their ten powerful limbs or by finding something strong enough for them to swing along (like very strong tree limbs or the rafters of ruined buildings).

4) Dolphins and Whales are natural enemies of the Cephalo-Arachon and inflict Mega-Damage with their attacks. Furthermore, attacks from the demon inflict only S.D.C. damage against these creatures.

Magic: Limited to the following spells: All Water Elemental spells level one through four plus the following illusion invocations: Blinding Flash (1), Cloak of Darkness (6), Befuddle (6), Fear (5), Multiple Image (7), Armor Bizarre (15), Horrific Illusion (10), Horror (10), Apparition (20), Illusion Booster (15), Illusory Wall (15-30), Hallucination (30), Sonic Blast (25), Shockwave (45), Wisps of Confusion (40), World Bizarre (40), Aura of Doom (40), Illusion Manipulation (25-60), Illusory Reef (45-90; basically an aquatic version of Illusory Forest), and Illusory Terrain (55-120).

Psionics: Considered a Master Psychic with the following abilities: Empathy (4), Presence Sense (4), See Aura (6), Sense Magic (3), Sixth Sense (2), Empathic Transmission (6), Hypnotic Suggestion (6), Mentally Possess Others (30), and Psychosomatic Disease (30).

Appearance: The Cephalo-Arachon resembles a dark green to gray, giant, demonic-looking octopus with ten long tentacles (Author’s Note: Yes, I know that an octopus has eight tentacles), three large amber-colored eyes arranged in a triangle around a serrated beak located at the center of its body. These Greater Demons enjoy lurking in the shadows near coastal or undersea communities and manipulating them with their illusion powers. Unlike most other Greater Demons which seek to build small kingdoms and carve out places of power for themselves, the Cephalo-Arachon prefers to manipulate mortals from the shadows until such time as a powerful hero or band of adventurers arrives to flush it out. If discovered and overpowered, the demon will typically flee rather than fight to the death.

At this point, there is no doubt that demons are escaping from the DVG Chamber. At first, Major Lecomb will dismiss this as impossible, claiming that, so far, Captain Harman’s squad has managed to destroy everything that has “popped” into the DVG Chamber. However, while still on the line, another NEMA search and rescue squad will radio in that it is in a firefight with a pack of “some kind of freakin’ aliens!” Additional reports from other teams will begin to come in, all corroborating the characters’ claim that monsters and demons are escaping the containment in the DVG. After some consideration, Major Lecomb will order all rescue teams to continue to

look for survivors and to report in any additional encounters with “demons.” They are to call for reinforcements only if absolutely necessary.

F. For any additional sections of Sublevel Seven that the players wish to explore as they search for personnel to save, Game Masters may use the following tables to determine the condition of the room or chamber the characters enter as well as any possible survivors. Game Masters, be sure to remain consistent with whatever conditions were already observed during the characters’ first rescue operation through Sublevel Seven. Remember, rooms can get worse, but not better. Game Masters should feel free to populate these rooms with any relatively minor supernatural creatures from the pages of *Creatures of Chaos*™ or any appropriate *Rifts*® sourcebook.

Condition of the Room

01-30% Undamaged.

31-46% Small electrical fires.

47-60% Minor structural damage (displaced furniture, ceiling panel collapse, minor wall damage).

61-74% Large fire (can be chemical or electrical).

75-84% Major structural damage (large sections of the wall and ceiling have collapsed).

85-92% Consumed by fires (entire room is an inferno).

93-00% Entire Chamber has collapsed (90% of the room is filled with rubble and debris).

Survivors

01-79% Empty.

80-81% 1D6 people, trapped but in good condition.

82-83% 1D4 people, trapped and in need of medical attention (non-critical, First Aid skill sufficient).

84-86% 1D4 people, trapped and in need of immediate medical attention (half are unconscious, most are in critical condition; Surgery or Medical Doctor skill required).

87-89% 1D6 people, trapped and in need of immediate medical attention (half are unconscious, most are in critical condition; Surgery or Medical Doctor skill required).

90-93% 1D4 people, trapped and in need of immediate medical EVAC (most or all are unconscious, all are in life threatening condition, Surgery or Medical Doctor skill required to stabilize for EVAC).

94-97% 1-3 people, trapped, unconscious and in need of immediate medical EVAC (all are in life threatening condition, Surgery or Medical Doctor skill required to stabilize for EVAC).

98-00% 1-3 people, dead or dying.

After a while (when the Game Master is ready to move on from these rescue ops), a panicked Captain Harman will break in over the radio with the following message: “All units retreat! All units retreat! Fall back to Sublevel Six! DVG Containment is breached. Repeat: All units retreat. All units...” The transmission is abruptly cut off with the sound of an animal-like snarl and a high-pitched human scream.

Major Lecombe will repeat the command to fall back to Sublevel Six while at the same time ordering all NEMA teams

to assist in the evacuation of all civilian personnel. This means the players will need to return to Barrack C and escort the survivors (29 of the remaining scientists, the medical triage team and any additional survivors the players might have discovered; determine by the random rolls for other rooms searched).

Game Master Note: Play this evacuation as a running firefight, with players in the front of the group, rapidly advancing while at the same time, cautiously peering around corners to check for threats. Meanwhile, characters in the rear of the group should be waging an increasingly difficult fight with an ever growing horde of demons and monsters hot on their tail. There is no hope to defeat them all (at least not at this time) and the players should only hope to make it to Sublevel Six without being overrun. With each flash of blue lightning, another 1D6 Lesser Demons will appear at random within the complex, a few in front of the escaping party but mostly appearing behind. So far, none seem to have appeared outside Sublevel Seven, as far as anyone has discovered. In general, this should be an action movie-style, fast-paced running battle with players blasting away at scampering demons that never seem to end.

Just as the players seem to be on the verge of being overwhelmed, they will be ordered to take cover as a line of Chromium Guardsmen appear ahead of them and open fire on the advancing demon horde. With the deafening roar of Boom Guns echoing down the hall, other NEMA soldiers will advance, some firing on the demons, others to help the evacuating civilians and characters. Again, this should be played in movie-style fashion with the cavalry arriving in the nick of time and covering the characters’ escape. With an ominous metallic clang, the massive blast doors to Sublevel Seven will slam shut, cutting off the screaming horde of demons and the occasional sound of gunfire, suggesting that not everyone managed to escape the complex.

December 25th: The Last Stand!

Despite the heroic last minute rescue, the news is not good. Now that the characters are out of Sublevel Seven, they will be privy to the most up-to-date intelligence N.O.R.A.D. has managed to gather so far. Despite their relatively low rank, the players will be called to a meeting with General Hammerick as they have the most direct firsthand knowledge of the nature of the enemy they are now facing. In this meeting, the players will learn the following pieces of information:

- Bizarre lines of blue energy, miles high and across, now crisscross the entire planet. Some areas are relatively free of the blue energy; others, according to sketchy satellite data, are completely blanketed in blue energy. The worst spots appear to be in England, China, the Ohio Valley and the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Florida. In places where these lines flare up brightest, reports have begun to stream in of demons and alien invaders. At first, this was considered mass hysteria, but after recent events in Sublevel Seven, these reports are now being given greater credence.
- A series of tsunamis have laid waste to every coastline on the planet. All major cities on the east and west coast, as well as along the Gulf of Mexico, are gone.

- Dozens of volcanic eruptions have been recorded worldwide, including a massive super-volcano eruption centered at Yellowstone National Park, blanketing the planet in ash and obscuring most of the sun's light. Already, most of Cheyenne Mountain's main entrance has been buried under ash, though, so far, the NEMA engineers say they can handle it when they are ready to dig their way out.
- Several "freak storms" were observed, some looking like massive hurricanes, others as continent-spanning blizzards.
- The President of the United States is dead. He was killed in a collapse on Sublevel One which was caused by the earthquakes that were triggered by the Yellowstone super-volcano eruption. The Prime Minister of Canada and the President of Mexico (both partners with NEMA) never made it. Reports from Mexico City are that it was leveled in a massive earthquake and is now obscured by a thick cloud of volcanic ash. Scattered reports from Quebec suggest that NEMA command in that area is holding but the massive winter storm has cut off any more reliable communication from Canada.
- Since this morning, there has been no contact with any of the orbital stations or satellites. Their last report indicated that massive solar flare activity had resulted in major malfunctions, including the A.R.C.H.I.E. Four super computer. Widespread panic was growing.
- The few functioning video links with Sublevel Seven indicate that the monsters are no longer attempting to storm the blast doors, which appear to be holding, but are scouring the complex, killing off any NEMA or civilian personnel who did not escape.
- Although Dr. Howe's team of scientists managed to escape the DVG Observation Control Room, neither Captain Harman's nor Major Lecombe's teams managed to make it off Sublevel Seven.

General Hammerick still feels confident that if they can manage to contain the enemy within N.O.R.A.D. that they can use the resources of NEMA to coordinate recovery operations out of Cheyenne Mountain. The last reliable satellite images indicated that there were few concentrations of the lines of alien blue energy in Colorado. If these are truly the source of the demon invasions, then N.O.R.A.D. would be the most logical place for a central command to launch rescue operations for the rest of the country.

However, before any attempt to consolidate power and organize rescue operations can occur, the dimensional rupture within the heart of Sublevel Seven must be repaired. Fortunately, Dr. Karen Howe and several members of her team of scientists managed to escape the DVG Observation Chamber before Captain Harman's platoon was overwhelmed. Based on the readings she managed to obtain before being overrun, she is convinced that if she and her team can return to the DVG Control Room that they can reverse the effects of the rupture, not only sealing it but also returning all of the monsters that came through it to whatever hellish dimension they came from. If asked how she can do this, she will begin talking very quickly about "quantum layers" and "sub-particle wave fluctuations" and "temporal flux variances," none of which will make any sense to General Hammerick, his troops or any of the characters. Even the remaining four members of her team seem to be completely confused at this point.

Trusting Dr. Howe's expertise, the General orders the players to act as her team's escort back into the DVG Observation Chamber. They will follow a squad of NEMA armor into Sublevel Seven. The robots and power armor will act as a diversion while the characters and their squad take a less direct route through a series of labs to approach the Observation Chamber from a secondary access tunnel. Characters with damaged gear will be issued new armor and reloads for their weapons. Although power armor cannot be repaired, any spent ammunition will be reloaded for this mission (at the Game Master's discretion, power armor that has been too badly damaged to survive another mission through Sublevel Seven may be replaced).

While the passage should be big enough to accommodate power armor, none of the larger robots will be able to navigate the access tunnels, meaning Armored Sentinel characters will not be able to use their massive robots for this part of the mission and will need to be issued a suit of power armor (probably Gunbuster). **Game Master's Note:** If a robot pilot wishes to be part of the armored diversion instead of remaining with the team, that is left up to the Game Master, though the diversion team will be a valiant yet ultimately suicidal part of the mission from which it is likely no one will survive.

The insertion into Sublevel Seven will go off smoothly. A dozen or so demons lurking around the blast doors are easily killed by the Chromium Guardsmen and Mastiff robot units that spearhead the diversion. As the robots and power armor advance, Dr. Howe leads the players off down a sealed side passage to the right. This access tunnel leads to the lab complex through a series of maintenance shafts. With the distant thud of Boom Gun and rocket fire echoing from other parts of the complex, they will emerge only a short distance from the DVG Chamber. The following rooms will need to be crossed in order to reach the DVG Observation Control Room: The Genetics Lab, the Advanced Weapon Development Center, and the Infirmary.

A. Though only in moderate use by the time of the Great Cataclysm, with most of the genetics research now taking place in the Lone Star Complex in Texas, N.O.R.A.D.'s Genetics Lab is still maintained to do additional research and handle projects for other divisions of the military outside of Lone Star's direct chain of command (after all, the Lone Star facility was part of the U.S. Military command structure and not part of NEMA proper). This lab is divided into four distinct rooms: The Super Computer Hub (which is the room the players will enter), the Specimen Lab, Specimen Quarantine and Examination and the Computer Research Lab (detailed descriptions of each section are provided under the N.O.R.A.D. Complex Map section at the end of the adventure). As the players exit the Computer Hub and enter the Specimen Lab, they will see about a dozen large and small specimen tanks, each with some freakish genetic mutation floating in luminous green fluid. When the players cross the chamber, the seemingly dead specimens will begin to come to life and attempt to claw, bite, and beat their way out of the holding tanks they are in. Although disgusting, these mutations are little more than animated dead, brought to life by the energies of the dimensional rupture. There are twelve total, ranging in size from small animals to giant-sized mutations. (**Game Masters** should use their imagination in describing what these freakishly disturbing mutations look like; unsanctioned genetic experi-

ments conducted prior to the Great Cataclysm dealt with all manner of attempts to blend human and animal DNA, after all.) These animated freaks are slow moving, only possess 50 M.D.C. each, have three attacks per melee and can only inflict a mere 1D6 Mega-Damage with their attacks, though their frightening appearance produces a Horror Factor of 18. The real problem is that the tanks they are in only have around 20 M.D.C. each and it will not take these monstrosities more than a melee round or two to escape. Furthermore, while the players are fairly well protected, Dr. Howe and her team are not, wearing only light M.D.C. vests (30 M.D.C. each) and carrying no weapons. The rest of the Genetics Lab is free of any more surprises.

B. Down the hall from the Genetics Lab complex is the Advanced Weapon Development Center. Dr. Howe indicates that they need to enter this chamber to access another service tunnel to reach the Infirmary and DVG Complex. This chamber (also described in detail in the Map section) is currently being torn apart by five Gremlins. Though physically not very powerful, Gremlins have a knack for figuring out mechanics and electronics. Three of them are armed with some of the experimental advanced weapons in the room. One is armed with a more powerful plasma rifle (1D4x10 M.D.). Another has an Electro-Net gun that fires electrically-charged energy nets designed to entangle and incapacitate but not kill (inflicts 4D6 S.D.C. plus victims who do not save versus 14+ are stunned for 2D6 minutes, P.E. bonuses apply). While the net will not harm characters in full environmental armor, they will still be entangled for 1D4 melee actions. The third is armed with an experimental weapon that fires an intense low-frequency pulse wave designed to incapacitate the mental abilities of its victim. Targets suffer no physical damage from the weapon, but those who fail a saving throw versus psionics suffer the following penalties: -4 to strike, parry and dodge, reduce attacks by half, and reduce all skills by -20%. Effects last for 2D4 minutes. EBA armor provides no protection from this, though characters in power armor and robot vehicles save at +3. Fortunately, these weapons can only be fired 1D6+2 times each before their charges are expended. The other two Gremlins will fight with psionics and their limited physical abilities. None of these creatures are particularly brave, and they will flee if it is obvious the players will overcome them too easily.

Gremlins Quick Stats: M.D.C.: 45, P.P.E.: 5. Mechanical and Electrical Engineering (50%), impervious to toxins, gases, poisons and electricity, does not breathe air. Four attacks per melee, +2 to dodge, +6 to save versus Horror Factor. Punch: 1D6 M.D., Bite: 1D6 M.D. Possesses W.P. Energy Rifle, Energy Pistol, and Heavy Energy (all +2 to strike). Psionics: Levitation (varies), Electrokinetics (varies), Object Read (6), Telemechanics (10), Telemechanic Mental Operation (12), Telemechanic Paralysis (20). I.S.P.: 50. Short, potbellied demons with hairy limbs, pointed ears, slanted red eyes, and a sneering mouth with jagged teeth. Horror Factor: 10. 2 feet (0.6 m) tall.

The access panel to the tunnel is on the far side of this room.

C. This last tunnel will exit into a hallway down from the Infirmary. As the players approach, they will hear the delicate sounds of metal instruments being placed down (as if a doctor were conducting surgery). As the players approach the open

door, they will see several bodies laid out around the room, some on tables, others on the floor. Some of them were injured personnel who had been evacuated to the Infirmary earlier. Others are clearly recognizable as members of Major Lecomb's command team. All of the bodies appear to have undergone various degrees of vivisection, with major organs exposed, limbs removed with surgical precision, body cavities left open. Several bloody medical instruments litter the room. As before, players who do not possess any of the skills Criminal Science and Forensics, Field Surgery, Medical Doctor, or Paramedic must save versus Horror Factor 16+ or become ill at the sight of these mutilated bodies. Once again, from the adjacent surgical ward, the players will hear the sounds of metal instruments being used followed by a human scream. In the surgery ward, a slender, humanoid looking figure dressed in what looks like blood-stained white robes is busily working over the body of Major Lecomb. Already, his midsection has been surgically opened and portions of the skin on his face and arms have been removed. After Sublevel Seven was evacuated, Major Lecomb's team was cut off by the demons rampaging throughout the complex. Although they held their own at first, when the Slicer Demon appeared, it used its magic to incapacitate the remaining personnel in the Infirmary and began to dissect them.

Slicer Demon

Lesser Chaos Demon. Also known as *The Demon Doctor* and *The Torture Demon*.

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+8, M.E. 2D6+6, M.A. 4D6, P.S. 3D6 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+20, P.E. 2D6+8 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D4, Spd 3D6.

Size: 7 feet (2.1 m) tall; 160 pounds (72 kg).

M.D.C.: P.E. number x2 +3D4x10. (On S.D.C. worlds, the Slicer Demon has an A.R. of 10, 6D6 + P.E. attribute number of Hit Points and 1D4x10+20 S.D.C.)

P.P.E.: P.E. number +2D4x10. **I.S.P.:** M.E. number +6D6.

Horror Factor: 15

Equivalent Level of Experience: 1D4+1

Attacks per Melee: 6

Bonuses (in addition to likely attribute bonuses): +3 on initiative, +1 to strike, +3 to parry, +2 to dodge, +2 to roll with punch, +6 to pull punch, +1 to save versus magic, +2 to save versus psionics, +5 to save versus possession, impervious to Horror Factor.

Damage: Bite: 1D6 M.D., Punch, Power Punch and Kick as per Supernatural P.S. Claws: Punch Damage +3D6 M.D.

Natural Abilities: Bio-regenerates 1D6 M.D.C. per melee, excellent vision, Nightvision 100 feet (30.5 m), See the Invisible, impervious to normal fire and cold. Half damage from magical or Mega-Damage fire and cold. Impervious to pain. Magically knows and can speak all languages at 95%, can read and write at 65%.

Sense Life Force (special): The Slicer Demon possesses the ability to sense the life force of those around it. This acts as a sort of Presence Sense ability that allows the demon to sense when it is not alone, the relative distance of those around it (near or far), the general number (many, few, one or two) and



the general sense of health of those nearby (healthy, sick, dying, in pain, etc.). This makes it extremely difficult to sneak up on the sadistic demon. This power is automatic and constantly in use.

Metamorphosis (special): The Slicer Demon possesses the ability to metamorphose into a member of another race for up to 12 hours. While specific individuals cannot be impersonated, the metamorphosis is otherwise flawless. Furthermore, when taking the form of another race, the demon's supernatural aura is suppressed to some degree, giving it an automatic saving throw versus psionics or magic to resist any attempts to sense its presence (See Aura, Sense Magic, Sense Evil, Presence Sense, etc.).

R.C.C. Skill Equivalents: Detect Ambush (67%), Detect Concealment (70%), Escape Artist (45%), Interrogation Techniques (77%), Field Surgery (56%), Medical Doctor (80%), Xenology (65%), Biology (90%), Wilderness Survival (40%), Land Navigation (34%), Track Humanoids (70%), W.P. Knife (+2 to strike, parry and throw). These skills do not increase with experience but instead represent instinctive skills known to the demon.

Vulnerabilities: 1) Electricity inflicts Mega-Damage to the demon. Mega-Damage and magical lightning inflicts double damage.

2) Mirrors are repugnant to the demon, causing it to recoil in horror at its own image (reacts as if it has failed a Horror

Factor roll). If exposed to a mirror while metamorphosed, it will revert to its true form. This only works on 100% reflective surfaces (such as true mirrors, highly metallic polished surfaces, including a Chromium Guardsman's armor, etc.) and not on surfaces that only cast a partial or distorted reflection.

3) Certain plants with holistic medicinal value will hold the demon at bay.

Magic: Limited to the following spells: Befuddle (6), Cleanse (6), Fear (5), Manipulate Objects (2+), Shatter (5), Armor of Ithan (10), Light Healing (6), Paralysis: Lesser (5), Charismatic Aura (10), Charm (12), Escape (8), Heal Wounds (10), Horror (10), Compulsion (20), Words of Truth (15), Agony (20), Animate/Control Dead (20), Life Drain (25).

Psionics: Considered a Major Psychic with the following abilities: Empathy (4), Sixth Sense (2), Deaden Pain (4), Induce Sleep (4), Psychic Diagnosis (4), Psychic Surgery (14), Alter Aura (2), Deaden Senses (4), Mind Block (4), Telepathy (4), Bio-Manipulation (10).

Appearance: At first glance, even in its natural form, the Slicer Demon might resemble a tall, very thin human, at least if seen from a distance. It appears to be dressed in long white robes or a white coat (not unlike a doctor's coat or lab coat). This is actually its skin, however. Its face looks like a parody of a human's, with a mane of thick, greasy black hair, and pale skin drawn tight over a boney face. The demon's mouth appears to be stretched into an exaggerated grin, showing two rows of long, sharp teeth. Its almond-shaped eyes are completely red with pitch black pupils. Its nose is thin and pointed. The demon's long arms end in pale hands with overly long fingers. These fingers are tipped with four inch, razor-sharp claws that resemble metal blades. It is with these, along with any knives and instruments that it might find, that it tortures its victims to death, feasting off the anguish and P.P.E. of the person as he or she dies. Although it possesses medical knowledge and healing powers, it uses these abilities and skills to torture rather than heal. This demon is sadistic in the extreme but it will not fight to the death and will seek to flee if it feels that it will lose the fight.

Should the players defeat or drive off the Slicer Demon, they might be able to save Major Lecomb (will require immediate stabilization through the use of the skills Medical Doctor or Paramedic and EVAC off Sublevel Seven), though without major magical or psionic healing, he will be scarred for life and most likely be driven insane from the experience. In any case, the access panel that will lead them into the DVG Observation Deck is located through the back of the surgical ward.

D. When the players enter the DVG Control Room through the access panel adjacent to the Infirmary, they will find that the blast doors have already been lowered and most of the computers are dark. One of the monitors that is still operating, however, shows that the crackling ball of blue energy is still suspended above the DVG Chamber. The bodies of what looks like a dozen or more demons litter the chamber, along with the mangled and torn armor of several Gunbuster units, both Silver Eagle SAMAS and what looks like the arm and leg of the Bull Dog robot. Every few minutes (3D4), the ball of energy will flash and 1D4 more demons or monsters will appear in the DVG while another 2D4 will appear in random locations throughout the

complex. As these demons appear, they will either begin to fight with one another (01-20%) or, more likely, exit the chamber through a massive hole in the blast doors that looks like it was torn by claws or bare hands (21-00%). Immediately, Dr. Howe and her team will sit down and begin restoring power to most of the terminals. Dr. Howe will then begin to rapidly bark orders to her team, turning once to order the characters to take up positions near the entrance to the Observation Room in case something comes along. If no one protests, the team will continue to follow her orders. If any of the players object, she will relent and allow two to remain in the room in case something “pops” in while they are working or comes through the access panel they used.

In any case, for several minutes, the only sounds the players will hear are the increasingly complex orders Dr. Howe is issuing, the occasional burst of energy coming from the DVG Chamber and the distant sounds of combat coming from the diversionary armor team elsewhere on Sublevel Seven. At first, any player watching at the door may notice the occasional dark, shadowy form scamper by, but after about five minutes, it will seem that what few lights still illuminate the halls will dramatically dim as a dark, lumbering shadow heads down the hall. Blocking out all of the remaining light, a patch of darkness with a vaguely humanoid shape will turn towards the door. Once the thing attacks, Dr. Howe will order any of the players who remained in the Observation Control Room to help defend the door, explaining that they only need to hold the room for a few more minutes before she is done.

Lumbering Abyss

Lesser Chaos Demon. Also known as *Void Demon* and *Night Devil*.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+2 (low human intelligence), M.E. 2D6+2, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 2D6+20 (Supernatural), P.P. 1D6+14, P.E. 2D6+25 (Supernatural), P.B. 2D6, Spd 2D6+10 running, 1D4x10+30 flying.

Size: 15 feet (4.6 m) tall; 750 pounds (337.5 kg).

M.D.C.: P.E. number x4 +2D4x10. (On S.D.C. worlds, the Lumbering Abyss has an A.R. of 11, 1D4x10 + P.E. attribute number of Hit Points and 2D4x10+40 S.D.C.)

P.P.E.: P.E. number +1D4x10. **I.S.P.:** M.E. number +4D6.

Horror Factor: 16

Equivalent Level of Experience: 1D4+1

Attacks per Melee: 5

Bonuses (in addition to likely attribute bonuses): +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, +3 to grapple (see below), +1 to parry, +2 to dodge, +5 to roll with punch, +4 to pull punch, +2 to save versus magic, +1 to save versus psionics, +6 to save versus possession, +8 to save versus Horror Factor, Impervious to Bio-Manipulation.

Damage: Punch, Power Punch and Kick as per Supernatural P.S.

Natural Abilities: Bio-regenerates 3D6 M.D.C. per melee, poor day vision, Nightvision 2000 feet (610 m), can see in total darkness. Sees in all spectrums of energy and light (infrared, ultraviolet, radio waves, radiation), See the Invisible, imper-

vicious to fire and cold (normal, Mega-Damage and magical, including plasma and nuclear), impervious to gases, poison, drugs, disease and toxins. Half damage from Mega-Damage kinetic impacts (such as explosions, bullets, rail gun fire, punches and kicks). Magically knows and can speak all languages at 75%, cannot read or write.

Creature of Vacuum (special): Being essentially a humanoid-shaped void, the demon is a creature of nothingness. This means that it is a vacuum contained in a vaguely humanoid shape by magical energies. As a result, any attack that inflicts 20 M.D.C. or more will cause a temporary disruption in the magical energies containing the demon’s essence. What this means in game terms is that explosions that damage the creature will not inflict blast-radius damage as the force is sucked into the vacuum of the creature. Also, any object that penetrates the creature (inflicting the necessary 20 M.D.C. damage) will be sucked into the demon’s body. To prevent handheld weapons from being sucked into the nothingness, the person striking the demon must possess a P.S. of 28 or more (25 for Augmented P.S. or 20 for Robotic or Supernatural P.S.). Objects sucked into the demon’s void body will be lost unless the demon is slain. If the damage is inflicted by a single punch or kick, the attacker will lose one melee action during which he or she struggles to pull the limb out of the sucking hole in the demon’s body.

Engulf Victims (special): Perhaps the most horrible attack this creature can make is to grapple with a victim and then engulf him into its vacuum body. To do this, the demon must



first successfully grapple with its intended victim and pin/incapacitate him (requires one melee action). Then with the next action, it draws him into its body through the magical barrier containing its void essence. The victim will then be seen floating helplessly in what looks like space. People in environmental armor or power armor will be fine, at least until their air supply runs out. However, non-protected victims will suffer the effects of explosive decompression and die in a matter of minutes (unconscious in two minutes, dead in six, not to mention that it is a very painful way to die). This attack can only work against victims less than 10 feet (3.05 m) in height. As many as three people can be consumed in this manner per day. From the point of view of the victims, they are now floating in deep space with no apparent way home. Victims trapped in the demon's void body can only escape if they possess dimensional-spanning magic (such as a Shifter) or if the demon is slain (see below). Negate Magic and Dispel Magic Barriers will also be effective at liberating someone trapped in the void body.

Expel Radiation (special): One of the powers of the Lumbering Abyss is to expel energy beams of intense radiation from where its hands or eyes would be. The damage is 4D6 M.D. +1D6 M.D. for every two levels of experience. Therefore, at third level the demon would inflict 5D6 M.D. from its radiation blasts and at 5th level it would inflict 6D6 M.D. Other than the immediate damage, the radiation should not affect anyone in environmental armor or vehicles (including power armor and robots) that are shielded against radiation. An unshielded victim will need to roll to save versus radiation poisoning (14+ with P.E. bonuses) or suffer radiation sickness (as described in *Heroes Unlimited™ 2nd Edition*, page 268). The range is 1000 feet (305 m) and it can be fired as often as twice per melee. The Lumbering Abyss demon is +3 to strike with this energy attack.

Explosive Decompression Death (special): If the demon's M.D.C. is reduced to 0, the magical energies containing the vacuum are dispersed. This means that for one melee round following the demon's death, everything within 3 feet (0.9 m) of the demon will suffer from the effects of being in a vacuum. Furthermore, anything within 10 feet (3.05 m) will be sucked towards the vacuum. Victims must be anchored to some surface to prevent this. Anyone with a P.S. of less than 30 will not be able to hold on for more than 1D4 melee actions before being sucked in. Fortunately, after the melee round, the vacuum vanishes with a "pop" and everyone and everything that had been sucked into the demon's body in the last 48 hours (including weapons and spent ammunition) will reappear. This means that there is also a chance that other items as well as bodies will also reappear (Game Master's discretion).

R.C.C. Skill Equivalents: Detect Ambush (40%), Wilderness Survival (70%), Land Navigation (90%), Astronomy and Navigation (98%). These skills do not increase with experience but instead represent instinctive skills known to the demon.

Vulnerabilities: 1) Intense light is physically painful to the demon, inflicting 1D6x10 M.D.C. per melee round exposed to it. This includes sunlight and large spotlights. Very bright lights (such as the spotlights on robots and vehicles) inflict

6D6 M.D. per melee round of exposure and a well lit room will inflict 3D6 M.D. per melee round. Any less intensity will not harm the demon. Lasers inflict double damage to the demon. The 1st level spell Blinding Flash inflicts 6D6 M.D. and the penalties and duration are double (the demon automatically fails its saving throw against this spell). Globe of Daylight (being pure sunlight) not only damages the creature (1D4x10 per melee round) but also drives it away as if it had failed a saving throw.

2) Any bird associated with the sunrise (including a rooster) inflicts M.D. with its attacks. Furthermore, the demon inflicts only S.D.C. damage against them and these birds are immune to its radiation bursts.

Magic: None.

Psionics: Considered a Minor Psychic with the following abilities: Empathy (4), Sixth Sense (2), and Mind Block (4).

Appearance: This demon, as described above, looks like deep space contained in a vaguely humanoid shape. The demon has no apparent features, though it clearly possesses the ability to see in a wide spectrum of energies. This bizarre demon feeds on the P.P.E. of its victims, though to do so, it must engulf them into its vacuum body (as described above).

At some point (this can be as the fight with the Lumbering Abyss is wrapping up or even in the middle of it), one of the scientists will shout "What the hell are you doing? No!!!" This will be followed by a tremendous surge of blue-white light coming from down the hall in the direction of the DVG Chamber. A concussion blast will rock the complex, knocking everyone and everything (including any demons) off of their feet. If the Abyss Demon is still alive, it will rise, glance in the direction of the disturbance, and vanish (actually teleports away). One of the scientists will then come charging down the stairs, explaining that something went wrong and instead of closing the rupture, their efforts have only made it bigger. Any character still watching the hallway will begin to notice multiple flashes (1D4 every melee round) that deposit additional monsters and demons within the complex. In a matter of minutes, the entirety of Sublevel Seven will be overrun with demons. He tells them that their only chance is to get to the giant blast doors at the entrance ramp to the Sublevel and seal them forever. Before the players can ask anything, a pair of long, bloody tentacles will reach down the ramp from the Control Room and snatch the man up from behind. With a final scream, the scientist will shout for them to "get the hell out of here and shut the damn door!"

If any of the players attempt to pursue the tentacles back into the Observation Room, they will be too late to do anything. The room is empty except for smashed computer terminals and bloody, ripped clothing. The body of one of the five scientists is lying, slumped in a corner near the open access panel that leads back into the Infirmary. Clearly dead, with a look of horror on his face, his neck has been torn open, though there seems to be little blood around the deep, ragged gash. There is no sign of Dr. Howe and the other three members of her team, including the one who ran down the stairs to warn the players. If the players attempt to pursue whatever did this through the access panel, they will only see the occasional trail of blood, but will lose sight of it when it becomes mixed with all of the blood from the horror in the Infirmary.

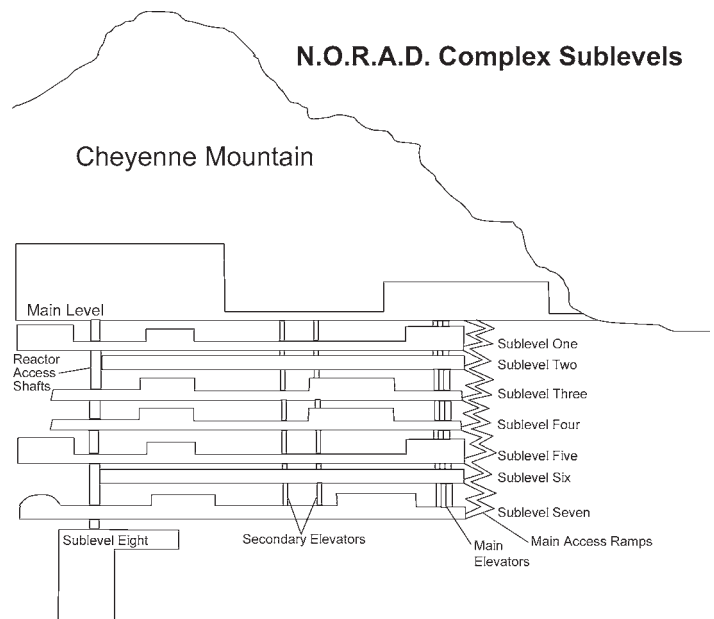
One of the Control Room's monitors is still undamaged and active. It shows that within the DVG Chamber, the dimensional rupture is now three times its original size (30 feet/9.1 m in diameter now) and constantly pulsing with flashes that disgorge even more demons into the room.

At this point, the remainder of the adventure is a desperate run for the exit, with the characters fighting off demons that keep appearing at every turn. Radio chatter from the armored diversion team will indicate that they are on the verge of being overrun by this new wave of demons. Any attempts to contact them or General Hammerick will fail as no one is listening in the confusion. As the players arrive at the ramp up to Sublevel Six, there is no sign of anyone else at the blast doors (almost all of the remaining robots and power armor units were sent in when the armored team reported a renewed surge in enemy resistance – the rest of the personnel were evacuated to the upper levels of N.O.R.A.D. in case something went wrong).

The adventure should culminate in a life and death struggle at the blast doors as one or more team members attempts to close them (the controls may have been damaged in a previous firefight or shorted out by the power surge from the dimensional rupture) while the rest of the team valiantly tries to hold the demon hordes off. The Game Master may want one of the players to realize that even if they do manage to close the doors, the only way to prevent anything from coming through the blast doors will be to collapse the complex ceiling on top of the doors. A mini-missile barrage or full melee rail gun burst should do the trick. However, such an act would certainly spell doom for whoever is still trapped inside Sublevel Seven (including any surviving members of the diversion unit as well as anyone on Dr. Howe's team who may manage to escape whatever has them).

December 26th: The Uncertain Future and the Road Ahead

If any of the players survive, when they reach the Main Level, they will find a few dozen NEMA and Air Force soldiers (mainly foot soldiers along with a platoon of ten Silver Eagle SAMAS, five Chromium Guardsmen, two Silent Soldiers, three Griffin SAMAS, seven Bull Dogs, two Mastiffs and one Big Dog Super Mastiff) along with several hover vehicles and about fifty surviving civilian personnel, mainly scientists and engineers. A wing of twelve Sky Hawk Rocket Bikes have also been salvaged from the collapsed hangar on the Main Level of N.O.R.A.D. General Hammerick, however, is not with these survivors. Word is that he led the last charge himself into Sublevel Seven. The survivors will now look to the characters to lead them. Scattered radio chatter suggests that a contingent of NEMA units is heading from somewhere east, possibly Atlanta, towards the Midwest (General Sawyer's units). Perhaps they can head east and meet up with them. With N.O.R.A.D. lost and both the General and President dead, there is little left to do now but to find someplace to set up base and try to save lives. That is, after all, what NEMA and the U.S.A.F. do best.



N.O.R.A.D. Sublevel Seven Complex Map

Game Master Note: Players should have access to this map (though not the information on the events that take place in each room throughout the course of the adventure). As the characters have spent a great deal of time on Sublevel Seven, they should be fairly familiar with the basic layout of the complex. Each entry includes references to the key events described above for each day of the adventure. On December 25th, unless specifically described above, there is a 01-75% chance that 2D4 minor monsters or 1D4 Lesser Demons will be discovered in any given room.

Main Access Hall

1. Ramp to Sublevel Six: In order to move heavy equipment to and from the various sublevels of N.O.R.A.D., a series of wide access ramps were excavated. At each level, a huge blast door (2,500 M.D.C.) can be closed and sealed from either side, though this requires a special access code (at the Game Master's discretion, the players may or may not have access to this code). The ceiling height is 30 feet (9.1 m) and the ramp is 50 feet (15.2 m) wide.

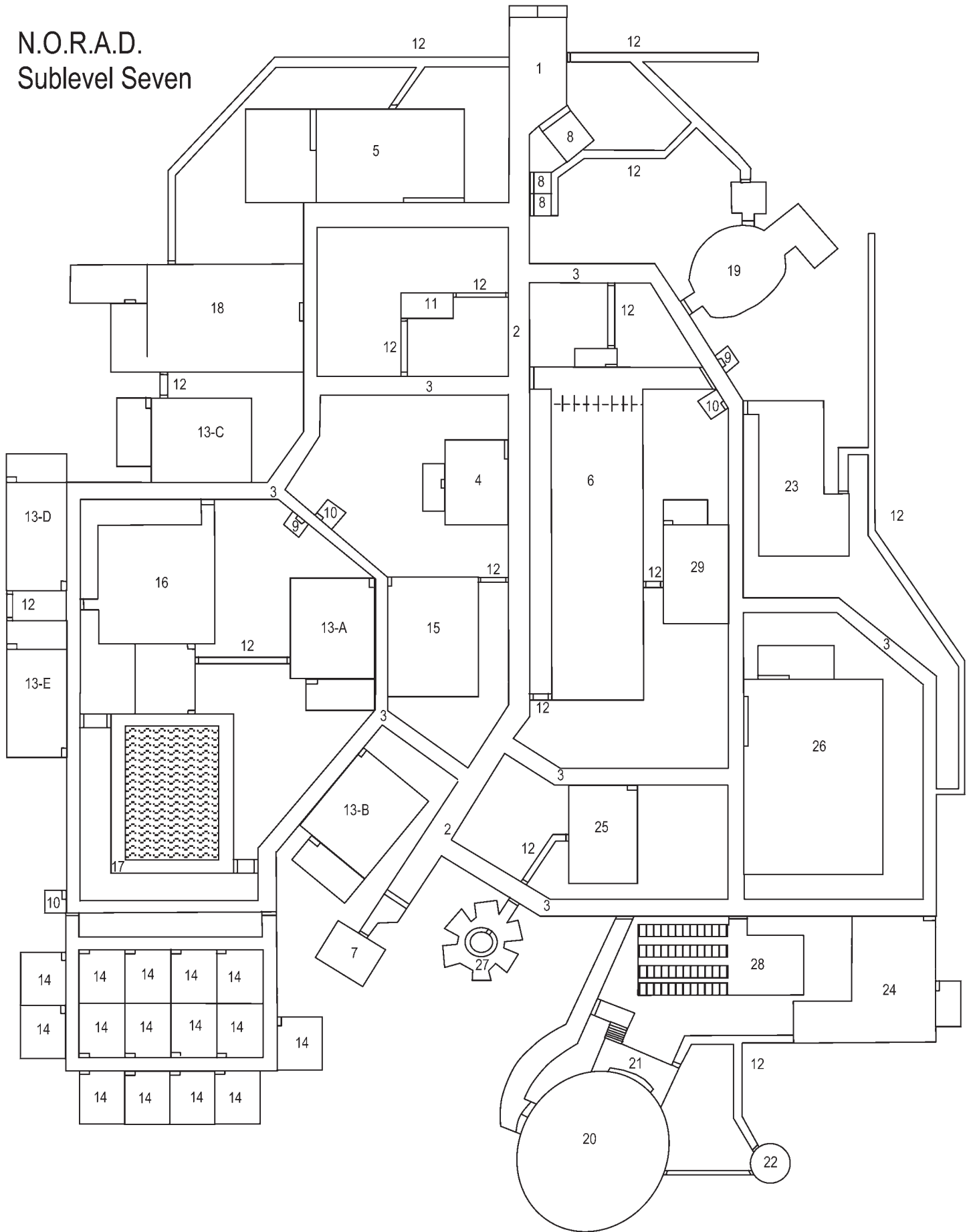
December 22nd: Rubble has blocked this ramp, though crews are working from Sublevel Six to clear it.

December 23rd: The rubble is cleared and two guards are posted at the blast doors. As a precaution, the blast doors are kept closed unless authorized by a ranking officer (Major or above). The players who are called to escort Colonel Atmon will meet him here.

December 24th: As a result of the dimensional rupture, the guard has been increased to a squad of 6 NEMA soldiers (including a heavy weapons team) as well as a pair of Bull Dog robot units and four Combat Drone Soldiers.

December 25th: When the team enters, they will be following the armored diversion team, but will immediately divert to the Service Access Tunnel adjacent to the Ramp. In the finale, the

N.O.R.A.D.
Sublevel Seven



blast doors will be opened, unguarded and damaged (requires successful repair skills be made to fix them and seal Sublevel Seven).

2. Main Access Hall: Running down the center of the complex is a long service hallway designed to accommodate large robot vehicles. The ceiling height is 30 feet (9.1 m) and the hallway is 20 feet (6.1 m) wide.

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables).

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

3. Secondary Halls: Connecting the various smaller labs and rooms to the Main Access Hall is a series of smaller halls. The ceiling height is 15 feet (4.6 m) and the hallways are 10 feet (3 m) wide.

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables); it will be in one of these halls where the encounter with the ghostly figure will take place.

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables).

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

4. Armory: The Armory contains an array of weapons for the NEMA and Air Force personnel to access while on Sublevel Seven. In peace time, no NEMA or Air Force personnel except those on guard duty are authorized to carry side arms or wear protective EBA armor. However, once the events of December 22nd begin, all military personnel are issued standard armor and weapons. The armory is locked at all times, though any officer (Lieutenant and above) has the access code to open the door. At present, the armory contains the following weapons:

14 Vibro-Knives, 6 Vibro-Sabers, 4 Vibro Swords, 2 Vibro-Axes, 8 NEMA Automag Pistols (48 clips), 4 NEMA 5.56 mm Assault Rifles (30 clips), 16 U.S.A.F. P95 Submachine-Guns (80 magazines), 10 NEMA PLP-20 Laser Pistols, 4 NEMA MIP-21 Maxi-Ion Pistols, 10 NEMA LSR-250 Laser Rifles, 5 NEMA LGR-360 Laser Grenade Rifles, 16 U.S.A.F. P101 Heavy Submachine-Guns (80 magazines), 2 NEMA PR-470 Plasma Rifles, 2 NEMA PR-476 Plasma Cannons, 1 NEMA GLR-540 Grenade Rifle, 1 NEMA ML-557 Mini-Missile Rifle, 160 Standard E-Clips, 20 Power Packs, 80 Explosive Grenades (for rifles), 24 Armor Piercing Mini-Missiles, 24 of each type of Hand Grenade (including smoke, stun and tear gas), 2 of each type of Fusion Block, 20 suits of Standard NEMA Body Armor, 12 suits of U.S.A.F. HCBA Heavy Combat Body Armor, 6 suits of U.S.A.F. LPBA Light Pilot Body Armor, and 4 suits of Fire & Rescue Enhanced Body Armor.

Note that all explosives are locked in a separate locker (200 M.D.C.) which requires special authorization (typically possessed by an Air Force officer, a NEMA Military Specialist, or a NEMA Pig-Man Heavy Weapons Soldier).

These weapons are in addition to the side arms issued to the players and other NPCs. The armory also has an access terminal to recharge E-Clips and Power Packs (recharges batches of 10 clips or 2 power packs at a time; takes 15 minutes).

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables); the Secondary Hall outside the Armory is the site of the fire described in the events for December 22nd.

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables).

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

5. Power Armor and Drone Hangar: The Power Armor and Drone Hangar is where the few power armor units assigned to NEMA and U.S.A.F. personnel on Sublevel Seven as well as a dozen modified Combat Drone Soldiers (basic CDS without the weapons systems; used for heavy lifting of machinery and manual labor) are stored. Again, as conflict is not generally anticipated this deep inside Cheyenne Mountain, there are few units stored on this level. These include whatever power armor any of the player characters use as well as a few other basic NEMA and U.S.A.F. units (such as those described at the beginning of this adventure). This can also include a few of the historic U.S. Military power armor units described in other *Rifts* titles, such as the SAMAS units discovered by Bandito Arms described in *World Book 14: New West* or the U.S. Marine Corps "Semper Fi" APA-15 Power Armor described in *World Book 7: Underseas*. Like the armory, this bay can be accessed by authorized personnel only (which includes any NEMA or Air Force officer, Field Mechanic, and pilots, including the player characters). In addition to storage of the power armor units, ammunition is also stored in a separate, locked container along with the necessary heavy equipment for rearming missile launchers and rail guns. This includes several dozen newly developed, flame retardant mini-missiles (each successful missile strike has a 75% chance of extinguishing a 5 foot/1.5 m area of fire). There is also an adjacent maintenance bay where the 'bots and armor units can be repaired.

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables).

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

6. Weapons Test Range: Though seldom used except to test experimental weapons that have already been tested once in the R&D lab, this facility still sees use from the NEMA and U.S.A.F. personnel who feel the need to hone their skills. It comes equipped with protective gear (goggles, ear protection, etc.) as well as an observation room where an officer typically monitors the activity on the range.

December 22nd: This is the site of the hostage incident involving the lone NEMA gunman.

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables).

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

7. Access Shaft to Fusion Reactors: This is the access shaft that descends deeper into the mountain to provide access to the main fusion generators for the entire N.O.R.A.D. mountain facility. The shaft is sealed behind a blast door (1,000 M.D.C.) and is locked with a code key only accessible to the base C.O. and a few high ranking officers. The reactors are buried several hundred feet below the complex and can only be directly accessed through these shafts. Unfortunately, while power con-

duits to the various levels have managed to remain mainly intact despite the earthquakes, the access lifts are damaged beyond repair at this time. Even the ladders are twisted and mangled, making their use to travel off of Sublevel Seven tricky at best. Likewise, the shafts are cluttered with debris, making vertical flight via SAMAS or Silent Soldier power armor impossible.

8. Main Elevators to Upper Levels: The main elevators on and off of Sublevel Seven (as well as the other levels) were damaged beyond repair in the initial earthquake. Furthermore, rubble from the quakes has filled the entire shaft from Sublevel Four down. This makes the Vehicle Access Ramp (#1) the only safe access to and from any of the Sublevels.

9. Secondary Elevators to Upper Levels: Located in two other locations around the Sublevel, these smaller elevators were also knocked offline with the first series of earthquakes.

10. Stairs to Upper Levels: Three sets of emergency stairs are strategically located around Sublevel Seven, two in the Barracks Complex and one in the Research Lab Complex. Though relatively clear after the first series of quakes, with the eruption of the Yellowstone Super-Volcano and the subsequent record-breaking earthquakes, these stairs become choked with debris and are nearly impossible to navigate.

11. Main Ventilation Access Shaft: As N.O.R.A.D. was designed to withstand a nuclear war, each level has its own independent ventilation and air circulation system. Fortunately, despite the damage to most levels as a result of the quake, the air shafts are still mostly clear, though air quality will deteriorate through the four days of the adventure. While the shafts do reach all rooms throughout Sublevel Seven, the shafts are narrow, only 3 feet (0.9 m) wide and 1.5 feet (0.45 m) high. This will make them nearly impossible for anyone to crawl through, especially in armor and with gear and weapons.

12. Service Access Tunnels: Throughout the complex, these access tunnels are used to access conduit and power lines between the various facilities on Sublevel Seven. Being fairly small and sturdy (10 feet/3 m high and 4 feet/1.2 m wide), they survived the quakes mostly intact; with little damage other than shorting out wires. They are unlit, however, and can only be accessed by authorized personnel. The entrances are also usually concealed behind access plates and are otherwise nondescript. These are the tunnels that will be used by the characters to reach the DVG Control Room on December 25th.

Barracks Complex

13. Barracks A-E: Each barrack is designed to accommodate 30 troops in dormitory-style housing. There are 15 bunks, each with a pair of footlockers, two desks and chairs. Bathroom and shower facilities are located in the room on the far end of the barracks. With Sublevel Seven now being used primarily for R&D, only Barracks A and B are in current use at the time of the Great Cataclysm (A is used by NEMA personnel and B by Air Force personnel).

December 22nd: Barracks A, B, D, and E: Random Damage (see tables). Barrack C remains fairly undamaged.

December 23rd: Barracks A, B, D, and E: Random Damage (see tables). Barrack C is the site of the confrontation between the characters and the civilian scientists.

December 24th: Barracks A and D: Random Damage (see tables). Barrack B is where the 14 paralyzed bodies are discovered. Barrack C is where the triage center is set up. Barrack E is where the burned bodies are discovered.

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

14. Officers and Private Quarters: These more private quarters all radiate off of a central hallway. At present, they were primarily used by the few officers stationed on Sublevel Seven as well as the bulk of the civilian scientists and engineers who lived on base. Most contain fairly basic personal effects as well as a TV, DVD player, stereo, and basic computer (limited security access).

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables). Light damage only.

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables). Light damage only.

December 24th: This is where the prototype combat drone (taken over by the Tectonic Entity) will be encountered.

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

15. Recreation Hall: The recreation hall is for off duty personnel to have a place to unwind. It contains several terminals for playing video games. Four large TVs with DVD players, a dozen computers with basic Internet connections (all low security; useless once the Great Cataclysm occurs and disrupts global communications), several ping-pong tables, a cabinet with several board games and a dozen tables and chairs of varying sizes. Four vending machines line one wall of this large hall.

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables).

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

16. Gym: Located near the recreation hall, the gym is your basic facility with a basketball court, a weight room, a storage locker filled with gear (basketballs, ropes, etc.) and a locker room with showers.

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables).

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

17. Natatorium: Adjacent to the gym is a room with an Olympic-sized swimming pool. Both the natatorium and gym share a common locker room and shower facility.

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables). Light damage only.

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables). Light damage only.

December 24th: This is the site of the encounter with the Cephalo-Arachon Greater Demon.

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

18. Mess Hall: A fairly large mess hall with adjacent kitchen was originally designed to accommodate a large troop load, though it seldom sees those kinds of numbers these days. Dozens of long tables and chairs line the room. There are also vending machines along one wall and several TV monitors hanging from the ceiling.

December 22nd: This is the site of the gas leak and cave in.

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables).

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

Research Labs

19. Genetics Lab Complex: The Genetics Lab Complex is divided into three distinct sections: The Super Computer Hub, the Specimen Lab, Specimen Quarantine and Examination and the Computer Research Lab. The Super Computer Hub is basically a ventilated room containing six massive super computers (semi-artificial intelligence, furnished by Cyberworks) that do the massive amount of calculations required in coding gene sequences and genetic manipulation. There are no access terminals in this room. Super computer access is gained through the Computer Research Lab. The Specimen Quarantine and Examination Room looks like your typical sci-fi genetics lab complete with large and small specimen containers filled with fluid and some genetic experiment floating inside. There are twelve specimen containers, each with a computer and lab table adjacent to it, as well as six dissection and examination tables spaced between them. Medical equipment is stored in a variety of locked cabinets and drawers lining the walls. The Computer Research Lab is where the bulk of the genetics work is done. This is where the scientists map out DNA sequences and run computer models in which they incorporate changes and mutations in order to predict the outcome of the specimen before they actually attempt to grow a genetically modified life form in the Specimen Lab.

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables). Light damage only.

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables). Light damage only.

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables). Light damage only.

December 25th: This is the room where the characters encounter the animated genetic mutations.

20. Dimensional Vortex Generator (DVG) Main Chamber: The DVG Chamber is a massive circular room, 80 feet (24.4 m) in diameter and with a 60 foot (18.3 m) ceiling. Four massive mechanical arms are suspended from the ceiling, each ending in some strange-looking transmitter-like device. There is only one access to the room, a set of blast doors (800 M.D.C.) as well as an armored view port 20 feet (6.1 m) above the chamber floor (150 M.D.C.).

December 22nd: Undamaged.

December 23rd: This is the site of the dimensional rupture.

December 24th: This is where Captain Harman's containment team attempts to kill anything else that comes through the rupture.

December 25th: The Necrophim's actions (see *Unresolved Issues*, below) widen the rupture considerably, allowing hordes of demons to enter the complex through this chamber. The demon's actions also fuse the four dimensional generators to the rupture, effectively making it a permanent dimensional tear that will still remain nearly 300 years in the future (though far less active once the ley lines settle down during the Dark Age that follows the Great Cataclysm).

21. DVG Observation and Control Room: Overlooking the DVG Chamber, the Observation and Control Room is lined with banks of computers and terminals for monitoring the DVG test Main Chamber. A concealed access tunnel leads directly to the Infirmary on one end and a set of stairs leads down to the hallway entrance on the other.

December 22nd: This is the site where the players overhear the first hints of the coming dimensional rupture.

December 23rd: The players who are assigned to escort Colonel Atmon will remain in the lower landing at the hallway entrance and overhear part of the conversation (this is prior to the Soul Snake bonding with Dr. Howe).

December 24th: By now, the Soul Snake has bonded with Dr. Howe and she is undergoing the transformation into a Necrophim. Meanwhile, her team continues to try to find ways to close the dimensional rupture.

December 25th: The players escort Dr. Howe's team back to this room and fight off the Lumbering Abyss while Dr. Howe's team attempts to close the rupture. When the Necrophim is revealed, it will kill one of the scientists, snare the other three and escape through the access tunnel.

22. DVG Micro-Fusion Reactor Unit: Adjacent to the DVG Chamber (accessed through one of the small tunnels) is a trio of synced together micro-fusion reactors dedicated to providing power to not only the DVG Chamber but the entire lab complex on Sublevel Seven. Ordinarily, their power supply would have exhausted itself after several years, but following the events of the Great Cataclysm in which the DVG generators were fused to the dimensional rupture, effectively providing it with limitless power, these reactors will remain on standby for nearly 300 years.

23. Advanced Weapons Development: This lab complex includes several computer stations hooked up to weapon test chambers (small, self contained transparent pods in which the weapons can be safely tested). Several experimental weapons still under development (like those described in the encounter above) are lying around. Exactly what any of these other weapons does is up to the Game Master, though to make things easy, other than the ones described above, they could all be unfinished and incapable of being used.

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables). Light damage only.

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables). Light damage only.

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables). Light damage only.

December 25th: This is the room where the characters encounter the Gremlins.

24. Infirmary: Adjacent to the DVG Complex, the Infirmary is divided into three distinct areas: The Main Ward (with examination tables, hospital beds, medical instruments, etc.), the Surgery Ward (with four surgery tables, diagnostic equipment and surgical equipment) and the Chief Medical Officer's office (just your basic office with a computer, bookshelves, file cabinets, etc.). Pretty much any of the items from the list of medical equipment on pages 184 to 186 of the *Rifts Game Master Guide* can be found in the Infirmary.

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables). Undamaged.

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables). Undamaged.

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables). The infirmary is where Major Lecomb sets up his command center once the dimensional rupture forms.

December 25th: This is where the characters encounter the Slicer Demon and the dissected remains of Major Lecomb's command team.

25. Deep Space Tracking Center: N.O.R.A.D. housed a facility for tracking objects in near orbit as well as deep space. While the near-orbit and air-space tracking station was located on a different level, the deep space tracking center was located in Sublevel Seven. This room consists of several banks of computer terminals and monitors. Until the morning of December 25th, these monitors will still show intermittent data from satellites that are still connected to N.O.R.A.D. Players with the necessary skills (Computer Operation and Astronomy) will be able to use them to observe events unfolding in the Solar System as well as further in deep space (for hints as to what is going on out there, see the *Mutants in Orbit*TM sourcebook). Characters making successful Computer Hacking, Computer Programming and Radio: Satellite (if allowed) skill rolls might be able to re-tool these deep space satellites to observe and even communicate with the near-Earth orbit space stations.

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables).

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

26. Robot and Power Armor Development and Testing: This large facility, consisting of a computer modeling lab, materials manufacturing center and assembly bay, is where new variants of NEMA power armor and robots were being developed and tested. At present, the only models currently under development include:

- An Advanced Combat Drone Soldier (later possessed by the Tectonic Entity).
- A variant of the Chromium Guardsman with two secondary weapon systems built into the left forearm for close-range combat: A laser weapon (4D6 M.D., 2,000 foot/610 m range, +1 to strike, unlimited payload) and a retractable Vibro-Saber (3D6 M.D.).
- A partially constructed robot frame (restricted computer files indicate that it is a backwards engineered attempt to manufacture a Triax robot; Game Master's choice as to which model Triax robot from *Rifts*[®] *World Book 5: Triax & the NGR*TM).

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables).

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

27. Artificial Intelligence Research Center: A series of six computer labs surrounding a core-chamber that houses a Cyberworks artificial intelligence computer system. Although the A.R.C.H.I.E. Two super computer used by N.O.R.A.D. to run its intelligence gathering systems is housed in an upper level, this is a variant of the Artificial, Robot, Cerebellum,

Housing, Intelligent Experiment (A.R.C.H.I.E.) model of super computer being tested at N.O.R.A.D. as part of Cyberworks' contract with the U.S. Military. This A.R.C.H.I.E. 2.5 was originally a prototype of what would later be developed at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland. Though Cyberworks has since then already developed the A.R.C.H.I.E. Three computer and installed it at the secret NEMA HQ-ECC compound in the Allegheny Mountains in Maryland, the 2.5 prototype is still being experimented on at Cheyenne Mountain to help work out some of the bugs in the newer model.

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables).

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

28. Cryogenics: This lab houses the experimental cryogenics units being tested by the U.S. Military and NEMA for the long-term preservation of living material, including humans. Though successfully tested (already, a full set of 30,000 cryogenic units is in use at NEMA's secret base in the Allegheny Mountains in Maryland), the R&D folks at N.O.R.A.D. are still running tests and experiments on the units on Sublevel Seven.

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables).

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables).

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

29. Cafeteria: This smaller mess hall was built to service the scientists and engineers working in the R&D section.

December 22nd: Random Damage (see tables). Light damage only.

December 23rd: Random Damage (see tables). This is the site where one of the scientists will attempt to kill himself as a result of ghostly "hallucinations."

December 24th: Random Damage (see tables).

December 25th: Random Damage (see tables).

Unresolved Issues

The characters will never know what befell Dr. Howe and her team, as well as exactly what happened to open the rupture rather than close it. In truth, N.O.R.A.D.'s fate was determined shortly after the initial dimensional rupture, when a Greater Demon entered the complex in one of the first dimensional flares. A powerful creature that would one day in the distant future be recognized as a Soul Snake entered Sublevel Seven and made contact with Dr. Howe in one of the few brief moments when she was by herself (working in the access tunnel to restore a shorted power conduit). The Soul Snake, recognizing the power hungry, ambitious Karen Howe as a person it could corrupt, contacted her and convinced her that only through bonding with it could she escape the doom that would ultimately encompass the base. Already, the good doctor recognized that the rupture would only grow larger as time passed and that there was no hope in shutting it. Realizing that this was most likely her only way to survive, she agreed and bonded with the vile creature. Over the next 48 hours, the creature changed Dr. Howe into a powerful demonic being known as a Necrophim. Normally, such a demon would not have been able

to conceal itself for so long, but with the increased magical forces permeating the planet at the dawn of the Great Cataclysm, the demon was able to maintain its human guise far longer than the normal 12 hours. Once the two had merged, Dr. Howe concocted a plan to spread death and destruction to all of the unworthy humans still struggling to fight back the inevitable (she always saw the military and even her own team of scientists as lesser individuals, beneath her obviously superior intellect). Instead of closing the rupture, she used her instruments to tear it open even wider, flooding the base with a horde of demons and dooming N.O.R.A.D. to destruction. Ultimately, it is only the last valiant efforts of the players to seal off Sublevel Seven forever that prevents the demon from escaping to spread death and destruction on an even wider scale (once bonded with a human, the Soul Snake is incapable of using any of its teleport or dimension-spanning powers). Although the complex is lost, the players do manage to prevent any of the demons from escaping into the outside world. And while the demon horde ultimately slays and feeds upon the remaining NEMA and Air Force teams trapped with them, there is no immediate escape from Sublevel Seven. Those demons that possess the power to either teleport or dimensionally teleport ultimately escape, leaving those that cannot (such as the Necrophim) to fight amongst themselves until only a handful are left. The characters will never know that while N.O.R.A.D. was lost to betrayal from within, they were able to prevent the architect of its demise from escaping, leaving it trapped within for nearly 300 years... until an unlikely series of events once more unearths the lost Sublevel Seven and unleashes the Necrophim. (For more information on the Necrophim and Soul Snake, see *Rifts® World Book 12: Psyscape™*, page 104.)

Beyond the Supernatural™ Note

As this adventure is designed to run like a sci-fi horror movie, many of the new demons and monsters introduced in this scenario would be highly appropriate in the BTS-2 setting.

- **Penta-Demon:** Demonic Predator, Lesser Demon. Threat Level: x4. Discorporation: When the Penta-Demon is slain, its body will dissolve into a mass of bubbling green foam that evaporates away in 1D4 minutes.
- **Dino-Spider:** Demonic Predator, Minor Demon. Threat Level: x4. Discorporation: When the Dino-Spider is slain, its body will become brittle, like a dried exoskeleton of an insect. Even the slightest touch will then cause it to crumble to dust. Analysis of the dust will reveal that it is identical to the chitin of a common species of spider.
- **Slicer Demon:** Demonic Predator, Lesser Demon. Threat Level: x4. Discorporation: When the Slicer Demon is slain, its body collapses in a pool of blood that evaporates in a matter of minutes.
- **Lumbering Abyss:** Demonic Predator, Lesser Demon. Threat Level: x4. Discorporation: Identical to what is already described earlier under the demon's stats.
- **Cephalo-Arachon:** Demonic Predator, Greater Demon. Threat Level: x6. Discorporation: When the Cephalo-Arachon is slain, its body collapses into a pile of 1D4x10 small squid and octopus which proceed to dry up and die in one melee round. Examination of the squid and octopus corpses will reveal nothing out of the ordinary.

The Chain Letter

Optional Source Material for Use with **Heroes Unlimited™**, **Nightbane®**, **Beyond the Supernatural™** and Other Games

By Greg Spivey

Disclaimer: Chain Letters are *illegal* (in any media form, like a pyramid scheme or a Ponzi scheme) and this article should not in any way encourage anyone to send, distribute or forward anything remotely like a chain letter. The material here is for game purposes, and created just for fun.

Tad opened the letter in his work e-mail box; the subject line on his screen seemed to wail out loud to him. "PLLLLLLLLLLEEEAAASSEEE REEEEAADD!"

Not the most professional of e-mails, but it made him curious. Absent-mindedly, he obeyed the typed request; the thought of deleting it just never crossed his mind. Still he couldn't help but think, 'Is this for real?'

As he read it, the bright lights of the office, the ringing of the phone and the chatter of co-workers vanished as the flagrant yet sugary sentiments (as well as poorly syntaxed sentences) spilled out of his computer screen.

The letter said:

"PLEASE! What you are reading here was on the morning news! IT IS FOR REAL!

TO ALL MY FRIENDS, I do not usually forward messages like this one, but it is from a long lost friend of mine Perellious Sunderland and he is a real attorney.

If he says this will work, then it WILL WORK – after all, what have you got to lose? Mr Sunderland said in his letter to me that he was sorry to bother anyone but this was just too good to be true and yet here it is! He knows the law and rest assured he follows through with all promises! His letter was filed with the board of a very prominent company called Delton Technologies, the biggest technological and software company ever! He also assures me that this big class action suit against them is the one filed against Central Corp and Ergonas Dynamics not to long ago. Here is his letter to me...

The message continued in this lower-cased, misspelled and "poorly worded" chain letter, the hand-typed note here (printed exactly as it was sent – word verbatim) says something a little more menacing.

"dear sir or madam, please do not throw away this letter or there will be dire consequences. i am sending this letter out as a gift to all who believe in good fortunes. the last letter i sent has gone around the world and the people that forward it to family and friend have prospered and have found love an riches beyond imagining. i want to share such luck and fortune will all, and all that you need to do is take this very letter, place it in a new envelope and mail it to either a loved one or a friend and they too will share in the power and the fortune. i warn you if you throw this letter away then terrible curses will follow. please heed this as real and bless you all.

No signature followed.

History

We've all gotten them, the annoying, intriguing and time wasting letters promising everything from helping poor people, reading a good joke, getting good luck by doing something, and sexy girl looking for a friend, to getting rich in an amazingly short amount of time.

Chain letters started way back in the 1900s as members of fraternities (among other groups) and secret societies sent official-looking bids for success out to the people that they wanted more attention from (and they sure got it). The purpose of these annoyances is to solicit a phenomenal amount of return (with an impact on many people) with as little, or moderate amount of work put in as possible (with the possibility of more profit or sway in people's thinking in the future).

The good majority of chain letters (though illegal – if they guarantee a huge return on money which is considered mail fraud) are seemingly harmless and don't go as far as the first 10 people who open them (yes, 10 people on average – then these same ten people may send it on to others, and the pyramid commences). These letters typically start from more urban cities and land in mailboxes and e-mails as far away as China and Russia (with people actually re-writing them in their own native language). In some cases, it is difficult to determine if the chain letter is a hoax or the real thing.

The success depends on the type of person most likely to open and send the letter on its merry way again. The human mind does not think in a progressive analysis process, it usually sees the objective outcome of a process with emotion (unless the mind has been trained otherwise). Younger people tend to send chain letters more readily (01-60% chance), yet older people (55 years or older) who are inclined to have their heart strings tugged have a hard time resisting well worded letters (01-75% chance) and send them onward in the mail to their less than appreciative friends (this means that if running a player character that opens and reads one, then make a save vs insanity 12 or 13 or better, including bonuses, to resist sending this letter on, unless there is a more occult method used in persuasion).

Usually, the post office tracks and keeps tabs on such things and of course, with e-mail (post 1996 era, or later in the 21st century) there are "spam guards" and easy electronic measures to filter out such things, unless a trusted person (some friend or family member) sends one DIRECTLY to you. At some point the FCC will get involved if the spam or chain letter asks for money or has directly or indirectly asked for a credit card number or a social security number (if the letter leads to a phone call to your home then this will be considered a case by the FCC). In many likewise situations this doesn't happen with the "classic" chain letter, but in these days this is getting more and more a reality.

The FBI has in some cases followed up on chain-type letters that are considered threatening to a person or a group of people but this activity will branch off into 'hate mail,' 'stalking with intent to harm' or 'hate crimes.' Other cases include when criminals have sent a letter written in the victim's blood (the note will say something like: "You are NEXT!") or the person receiving the mail has some vested interest in something such that



the perpetrator is blackmailing them (“If you don’t do this then I will financially RUIN you forever! And I have the resources to do it! You are my puppet! OBEY ME!”).

Veiled threats are hard to prove in court but the average chain letter usually gets its readers to send by thinly veiled enticement and sheer duplicity.

Game Influences

Chain letters can be interesting plot hooks for players who want a little something out of the ordinary. Working these scenarios into a point within the plot of a game will catch most players off guard. The whole plot concept, from first opening the letter to finally finding the culprit(s), may take from one to several game sessions (depending on how clever your players are).

There are several *types* of Chain Letter:

1. The Innocuous Chain Letter: This is sent with no real harm intended.

The alignments that would send such are Scrupulous, Anarchist and to some extent Unprincipled. They don’t sway the populace that has seen such but there are even entertainment types that send/spread news of an event to millions. To some agents the imbedded code is as valuable as the codes set by the most secretive of societies (similar codes are commonly seen in the Ninjas and Superspies dimension).

2. The Occult Chain Letter: This has a spirit or some form of ghost or psychic imprint. The alignments vary due to the actual intent involved but nine times out of ten the one sending a hostile letter or spam is evil (of course the sender may be repeatedly coerced or just plain stupid).

3. The Cursed Chain Letter: The variety of *cursed* chain letters have started to increase in number within the dimensions that have high P.P.E. (like the Nightbane and Beyond the Supernatural dimensions) with magical influences, as well as the means of getting the word across to the masses (e.g. regular ‘snail’ mail, e-mail, etc.), and of course Rifts Earth will have its own style of cursed letters – usually in the form of telecom or e-info letters and memos. Cursed chain letters have the distinct ability to spread misery and pain wherever they go and they are just as dangerous as any biological or terrorist letter bomb!

4. Others: There doesn’t have to be a curse or any powers included. Sometimes the best letter out there is one with true intentions for good or there may be a blessing attached to that e-mail. Players will be suspicious of such chain mail (of course) but the plot may be just to assist, rather than harm.

“Holding” a plea or a threat?

Can a sheet of writing paper or an e-mail hold mystic properties or a psionic imprint? The answer is yes if the sender has properly prepared the medium. Parchment and various occult compounds, components and mystic symbols will carry a powerful enough spell or even a psychic “push” for more than a dozen or so readers. Each message may carry the imprint but if the duration of the power is long enough, the effect can invariably be carried for years until the last victim reads the message and takes the strange effect head-on! Many spells and rituals (as

well as some psychic preparatory meditative trances) may require special props, media or magic components to cast. The majority of the spells or psychic effects stated here are created (or re-worked magically/mentally) with that in mind.

Chain Letter Magic or Related Psionics

Combining the power of suggestion and the power of either magic or psionics, the chain letter may get an extra oomph.

Magic Spells

Jumble

Range: Touch.

Duration: Permanent.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: Twelve.

Considered a fifth level defensive spell.

Considering the text of any message (even magical) is to convey the sender’s words and have some form of effect, the mage can cast this spell to jumble the meaning and, to some extent, the effect of the message. This can nullify or confuse the words of written letters or even text sent by phones or printed book information, for either the good or the ill of the next reader. Note: This spell can be used offensively to convey vague or confusing dialog in a written text and on a magic scroll unless the scroll is warded or somehow protected from magical effects.

Message Curse

Range: Sight.

Duration: Instant (varies depending on the mode of delivery) and up to 1D6 days +2 per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard (most supernatural beings have a higher save allotted to their R.C.C.).

P.P.E.: Twenty.

Equal to a sixth level offensive spell.

The message can be either physical or electronic in nature. The sender casts this cruel incantation on the message (including the wording of that message during the incantation) and sends it. The reader/recipient must make a save vs magic (bonuses apply) as he reads the message. Depending on how the message reads, the recipient must follow through with the demands of the lines to the letter; if not, the recipient will receive the following penalties: -3 to strike, parry and dodge and -30% to all skills relating to the message (if no skills apply then the G.M. may choose the skills the affected character is most likely to use). The effect is unsettling (Horror Factor of 13 – recipient is disturbed at the letter and until the duration of the magic ends he may go out of his way to find an end to the fear). Note: These effects are not cumulative.



Mutilate the Reader

Range: Touch or sight.

Duration: Instant (again, this varies, depending on the mode of delivery) and up to 1D6+1 days.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Thirty.

Equal to a ninth level offensive spell.

This spell is a terrorist's dream. The reader is assaulted by the reading or touching of the chain letter in question. The reader may feel an ominous premonition of doom (Horror Factor 13 while reading the letter) and then instantly afterwards the effect takes place. The reader takes 1D6 damage to S.D.C. and is unable to heal this damage until the letter is read fully and complied with (or unless the duration ends). The effects will not penetrate power armor or affect robots or magical beings. Note: The spell is easily detected by mages (who can see or detect cursed items, mystic tomes or runic magic) or Diabolists even if it is transmitted via a computer or other conveyance.

Psionic Abilities

Nonsense

Range: Sight (or touch if reading Braille).

Duration: Instant.

I.S.P. Ten.

Considered a Sensitive psionic power.

This interesting mental feat of psychic ability allows the reader to determine if what he has just read is for real or a hoax. Fraudulent reading material can be anything that is willfully inaccurate, libelous or created to deceive the reader's eyes. Common errors like changing of information, poor updating of information and other mistakes are not detectable. Additionally, this ability can bridge over into visual information like holographic texts and even picture phrases.

Psychic Emotion Imprinting

Range: Sight or touch (sight within 6 feet/1.8 meters max depending on the reader's ability to make out what is said).

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: Standard.

I.S.P.: Fifteen.

Considered a Physical psionic power.

The effect of physically *imprinting* emotions of urgency or fear or happiness on a printed page is not a new one. Writers seem to have the knack in a more corporeal way by using their skill proficiency of *Writing*, but psychics can use this power (and the skill if they have it) to their advantage as the reader gains insight or is moved to do something they otherwise would not do. The effect stays with the page till it is destroyed or until the psychic is either killed or chooses to reverse this effect.

Note: If a psychic sensitive uses the power of *Object Read* on the imprinted letter, the effect of this power is doubled in duration and effect.

Bonuses: The writer/sender gains a temporary skill bonus of +30% to any Writing skill, applicable only toward the writing of this letter.

Chain Letters in the Megaverse[®]

Open carefully dear reader, for that innocent looking letter in your hand or message glowing before your eyes on the flat screen will have a direct impact on you and everyone that you know around you! No matter where you are in the Megaverse, the mildly-pervasive chain letters have found their way into just about every corner of time and space.

The disturbing aspect of this is that just about any O.C.C. or R.C.C. can start a chain letter with little or no effort. It takes time and the initiative to run the chain letter and then monitor it or just have someone do it for you. In the following examples, someone (or something) has done this to varying degrees of effect.

Heroes Unlimited[™]

"Yeah dude! That letter said that if I send it out to all my buddies then I'll get super powers too!! And you know what? It WORKED! I used to be just a scrawny little bean pole, but now I have a huge well-defined body and my muscles are massive and I can lift cars and even fly! THIS ROCKS! All those guys that used to pick on me, I kicked their butts! And I get the girls all the time now! You've got to send this letter to a friend!!! NOW THE WHOLE WORLD CAN BE SUPER!"

Game Mechanics: If the sender gets more than 1D6+12 people to send the letter out to friends and loved ones, then the excess power (possibly residual P.P.E. or some sort of mystic domino-effect) will bestow the same effect as an Enchanted Object (see page 149 of *Heroes Unlimited[™] 2nd Ed.* for the powers and the granting of those powers). The only difference is that the effect will only occur when and if the person holding the Enchanted Object/Chain Letter is able to send that letter along to another (duration of the powers would be only 1D6 weeks). This appears to be some experiment or a villain trying out some type of strange super weapon, and either the trick worked and certain

unscrupulous people have taken the bait (and the villain from whom the letter originated is fully aware of it), or the effect is truly random. Roll percentile dice – every person that sends the letter has a 01-23% chance to gain the effect (if they do gain the effect then have the player roll for the super abilities – see page 149 of Heroes Unlimited™ 2nd Ed.).

Beyond the Supernatural™

The screen took a few seconds to load then the “You-Video” in black and white appeared, but soon the screen began to fill with color and the face (though distorted) of a black woman in tribal dress drifted in and out of camera...

The video comment said simply:

“My Dear Friend,

It was nice of you to take the time to open and view this letter. I only wish that you could help me. I am a representative of Africa...”

Her tiny, innocent voice began to rise in both pitch and take on the voice of an adult woman.

“Some time ago, my daughter was killed by militia men in the south, and to this day my heart is in deep grief...”

Her face seems to change slightly as the unsteady camera catches her anger and sorrow slowly, shifting, changing – seemingly getting more youthful yet coldly ominous and hate filled.

“You must send this video message on to a friend, and then they must send this to more people. My words of vengeance will be heard, the world will see the tyranny of my death!”

As she now refers to “herself” in the first person, the face is suddenly that of a skull with seething eyes and flesh dropping from the bones! A terrible feeling sweeps over the viewer(s).

“If this is not done, then my wrath will follow you and all who do not help ME in this suffering! YOU ARE NOW MY DISCIPLE, OBEY ME! SEND MY WORDS OUT TO TWO MORE PEOPLE AND BE SPARED TERRIBLE PAIN! Kata La-baHH Moobarou! Esta BEETAMM!

Suddenly, the picture ceases and the “Replay” option appears. Several replies urge that the viral demonic video you have just viewed is real, and are begging the server’s monitor to get rid of it! They say repeatedly that this chain message has caused them all horrible misfortune.

Game Mechanics: The spirit is an ancient evil (named Kata Moobarou) that has cursed this specific tribe (comprised of murderers and thieving gunmen) which six years ago, murdered her and slaughtered other prominent worshippers in neighboring tribes. Anyone that hears of her death and does not pay some form of homage to her (by either ritual or obedience) will be visited by her spirit and some terrible misfortune will occur (they will lose money, have an auto accident, see a loved one get very sick or perish etc.). The acts will be bloody and grisly, and there are few earthly ways to get rid of her (CSI agents or a thorough postmortem will confirm the person died of either an accident or some terror – but not murder). Determining the real cause of death is going to be up to the more “paranormal investigators.” What makes matters worse is the men who originally killed her are mystically protected by a shaman who sees to the well-being of his criminal organization.

The Spirit’s Stats

Alignment: Miscreant.

Attributes of Note: I.Q. 17, M.E. 23, M.A. 30, Spd 40 (can double this speed if attempting to flee a more powerful opponent).

P.P.E.: 80

Natural Abilities:

1. Pass Compulsion Curse: The video medium is the catalyst for casting the spell (which is similar to the spell *Compulsion*). The caster implants a sudden desire or need in another’s mind. No P.P.E. cost is needed for this ability.

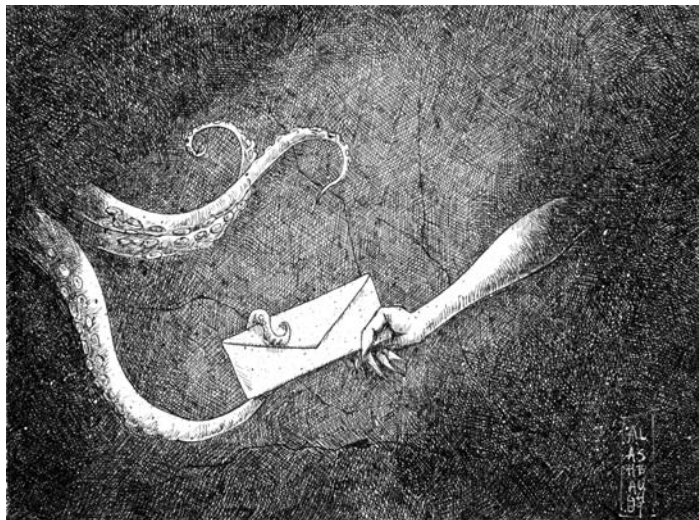
2. Harbinger of Suffering: The ruthless spirit can, in an instant, locate the victim (at 80% skill proficiency) and begin an attack.

Psionic Powers: Has all psionic powers of Physical and Sensitive including Suggestion, Induce Pain, and Super Telekinesis. **I.S.P.:** 120.

Attacks per Melee: Five.

Damage: Can not do physical strikes (relies on its powers and psionics).

Other Bonuses: +3 to all Perception Rolls, +3 to save vs Horror Factor.



Nightbane

“You know, I usually toss any chain letters out, but this one was from a buddy I haven’t seen in so long. What caught me as strange was the postmark on the letter and the way he wanted me to pass this “Special message on to others.” The nerve of that guy! How damn dare he send me this garbage! Who does he think he is?!”

When I tossed the letter in the trash, I get a phone call that my mom is in the hospital. They say she is in critical condition after a bad fall and that I should contact other family members and if possible, ‘get our affairs quickly in order.’ What’s worse is that when I’m packing the car for the drive out there the words of the letter keep haunting me over and over. “Send this letter on and I guarantee your loved ones will be protected by love and fortune.” Before I left for the hospital I was about to place the garbage out (with the letter in the trash) and I get a call on my cell that her condition is worsening. How the heck

can that BE!?!? They tell me the injuries are serious enough and that an infection has set in. I froze thinking that the letter said there was a 'family misfortune' and that the letter's 'grace' helped them out. I hung up on the nurse and dropped the bag. Tearing it open the letter was resting there a bit crumpled but good enough to send and the postman doesn't get here till the afternoon.

With my heart pounding and hands shaking I stick the stamp on the letter and post it to my old friend in college. I dashed out the door to the hospital and tossed it into the mailbox on the corner. Just as I do this my cell phone rings.

As I pull over to the side of the road the voice on the other end says, "Mr. James I have good news. Your mom is responding well to the medication and she is in the ER now. She's in good hands with our best surgeon and he sends his assurances that she'll be fine." I thanked her profusely and suddenly a shiver ran up my spine. As I drive I switch the radio on to settle my nerves, the lottery numbers are read aloud and I happen to look in my glove compartment for the ticket. Each number corresponded to what was read aloud on the radio, which meant that 25 million dollars was mine! Holy geez! I WON! I hysterically laugh out loud and shout, "Who do I have to thank for this?!" Before the music cuts out, the voice on the radio suddenly says, "You have us to thank, Mr. James..."

Game Mechanics: This chain letter will act as if it was an evil Jinn (see *Rifts® Conversion Book* for the evil Jinn – or Green Jinn of the Air) or some such creature because of the suffering and great fortune that the letter grants. Such hate and angst and terrible emotional impact powers the chain letter, but in this case the letter must be sent in its ORIGINAL form (not copied, or scanned and sent by e-mail). Supernatural elements of cruelty (like this chain letter and other equally evil ploys) are used ALL the time by the Nightlords, and some are not as forgiving as the chain letter described above.

Other Dimensions

From here it gets *stranger*, as the world you know is touched in odd ways by such an innocuous (yet powerful) thing as opening a file, reading a scroll or looking into a crystal ball! Gaining a foothold into the minds of millions is just a click or a casting away!

A Chain Letter in Phase World?

"The holographic female seemed lovely, like a model. She didn't appear to have been 'enhanced' by any form of computer holography but who knows these days with Techno-Wizardry and all. She was asking if I would forward her to a friend just to 'keep them company' or have a 'smile sent to them.' What worried me was there was no Terminal code at the beginning of the hologram and other than a few hundred poor saps that had already sent/forwarded and copied her around (and some of these addresses are seedy at best), there seemed to be no beginning. She just kept dancing, smiling and the sound of her voice was so clear and free of that static and hisses. Just like clear bells with her laugh and kind words... You know, maybe my buddy in Center might like her to dance on his holo-terminal. Besides, she says she's a lucky star and there aren't many of them around these days.

Game Mechanics: This seemingly innocent window dressing is a seed computer mole that is capable of extracting information on not only what is said by the user, but what is in the user's physical files and any information he may have around him (like holo-disks and information stored on any number of non-secured media).

The mole would not have the ability to penetrate high level cyber-protection (as seen in Center or most planetary level governments or companies), force fields (magic or otherwise) nor is it able to ask for, or push to get the information, only when the user(s) of the terminal are careless. Some moles even advertise a site that will create a *new* and "more intriguing persona that will entertain you," but the minute the user goes to that site, the engineers of the site (usually off-world) will scan the capabilities of the user and send appropriately created moles and electronic worms to disrupt or tag the user.

The Splugorth and the Kreegor constantly field such contrivances around for the unwary.



Rifts Earth

The Coalition frowns on such trivial use of the message networks (much of the information is expressed in a computerized-sounding facsimile or close to human voice because the majority of the military can't read). They especially dislike messages from "unknown origins," especially when it is broadcast/transmitted in the military frequencies band (or in codes that are used by the higher-ups in the military), but this message (a verbal plea) was particularly interesting:

“Don’t hit that delete application!

“HEY, OUR COMPANY IS LOST!” *Coalition Security Line number L-700119 (Date sent – Unknown). Non-retrievable data on lost company of soldiers during the battle against Tolkeen.*

Message:

“I have information on the party of the “Sage Blazers,” Detachment 211 (originally with the lost battalion of the 29th Regiment, as they have been misplaced but never forgotten in the wilderness after the repugnant magical disruption of the lands in and around that fallen city). Here’s to the death of those worthless scumbags in a city that begged for death to rain down on them!”

The message continues, and at this point the difference between the soldier just deleting or ending the transmission is lost as the plea gains momentum and the listener is intrigued by the ‘urban myth’ of these brave soldiers.

“Our own soldiers by the hundreds were horribly massacred by demons and we can not let any survivors die out there alone. The enemy’s accursed magic has changed many of them like rats in a lab and the Coalition must hear their plight!

“The war has not ended with the monsters that turned them into mutants! The Coalition hierarchy is expecting you to turn a blind eye to their plight and leave them to the wolves in the wilds, just because they were made to ‘seem’ like monsters or D-Bees! These are still your brothers and sisters in arms, they have families, knowledge and information that can turn the tide of this war, yet you will not listen!

“I will show you their picture taken last week, and then you must make your own decision!

A picture flashes on the vid-screen positively identifying twelve perfectly normal, or in some instances, rather handsome or beautiful men and women in their battle armor (helmets off and numbers signifying who they are, and where they belong). Some are known to the majority of the Coalition, soldiers and civilians alike, yet the only difference is their eyes seem to be alight, and they are standing near a couple of Coalition Spider Walkers (a pair of CR-004 Scout Spider-Skull Walkers, around 12 feet/3.6 meters tall). Depending on the possible angle of the camera they are all either standing next to, or in the foreground of the badly damaged vehicles. From the odd angle they seem to be larger than the vehicle (giant-sized Coalition grunts?) and the voice continues.

“Now, hear their voices: (the crackly sound of the sergeant’s voice) “Sergeant Brooks, Technician Smith, Lieutenant (crackle)!

“...last position (crackle) ... 0943 W of the battle area, we were caught in some sort of light and (the sound degrades further for a moment – a female voice sounds off telling of the group finding ‘something that will turn the tide of this war’ and then after identifying her other comrades, she fades).

Finally, the first voice ends it all on this note:

“They are alive and willing to come back to the fight! They will prove they are not dead or magically transformed monsters! Give them that ch-” (message cuts out with a blip).

Suddenly, the transmission is cut as the Coalition silences the message and filters out the rest (or more appropriately they are monitoring and analyzing the footage).

Game Mechanics: Simply put, the G.M. may ultimately decide if this is a hoax or the real thing. Apparently, the Coalition has seen the footage and has tried to keep this quiet, without any luck.

Investigations into the appearances and disappearances of personnel working secret (and unfortunately, now a highly publicized) mission(s) on the behalf of the Coalition must be looked into.

The possibilities are as follows:

1. The soldiers in question are dead (end of story – take their bodies and bury them with honors, for they fought with valor and great bravery according to their verbal logs).

2. The message is a hoax, but the men and women of that unit are alive (amazingly) and unchanged. This will lead to further interrogation and debriefing of these soldiers.

3. The message is a trap for the unwary (sure have been enough of these lately). Use your imagination as to who (or what) is behind them.

4. The message is genuine and the unit has been changed (are they evil, or are they working for the Coalition as they say they are). Role-playing their eventual capture/return is going to be very interesting.

If the unit is truly changed and is now large enough to hold their human-sized counterparts in the palm of their hands, the Coalition is truly in for some powerful allies (G.M. discretion as to how powerful – please don’t make them gods as this tends to be unbalancing).

A cruel twist to this plot would be for the execution of the soldiers as spies for the demons that changed them or death for just being a monstrous mutant.

Define the characters as still dedicated soldiers (with one or two who are possibly ready to defect from the Coalition) who truly are out to help. Oh, and as for the ‘important’ information, there may be a way to duplicate the effect in a small way (given a long time and the proper repairs or correct re-creation of the strange procedures to duplicate this), or there will be a way to capture the alien D-Bees that created the effect.

So far, the effect causes low level psionics and the bodies and equipment to grow (use the rule for giants in Heroes Unlimited™ 2nd Ed. and the permanent effect is only for normal humans, their clothes, personal belongings, hand weapons and regular armor, not power armor, vehicles, psychics, Juicers or Dog Boys). This may lead to more adventures.

Note: This alien technology may be fragile (below 20+2D6 M.D.C.) but it is dangerous nonetheless in the hands of the Coalition. Player characters in the thick of this may get a plea from the aliens to stop the development of this strange system (will take years 2D6+2 years of non-stop reverse engineering before they gain a rudimentary idea of how it works), before the government (the Emperor) continues researching such a technology.

The Culprits (NPCs)

These sneaky and persistent people govern what should be called a world-wide scam. If all of the player characters’ resources, contacts and time, as well as effort, pan out they will eventually find who is responsible for sending or transmitting

the chain letters. If your player characters are evil, these guys described below would never join them because they (the paranoid “senders”) see themselves as loners. Many of them would perceive the alliance as a possible threat and cease contact out of fear for their own personal goals, safety or creative freedom.

Here are a few of the possible suspects. Each has his own goals and reasons for doing this, and it’s up to the G.M. to spice it up if the reasons are a bit more broad or convoluted than described here.

Social Engineering Geek

Bored, and interested in how many people will send the letter back and/or respond in kind, the Geek is a one-way loser who is getting more attention every day, and he loves it. If he continues, he will gain more respect from his ‘peers’ (other geeks and troublemakers) and create more scenarios and more risky mailings.

Race: Human.

Real Name: Stephen Brower III.

Age: 20

Alignment: Scrupulous with slight Anarchist tendencies.

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 8, M.A. 18, P.S. 9, P.P. 8, P.E. 13, P.B. 6 (very homely), Spd 15.

Experience Level 5th. (Considered a City Rat in Rifts Earth but would possibly be a “Genius-level” college student in the Heroes Unlimited World.)

Hit Points: 20. **S.D.C.:** 40. **P.P.E.:** 12.

Occupation: Unemployed computer geek.

Skills of Note: Role Playing Games: 60%, Languages (English and Spanish) 78%, Computer Operation 68%, Computer Hacking 53%, Computer Programming 53%, Seduction 37%, Writing (creative) 53%.

Physical Appearance: Young, 19 to 20 year old male with an unruly mop of brown hair and pale skin (doesn’t go out much), wears ‘casual’ clothing. Has stained teeth from drinking too much soda pop.

Disposition: Too smart for his own good, the Geek doesn’t realize how much trouble he is in and will continue even if warned by adult or authoritarian figures. Thinks he is “all that” with the girls online (some he knows from high school; and others he has met recently while chatting). He will run if the problems he’s started (up to the G.M. to decide how far this guy will go) begin to grow out of control. He can get as nasty as a snake online if anyone ‘flames’ him. In person he is quiet... too quiet.

Height: 5 feet, 4 inches tall (1.6 m). **Weight** 150 lbs (67.5 kg).
Note: He is gaining weight fast!

Natural Abilities: Same natural abilities as a normal human, with no exotic additions or transformations. If anything, he has a unique imagination, and can double-talk his way in and out of situations (equal to a skill level of 60%).

Combat: No formal combat skills or any kind of training.

Attacks per Melee: Two.

Weapons: None!

Currency: Uses little or no cash. (About 1D6x10 dollars, the rest he borrows from friends or mooches off people that he knows won’t ask for the money back.)

Equipment: A very nice computer setup (computer system worth about \$12,000 with all the bells and whistles) in his room (basement closet-sized ‘suite’).



The Letter Spirit

This ‘spirit or ghost’ was bound to a letter as punishment, or may have willingly allowed itself to be bound to a chain letter. Regardless, it has a distinct bond to an earthly letter sent from a man to his lover decades ago, and this unique letter was sent to people as almost a tribute to the life of these lovers. The letters are opened, read and the reactions seem to send the ghost (bound to the letter) some form of energy (it gains 1D6 P.P.E. as the letter is held and read).

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Attributes of Note: I.Q. 20, M.E. 30, M.A. 27. Physical attributes do not apply.

Disposition: Adventurous, sneaky, curious and gleefully voyeuristic. The more it feeds, the more pleasant its mood is.

Magic: None.

Psionics: Has all Sensitive abilities plus *Alter Aura* and *Mind Bolt*. Equal to a 7th level psychic.

Natural Abilities:

Nightvision 3000 feet (914 m), hawk-like color vision, see the infrared and ultraviolet, impervious to energy and physical attacks, can feed on either P.P.E. or I.S.P. similarly to a Possessing Entity (especially on a Ley Line), converts P.P.E. to I.S.P. (four I.S.P. to one P.P.E. point).

Skills of Note: Knows Earth culture fairly well and is learning more and more (equal to a Lore skill of 70%), and the being knows the English, French, Spanish, Latin and Russian languages at 90%. Other than an instinctual knowledge of Navigation and Wilderness Survival (about 70% skill proficiency), the spirit knows very little of the mundane skills that mortals know.

Attacks per Melee: Five.

Damage: Psychic attacks only.

Other Bonuses: +10 to save vs Horror Factor.

Vulnerabilities: Magic will do normal damage, and it is possible to starve it of I.S.P. and P.P.E. *Banishment* spells and *Exorcism* spells work all too well on this spirit.

Allies: None (typically a loner).

Enemies: Necromancers, most humanoids (though it will toy with them if it pleases) and other spirits may attack it on sight.

Alien Chatter

Curious about the human race, this alien carefully creates letters and e-mails and gains contact and knowledge in that fashion. These creatures are fast, tough and dangerous when backed into a corner. They resemble large, humanoid reptiles (definitely alien), but this one has assimilated well enough to where it plays the guitar as well as any human can!

Race: Unknown.

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Attributes: I.Q. 21, M.E. 19, M.A. 30, P.S. 20, P.P. 30, P.E. 20, P.B. 29, Spd 30.

P.P.E.: 90

Disposition: It is quiet, observant and ready to inspire stirring (or strong) emotions in the humans of this world. The race of 'man' is piquing a lot of curiosity in it, and it wishes to 'study' further. If angered it will strike out at those it feels deserve it. This attack can be physical or emotional.

Reason for Visiting Earth: Observation, study of the human ability to make judgments on people they have never met. Additionally, the alien is unable to reach its home-world (the small star craft is damaged and can not return home).

Natural Abilities: Has a Superior Physical Prowess, high intelligence (and temperament) of his race, and an unbelievable proficiency in long-range weapons. Nightvision 90 feet (27.4 m; can see in total darkness).

Size: 6 feet (1.8 m).

Experience Level: 9th level pilot.

Skills of Note: Basic Math (98%), Radio: Basic (98%), Radio: Scramblers (98%), W.P. Sword, W.P. Long Bow, Land Navigation (98%), Lore: Demons & Monsters (98%), Pilot: Starship (89%), Wilderness Survival (80%), Climbing (95%/85%), Prowl (85%), Paramedic (90%), Language: English, Spanish, Chinese and German at 98%, Play Musical Instrument: Guitar 98%, W.P. Energy Rifles.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks per Melee: Seven.

Combat Bonuses: +3 to initiative, +4 to strike, +7 to parry and dodge, +7 to damage, +2 to pull punch, +3 to save vs Horror Factor.



Psionics: Is considered a Natural Psychic. **I.S.P.:** 70. Has the powers of Astral Projection (8), Clairvoyance (4), Sense Evil (2), Telepathy (4), See Aura (6) and Object Read (6), to name a few.

Magic: None.

Money: Has an incredible monetary inheritance from a benefactor on Earth (unknown as to this day – possibly swindled but may have been given to the creature to fund an agenda of the benefactor). All this equals about \$220,000 and around 3D6x100 dollars in gold, gems, precious metals, information and artifacts in its secret hold.

Weapons: May use any weapons found in either Heroes Unlimited or Rifts. The creature typically uses long range type weapons.

Limitations/Weaknesses: Magic does double damage to it.

Demonic Monster

As a cruel punishment from his demonic master (a Demon Lord that serves Modeus himself), this demon was exiled from Hades to spread misery and corrupt the masses of humanity from cyberspace, using magic and centuries of hate-fueled guile. Stinging from this constant belittlement, he sets forth into the world of unsuspecting humans to spread utter hatred and pain. Able (with rare spells) to magically corrupt the data and content on a website or in an e-mail, this demon spreads hatred and misery via the Web.

Species: Unknown (is considered a Sub-Demon).

True Name: Kurrelockk. **Alias:** “Your Special Friend.”

Alignment: Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 20, M.A. 15, P.S. 24 (Supernatural), P.P. 22, P.E. 26, P.B. 5, Spd 13.

Hit Points 67. **S.D.C.:** 122. **A.R.:** 14. (Note: In high P.P.E. environments, add the Hit Points and S.D.C. to get the total M.D.C. of the being.) **P.P.E.:** 118. **Horror Factor:** 13

Height: 6 feet, 2 inches (1.9 m). **Weight:** 82 lbs (37 kg). (Note: Most of his body is composed of scaly hide; A.R. of 14.)

Age: Effectively immortal. Actual age is unknown.

Appearance: Without his invisibility active he looks like the classic demonic monster with horns and clawed hands and wide, unblinking eyes. He wears masks and clothing that covers him up very well or he may use holographic projective devices in a high technological environment to instill the appearance of normalcy (with this being the case, his P.B. is a mere 10). He could learn the mystic shape shifting of his master but this may bring him more in “debt” to his lord.

Disposition: Burning behind those cold eyes is a mind that has one wish, to turn the world into one big cesspool of hate and discontent. The demon despises Earth and humans, and knows that his master would approve of this destructive foray into the Web. Additionally, as he works to see that end, he savors this cruel task with as much relish as is possible of such a being. He laughs out loud when others see the heinous responses of those who supposedly were sent e-mails by once hot lovers, kindly parents and friends from long ago. He doesn't care about hiding IP addresses much, nor does he care if he gets caught (he'll just teleport away and then return to set up shop somewhere else), he just delights in sending messages that will have some negative impact later in the lives of the readers. He also relishes persuading other users

into doing the same thing (misrepresenting themselves, toying with people, lying and sending threats over the Internet). When his hand is through typing/sending the messages on out to the recipient, the smile on that wickedly hideous face could send a chill up a Splugorth's spine (if they had one).

Natural Abilities and Powers: Other than immortality and supernatural abilities and attributes (Supernatural Strength and Endurance), this Demon has the ability to resist all forms of poisons, toxins and gasses (do no damage to him). Normal weapons do only half damage to him. Has no form of identifying marks on his body (i.e. fingerprints, eye color or even a traceable voice pattern). He has some limited form of invulnerability in that he is not affected by normal heat or cold (magical or unnatural heat and cold do only half damage), and is impervious to diseases or radiation. He doesn't need to breathe, sleep or eat (the pain he causes on a daily basis sustains him), nightvision 300 feet (91.5 m), sees the invisible, normal day vision, keen hearing (+3 to Perception Rolls involving sounds heard), bio-regenerates 1D6x10 S.D.C./Hit Points per every 12 hours.

Special Ability: Can triple his P.P.E. level if more than three persons in his vicinity are corrupted, or go through terrible pain and suffering (the effect lasts for 1D6+10 minutes). Achievement of this goal is likely if the skill rolls are critical successes (or some very good role-playing occurs).

Penalties & Disadvantages: He takes double damage from holy relics (including holy water and blessed salt), magic items, weapons and objects or symbols of Order (they act just like a holy cross does against a vampire). Magic, wards, weapons of magic and psionics do full damage.

Experience Level: Eighth.

Psionic Powers: Knows all Physical and Sensitive powers plus the Super Psionic powers of Telemechanics, Telemechanic Mental Operation, Hypnotic Suggestion, Empathic Transmission, Mentally Possess Others, Mind Wipe, P.P.E. Shield, Pyrokinesis, and Telekinesis (Super). **I.S.P.:** 230.

Magic Knowledge: Will use magic weapons and devices to his advantage. Has 118 P.P.E. Has all common spells up to 8th level including Havoc, Speed of the Snail, Dimensional Pocket, and Teleport (Superior).

Combat: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks per Melee: Five; may combine magic or psionic attacks with physical attacks.

Bonuses: +1 to initiative, +1 to strike, +1 to parry and dodge, +6 to S.D.C. damage, +3 to save vs magic. +3 to all Perception Rolls, +7 to save vs Horror Factor.

Skills of Note: W.P. Blunt (or G.M. may choose any Ancient or Modern weapon), Computer Operation 37%, Mathematics 60%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 90%, Forgery 75%, Seduction 55%, Streetwise 80%, Math: Advanced and Basic at 95%, Wilderness Survival 70%, Literate in any three Languages (G.M.'s choice). Skills improve at a rate of 1% per level of experience. Instinctually knows human nature and psychological torture and will implement this to the fullest effect online; equal to 65% skill proficiency.

Equipment: Has a laptop computer with HD monitor with all the bells and whistles (including wi-fi and extra memory added, with external hard drives if needed). Secure lines and the best online service money can buy.



The Hammer of the Forge

Chapter Forty-Seven

“Whirlwind”

By James M. G. Cannon

Behind Romana lay a wide open field, upon which two monstrous armies battled beneath a cloudless sky, blue turning to purple as the sun dipped below the horizon. Before her, just five feet from where she stood, stood a burning desert, heaped high with sandy dunes, and in the distance, a coliseum rose into the mid-morning sky, built beside a city of mud and stone. Between these two worlds existed a divider, apparently some kind of thin, mirrored substance that shattered under a blast from Romana’s laser pistol. The desert could be glimpsed through a jagged-toothed maw in the barrier, while around the hole extended the grassy plain in all directions.

“What is this place?” Romana asked aloud, not expecting anyone to answer. The Ogre soldier behind her had given up the chase,

even more flummoxed by the opening than the Altess time traveler was. She ignored the Ogre, holstered her pistol, and raised her left arm, upon which rested the Singularity Watch, a powerful artifact of Time. She scanned the opening with the Watch, and frowned when an “error” message flashed. Whatever this thing was, whatever was happening here, the Watch had no answers. That was more than a little unsettling.

Still, she was a member of the Time Council in good standing, and armed with one of the most powerful artifacts in the Megaverse. It was practically her responsibility to investigate.

Cautiously, Romana approached the rift. A cool spring breeze ruffled her long, dark hair, and carried the sounds and smells of carnage with it. Wrinkling her nose in distaste, Romana stepped through the rift, crossing the barrier, stepping off from grassy plain and stepping down on sandy desert floor. No breeze here, but sudden, scorching heat from an unforgiving sun. And Romana in all black.

She unshouldered her backpack and removed a blue cloth from a pocket, then slipped the pack back on and wrapped the cloth around her head. She unclipped a canteen from her hip and took a few careful sips, then began the long march across the desert floor.

Crossing from one world to another had caused no discomfort, no change in Romana’s system at all. The barrier was practically seamless. Perhaps there was no barrier? Could she have passed between pocket dimensions, or were they some kind of... habitats? Romana paused, suddenly chilled despite the desert climate.

A sudden thought occurred to her, and she raised the Watch. Her fingers flew across the face. Little red dots appeared on it, quietly flickering. The Watch had picked up other life forms with a quantum signature similar to Romana’s. Just as she suspected. She had been lured to the world with the monster armies, and beside it, someone else had been lured to this desert planet. To what purpose?

Too many questions. The only way to find answers, Romana knew, was to locate her fellow rats, and then they could see about talking to whoever built this maze.

* * *

Four CAFFCO marines in full body armor, weapons at the ready, bracketed the Sinestrian scientist, Vodal Kee. Two before him to clear the way, two behind to guard their flanks. They moved quickly, economically, missing nothing. Two of their number were dead already, slain by a giant with a massive club, who they had left behind in the middle of the arena. Now the five of them hurried through the bowels of the coliseum, seeking an exit.

Vodal struggled to keep the pace. His hearts were hammering in his chest and he could not ignore the fact that his life and the lives of his defenders were in danger. His snakelike body was not designed for the pace which the marines set, not for extended periods, and he was beginning to slow.

The corridors beneath the coliseum looked ordinary enough, standard Tri-Galactic mega-steel, interlaced with ducts and conduits and a mishmash of foreign looking technology. Strange glyphs and signs decorated the corridors, written in no language Vodal recognized. The marines appeared to ignore them, choosing passages and turns seemingly at random. Occasionally they would rush past a sapient or two, some kind of lizard-humanoid clad in robes and plasteel armor, who squawked at the intruders as they hurried by. Vodal attempted an apology in Trade Five but no one seemed to understand him.

Then the shooting started. Vodal wasn’t sure who shot first, but one moment the five of them were calmly marching down another

endless corridor, and the next moment they were returning laser fire. A squad of lizard guards in heavy armor, brandishing carbines, stood framed by a doorway, firing away. Vodal dropped nearly prone and raised his waldoes over his head. He heard the “vupp, vupp” of the marine’s weapons, followed by a “zeen-zeen” noise from the lizards’ carbines, and several yelps of pain. Then someone was dragging him upright – the grim CAFFCO sergeant whose name Vodal still did not know – and leading him through a scene of carnage. Vodal struggled not to look at the contorted forms of his attackers. He felt sick to his stomach.

Then, they were rising, hurrying up a set of steps that Vodal found incredibly uncomfortable, and the sergeant pushed open a door with a gauntleted hand, and they were out under the sun again. But their troubles were just beginning.

They came out of the coliseum into a back alley with a sandy floor. Around them, walls of mud brick, dumpsters piled high with trash, and a few wide-eyed lizard people sharing a smoke and talking about the match. The marines ignored the spectators and hustled Vodal down the alleyway towards a bustling street. The sergeant drew up short, however, at the sound of sirens and the appearance of hovercars decorated with flashing lights that nudged their way through the crowd.

“Of course we hit this place at noon during the busiest part of the day,” muttered one of the marines. “We need to go to ground, Sarge,” he added.

The sergeant simply nodded and herded his people back the way they had come. Lizards began to clamber out of the hovercars, wearing heavy armor and brandishing energy weapons. The hacker, the marine who had hacked the coliseum door lock earlier, fired a few shots over their heads, and when the lizards all ducked, the marines ran. Vodal struggled to match their speed. Two marines leapt up on top of the dumpsters, one covering their retreat, the other bounding up onto the wall behind the dumpsters. Armored fingers gripped the edge of the roof and the marine hauled himself up. The sergeant and the hacker helped Vodal up onto the dumpster, and then levered him up into the other marine’s arms. Blasts of laser fire from the lizards fizzled through the air. A few slammed into the marines, but their body armor held. Vodal was acutely aware that he wore no protective armor capable of withstanding megawatt energy blasts. Vodal felt a flashburn scar his cheeks as a blaster shot skimmed the shoulder of the marine pulling him onto the roof.

And then suddenly, all four marines, battered but whole, were on the roof and the five of them were scurrying across the open expanse toward the next building, the next roof. Shouts and sirens followed.

Since they remained so terribly unforthcoming, Vodal decided to give them all names. It was too confusing in his own head not to do otherwise. Sarge was a given, as was Hacker. The other two would be Silent and Quick, at least for now. With some measure of order imposed on the situation, if only in his own mind, Vodal actually began to breathe a little more easily. Despite being shot at.

Silent and Quick helped Vodal leap across the next alley onto the next rooftop, while Sarge and Hacker maintained a wary watch on their rear. Vodal heard the whine of turbines and risked a look backward. The lizards’ hovercars rose into the air behind them. Vodal ground his teeth together. This was all beginning to feel a little familiar. Since defecting to the Consortium of Civilized Worlds from the Transgalactic Empire, it felt as though his life had become one long chase scene. It was beginning to wear thin, Vodal decided, as a megawatt laser burned a hole in the roof beside him. He noted

that he was probably in shock, given that he wasn’t screaming and flailing his waldoes.

Then the floor dropped out from under him. It took a moment for Vodal to realize that the marines had left their rooftop run and dropped back down to street level, taking him with them. “You okay?” Silent asked, forcing Vodal to briefly consider renaming her.

“I think I’m in shock,” he heard himself say.

The marine nodded. “Kind of a weird day,” she agreed, totally deadpan. Vodal started to laugh. Yes, he was definitely losing it.

Sarge and Hacker led them through a crowd of lizard people and other sapient creatures; all reptilian, many brightly colored. They crowd parted as the armed and armored marines forced their way through them. A sudden strange thought occurred to Vodal. Did the lizards think these mammals were kidnaping him, a snake-like humanoid? That would be too rich. Too rich by half.

“Hey!” came a strange voice from the other side of the street. Vodal craned his neck, recognizing Trade Four when he heard it.

Sarge and Hacker raised their rifles to their shoulders and aimed towards the shout. Beside Vodal, Silent and Quick kept their weapons loose and ready. Behind them, Vodal heard the hovercars draw closer.

Out of the crowd of reptilian faces stepped a female humanoid mammal, attractive by those standards, clad in a black jumpsuit. She had short, black hair and dark eyes, and wore a compact backpack on her shoulders as well as a slim laser pistol on her hip. Something large and glowing lay on her arm where a wrist-chron would go. “Having a little trouble?” the humanoid asked.

“Nothing we can’t handle,” Sarge said. He kept his voice modulated and the rifle aimed at her. “You?”

“Really, Sergeant,” Vodal said. “She’s not even wearing armor. I doubt you need to point that thing at her to appear threatening.”

“I’m treating everyone around us as hostile until proven otherwise, Doctor Vodal,” Sarge said. “No offense, miss.”

The humanoid nodded. “None taken, I assure you. If our places were reversed, I would probably do the same.”

“Less chit-chat, more running,” Hacker suggested. A few warning shots came from the hovercars, now awkwardly descending towards the street.

A pulse of light flashed from the female humanoid’s wrist-chron, and suddenly everything around the six of them froze – even the blaster bolts flashing through the air. Vodal saw Sarge tense up. Vodal lurched forward, awkwardly slamming into the marine, hitting him just hard enough to alter his aim. A blast of light sizzled past the humanoid, and before it got a foot away from her, froze in midair as well.

“Doctor, what are you doing?” Sarge asked angrily. He reoriented his gun.

The female didn’t blink. “My name is Romana Vorishcenko ne Uskios. I am a member of the Time Council, and I have just pulled the half-dozen of us dimensional wanders out of the local timestream. The blip will only last a moment, and the locals will miss it entirely. We don’t have long to discuss our situation, so I suggest you settle down, sergeant, and increase the chances of us all surviving.”

Quick loosed a low whistle. “She’s got you there.”

After a moment, Sarge lowered his weapon. Hacker reluctantly did the same.

Romana smiled. “That wasn’t so hard, was it?” She turned to Vodal. “Am I to understand that you are Doctor Vodal Kee?”

Vodal nodded. "You've heard of me?"

"You assisted Caleb Vulcan, Sol Vyking, and Ariel of Titan in their mission to destroy *the Shadowstar*."

Vodal coughed. "Yes, I guess I did. Sort of. But I believe that whole thing is... um... classified. How do you know anything about it?"

"I'm a time traveler, Doctor, as well as an acquaintance of Caleb Vulcan's." Her cheeks colored slightly, but Vodal wasn't well enough acquainted with mammalian color patterns to guess why. "I try to keep track of him, sometimes. At any rate, I'm curious as to the significance of the two of us meeting here, if indeed there is any significance."

"You came through the gate, too?" Vodal asked.

"A gate. But not the one that brought you all here. I appeared in another realm, literally next door to this one. I don't know what this place is, Doctor and marines, but whatever it might be it is a colossal undertaking. If we are here, then my guess is that others have been drawn into the same web. And I believe it is possible to find the spider at the center of it."

"I'm only understanding about a fifth of what you're saying," Vodal said.

Romana's red lips quirked up in a half-smile. "I'll explain on the way. This stasis bubble will expire in about thirty seconds. I suggest we make ourselves scarce before it does."

Vodal agreed. But wondered: What did she mean, 'a gate'?

* * *

Elsewhere...

Beneath black skies lit by strobes of crimson lightning, Caleb Vulcan, Knight of the Cosmic Forge, walked the streets of a dead city. The flagstones under his feet and the stepped architecture around him reminded him of Teotihuacán back home on Earth. Except for all the damn vampires.

He and his companions walked along a broad roadway, lit primarily by the Globe of Daylight spell summoned by Doctor Abbott, shadowman and wizard. Abbott was a living shadow, featureless save for the glowing orange lights of his eyes. He wore a battered fedora and trench coat and carried a cane, which doubled as a kind of wand for his magics. Beside him walked his ward, Arwen Griffin, a martial artist with green skin and blue hair. Behind them came Joriel the Celestine, a broad-shouldered android with maroon hair and eyes, and two enormous wings erupting from his back. At his side clanked along Sammadar Orak, a Galactic Tracer clad in a suit of insectile power armor painted in a riot of day-glow colors. Bringing up the rear was Kassiopeia Acherean, Atlantean Undead Slayer, with blue eyes and midnight tresses and an elaborate pattern of blue-white tattoos decorating her exposed flesh.

They had arrived on this desolate world through a dimensional gateway, and although Caleb and Sammadar did not recognize the place, everyone else in the party had recently visited it. But they had backup then, in the form of a dozen other Atlantean Undead Slayers, vampire killers extraordinaire. Right now, Kassy and Abbott were the only ones capable of even harming the vampires that swarmed on all sides, edging along with the group, jostling one another for position, barking and hissing and threatening to cross the boundary into the light of day. They were beginning to make Caleb nervous.

Abbott assured them all that he could pull them back to the Three Galaxies in no time at all, but he was curious. His first visit to this dimension occurred when he and the others were pursuing a Shoggoth that had kidnaped a number of villagers, and hopped

across a dozen dimensions before landing in Atlantis on some post-apocalyptic Earth. The vampire world appeared, Abbott and the others had believed, at random. Now Abbott wasn't so sure. The dimensions were infinite, after all, and the likelihood of anyone randomly coming across the same dimension in just a few months was astronomical.

So now they explored the dead world, the dead city. Abbott's mage light kept the vampires at bay, but it wasn't pure enough to do any damage. Abbott's magic could do other things, of course, if it came to that, and Kassy had her tattoos, but it Caleb felt odd and powerless. The undead creatures were practically invulnerable, and he couldn't harm them. The reverse was not true. This many vampires would tear their party apart in seconds if they weren't careful.

Even fully armored, Caleb wouldn't last long against them. But he was determined to sell his life to give his friends the seconds they might need to mount a credible defense. Not that he hoped it came to that. He hefted the heavy hammer in his hand and eyed the deadly mob.

"What exactly are we looking for, Doc?" Caleb asked over his shoulder.

"I'm not sure," Abbott admitted. "We didn't linger on our last visit. But something drew us back here. I am stretching out with my senses now, something I neglected to do the last time. There's something odd about the ley lines here."

"Odd?" Orak asked.

"Yes. They don't extend as far as I would expect. Five miles in the direction we're walking they just... stop. Fifteen miles behind us, they stop again, as if there is some kind of invisible wall. It may be something we can breach. It's possible that this dead city is merely a prison or cage for this world's vampire population."

"Who, or what," Kassy said, "would herd undead like that? Far smarter and easier to simply wipe them out."

"We don't know that, my dear," Abbott said.

He was about to say more when one of the vampires edging backward away from Caleb suddenly darted forward, into the sphere cast by Abbott's light. Without thinking, Caleb threw his arm forward, and his hammer and the vampire connected with a loud slap that sent the vampire flying through the air to crash against his fellows. They tumbled to the flagstones in a heap, but were on their feet again in an instant and surging forward, disdainful finally of the weak light meant to keep them at bay. Caleb unleashed his eye beams at full power, but they merely glanced off the vampires. He knocked them backward with a broad swipe of the hammer, but although the weapon could dent starship armor, its impact merely knocked the bloodsuckers down.

Arwen was beside Caleb in an instant, suffused in violet light. Her fists and feet flashed like lightning, striking with nearly as much power as Caleb's hammer, and with about as much effect.

An explosion of water erupted across Caleb's back and slammed into the first wave of vampires. They reacted as if struck by acid, howling and lurching backward as their flesh began to smoke and burn. Caleb heard the other vampires converge on his friends, knew that Joriel and Kassy could handle themselves – Kassy better than almost anyone, in fact – and that Orak's armor would protect her. He was worried about Abbott, however. Even if he was composed of shadow, the claws and teeth of the vampires could still tear him apart.

Caleb felt those claws rip into his own armor, and winced as the vampires dug furrows in it. He felt arms wrap around his left forearm, felt his gauntlet ripped from him. He dispelled his hammer and resorted to fists. The fighting was getting too close.

The street suddenly illuminated brightly as a bolt of red lightning struck the ground ten feet from where Caleb stood, immolating a pair of vampires. Then a cold, weak rain began to fall, a rain that gradually grew in intensity. The vampires disintegrated. Some literally so, others retreating into the surrounding darkness.

Caleb risked a look at his allies. Most of them stood in a protective circle around Abbott, who stood with cane raised and pointed at the sky. "Rainmaking," Abbott said, "is usually simple magic. But this world is fighting me. I'm not sure how long I can maintain this storm."

"We'd best get to that invisible wall quickly, then," Caleb said. "Can you keep the storm with us?"

"I shall try," Abbott said.

* * *

Slowly, consciousness returned to her.

The last thing she recalled was being overrun by an army of Deevils, after crossing into their realm through an arcane gate. Now, she felt pain, in her shoulders and her legs, and throbbing deep within her skull.

Ariel of Titan, Knight of the Cosmic Forge, slowly opened her eyes. She found herself in a darkened space, stretched across a cross shaped frame hanging half a meter from the ground. Metal binders encased her forearms, her waist, and her ankles. She felt something bite into her neck as well, just as she noticed the runes carved into the metal. She tested their strength, and discovered them superior to her Forge-enhanced strength. She focused her power and attempted to burn through the bindings with her eye beams, but nothing happened. She paused, and noticed finally that the core of cosmic fire that burned within her was strangely, frighteningly silenced.

Ariel grimaced. The frame encasing her had severed her link to the Cosmic Forge. So be it. She was still a Titan. She flexed her right arm and began to pull against the bindings. There was no give initially. With work and time, however, she would be able to dislodge it, she was certain.

"I would not suggest doing that," a familiar voice said from the darkness.

"Vyking!" Ariel said. "Praise Zeus. Get me out of this thing!"

"No," Vyking said. "I don't think I'll be doing that. Not yet, at any rate." As he spoke, the lights in the room slowly came on, illuminating a vast chamber with a vaulted ceiling. Ariel's frame hung suspended over a massive, rounded block from which stretched arched bridges to several still darkened doorways.

Sol Vyking stood at the apex of one of the arched bridges. He was tall for a human, broadly built and roughly handsome. He had piercing blue eyes and black hair, and wore a neatly trimmed beard. His shirt was decorated with brightly colored flowers, and he also wore canvas shorts and sandals. He was a Cosmo-Knight and an ally. Which made his statement that much more troubling.

"What's happening, Sol?" Ariel asked. He could be mind controlled, or under some twisted spell. Or...

"What is happening, is that you are realizing that the tenuous connection between you and the Cosmic Forge is lost. Perhaps forever." Vyking's tone was cold, his eyes colder still. "Soon, you will realize that at your darkest moment, when your need is greatest, the Forge will not avail you. You are lost, Ariel of Titan, and you don't even realize it."

Ariel could only stare. "You've... Fallen, haven't you?"

Vyking smiled. It was a reptile's smile. "It's not as bad as it sounds, Ariel. I've just had my blinders lifted. And I have found a new path to power." He raised a hand, encompassing the chamber. "Here, in the Heart of Reality. This place is the center of a thousand dimensions, and the power of each of them is fueling me. There is nothing I cannot do. Soon, I will rival the Forge itself."

Realization struck Ariel. "You created the gate. You summoned me here." She paused. "Who else have you brought here? And to what purpose?"



"All my old friends are here, Ariel. Soon they'll join you hanging here. As to why, the answer is simple. Revenge."

Ariel floundered. "Revenge? For what? Vyking, the last time I saw you, we fought *the Shadowstar*. In the wake of its destruction, we were all scattered."

Vyking's eyes grew distant. "*The Shadowstar*? Yes, I think I remember it. But that was a thousand years ago. Before a thousand years of torture and despair. Did you never once think to look for me? Did you never once wonder what fate befell me?" Vyking's eyes focused on Ariel, hard and cold. When he spoke, his voice was thick with venom. "My friends. I will destroy you all, for abandoning me."

Ariel's lips thinned to a grim line. For her, only a few months had passed. But time sometimes worked differently across the varied dimensions. Vyking had been lost for a long time, perhaps too long. But she would try to bring him back to the light. She only hoped she could do it before he killed her.