

The Rifts® RPG – Celebrating 25 Years of New Dimensions in Role-Playing

Palladium Books® Presents:

THE

RIFTER®

Your Guide to the Megaverse®

Inside this 96 page sourcebook...

Game Master Tips

Rifts® – The Unbidden™

Rifts® – Clean (conclusion)

Rifts® – City of New Strawn™

Splicers® – The Technojacker™ Revisited

Rifts®/Fantasy RPG® – 60 Frost Magic Spells

Coming attractions, news, & more.

Warning!

Violence and the Supernatural

The fictional worlds of Palladium Books® are violent, deadly and filled with supernatural monsters. Other-dimensional beings, often referred to as “demons,” torment, stalk and prey on humans. Other alien life forms, monsters, gods and demigods, as well as magic, insanity, and war are all elements in these books.

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

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



The Rifter® Number 70

Your Guide to the Palladium Megaverse®!

PDF Edition – March 2017

Copyright 2015 Palladium Books® Inc.

All rights reserved, world wide, under the Universal Copyright Convention. No part of this book may be reproduced in part or whole, in any form or by any means, without permission from the publisher, except for brief quotes for use in reviews. All incidents, situations, institutions, governments and people are fictional and any similarity, without satiric intent, of characters or persons living or dead, is strictly coincidental.

Robotech® and Robotech® The Shadow Chronicles® are Registered Trademarks of Harmony Gold USA, Inc.

Palladium Books®, Rifts®, The Rifter®, Chaos Earth®, Coalition Wars®, After the Bomb®, Dead Reign®, The Mechanoids®, The Mechanoid Invasion®, Megaverse®, Nightbane®, Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game®, Phase World®, Powers Unlimited®, RECON®, and Splicers® are registered trademarks owned and licensed by Kevin Siembieda and Palladium Books Inc.

The slogan “A Megaverse of adventure – limited only by your imagination,” RPG Tactics, and titles and names such a Bizantium and the Northern Islands, Armageddon Unlimited, Aliens Unlimited, Arzno, Atorian Empire, ARCHIE-3, Beyond Arcanum, Beyond the Supernatural, BTS-2, Brodkil, Biomancy, Biomancer, Bio-Wizardry, ‘Burbs, ‘Borg, ‘Bot, Dimensional Outbreak, Dinosaur Swamp, Dyval, Elf-Dwarf War, Heroes Unlimited, I.S.P., Land of the Damned, Lazlo, Victor Lazlo, Lazlo Agency, Lazlo Society, Palladium of Desires, C.A.M.E.L.O.T., Chi-Town, CS, Coalition States, Cosmo-Knight, Crazy, Cyber-Knight, D-Bee, Dark Day, Dead Boy, Doc Reid, Dog Boy, Dog Pack, Dweomer, Emperor Prosek, Erin Tarn, Fadetown, Free Quebec, Gadgets Unlimited, Gargoyle Empire, Glitter Boy, Gramercy Island, Hardware Unlimited, Heroes of the Megaverse, Heroes Unlimited, HU2, Juicer, Ley Line Walker, M.D.C., Mechanoid Space, Mega-Damage, Mega-Hero, Megaversal, MercTown, Minion War, Morphus, Mutant Underground, Mysteries of Magic, Merc Ops, Naruni, Naruni Enterprises, NEMA, Ninjas & Superspies, NGR, Northern Gun, The Nursery, P.P.E., Powers Unlimited, Psi-Stalker, Pyscape, SAMAS, S.D.C., Secrets of, Shifter, Siege on Tolkeen, Skelebot, Skraypers, Sorcerer’s Forge, Splugorth, Splynncryth, Splynn, Techno-Wizard, Temporal Magic, Temporal Wizard, The Disavowed, Three Galaxies, Tome Grotesque, Triax, Vampire Kingdoms, Warpath: Urban Jungle, Void Runners, Wilk’s, Wolfen, Wolfen Wars, Wormwood, Wulfen, Xiticix, and other names, titles, slogans, and the likenesses of characters are trademarks owned by Kevin Siembieda and Palladium Books Inc.

Palladium Online www.palladiumbooks.com
Also visit us at facebook.com/PalladiumBooks



The Rifter® #70 RPG sourcebook series is published by Palladium Books Inc., 39074 Webb Court, Westland, MI 48185. Printed in the USA by McNaughton & Gunn of Saline, Michigan.

Palladium Books® Presents:

THE RIFTER® #70



Sourcebook and Guide to the Palladium Megaverse®

Coordinator & Editor in Chief: **Wayne Smith**

Editors: **Alex Marciniszyn**

Contributing Writers:

Brandon Aten
Nathan Bingham
Chris Isberg
Irvin Jackson
Travis Legge
Kevin Siembieda
Josh Sinsapaugh
Mark Temple

Proofreader: **Julius Rosenstein**

Cover Illustration: **Charles Walton II**

Interior Artists:

Amy L. Ashbaugh
Kevin Long
Benjamin Rodriguez
Tanya J. Ramsey
Charles Walton

Cover Logo Design: **Steve Edwards**

Credits Page Logo: **Niklas Brandt**

Typesetting & Layout: **Wayne Smith**

Art Direction: **Kevin Siembieda**

Based on the RPG rules, characters,
concepts and Megaverse® created by **Kevin Siembieda**.

Special Thanks to all our contributors, writers and artists this issue, especially new contributors. Our apologies to anybody who may have gotten accidentally left out or their name misspelled.

– *Kevin Siembieda, 2015*

Contents – The Rifter® #70 – Spring, 2015

Page 6 – Glitter Boy Concept Art

This issue's *Page Six Art* is a Glitter Boy concept drawing created by the indomitable *Kevin Long* way back in 1990! The pencil sketch is just one of the items publisher Kevin Siembieda has pulled from his private collection to make available at the **2015 Palladium Open House – May 15-17**.

Page 7 – From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

With the Palladium Open House only four weeks away, publisher Kevin Siembieda talks about the excitement building for the event amongst the Palladium staff, the things he loves about the POH and some of the things we're doing to make this POH truly special. One way is to share the legacy and creations of the past and present with our fans. That has prompted Kevin to dig out rare collectibles and original artwork he intends to make available at the Open House. Also read about the "negatives" from the original books that are being offered. What a rare opportunity. We hope to count some of you among the people attending, even if it's for one day or an evening.

Page 9 – Palladium News

Things are starting to heat up for both **Rifts®** and **Robotech® RPG Tactics™**. New game releases are coming, **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** Wave One is in full-swing and we have all kinds of plans for this game line, and not just the hotly anticipated Wave Two items. Things are percolating behind the scenes for **Rifts®** and all of a sudden we are fielding all sorts of inquiries about the **Rifts®** I.P. Very fitting considering 2015 is the **25th Anniversary of Rifts®**. Publisher Kevin Siembieda talks about the few things that have already gotten put into place.

There is a brief AdeptiCon Convention Report, a reminder about Gen Con and more about the Palladium Open House.

Page 12 – Coming Attractions

New books are on their way (**Chaos Earth® Resurrection**, **Robotech® Expeditionary Force Marines™**, and more), plus there are a few new ancillary items such as the **Robotech® Dice Bag and dice**, **Imaginos Plus™ #1 comic** book (featuring an Erin Tarn comic strip), and Kevin Siembieda's old **A+Plus #5** comic book. They and others are all described in Coming Attractions. Oh, and if you are a fan of Palladium Fantasy and haven't taken a look at **Bizantium and the Northern Islands™**, what are you waiting for?

Page 20 – Splicers®: Blood and Iron™

– Official source material for Splicers®

Writer **Brandon Aten** (**Madhaven**, **Triax 2**, etc.) gives us a sneak preview of an upcoming **Splicers® Sourcebook** by sharing the much expanded description, powers and abilities of the **Technojacker™**.

Page 21 – The Technojacker™ O.C.C.

Page 22 – Limitations to Machine Control

Page 24 – Technological Evolution (nanobots)

Page 29 – New Technojacker Skill Packages

Page 30 – New Technojacker Skills

Page 33 – Piloting/Transportation Skills

Page 34 – Weapon Proficiencies

Page 35 – Robot Combat: Technojacker

Page 36 – Technojacker Clans

Artwork by Charles "Splicehead" Walton II.

Page 39 – 10 Tips for Game Masters

– Optional house rules, suggestions, and ideas for running role-playing games

Chris Isberg offers some excellent suggestions and advice that the Palladium crew (including game wizard, Kevin Siembieda) all found fun and eminently playable. Send us your G.M. tips and house rules for publication in future issues of **The Rifter®**!

Page 42 – The Unbidden™

– Official source material for Rifts®

Writer *Josh Sinsapaugh* (**D-Bees of North America**, etc.) presents a trio of transdimensional monsters that follow dimensional anomalies and weaknesses in the dimensional bleed to invade new worlds. Hell Pits are one such means of entry. Each is bizarre and dangerous, and likely to be found anywhere on Rifts Earth, Phase World, the Three Galaxies and other places where Rifts and dimensional energies are strong. And adaptable to any Palladium world setting.

Page 42 – Conqueror Worm

Page 45 – Gem Heads (Robo-Pillagers)

Page 49 – Brain Squids

Artwork by *Tanya J. Ramsey*.

Page 51 – The City of New Strawn™

– Optional location and adventure ideas for Rifts®

First-time Rifter® contributor, *Travis Legge*, outlines the independent City-State of New Strawn located in Kansas, along with some notable characters and adventure ideas.

Page 58 – The Deep Frontier™

– Optional source material for Rifts®

First-time Rifter® contributor, *Mark Temple*, writes about the potential for adventures under the sea, and includes some notable communities, characters and equipment, including underwater habitats, civilian submarines and a new aquatic O.C.C. A nice addition to campaigns and adventures that use **Rifts® World Books Lemuria** and **Rifts® Underseas**.

Page 62 – Life under the sea

Page 63 – Equipment

Page 64 – Harpoon Rifle

Page 64 – Diving Hard Suit

Page 65 – Civilian Submarines

Page 67 – Freelance Aquanaut O.C.C.

Artwork by *Benjamin Rodriguez*.

Page 68 – Frost Magic™

– Official source material for The Palladium Fantasy RPG®, Rifts®, Phase World®, Chaos Earth®, Heroes Unlimited™, and any game setting where magic exists.

H. Nathan “Nate” Bingham and Kevin Siembieda team up to offer a Wizard who specializes in frost and cold-based magic spells, along with 60+ spells; more than 40 of them completely brand new.

Page 68 – Frost Mage O.C.C.

Page 70 – Frost Magic Spells by Level

Page 70 – Level One

Page 71 – Level Two

Page 72 – Level Three

Page 73 – Level Four

Page 74 – Level Five

Page 75 – Level Six

Page 77 – Level Seven

Page 78 – Level Eight

Page 79 – Level Nine

Page 80 – Levels Ten & Eleven

Artwork by Tanya J. Ramsey.

Page 81 – Clean, Part Two – A story for Rifts®

Enjoy the conclusion of Irvin Jackson’s thrilling story of survival and adventure around the fortified city of Chi-Town. Life in the ‘Burbs, especially the Old Town ‘Burbs, may be better than out in the wilderness, but it’s no bed of roses. Read on.

Artwork by Amy L. Ashbaugh.

The Theme for Issue 70

The theme of **The Rifter® #70** is magic, monsters and exotic places and people. And “officialness” – we hope you enjoy the fact that half of this issue is “official” source material. Every issue of **The Rifter®** in 2015 shall feature a cover and adventure/source material to celebrate the **25th Anniversary of Rifts®**. Enjoy.

The Rifter® Needs You

We need new writers and artists to fill the next few decades of **The Rifter®**. You do not need to be a professional writer to contribute to **The Rifter®**. This publication is like a “fanzine,” written by fans for fans. A forum in which gamers just like *you* can submit articles, G.M. advice, player tips, house rules, adventures, new magic, new psionics, new super abilities, monsters, villains, high-tech weapons, vehicles, power armor, short works of fiction and more. So think about writing up something short (even something as small as 4-6 pages). Newcomers and regular contributors are always welcome.

The Rifter® needs new material, especially when it comes to adventures and source material, for *all* of our game lines, particu-

larly *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.

The Cover

This cover is by **Charles Walton II**. It depicts a hostile dragon in hot pursuit of a Coalition “Smiling Jack” SAMAS. Watch for the print that will become available soon. Every 2015 cover of **The Rifter®** celebrates the 25th Anniversary of *Rifts®*.

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

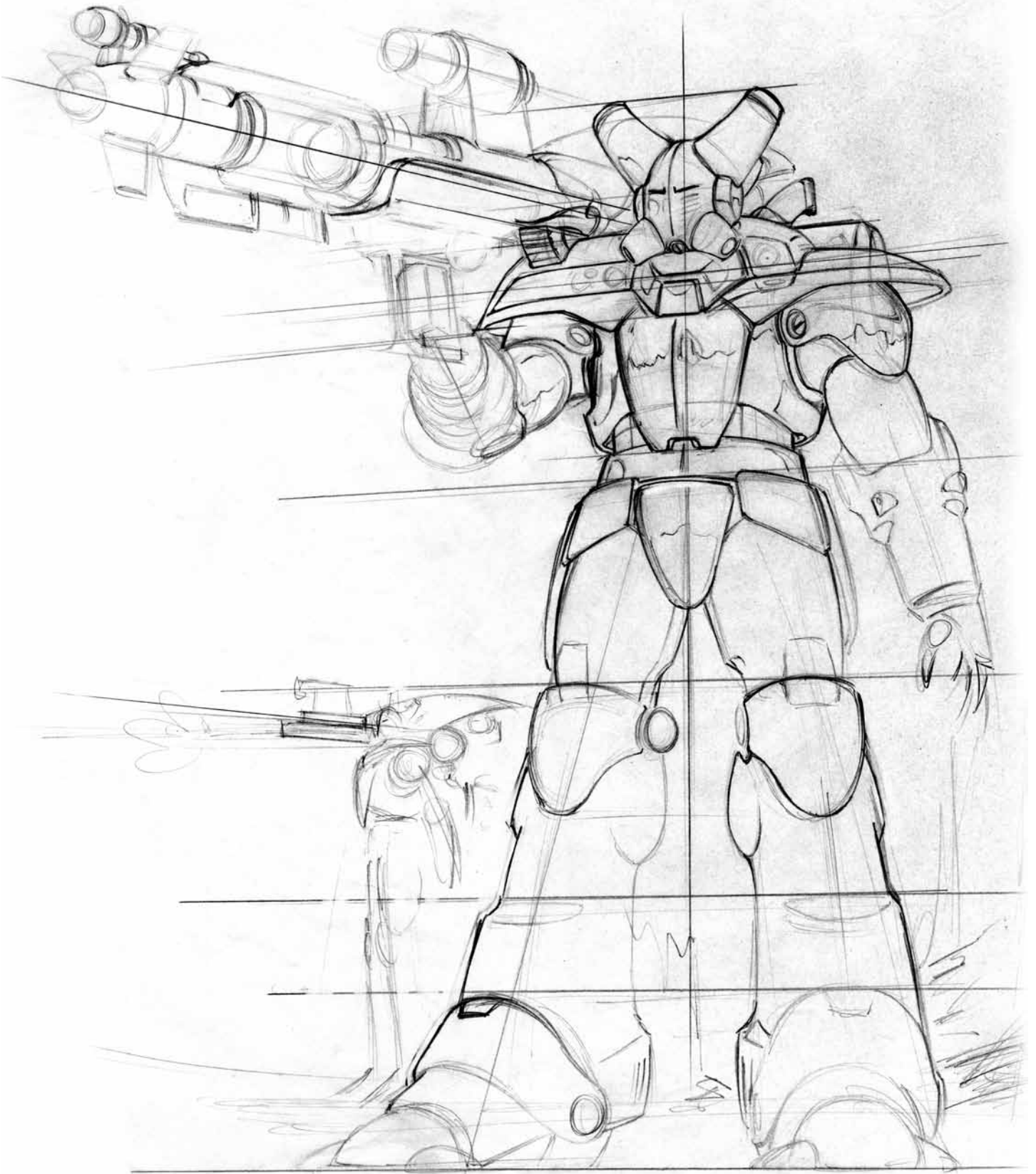
The Rifter® #71

The Rifter® #71, Summer issue will present a nice variety of new source material for Rifts® and other Palladium RPG settings.

- Cover by Amy L. Ashbaugh.
- Source material for Rifts®.
- More tips for Game Masters.
- Source material for Rifts® and 2-4 other settings.
- News, coming attractions and much more.
- And maybe YOUR submission. Send us something and see if you get published.

**Bringing you infinite possibilities
limited only by your imagination™**

Celebrating 25 years of Rifts®



From the Desk of Kevin Siembieda

As I write this, the **Palladium Open House** is exactly four weeks away. It seems like the Open House always comes up too soon no matter how far in advance we plan. There's always so much to do and never enough time, but I'm very much looking forward to this Open House. Many friends will be attending along with fans from around the world. That "world" part always amazes me. I can understand attending from across North America all the way from California, or Alaska, or Newfoundland. But it always surprises me when we have gamers fly in from England, Spain, Germany, Australia, Brazil and Uruguay! I mean, holy moley! Very cool. They must have fun, because many of the same gamers from afar attend over and over again.

I think the surprise comes from the fact that even after 34 years of publishing, we don't really see ourselves as celebrities. It's difficult to conceive how many millions of lives we've touched with our games and books over the last three decades. It is humbling to know that so many people think so highly of us and greatly enjoy our games. But we don't really see ourselves as anything other than hardworking gamers, writers, editors and artists. So even after all these years, it is still a little strange (but awesome) that so many of you appreciate us so much. Thank you.

I'm looking forward to seeing old friends and many new faces with whom to share old stories and laughs, and create new tales to be told. The Open House is an inspiration and a joy to me and I think most of the Palladium crew. It is a truly special event that comes only every few years. It's not like game conventions, which are fun, sure, but there is nothing like the intimacy and relaxed atmosphere of the **Palladium Open House**, where you can let your hair down and talk with people without time restrictions or multitudes of other people waiting their turn. And then there is that sense of camaraderie and closeness. Yep, there is just something magical about the POH. I can't really explain it.

The 2015 Open House may be the last one we hold, so this one is already feeling extra special. There are a lot of reasons why this may be the last Open House. One is that as Palladium continues to grow and develop new product, space in the warehouse is being taken up like crazy. No space, no POH is possible. We've had to do a lot of finagling to make this year's Open House work. Two: parking. We have to get our neighbors to let us use their parking, and depending on their business needs, space may or may not be available. This year, things are looking good, especially Saturday and Sunday, but V.I.P. Thursday and Friday are going to be tight. A third reason is the amount of work it takes to host an Open House. We're all getting older and the demands of the POH on top of everything else we need to be doing have been quite daunting. There never seems to be enough time, manpower and money to do everything we want to do, nor as fast as we need to do it. There are several other considerations, too, so yeah, this may be the last POH we host. Of course, I think I say that every other POH we do. I guess time will tell.

I'm approaching the 2015 Open House as if it will be the last, and that means I'm pulling out all the stops. I'm digging up all kinds of keepsakes, original artwork, collectibles and items I think gamers will go wild over. I want to leave those of you who attend with fond memories that will last a lifetime. I've been pulling out original art and items that I never thought I would let go

from my personal archives. I've dug up something like 40 **Kevin Long** original pieces of artwork to sell – pencil drawings and finished inked artwork, including some art from a number of the original **Robotech®** books from the 1980s. Some of the Long art includes pieces from **The Sentinels® RPG**, the pencil concept sketch for the cover of the **Robotech® Ghost Ship sourcebook**, art from the **Turtles Go Hollywood sourcebook**, some art from **Villains Unlimited™**, and art from **Rifts®**. I have also unearthed a couple of old **Ninja Turtle** posters, some old TMNT RPGs and sourcebooks (some that are signed by *Erick Wujcik*), and all kinds of fun, rare collectibles. We're even selling *the negatives* from the books you love. Plus, we'll be debuting some new products and offering some POH ONLY items.



Rare pieces of Palladium history can be yours – book negatives available at the Open House

Back before the digital era, the physically "pasted up" pages of a book were photographed, and a set of negatives were used to make the "plates" from which the books were printed. With a few rare exceptions, there was only ever ONE set of negatives created for each book (sometimes two, usually when changes and correction pages were made, or a second edition done). That negative was used to create the printing plates for every new print run. As a "negative," the images of the text and line art are reversed; white on a black background.

Pages with artwork look amazing, but even the pages with only words and headlines look cool and make an exotic and unique keepsake. For a few bucks, you can own a piece of gaming (and printing) history. These are truly, one-of-a-kind items that look pretty spectacular in a mat or frame. Negatives with text only are \$2, title pages and those with a quarter or half page

of artwork are \$5-\$15, and a full page of artwork is \$15-\$30. Only those from the iconic **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles** titles sometimes cost more, ranging from \$2-\$50; the most expensive negatives being comic strip pages and full pages of artwork by *Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird*.

To my knowledge, no one has ever offered similar negatives for sale. We came up with the idea one day in the warehouse last summer while Jeff Burke and I were flipping through a massive stack of negatives and pondering their fate. They come “ganged” on big, 30x48 inch sheets with 16 pages of negatives on the big sheet. There were sheets of white paper between each big sheet of negs, and the negative images on the white backdrop looked fantastic. Like a *woodcut* or something. I made the comment to Jeff that they were like works of art and a shame to destroy. Jeff agreed, saying they looked impressive and were unique works of art – like a one-of-a-kind lithographic print. And added, “I think fans might want to buy some of these. I know I would. Have you considered giving them away in Christmas Grab Bags or selling them?”

I loved the idea. As a collector, myself, I knew this was something I would buy as a fan. As fate would have it, a couple fans came by a few days later. I showed them some pages and asked their opinion about offering them for sale. They went nuts over them and one guy bought a dozen pages all by himself, plus a half dozen TMNT pages for a friend he called on the phone. As a hint of things to come, I included a negative or two in several dozen *2014 Christmas Surprise Packages*, but we’ll be making the largest selection of negatives available for the first time at the **Palladium Open House**. They include negs from the following books:

TMNT® and Other Strangeness

TMNT® Adventures (sourcebook)

Rifts® Sourcebook One

Rifts® Triax & the NGR

Rifts® Lone Star

Rifts® Psyscape

Rifts® Free Quebec

Rifts® Xiticix Invasion

Rifts® China One

Rifts® Dinosaur Swamp

And possibly others. It depends on how many we have time to cut loose and bag. Besides, we don’t know what the demand may be. Just because we and some fans think they are awesome keepsakes and collectibles, doesn’t mean other people will agree. Then again, as a comic book collector, I know I would be thrilled out of my mind if I owned even just a few negatives from early issues of **Spider-Man, the Avengers, Captain America** or any old Marvel comic book.

All the negatives we have are books printed in the 1980s and 1990s. We do NOT have the negatives for all our books, as they have been destroyed or lost over the decades, but we do have the negs for several dozen books that were stored in the Palladium warehouse. (I’m only keeping the original **Rifts® RPG** negatives for myself.)

Note: Each negative comes in a plastic bag with a white backing board and *certificate of authenticity* and *explanation* of exactly what the negative is and which book it came from. I think collectors of art and Palladium memorabilia will love this unique item. And once they are sold, they are GONE forever. I hope you get as big a thrill out of these pages as we do.

POH Panel Talks

There will be many one hour long panel talks (a few longer, like when I blab). Some will be Question and Answer sessions open to any subject while other panels will have specific themes with specific people on the panel. At least a half dozen panel talks will be with me, *Kevin Siembieda*, or me and one or two other writers/artists. Others panel talks will be with Palladium artists and writers or staff. For example, there will be a panel talk entitled **Plans for Splicers®** with *Chuck Walton* and *Brandon Aten*, **Game Master Tips on Running BTS and Horror RPGs** with *Steven Dawes*, **Writing for Palladium Books** with *Glen Evans*, **Meet So and So** (Palladium artists and writers), and many other subjects. Most panel talks are open to questions and answers, and you can ask any reasonable question and get an answer.

Even though you have unprecedented access to 40+ Palladium creators who are happy to chat with you one-on-one, panel talks are a chance for us to speak to a larger audience and address a wider range of questions. Questions you might not have thought of on your own. Likewise, a particular “theme” can lead to subjects and stories you (and us) might never have considered otherwise.

Games, games and games

There are 100+ role-playing game events, and a **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** tournament (Saturday), in addition to panel talks, live auction and much more happening at the Palladium Open House. Many games are run by the very people who create them, like games run by me, Julius Rosenstein, Brandon Aten, Carmen Bellaire, Taylor White and others.

The **Palladium Open House schedule** is available online at www.palladiumbooks.com – but is subject to change. *Carmen Bellaire’s* games, a few other G.M.s and some panel talks are yet to be added to the schedule. **Game Masters**, if you want to run a game or two we can still add you to the schedule up to the day of the event, but sooner is better so people coming can start planning. There will also be space for open gaming.

Closing Thoughts

So many plans and products are in motion, including things for **Robotech® RPG Tactics™**, **Rifts®** and all our game lines. See the Palladium website (www.palladiumbooks.com) for weekly updates. I’ll have more info and musings in the next issue of **The Rifter®**.

I hope you are pleasantly surprised by all the “official” source material this issue. We know that is one of the things people would like to see more of, so this issue is packed with it. Enjoy.

If you are within driving distance to the **Palladium Open House – May 15-17, 2015** – please come and join us, even if it’s only for a day or two. Don’t forget, KoDT creator/artist/writer **Jolly Blackburn** will be there. Artist **Ramon K. Perez** (Palladium Books and Marvel Comics, amongst others) hopes to be at the POH Thursday and/or Friday, artist **Apollo Okamura** is hoping to join the fun too, and dozens of Palladium creators will be present for the entire event. See the list a couple pages over. Don’t miss the fun.

– *With Joyful Anticipation* – *Kevin Siembieda, April 2015*

Palladium News

By Kevin Siembieda, the guy who should know

All of us have been working hard at getting this issue of **The Rifter**®, **Robotech**® **Marines** and several new RPG source-books finished and to the printer. We've also been working on getting more **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ products into manufacturing and exploring new possibilities with potential development partners (see below). On top of all that, we have done a lot of prep for the **Palladium Open House** (May 15) and **Gen Con Indy** (July 30). We have all kinds of plans for products to support our many existing game lines, with **Rifts**®, **Robotech**®, **Chaos Earth**®, **Palladium Fantasy**®, **Splicers**® and **Beyond the Supernatural**™ at the forefront.

Rifts® is heating up

There has been a flurry of interest in **Rifts**® by third parties these past few months. Nothing big like a *Walt Disney* movie yet (waaahh, are they ever going to make a *Rifts*® movie?!), but a few things we think you'll find fun and exciting.

- In an effort to truly expand **Rifts**® across the Megaverse®, in cooperation with Palladium Books, another role-playing game company is to adapt the *Rifts*® *Earth* setting to that company's RPG system of rules, as well as produce adventure source-books. This is only the second time in Palladium's history that an outside company will create new game material under a different set of rules. **Rumor Squashing**: No, Palladium is NOT going to stop publishing **Rifts**® nor change to a completely different set of rules. Far from it. In fact, Palladium expects to release six new **Rifts**® titles in 2015 and 98% of all **Rifts**® titles are in stock and available now. The idea is that by offering **Rifts**® via another game company's set of popular rules it creates a parallel dimension of gaming enjoyment. This is a bit of an experiment, but we are excited to see how it all unfolds.
- **A few steps toward Rifts® comic books?** First, there is **Imaginos Plus #1** created by Palladium artist and pal, Mark Dudley. It is a full color, 32 page, anthology comic book that features four 8 page "teasers" for different comic book titles created by Dudley and the Imaginos crew — including **Rifts**®: **The Adventures of Young Erin Tarn**™. I was impressed by the work in **Imaginos Plus #1**, and the **Erin Tarn** story is just a glimpse at a potential 12 issue comic book series. All 12 issues are completely plotted out and the first six issues are completely scripted. By the way, **Imaginos Plus #1** is available from Palladium Books for \$3.99 plus shipping.

Second, Palladium Books has recently agreed to a one-shot deal with a notable independent comic book company to publish *Ramon K. Perez's Rifts® Machinations of Doom* as a *full color graphic novel*. If the graphic novel does well . . . who knows what might follow?

I apologize that I cannot reveal who these partners are or when you can expect their products, at least not yet. They will make the big, full announcements when they are ready; probably sometime over the next 4-10 months. When they do, I'll be sure to let you know.

- **Palladium Books, itself**, has at least three new **Rifts**® source-books and two **Rifts**® **Chaos Earth**® titles coming out this

summer. A couple of them should see release in May and June, with more to follow. Meanwhile, we have some huge plans and ideas for **Rifts**® and the Palladium game system over the next several years. It's too soon to talk about them just yet, but when the time is right, you'll be the first to know.

- **And that's not all!** There have been a few recent inquiries about **Rifts**® and **Nightbane**® from other interested third parties. We have no idea where discussions may lead, but it's cool that, all of a sudden, there is this interest in **Rifts**® and other Palladium I.P.s from people within and outside of the hobby industry. I will keep you posted if any of them develop. Meanwhile, there are a few other projects underway in which Palladium Books® anticipates working hand-in-hand with other game companies to develop new products and source material with us.

AdeptiCon Convention Report

AdeptiCon was a welcomed experience. We got a ton of positive feedback, made many new connections, and got to witness one of the very first **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ tournaments take place.

Everyone we spoke to was friendly and helpful. We sold some product and shared information, but most importantly, we watched, learned and got a lot of valuable input from wargamers from around the globe. The event was worth it just for the networking and chance to speak to so many people. I love the gaming business, because you can get such honest and thoughtful feedback from gamers. Excellent. It really helped us to fine-tune some of the plans we've been making for the **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ game line, both immediate and long-term.

Robotech® **RPG Tactics**™ was the Number One point of interest. The new **Robotech**® **dice bag** with the classic logo made its debut at AdeptiCon and it went over well. I was surprised by how many gamers there knew *Palladium Books* from our role-playing games and was pleased to sell a number of RPG titles; mostly **Rifts**®, **Heroes Unlimited**, **Robotech**® and **Dead Reign**®.

The **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ **Tournament** orchestrated by *Kyle Toth* and his crew was one of the events most highly anticipated by us at Palladium. It seemed to go over well and we had more than a few excited participants stop by our booth afterward. Many of the painted game pieces looked awesome, and the terrain provided as playing fields varied. Our heartfelt thanks to Kyle and his team for all their time and hard work. You guys are awesome.

Jeff Burke ran demos at our booth all four days. Jeff Ruiz (NMI) pitched in on Sunday. We fielded questions and received helpful suggestions about rules, running tournament events, as well as impromptu opinions on a number of subjects we asked the gamers there. The response to **Robotech**® **RPG Tactics**™ continues to be overwhelmingly favorable and gamers are excited about what the future holds for this expanding game line. We will be clarifying and defining our plans for it very soon.

Robotech® **RPG Tactics**™ is now available in the **USA, Canada, European Union, Australia and New Zealand!** The game pieces are detailed and gorgeous, the game play fast and fun. And most important to **Robotech**® fans around the world, it captures the look and feel of the **Robotech**® television series we all know and love.

Palladium has a ton of support planned for the RRT game line. Wave Two game pieces, other game pieces to expand the scope of the game, advanced rules, game scenarios, and much more are all in the works. We are behind this game 100% and have years worth of ideas and material for the **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** game line. The basic **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** game and expansion packs are just the beginning of something HUGE. Much more to come.

Retailer Support from Palladium

Since writing this in the last issue, we have heard from a number of retailers and have helped them to get Palladium products. If you are a retailer and you want Palladium products, but are having trouble getting them from some of our distributors, please contact Palladium Books directly (734-721-2903) and we will help you get our products.

FYI: When Palladium releases a new title we always make sure we have an anticipated *one year supply* printed, and usually reprint quickly when a book sells out. That means 96-98% of Palladium's entire game line is sitting in our warehouse at any given moment. Right now you can order as many **Robotech® RPG Tactics™**, **Rifts®**, **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**, **Robotech®**, **Dead Reign®**, **Nightbane®**, **Heroes Unlimited™** and all the rest of our titles as you may want and we can provide them. If you are being told otherwise, call the Palladium office and we'll make sure you get the products you need. Call Palladium at 734-721-2903 or send an email to distrib@palladiumbooks.com.

Gamers, you can help again by letting your local stores know they can call us any time to ask questions about products, availability and to get assistance in getting our products!

Store Demos and Game Events. We plan to offer game event support for **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** in the months to come. Palladium has a growing list of volunteer demo teams and Game Masters who can run demos for **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** and **many of our role-playing game lines**. We cannot accommodate every store request, but we can for many. Want to do a special promotion? Contact Palladium to see if we can help. Let us help you sell our games! Call the Palladium office at 734-721-2903 or send us an email at ambassadors@palladiumbooks.com.

Gamers, you can help by letting your local stores know that if they contact us, we may be able to arrange a gaming event or special promotion, as well as put product in their hands.

Palladium Books at Gen Con Indy

– July 30 to August 2, 2015

- 50 Palladium gaming events.
- Huge selection of Palladium products.
- New releases and convention special items.
- **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** products, games and demos.
- Meet Palladium artists and writers.
- Get autographs and the latest news.
- Gen Con® specials in the Coupon Book.
- Join us for the fun.

Gen Con Indy is rapidly approaching and is always a whirlwind of fun and excitement. This year, Palladium Books will again have approximately 50 gaming events thanks to the *Megaversal Ambassadors* and *volunteer Game Masters*. We always bring an expansive amount of product, new releases and specialty

items. We are happy to chat with gamers and sign autographs. Meet artist *Charles Walton*, writer *Brandon Aten*, writer and artist *Mike Leonard*, artist and staffer *Jeff Burke*, editor and staffer *Wayne Smith*, Palladium founder and lead game designer *Kevin Siembieda*, and other Palladium maniacs.

40+ Palladium Creators at the Palladium Open House – May 15-17

Meet 40+ Palladium Creators – artists, writers, game designers staff, Rifter® contributors, Defilers and others for one of the largest such gatherings *ever*. It happens only once every few years at **the Palladium Open House – May 15-17, 2015 – Westland, Michigan**. (Plus May 14 for those attending VIP Thursday.) The event takes place at the Palladium warehouse and offices. And this may be the last Open House, so do not miss out.

Special guests include **Jolly Blackburn**, creator of *Knights of the Dinner Table*, and *Marvel Comics' Spider-Man* artist and long-time Palladium fan favorite artist, **Ramon K. Perez**.

Other Palladium Creators, Artists, Writers & Personalities:

- Amy L. Ashbaugh (Artist)
- Brandon Aten (Writer; Triax 2, Madhaven, The Sovietski, The Rifter®)
- Matthew Balent (Author of Weapons & Armor, Weapons & Castles, Monsters and Animals, and other titles; he was present at the start of Palladium Books!)
- Thomas Bartold (Defiler, writer; Island at the Edge of the World)
- Carmen Bellaire (Writer; Powers Unlimited 1-3, Splicers®)
- Joseph Bergmans (Honorary Staff Member, Helper and Consultant)
- Jolly Blackburn (Creator of Knights of the Dinner Table)
- James Brown (Game Master Supreme, Megaversal Ambassador)
- Jeffrey Burke (Staff Robotech® Consultant & Artist)
- Kent Burles * (Artist)
- Braden Campbell * (Writer; Fleets, Thundercloud Galaxy, The Rifter®)
- Matthew Clements (Writer: Northern Gun 1 & 2, and much more)
- Steven Dawes (Writer; Dark Places, The Rifter®)
- Greg Diaczyk (Writer; Rifts® Lemuria and The Rifter®)
- Mark Dudley (Artist and Game Master)
- Scott Gibbons (Game Designer – play testing Rifts® board game)
- Carl Gleba *(Writer; Megaverse® in Flames, Minion War series, and many others, and an awesome G.M.)
- Chris Guertin (Honorary Staff Member/Helper)
- Jeffrey Scott Hansen * (Writer & Author; Warpath)
- Irvin Jackson * (Writer & Artist)
- Doug Lamberson (Honorary Staff Member/Helper)
- Lonnie Langston * (G.M. and Megaversal Ambassador)
- “Madman” Mike Leonard (Artist and Writer)
- Allen Manning (Artist)
- Brian Manning (Artist)
- Alex Marciniszyn (Staff Editor and Research)
- Mike Mumah (Artist)
- Mark Oberle (Writer; Nightbane® Survival Guide, Rifter®)
- Apollo Okamura * (Artist)
- Taylor Oltman * (Artist)

- Ramon K. Perez (Artist for games and Spider-Man)
- Victor Peterson (Megaversal Ambassador & Game Master)
- Ben Rodriguez (Artist)
- Julius Rosenstein (Staff, Writer, Editor & Game Master)
- Jeff “NMI” Ruiz (Palladium’s Online Administrator & MA)
- Kevin Siembieda (Staff, Founder, Writer, Artist & Game Master)
- Kathy Simmons (Staff, Order Processing & Customer Services)
- Josh Sinspaugh (Writer, Rifter® Contributor)
- Wayne Smith (Staff, Editor, and Editor-in-Chief of The Rifter®)
- Charles Walton (Artist and Concept Guy)
- Taylor White (Writer and Musician)
- And more.

Only those with an asterisk remain tentative, but circumstances change, so there is no guarantee everyone on the list will make it to the POH.

Price of admission covers ALL events, EXCEPT the Robotech® RPG Tactics™ tournament.

Play in games run by the very people who make them, in the building where the magic happens.

Get the latest news and happenings. Get the behind the scenes lowdown on events. Ask any question. Have a blast.

Most Palladium products are in stock and available for purchase, from prints and T-shirts to books and coffee mugs. And we always have a selection of *new T-shirts* and *speciality items* available for the first time ever at the Palladium Open House. This year, there is also a wide range of *original art*, *prints* and rare, signed and out of print book titles being made available. Some of the rarest and most unique items to be offered up in the *live auction*. IN ADDITION, many of the artists and writers bring original art, prints and specialty items for sale from them individually.

It all adds up to an incredible experience.

Palladium Open House

– May 15-17, 2015 – Westland, Michigan

- Game with us at the Palladium warehouse.
- 100+ Palladium gaming events.
- Play in games run by Kevin Siembieda & other Palladium creators.
- Play-test a prototype *Rifts® board game* run by the game designer.
- Enjoy *Robotech® RPG Tactics™* tournament, games, products and demos.
- Compete in the *Robotech® RPG Tactics™* painting competition.
- Participate in *panel talks* and many question & answer chats.
- Meet 40+ *Palladium creators*, all available to chat & sign books.
- Bring your favorite game books to get signed.
- Meet *Kevin Siembieda* and the Palladium staff.
- Meet *Carmen Bellaire* and many other Palladium creators.
- Meet *Jolly Blackburn*, creator of *Knights of the Dinner Table*.
- Meet *Ramon K. Perez*, Marvel Comics artist – *Spider-Man: Learning to Crawl* and artist of many Palladium World Books and other comics.
- Meet fellow gamers from around the world: Brazil, Canada, England, Germany, Uruguay, USA and elsewhere.

- Every in stock Palladium product available for purchase, and 40 creators happy to autograph whatever you get.
- Commission select artists to draw your favorite character.
- Rare collector items, first printings, and signed books.
- Original art by Long, Siembieda, Walton and many others.
- Art prints, T-shirts and specialty items.
- Robotech® art from the 1980s and 90s by Kevin Long and others.
- “Live” Auction with rare collectibles and oddities.
- Get the latest news and other insider info.
- Price of admission pays for all events EXCEPT the RRT tournament!
- Family reunion and party atmosphere.
- An intimate setting, unlike big conventions.
- 100+ Gaming Events:
 - After the Bomb®
 - Beyond the Supernatural™
 - Dead Reign®
 - Heroes Unlimited™
 - Nightbane®
 - Ninjas & Superspies™
 - Palladium Fantasy RPG®
 - Phase World®/Three Galaxies™
 - Rifts®
 - Rifts® Chaos Earth®
 - Robotech®
 - Robotech® RPG Tactics™
 - Splicers®
 - and more . . .
- Special Event: *Robotech® RPG Tactics™* tournament.
- Special Event: *Robotech® RPG Tactics™* “Painting Contest” – bring your best painted mini and see if you win.
- Special Event: *Robotech® RPG Tactics™* games galore. Some run by *Carmen Bellaire*, the co-author of the RRT rules.
- Special Event (Saturday): **Live Auction** – rare collectibles and original art including some *Kevin Long Robotech® II: The Sentinels* artwork, animation cels, and rare *Kevin Siembieda* artwork.
- Open gaming at the main site and designated hotel.
- Game with the very people who make your favorite games and sourcebooks like Kevin Siembieda, Julius Rosenstein, Brandon Aten, Carmen Bellaire, Matthew Clements, Greg Diaczyk, Chuck Walton, the Mannings, and others.
- No fees for the individual games or panel talks. ALL events are covered under the price of admission, except for the RRT tournament.
- Meet 40+ Palladium creators – the largest gathering of Palladium creators in the world! Most available every day, the entire day.
- Chat with Palladium artists and writers from across the country.
- Get autographs from all the Palladium creators.
- Live panel talks and interviews.
- Live auction (Saturday evening) with rare, out of print books, original artwork, proofreader copies of manuscripts, collectibles, books from the Erick Wujcik collection, and more.
- Get new releases, back stock items and Palladium collectibles.
- Get original artwork and limited edition prints.

- See (and play games in) the Palladium warehouse.
- Intimate setting. Easy access to Palladium creators.
- Held at the Palladium warehouse and offices.
- Meet fans from across the USA and around the world – Canada, England, Germany, Spain, Uruguay, etc.
- Location: It all takes place at the Palladium warehouse, Palladium Books, 39074 Webb Court, Westland, MI 48185-7606
- Join the fun and make memories to last a lifetime.
- Hours: 9:00 A.M. to 12:30 A.M. (possibly longer). For you all-night gamers, gaming continues at the hotel.

A rare event, the POH is sort of like the Olympics in that we only host one every 2-4 years (the last one was held in 2012), making it all the more special. For a number of reasons, it is looking more and more like this may well be the last Palladium Open House, so if you can make it, come on over for our last grand party.

Price of POH Admission

Advance Ticket Purchase Guarantees Your Admission – May 15, 16 & 17, 2015 (VIP Night, May 14, 2015 is an additional day and extra cost of \$87).

\$60 per person for the Three Day Weekend (Friday, Saturday & Sunday) when ordered after April 20, 2015 or purchased at the door, if space is available.

\$25 for Friday, 9:00 AM till Closing (about midnight). Same price at the door, if space is available.

\$25 for Saturday, 9:00 AM till Closing (about midnight). Same price at the door, if space is available.

\$12 for Sunday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Same price at the door, if space is available.

\$87 additional for “VIP Night” – Thursday, May 14, 2014; 3:00 P.M. till about Midnight. A few “cancellations” have made a handful of VIP night tickets available on a first come, first-served basis. VIP Night is a special, one-evening event limited to around 100 gamers. You get the delicious dinner catered by Palladium’s very own Kathy Simmons (people rave about her food), plus you get an extra afternoon and evening of gaming, a more intimate chance to talk with Palladium staff, artists and writers, and first crack at rare collectibles, prints and original art.

The price of admission covers ALL events EXCEPT the Robotech® RPG Tactics™ tournament. The price of admission gives you access to all the guests, Kevin and crew, as well as the many RPG gaming events (first come, first served), panel talks, auction and other activities. There is an additional \$10 fee to play in the **Robotech® RPG Tactics™ tournament.** Limited to 20 players.

Methods of Payment:

Placing Your Order: 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.

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.

By Telephone: Call (734) 721-2903 – have your credit card information ready. You may place your reservation online in a similar way as placing a book order or you may use Palladium’s

order line 734-721-2903. Please 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.

All tickets are sold on a first come, first served basis, so get your reservations in as soon as possible! Due to space and parking limitations and safety concerns, attendance is limited to approximately 350 participants.

Admission at the door is available, provided there is still room! Kathy Simmons will be handling reservations and tickets, so you know everything will be timely and organized.

Coming Attractions

Palladium’s 2015 Release Checklist

Recent Releases – ALL Available Now

- **The Rifter® #69** – Available and in stores now
- **The Rifter® #70** – Available and in stores now
- **Bizantium and the Northern Islands™** – Available and in stores now
- **Rifts® Chaos Earth®: Rise of Magic™** – Back in Print – available now
- **Rifts® WB 21: Splynn Dimensional Market™** – Back in Print – available now
- **Rifts® Book of Magic** – Back in Print – available now
- **Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Boxed Game** – Available around the world
- **Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Expansion Packs** – Available around the world
- **Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Rule Book** – Available now

May and June Releases

- **Robotech® Dice Bag (NEW)** – Available only from Palladium Books
- **Imaginos Plus #1 (NEW)** a 32 page comic book – Available now
- **Rifts® Chaos Earth® Resurrection** – May
- **Robotech®: Expeditionary Force Marines™** – June
- **Event: 2015 Palladium Open House** – May 15-17 – Join the fun

Spring/Summer 2015 Releases

- **Rifts® The Disavowed™** – Spring/Summer
- **Rifts® Heroes of Humanity™** – Spring/Summer
- **Rifts® Secrets of the Atlanteans™** – Spring/Summer

Coming Later in 2015

- **The Rifter® #71 and #72**
- **Rifts® Chaos Earth® Sourcebook: First Responders**
- **More Rifts® Sourcebooks**
- **Splicers® Sourcebooks**
- **Heroes Unlimited™ sourcebook** (tentative)

- **Beyond the Supernatural™ Sourcebook: Beyond Arcanum™**
- **Beyond the Supernatural™ Sourcebook: Tomes Grotesque™**
- **Dead Reign® Sourcebook 6: Hell Followed™**
- **Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Wave Two Expansion Packs**
- **Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Advanced Rule Book**
- **Some BIG announcements**
- **And maybe a few surprises.**

Palladium RPGs are available in many hobby and game stores around the world. We encourage people to support their local stores. Going to a store enables you to see the product before purchasing it, and many stores are happy to place special orders for you, provided you pay in advance, enabling you to avoid the cost of shipping and possible damage in the mail.

Ordering from Palladium Books: You can also order directly from Palladium Books, but you will pay extra for shipping. For customers with access to a computer, we highly recommend ordering online. This provides you with information about the most recent releases and Palladium's entire product catalog. It also provides you the most accurate shipping costs and more shipping options. You can also order by telephone; 734-721-2903 (order line only). For customers without such access, use the following "mail order" process.

1. Send the cost of the books or items being ordered.

2. **In the USA:** Add \$6 for *orders* totaling \$1-\$50 to cover shipping and handling. Add \$12 for *orders* totaling \$51-\$95. Add \$18 for *orders* totaling \$96-\$200. **Note:** For *non-book products*, including the **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** box game and expansion packs, add an extra \$6 per \$50 worth of product, on top of the shipping amounts listed above. This is because *non-book products* cannot ship via Media Mail, and must use a more expensive method of shipping. **Outside the USA:** Double the shipping amount for orders going to Canada, and *quadruple* it for overseas orders. Any and all additional costs incurred as a result of customs fees and taxes are the responsibility of the foreign customer, NOT Palladium Books.

3. Make checks or money orders payable to *Palladium Books*.

4. Please make sure to send us your complete and correct address, *including* apartment number. **Note:** These costs are for the least expensive and slowest method of shipping only. Allow 2-4 weeks for delivery. Order online or call the office for a superior but more costly shipping method.

NEW! Imaginos Plus™ #1 Comic Book

A 32 page, color comic book created by long-time Palladium artist and friend, *Mark Dudley*. **Imaginos Plus™** features four, 6-8 page "teasers" for different comic book titles created by Mark Dudley and the Imaginos crew. One of them is a **Rifts®** story. To **Rifts®** fans and collectors, this item is well worth the cover price.

- **Rifts®: The Adventures of Young Erin Tarn™** – The title says it all. Art by Noah Page and Benjamin Rodriguez (Palladium artist). Story by Jeff Lilly. Get in on the ground floor of what could develop into a regular comic book series. If that happens, **Imaginos Plus™ #1** will become a rare collector's item. Fewer than 1,000 printed.
- **Requiem™** – Science fiction. Art by Cassie Henry and Gary Mitchell. Story by Joseph A. Cain.

- **Candy Coated™** – A super-hero comedy. Art by Dimitris Moore and Brandon C. Clark (the latter is another old **Rifts®** artist). Story by C.C. Gamers. (I loved it. Very funny. – Kevin)
- **Juda Fist™: 7 Deaths of the Yobi** – Superheroes, Mercs and mystery. Art by Mark Dudley and Allen Smithy. Story by Mark Dudley. (I wanted more! – Kevin).
- Heavy, quality paper stock. Glossy cover by Mark Dudley.
- Excellent art and color. Quality work all around.
- **Cat. No. Imaginos1 – \$3.99 retail – 32 page comic book.** Available now while supplies last.

NEW! A+Plus™ #5 Comic Book (1978)

We offered issues Number 1-5 of **A+Plus, Detroit's First Comic Book**, years and years ago and thought we had sold them all. However, four dozen copies of issue #5 were recently uncovered. Two dozen of them are being offered again via Palladium Books.

A+Plus Number Five was the last issue of a 64 page, black and white, independent comic book created and published by *Kevin Siembieda* and *Alex Marciniszyn*. The first few issues came out while these two best friends were still in college. It sells on the collector's market for \$10-\$20. Had Siembieda continued on the comic book trail, there might never have been a Palladium Books.

- **The Harlequin™** – A 20 page story about a tormented soul who has taken refuge in a circus, but has secretly become a reluctant hero searching for answers about his own origin and purpose. You see, the Harlequin was bio-engineered to be a living weapon. How, why and by whom remains a mystery. Art and story by *Kevin Siembieda*. (**Note:** Nick Bradshaw has been trying to convince Kevin to reprint the two Harlequin stories in **The Rifter®** or as an adventure sourcebook for **Heroes Unlimited™**, with all new, expanded game background, heroes, villains and adventure hooks. Kevin is considering it.)
- **Arc™** – A strange, 8 page, science fiction story with human and animal characters. Art and story by *James Dombrowski*. Jim would go on to contribute illustrations to a couple of **After the Bomb®** sourcebooks and make a career in the newspaper industry.
- **Down to the Last Man™** – The Last Man™ – science fiction fantasy – was one of A+Plus's most popular features, and one of the few ongoing series. Art by *Brian Siembieda* (pencils) and *Kevin Siembieda* (inks). Story by *Brian Siembieda*. Yes, Brian is Kevin's talented younger brother. It started out all humor and took a darker turn as the story progressed. Brian's inspiration came from the works of Ralph Bakshi, Will Eisner and Vaughn Bode. This 11 page story is one of Kevin's personal favorites.
- **And Now a Word from the Overseer** – A weird 8 page science fantasy story that ties into being a comic book artist. Art and story by *James A. Osten*. Jim would work for Palladium Books as an editor for many years.
- **The Bunny of Death™ in the Hare, the Worm and the Desert** – A 5 page tale of a truly deadly, sword-wielding, beer drinking rabbit. Art and story by *William Messner-Loebs*. Bill would go on to create a popular independent comic featuring **Wolverine McAllister**, before moving on to write **The Flash** for several years at **DC Comics**.

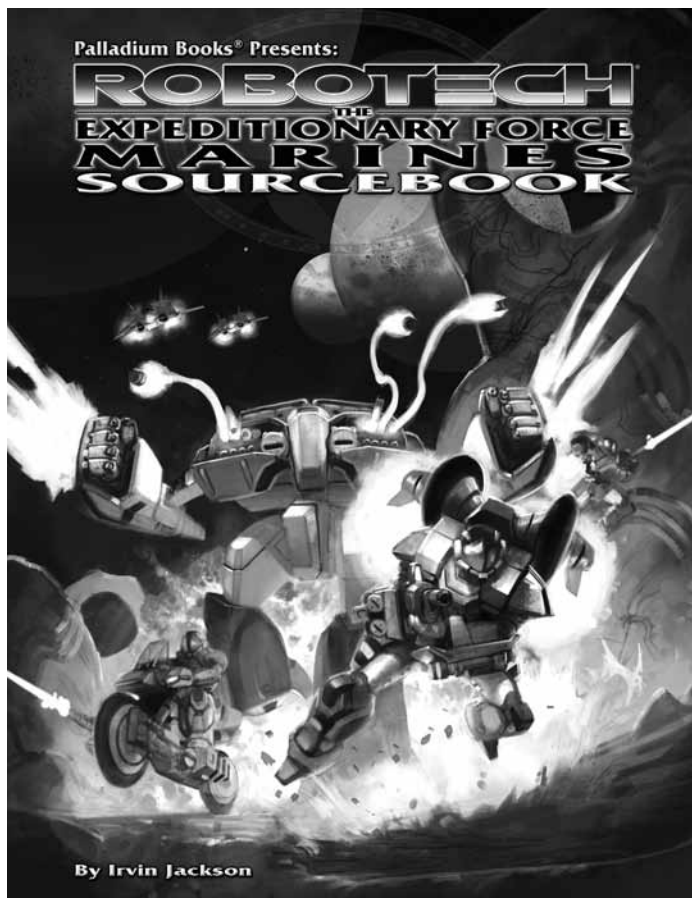
- A couple of short strips, an article about J.R.R. Tolkien's the Silmarillion and a couple ads round out this final issue.
- Glossy cover by *Michael Kucharski*. Mike contributed art to several of the early Palladium Fantasy titles and a couple of the Weapon Books, most notably **Weapons and Assassins™**.
- Newsprint interiors.
- Only 5,000 copies of this comic were printed. Only around 40 copies remain in Kevin Siembieda's possession, half of which are being made available for sale.
- The book you are buying is the actual comic book printed in 1978 and shows signs of yellowing and age. However, all are in at least good to very good condition. Remember, this comic is 37 years old!
- **Cat. No. Aplus5 – \$9.99 retail – 64 page, black and white comic book from 1978. 24 copies are available now, ONLY while supplies last.**



NEW! Robotech® Dice Bag

People have enjoyed the Rifts® dice bag for years, so we thought we'd do one for **Robotech®**. The **Robotech® Dice Bag** debuted at AdeptiCon and went over very well. Now it is available in the Palladium store for everyone. This is just one tiny thing we've been working on behind the scenes for **Robotech®**. More to come.

- **The classic Robotech® logo.**
- **Golden yellow color, silk-screen imprint.**
- **Black, faux velvet, draw-string bag.**
- **7½ x 8 inch bag with a flat, round bottom. Can hold a lot of dice.**
- **Suitable for any Robotech® gamer with a pile of dice.**
- **\$8.00 retail – Cat. No. 2565 – Available now, only from Palladium Books.**



COMING: Robotech®: Expeditionary Force Marines™ Sourcebook One

Robotech®: Expeditionary Force Marines sourcebook is set in space with the UEEF (United Earth Expeditionary Force) led by Admiral Rick Hunter. This valiant force of mecha-clad heroes travel across the galaxy liberating planets from the bondage of the Invid Regent, the Robotech Masters and other tyrants and monsters.

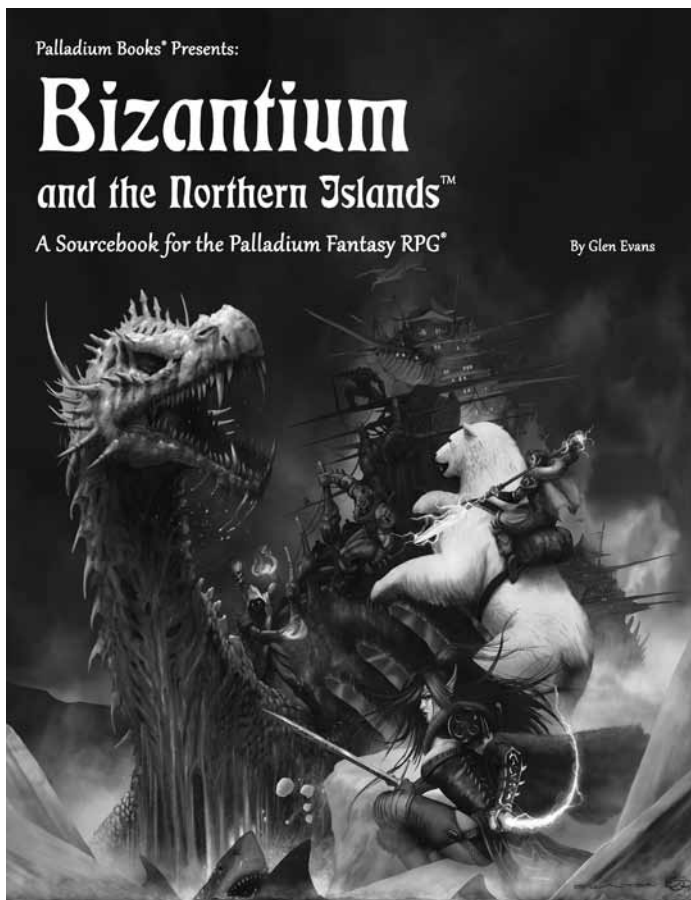
- **New mecha and weapons of the UEEF Marines.**
- **New UEEF Marine character classes and background.**
- **Alien species and allies.**
- **Planet hopping, adventure and much more.**
- **Epic battles and adventure ideas galore.**
- **Written by Irvin Jackson. Additional text by Kevin Siembieda.**
- **160 pages – \$20.95 retail – Cat. No. 553. June, 2015.**

NEW! Palladium Fantasy RPG® Sourcebook:

Bizantium and the Northern Islands™

To the civilized world, Bizantium and the waters and lands around it are frightening. A realm of sea serpents, monsters, and barbarians. To the heroes and people who live there, it is a realm of adventure, beauty and opportunity.

One might consider Bizantium as the center of adventure and mystery in the North. Many are the myths of ancient gods, lost treasures and strange creatures. On the mainland, there are the Wolfen and their canine kin, the Kiridin barbarians, the turbulent Shadow Coast colonies, and all manner of monsters and secrets in



the Northern Hinterlands and Great Northern Mountains. Living near the edge of the Sea of Despair and in the shadow of the Land of the Damned, sea monsters and danger are but a short voyage away and make all too frequent visits to the Bizantium islands.

North of Bizantium are the Icy Ocean and Great Ice Shelf, places where only a handful of the bravest Bizantium sailors have ever set sail, and the rest of the world *knows nothing* about. For kingdoms in the South, only a few scholars have ever heard of the Great Ice Shelf or the cannibalistic Necromancers known as the Iceborn who make the frozen wasteland their home. Those who have heard tales of the land of ice and death are convinced they are nothing but the stuff of myth. Very soon, they will find out otherwise.

And these are but a few of the revelations presented in **Bizantium and the Northern Islands™**. Discover for yourself the wonders and horrors that await.

- **Waterchanter O.C.C. and 20+ magic spells new to the Fantasy setting.**
- **Necromancy revisited. Many spells new to the Fantasy setting.**
- **90+ spells in all, Ocean Magic, Necromancy and more.**
- **Serpent Chaser, Bizantium Marine & other new character classes.**
- **The Iceborn Raiders, Skinbinders and Sea Witches. A forgotten race of monsters who worship death, wield death magic, hunt humanoids, eat their flesh, and wear their skin. A villain you will love to hate.**
- **The Iceborn's Necroilus – massive vessels made from the remains of dead sea serpents and animated by Necromancy to prowl the seas.**
- **Vengeful gods, monsters and Sea Monster creation tables.**

- **The Seven Treasures, lost for centuries, waiting to be found.**
- **New and old Bizantium ships, new weapons and gear.**
- **Bizantium and the Northern Islands as never before revealed.**
- **The Great Ice Shelf – a new continent to explore.**
- **Bizantium history, society, culture, and notable places.**
- **Adventure hooks galore, and more.**
- **Written by Glen Evans, Matthew Clements and Kevin Siembieda.**
- **192 pages – \$24.95 retail – Cat. No. 474 – Available NOW!**



Rifts® Chaos Earth® Sourcebook:

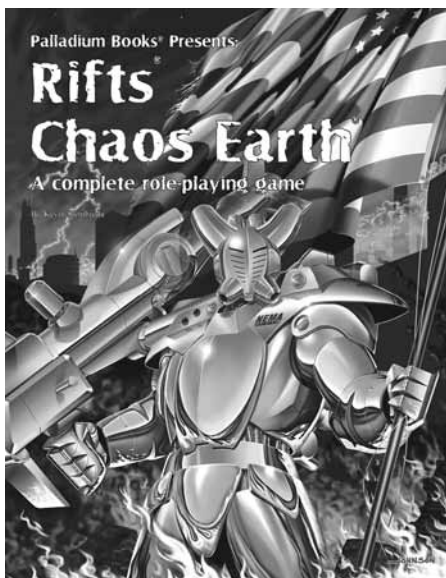
Rise of Magic™ – Back in print

We've all played "post" apocalyptic games. Now imagine playing as the apocalypse is happening. As the world you know is crumbling. As magic and monsters from myth become real and your world is reshaped by forces beyond your comprehension. That is the premise behind the **Rifts® Chaos Earth®** series. That YOU play through the Great Cataclysm as the apocalypse happens.

Rifts® Chaos Earth®: Rise of Magic™ is a key book in that continuing story (new books are coming this spring and summer). In **Rise of Magic™**, humans, particularly children, are discovering they can draw upon mystic energy and cast magic. The thing is, they don't really know what they are doing. Magic is just part of the chaos and the impossible that is happening all around them. Meanwhile, others have found they can summon and control monsters and demons, while still others make pacts with supernatural beings to become witches and worse. And some have learned they can harness the magic to animate and command the dead. Madness and more chaos ensues. All of this only complicates things for NEMA, Earth's defenders, as the line of distinction between "good guys" and "bad guys" begins to blur, and things go from bad to worse.

- **Chaos Magic, new magic specific to the Chaos Earth® setting.**
- **100+ unique Chaos Magic spells.**
- **New magic O.C.C.s like the Blue Zone Wizard and Chaos Wizard.**

- New evil magic users like the Chaos Witch and Demon Caller.
- More on NEMA and the Demon Plagues.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- Two new Chaos Earth® sourcebooks are coming soon.
- 64 pages – \$12.95 – Cat. No. 662. Available now!

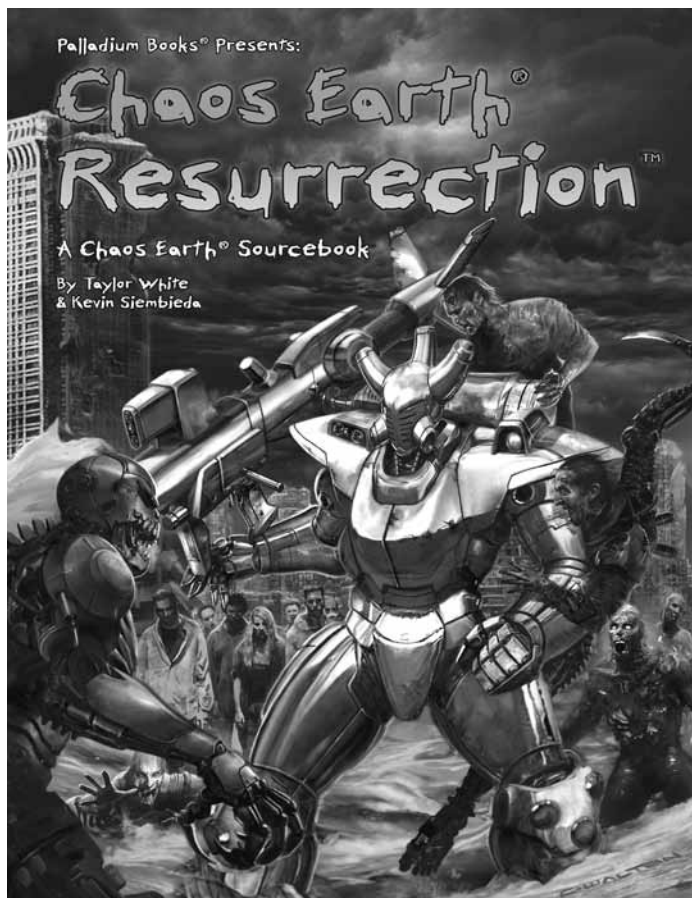


Chaos Earth® RPG – Available now

The origins of **Rifts®** start here! It is a new beginning. But first everything that human civilization had become during the Golden Age of Science, more than eighty years in our future, must come to a crashing end. The Earth is in the process of being transformed into a place more alien than a thousand alien worlds. Ley lines erupt with even more power and ambient energy than what is known on Rifts Earth 300 years later. Rifts – tears in space and time – appear along ley lines to unleash legions of aliens, monsters, dragons, supernatural horrors, and ancient gods of myth and legend in a mad symphony of chaos and transformation.

You play survivors or the heroes of **NEMA**. The men and women of the Northern Eagle Military Alliance equipped with their *Chromium Guardsmen* (Glitter Boys), *Silver Eagles* (SAMAS) and a host of other robots and power armor to stand against a rising tide of enemies and alien invaders. They are humanity's last and only hope to survive the apocalypse that will become known as the Great Cataclysm. These are the heroes you play in a world that can only be described as *Chaos Earth*.

- Overview of the Great Cataclysm as it unfolds.
- Introduction to NEMA and its weapons and resources.
- 11 different character classes, including robot pilots, the Para-Arcane, Demon and Witch Hunters, Chromium Guardsmen, & more.
- Weapons, robots, power armor, vehicles and equipment.
- Monsters, chaos and adventure. Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- 160 pages. A complete RPG – \$20.95 – Cat. No. 660 – Available now!
- *Chaos Earth® Sourcebook 1: Creatures of Chaos™* – 30+ Chaos Demons, NEMA and more. \$12.95 – 64 pages – Cat. No. 661 – Available now.



COMING: Rifts® Chaos Earth® Sourcebook: Resurrection

In the shattered depths of Wisconsin, survivors are besieged by the dead come back to life. Zombies. But not just any type of zombie, zombies done Rifts-style. And unless the source of the zombie plague can be found and neutralized by NEMA defenders, North America may be overrun by the dead.

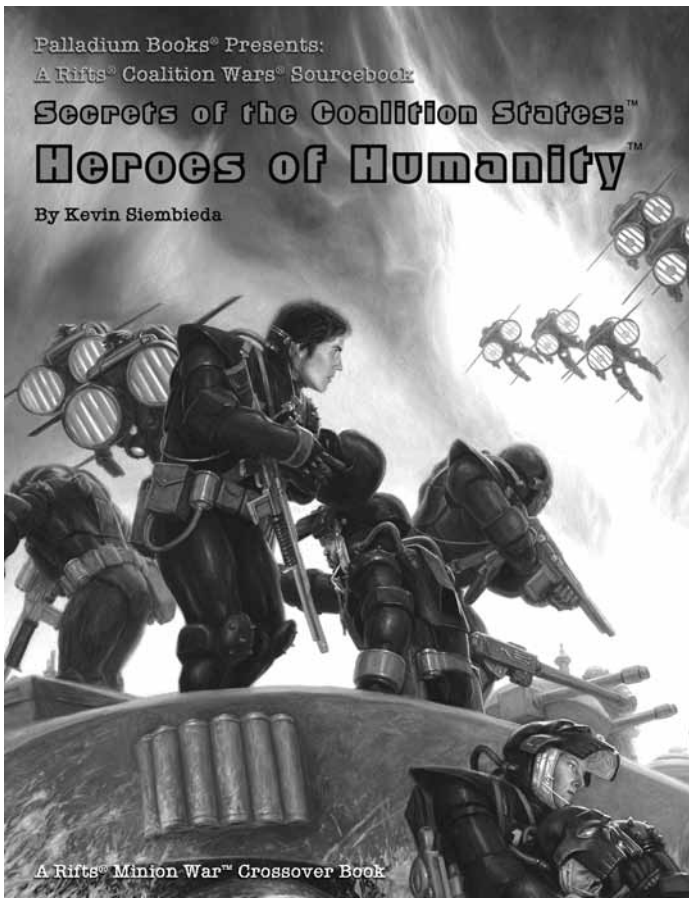
This was actually something Taylor White and I have been kicking around for years, even before we released the *Dead Reign®* RPG line. We think you'll love it.

- **Something has animated the dead in Wisconsin. It is up to NEMA heroes to find the cause and stop it before it spreads beyond control.**
- **Scrap Zombies of all types.**
- **Snatcher Ghouls, Carrion Cleaners, Screaming Puppet Ghosts, Sour Maggot Parasites, and other monsters.**
- **The Zombie Pox and other dangers.**
- **Setting background, adventure and adventure idea table.**
- **Written by Taylor White.**
- **128 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 666. May or June, 2015.**

COMING: Rifts® Chaos Earth® Sourcebook: First Responders

The Great Cataclysm has devastated civilization, but humanity fights for survival. The struggles of civilian law enforcement, fire and rescue, and everyday men and women are some of the most epic tales to be told in a world gone to hell. They fight monsters, aliens, the paranormal, the elements, and each other, all with the hope of reclaiming their lives from the Chaos.

- New D-Bees and monsters from the Rifts.
- First Responder O.C.C.s, skills and special equipment.
- New “average citizen” Occupational Character Classes (O.C.C.s).
- New equipment for NEMA “Roscoes” and other emergency personnel.
- Notable rescue vehicles, robot drones, and technology.
- Source information and stats for common Golden Age technology (weapons, vehicles, medical tech, etc.).
- Apocalypse Plagues brought from other worlds to Chaos Earth.
- Adventure ideas and more.
- Written by Jason Richards. Additional text by Clements & Siembieda.
- 96 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 665. Summer, 2015.



Rifts® The Coalition States – Heroes of Humanity

The events unfolding in **World Book 35: Megaverse® in Flames™** threaten to change the entire landscape of Rifts® Earth, as the demonic minions of Hades and Dyval seek to bring Hell on Earth and turn the planet into a dimensional gateway to Armageddon!

The Coalition States, along with Northern Gun and Lazlo, take the lead in the defense of North America. *Heroes of Humanity* explores the good and bad in the Coalition’s efforts to save humanity and send this new threat back to the pits of Hell.

- **New Coalition weapons, armor and war machines.**
- **The Coalition States: are they heroes or villains? Or does it depend on whether you are human or not?**

- **Can the CS fight alongside mages and D-Bees if it means saving the world?**
- **How is the CS dealing with the Minion War on Earth?**
- **One plan to battle the Xiticix and who really pays the price.**
- **Adventure ideas and more.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda, Matthew Clements and contributors.**
- **Final page count and cost yet to be determined but probably 96 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 889. Spring or Summer, 2015.**

Rifts® Secrets of the Coalition States

The Disavowed™

“Desperate times require desperate measures. War has nothing to do with morality or justice. It’s all about winning or dying. We cannot bind our hands with high ideals, even our own, or worry about the laws of renegade nations or the rights of alien people. We must fight fire with fire. And you are the match.”

– Colonel Lyboc addressing a Disavowed team

The Disavowed are so Top Secret that their existence is known only to a handful of the Coalition States’ most elite, top echelon, with *Joseph Prosek II* the mastermind behind the Disavowed operation, and Colonel Lyboc its shadowy face. Find out who these men and women are. How the Disavowed get away with using magic, traveling to other parts of Rifts Earth and even to other dimensions in pursuit of enemies and strategic information that cannot be had through conventional means. Learn about the secret parameters in which these hard-boiled warriors, secretly hand-picked by Joseph Prosek II, operate, why almost every mission is considered a suicide mission, and why they must forever be the Disavowed.

- **CS operatives so secret that even the top military and political leaders right up to Emperor Prosek know nothing about them. And if they did know, would they condone their activity or condemn it?**
- **Are the Disavowed heroes or renegades? Assassins or soldiers? Madmen or super-patriots? Or a little of them all?**
- **Unsung heroes who keep the CS safe, or thugs and pawns of a shadow agency within the Coalition government?**
- **What role does the Vanguard play in this group?**
- **How do they reward their D-Bee “teammates” when the mission is over?**
- **What happens to the Disavowed when they have seen or learned too much? Adventure ideas galore and so much more.**
- **Written by Kevin Siembieda and Matthew Clements.**
- **Final page count and cost yet to be determined, but probably 96 pages – \$16.95 retail – Cat. No. 892. Spring or Summer, 2015.**

Rifts® Secrets of the Atlanteans

True Atlanteans are descendants from Earth’s past. The survivors of the sinking of Atlantis (really a dimensional mishap) and travelers of the Megaverse, wielders of Tattoo Magic and other lost mystic arts. Most people regard them as heroes, but are they? The Sunaj Assassins are mythic villains feared by all, yet they too are True Atlanteans who serve dark forces.

For the first time, much of the story behind True Atlanteans and their secrets are revealed.

- **True Atlanteans revisited.**
- **Optional Atlantean character creation tables including clan heritage and other factors.**
- **Secrets of the stone pyramids, different types/purposes and powers.**
- **Many new magic tattoos, magic spells, weapons and armor.**
- **Atlantean hideouts and secret communities across the Megaverse.**
- **The Sunaj Assassins, their secrets, history and plans for the future.**
- **Atlantean Monster Hunter O.C.C., Atlantean Defender O.C.C. and much more. And this is just the tip of what this book contains.**
- **Written by Carl Gleba. Additional text and ideas by Kevin Siembieda.**
- **Final page count and cost yet to be determined, but probably 160-192 pages – \$20.95-\$24.95 retail – Cat. No. 890. Summer 2015.**

The Rifter® #71

Every issue of **The Rifter®** is an *idea factory* that helps players and Game Masters to generate new ideas and keep their games fresh. It provides useful, ready to go, source material gamers can just drop into their ongoing games. A doorway to new possibilities and numerous Palladium role-playing worlds. It offers new characters, O.C.C.s, powers, magic, weapons, adventure and ideas for your games. It presents new villains, monsters and dangers to battle, and new ideas to consider. Every issue has material for **Rifts®** and at least two or three other Palladium game lines.

With 2015 being the 25th Anniversary of **Rifts®**, every issue of **The Rifter®** will feature a **Rifts®** inspired cover and contain at least one **Rifts®** article.

The Rifter® #71 – Summer, 2015:

- **Rifts® source material.**
- **Optional source material for 2-5 settings.**
- **News, coming attractions, product descriptions and more.**
- **Cover by Amy L. Ashbaugh.**
- **96 pages – \$13.95 retail – Cat. No. 171. Summer issue.**

Robotech® RPG Tactics™

Available now in store across the USA and Canada

Robotech® RPG Tactics™ is a fast-paced, tabletop combat game that captures the action and adventure of the **Robotech®** anime. Two or more players can engage in small squad skirmishes or scale up to massive battles. Relive the clashes of the First Robotech War, engage in stand-alone tactical games, or use the dynamic game pieces to enhance your **Robotech®** RPG experience. Or simply collect your favorite mecha from an expanding range of top-notch game pieces.

Mecha vs Mecha. Take command of the fighting forces of the *United Earth Defense Force (UEDF)* valiantly defending Earth from alien annihilation. Or lead the massive clone armies of the *Zentraedi Armada* to recover an alien artifact of immense power and enslave humankind.



Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Box Set – Cat. No. 55100

- **Size of Box:** Just over 11.5 inches by 11.5 inches by 6 inches tall.
- **112 page, full color, softcover rule book.** Includes a comprehensive 15 page color guide (more than 100 images) for all Macross mecha in the series.
- **24 Battle Dice, 12 UEDF and 12 Zentraedi.**
- **53 color game cards (unit cards, etc.).**
- **4x VF-1A Valkyries** (in Fighter, Guardian, and Battloid modes).
- **1x VF-1J “Officer” in all three modes.**
- **4x Destroyers: 2 Tomahawks and 2 Defenders.**
- **12x Regult Zentraedi Battlepods.**
- **1x Glaug Officer’s Battlepod.**
- **1x Quel-Regult Recon Battlepod.**
- **1x Quel-Gulnau Recovery Pod.**
- **1/285th (6 mm) scale, high quality, multi-pose plastic game pieces** (40mm to 70mm tall). World-class sculpts from sculptors around the world.
- **Game rules use D6.**
- **Turn-based system of play.**
- **Scalable from small squad skirmishes to mass battles. Can accommodate two to several players.**
- **Combat is fast and designed to emulate the anime action.**
- **Measuring tape required to determine targets and distance.**
- **Assembly required. Game pieces come unpainted. Not a toy. Small parts, not suitable for children under the age of 13.**
- Brought to you by **Palladium Books®**, created with **Ninja Division** (the creative minds behind *Soda Pop Miniatures* and *Cipher Studios*).
- **\$99.95 retail price – Cat. No. 55100 (Main Box Game) – Now available!**



- **UEDF Dice Pack – Cat. No. 55101 – \$12.00 retail.** 12 white, six-sided dice with red printing and the UEDF logo in place of the six.



- **Zentraedi Dice Pack – Cat. No. 55102 – \$12.00 retail.** 12 purple, six-sided dice with yellow printing and the Zentraedi logo in place of the six.
- **Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Rulebook – Cat. No. 55105 – \$20.00 retail.** **Note:** This is the same rulebook that is included in the main game box, and is offered separately for those who want an extra copy, or want to check out the rules before buying the whole game.
- **Robotech RPG Tactics Template & Token Pack – Cat. No. 55106 – \$15.00 retail.** 10 UEDF Command Point tokens, 10 Zentraedi Command Point tokens, and one blast template.
- **Robotech® Dice Bag – Cat. No. 2565 – \$8.00 retail.** The classic Robotech® logo in a golden yellow color, silk-screen imprint. Black faux velvet, draw-string bag. 7½ x 8 inch bag with flat, round bottom. Can hold a lot of dice. **Available now, only from Palladium Books.**

Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Expansion Packs and other accessories

- **UEDF Valkyrie Wing – Cat. No. 55201 – \$36.95 retail.**
- **UEDF Tomahawk/Defender Destroids – Cat. No. 55202 – \$32.95 retail.**
- **UEDF Spartan/Phalanx Destroids – Cat. No. 55203 – \$32.95 retail.**
- **Zentraedi Regult Battlepods – Cat. No. 55401 – \$36.95 retail.**
- **Zentraedi Artillery Battlepods – Cat. No. 55402 – \$36.95 retail.**
- **Zentraedi Glaug Command – Cat. No. 55403 – \$36.95 retail.**



Splicers®: Blood and Iron™ Preview

“Official” Source Material for Splicers®

By Brandon K. Aten

At the very core, **Splicers®** is a game with almost countless options as masters of genetic manipulation square off against the overwhelming and tireless forces of an insane machine. Organic suits of living armor, gigantic beasts of war and even individual soldiers can be constructed on a genetic level to bring astounding capabilities to the field of battle. Most classes are able to grow and develop as they level up, getting new weapons, senses and abilities as they earn more Bio-E.

When I first started playing **Splicers®**, this variety is what made this game so unique and rich to both me and my players, though I quickly found myself gravitating towards the one O.C.C. that was the exception to this rule.

The Technojacker™ and its ability to interact with technology was an appealing character class to me, but I noticed that the O.C.C. was extremely “front-heavy,” meaning that the class received most of its abilities at level one. This allows a level one Technojacker to

have some really cool abilities that set it apart from the other characters in the game, but also means that a level one Technojacker really doesn’t have much to differentiate it from a level 15 member of the same class. Additionally, I felt that the thing that made the **Splicers® Role-Playing Game** so appealing to me and my players, the constant ability to grow and develop your character in new and interesting ways, was noticeably absent from the class. These reasons led me to connect with a few people who I had met with in the vibrant online **Splicers®** community and propose that we work on a project together, expanding the player options for the Technojacker.

Splicers®: Blood and Iron™ is a project in development for the **Splicers®** Role-Playing Game packed full of new information for playing a Technojacker, but also a wealth of new material fleshing out the setting. Counted in this material are new skills available to Technojackers, Technojacker Clans and Tribes, Technological Evolution, N.E.X.U.S. plans and machinations, new minor personalities,

old Congressional military equipment, new robots of the wasteland, and a brand new, unique take on cybernetic enhancement never before seen in any Palladium product. This article contains just a few bits of information to quench the thirst of Splicers fans for new setting material and hopefully pique the interest of fans old and new.

The Technojacker™

(Revised and Expanded)

The nanobots released by N.E.X.U.S. not only infest every living person, but have also permeated the entire planet. These machines can be found everywhere, including the water, rocks, trees, grass and even the very air breathed in by almost all living things. When contact is made, the machines in the body and the machines in the environment cause a nanoplague response in an effort to kill off humanity one person at a time. The cruel reality of life after the release of the Nanobot Plague is that even exposure to the most simple of items can ensure that a human will meet with a particularly gruesome end. This often leads to many children and young people meeting an early end due to accidental exposure, but there are a few children that manage to survive exposure early in life.

Roughly 99% of all humans are infected with the nanobots that make the safe handling of metal and technology an impossibility, but there is a unique group of individuals who have been spared this fate. That rare one percent can handle metal, including ancient weapons, electronics and robot weapons, without the slightest problem. Nobody, not even the great Engineers and Librarians, knows how this can be, but it is assumed to be some extremely rare genetic mutation or abnormality. These special humans look completely normal except that most have grey or greyish-green eyes. These are the legendary Technojackers.

Technojackers possess within them a battery of altered nanobots that protect them from the Nanobot Plague that infects all technology and metal on the planet. This allows the Technojackers to use metal weapons, guns, vehicles and technology of the Machine. Over time, this power grows and develops with the Technojacker, granting further control over the metal, technology and nanobots. These abilities can look drastically different from one Technojacker to the next, while the particular experiences and focus of training are used to guide this development. While this can be an advantage to the Human Resistance, the fact is most people fear the Technojackers. What scares people the most is their ability to control the robots and devices of the Machine, which seems extraordinarily dangerous and more than a little suspicious to most people. The fact that once a Technojacker releases a robot from his control or is rendered unconscious, it regains its full independence and will kill any humans in the area also means those around him are in immediate danger should his control be severed.

Consequently, most Technojackers do *not* belong to one of the Great Houses, but are independent operators, adventurers, robot hunters or vagabonds similar to the ronin of ancient Japan. They generally come to a Great House to perform some needed function for the rebellion or to sell their services as a mercenary, but once the job is done and before the Warlord and his Dreadguard get too “uncomfortable” with his presence, the Technojacker leaves. This has led to many Technojackers forming roaming, nomadic clans on the surface. These groups stick together for safety, security and to offer a wider set of marketable skills to the leadership of the Great Houses. Some of these clans even have arrangements with Great Houses to accept (or trade services for) children born with such resistance to the plague so that they can be raised in an understanding and support-

ive environment. Such is life for someone who could become one of the Resistance’s greatest weapons. Even the loathsome Scarecrows and Skinjobs have more companionship.

Technojacker O.C.C. Powers & Abilities (Revised)

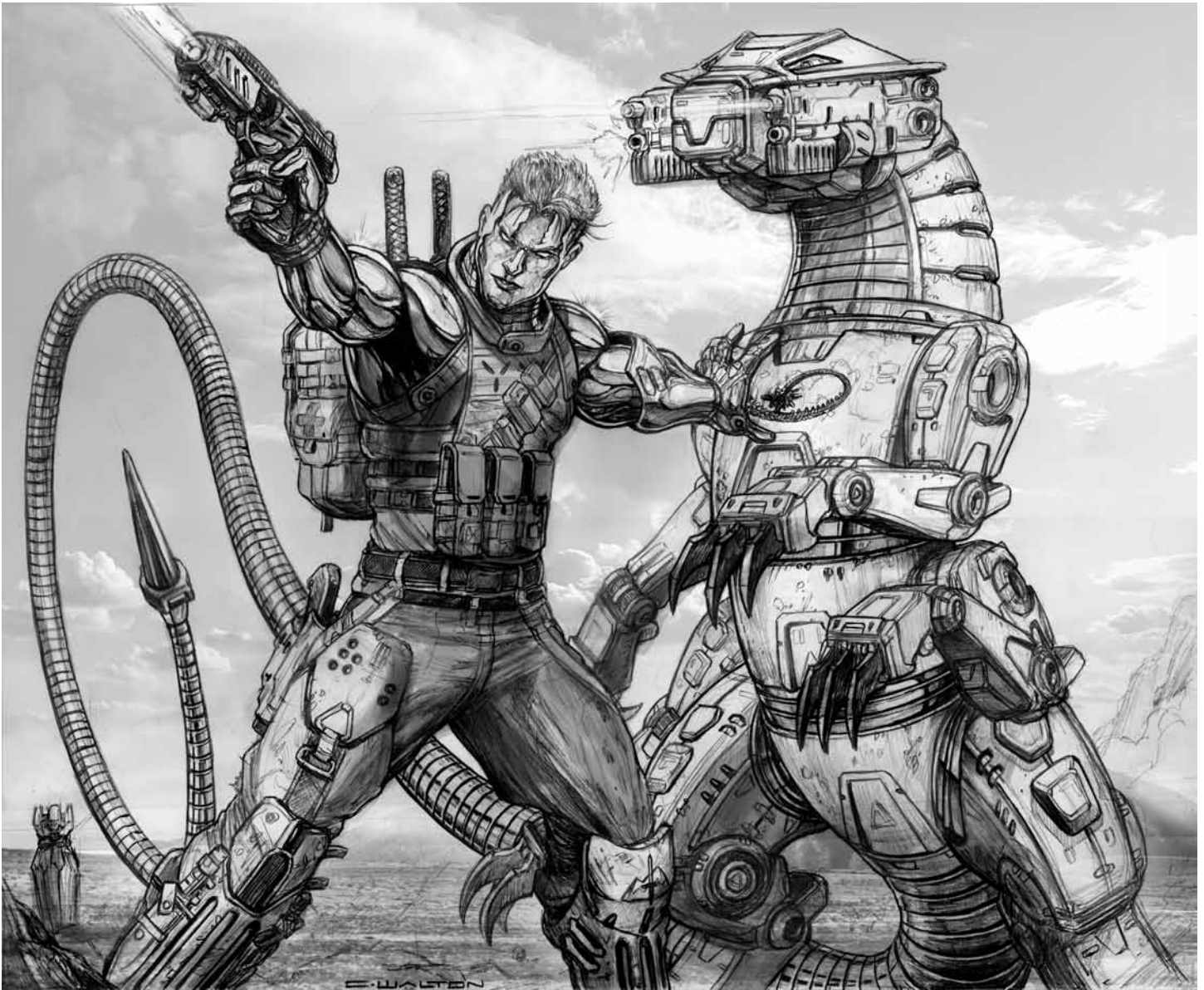
1. Impervious to the Nanobot Plague: Due to their control over their altered nanobots, the Technojacker is impervious to the Nanobot Plague and never triggers a hostile nanobot reaction as described on pages 11 and 12 of the Splicers Role-Playing Game. This means the character can pilot a vehicle or wear a suit of armor without any ill effect. However, any non-Technojacker interacting with that device will trigger a response as normal unless it is a device to which the Technojacker is connected through use of the nanobot umbilical cable as described in the “Meld with Machines” ability below. If connected, the Technojacker acts as the control unit and power source of the device so the nanobots recognize it as a controlled machine just like the machines of N.E.X.U.S., therefore negating any danger of a Nanobot Plague response.

2. Create Nanobot Armor: By exuding nanobots that are within the character from his pores, eyes, ears, nose or mouth and gathering other nanobots in the environment which they can enslave, the Technojacker can produce a thin layer of M.D.C. armor over his own skin. This light armor has 1D8x10+25 M.D.C., but this ability can also be used to hold together armor spun from metal scraps and the remnants of robots and other body armor. This second, heavier armor type has 1D4x100+40 M.D.C. whenever it is created. The nanobot armor only takes a few seconds to form, while the heavier armor takes one minute and requires the spare parts and salvage to be available. Neither power is available if the character is inside a robot or other vehicle, but this armor can be created over normal M.D.C. or S.D.C. non-environmental body armor. The nanobot armor regenerates 1D6 M.D.C. per melee round and can be created in 1D4 seconds (one melee action). The armor can be fully or partially (like uncovering the face or head) retracted in 2D4 seconds/two melee actions. As many as six suits can be created per 24 hour period. **Note:** While the Nanobot Armor is in use, the character is impervious to vacuums, poisonous or toxic atmospheres and radiation.

3. Meld with Machines: By extruding cables made by his own nanobots from an arm, shoulder, wrist or other part of the body, a Technojacker can take control of any machine, robot, drone or vehicle to which he can connect a melding cable. Creation of the cable takes 1D4 melee actions. Since the Technojacker can bypass the Machine’s controls and become directly linked to the robot, vehicle or device, the character can operate machines humans can no longer operate, as well as the hated robots, drones and weaponry of the Machine. However, to gain control, the Technojacker must be able to *touch* it (the cable connection and melding is immediate, using up two melee attacks/actions). To maintain control, the Technojacker must ride on top of or stay within five feet (1.5 m) of the robot, vehicle or device. Additionally, the Technojacker’s control cable must remain hooked to the device like a metallic umbilical cord, and if the cable is severed (it has 25 M.D.C.), control of the machine is lost, at least until a new umbilical can be created, which takes another 1D4 melee actions.

The Specifics of the Technojacker’s Powers:

- Once connected by the melding cable, the Technojacker turns the machine into a “slave unit” with him in control. While maintaining his own identity and awareness, the Technojacker is able to merge with the machine and is able to see through the robot or device’s eyes and sensors. Once a successful meld is completed, the Technojacker is the overriding force in control of the robot,



vehicle or machine and cannot be subverted or have control taken away, even by N.E.X.U.S. itself. However, the Technojacker cannot take control of a robot or machine directly under the control of one of the major N.E.X.U.S. personalities, nor can one take control of the N.E.X.U.S. computer itself.

- Each of the robot's or vehicle's attacks count as the Technojacker's own, but his are added to those of the robot he controls. The Technojacker can choose to use a weapon or ability of the robot or one of his own, since the two will act as a unit. The Technojacker also enjoys a bonus of +2 on initiative and +2 to strike, parry and disarm with any robot weapon, or handheld technology to which he is physically linked or connected.
- As for vehicles, the Technojacker is able to pilot them as if a trained expert at a skill level of 88%, even if it is the first time the Technojacker has ever piloted one. The Technojacker can also make any mechanical device run, fly or go 20% faster, leap 20% higher and shoot 20% farther.

Limitations to Machine Control:

- Seizing control of 1 to 4 handheld weapons or devices at a time is easy and can be done continuously without fatigue or stress. This includes guns, severed robot limbs, communication devices, portable computers, sensor devices and similar "mindless" hardware. This connection also enables the character to power equipment and energy weapons as if they were hooked up to an endless power supply, and makes even broken weapons work again, but only if all the parts still remain.
- Controlling large and more complex devices is a strain. The Technojacker cannot control more than one robot, vehicle, power armor or complex machine at a time, regardless of size.
 - Controlling a man-sized robot (up to 9 feet/2.7 m tall) such as a Nex-Android, Steel Trooper or Slicer robot, is fairly easy and can be maintained for up to 12 hours before the Technojacker loses focus and the melding cable disconnects.
 - An automobile-sized vehicle or robot, such as a Sewer Prowler, Skitter Pod or Flying Strike Ship, can only be controlled for three hours at a time.
 - Vehicles and robots that are bigger than a car but smaller than a semi-truck and trailer, such as an Assault Slayer, Battle Track, Sky Fighter, Repair Wagon or Transport Platform, can only be controlled for one hour at a time.
 - Any robot, vehicle or machine larger than that, or directly hooked up to several other machines/slave units, can only be controlled for 1D6 minutes per level of the Technojacker. The

Technojacker will sense when the last six minutes of control has been reached and will know precisely when control will be lost.

- Complex computers, like those in charge of N.E.X.U.S. power farms, electricity generation stations or manufacturing, can only be invaded and controlled for one hour at a time.
- If any computer system, robot or vehicle is controlled by an A.I. (almost all N.E.X.U.S. robots) the control time is halved.
- If the Technojacker is rendered unconscious, control of the machine is broken and the robot or device will resume its normal functions. In the case of robots and drones of the Machine, that function is to exterminate humans. If the Technojacker becomes dazed, dizzy or confused, or if the ability to concentrate or focus is diminished by fever or other forces, retaining control will be difficult. In this case, half the combined attacks of the robot are made by the Technojacker and the other half by the robot. So the robot may go from doing what the Technojacker commands to suddenly turning and blasting a comrade.
- A Technojacker cannot use his nanobots on, nor seize control of, Bio-Tech or organic weapons, computers or machines, though any robot, machine or piece of technology directly under the control of the Technojacker will not trigger a hostile nano-plague response due to proximity to Splicers.

4. Self-Regeneration: The nanobots inside the Technojacker travel through the bloodstream and repair any internal injuries to the physical body. The tiny robots search for damage and repair it as part of their protocol. Types of internal injury which they can repair include the removal of blood clots, repairing torn/ruptured veins, internal bleeding and minor damage to internal organs. These repairs are made at the equivalent of the Medical Doctor's surgical skill of 78%. These tiny machines serve to give the Technojacker the equivalent of a slow form of Bio-Regeneration, healing 2D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. every 10 minutes. The nanobots also serve to prevent catastrophic failure of the character's brain, lungs and other internal organs, giving the Technojacker a +30% to save versus coma/death and a +3 to save versus toxins, poisons and disease. This regeneration also extends to any cybernetic part that is based off of cloned tissue, but not fully artificial, mechanical parts.

5. Scorned by Humanity: Technojackers are shunned by the rest of humanity due to their odd powers to control and manipulate machines. The Technojacker's skin takes on a metallic silver or chrome-like appearance whenever their nanobot armor is raised. This machine-like manifestation is alarming and frightening to many fighters within the Human Resistance who wonder if the Technojackers can be trusted. Technojackers are also at a huge disadvantage within the resistance since they cannot use Bio-Weapons or organic technology at all. The controlled nanobots within the Technojackers reject all contact with Bio-Technology, preventing neural connections and stopping items from functioning. Alternatively, Technojackers cannot bring their technology around other humans for fear of harming or killing them with a triggered nanobot reaction.

6. Technological Evolution: The nanobots in a Technojacker, in an almost eerie mockery of biological evolution, growing and learning as the Technojacker does with more experience. The more a Technojacker uses a particular set of abilities, the more ingrained the actions become in the programming and code of the controlled nanobots. Some Technojackers are able to manipulate their nanobot armor to become hulking, armored monstrosities, while others are masterful combat pilots, melee fighters or are able to control the flow of electricity around them. Each Technojacker *evolves differently*

and there is a wide variety of abilities that can manifest, illustrating the technological parallel to the biotechnology of the Human Resistance.

Pick two abilities from the Technological Evolution list at levels 1 and 10, and one at levels 3, 7, 12 and 15. **Note:** Any prerequisites will be listed, but a selection and its prerequisite cannot be selected at the same time. These selections must be made at different levels of experience.

Technojacker Stats

O.C.C. Skill Programs: Basic Military (+10%), Weapons Training (must include W.P. Modern Weapons) OR Gunman, two skill programs of choice (except Host Pilot, Medical Doctor, War Mount Rider or Wingman).

Alignment: Any, although most tend to be good or selfish. There are rare cases of those being allied with the Machine, which most people would consider evil.

Attribute Requirements: None, but a high P.E. and M.E. would be helpful.

Attribute Bonuses: +1D4 to I.Q., M.A., P.E. and Spd.

O.C.C. Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +2 to dodge and +3 to save versus Horror Factor.

Base S.D.C.: 40, plus those gained from Physical skills.

Common Skills: Standard, with the addition of the Jury-Rig skill and one Technojacker skill of choice (NEW skill category).

Elective Skills: Select five Elective Skills from the following list at first level, plus select another one skill at levels 2, 4, 8, 10 and 12. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+10%), except Bio-Comms.

Domestic: Any.

Espionage: Any (+5%).

Medical: Animal Husbandry, Brewing: Medicinal, Dentistry, First Aid and Holistic Medicine only (+10%).

Military: Any (+5%).

Physical: Any, except Acrobatics.

Rogue: Any.

Science: Any (+10%).

Technical: Any, except Operate Bio-Equipment. (+10%; +20% to Machine Technology and +15% to Machine History only).

Technojacker (NEW Category): Any (+15%).

Transportation: Any, except Pilot Wing Packs, Host Armor Combat, and War Mount Combat.

Wilderness: Any.

W.P.s: Any, except W.P. Bio-Weapons (any).

Secondary Skills: The character gets to select five Secondary Skills initially from the Secondary Skill list on page 186 of the Splicers Role-Playing Game. The character can also select from the list of Technojacker skills presented in this book. These are additional areas of knowledge starting without any special O.C.C. bonuses. The character may select one more Secondary Skill at levels 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15.

Standard Equipment: A suit of personalized, non-organic body armor, a couple of sets of work and dress clothing, a pair of sunglasses or tinted goggles, 1D4 knives, one or two weapons confiscated from robots, and one weapon for each W.P. with 1D4 reloads of ammunition where appropriate, a good horse or an old vehicle (automobile, hovercycle or motorcycle) for transportation, first-aid kit, tent, knapsack, backpack, bedroll, two water skins, emergency food rations (four week supply) and some personal items.

Money: Has trade items, relics or precious metals that will garner 4D4x100 credits as well as 3D6x10 in available credits. As al-

ways, money can be spent immediately on additional equipment or saved. Technojackers value the micro-computer discs that are used as currency since some have valuable information that can be temporarily loaded to the brain of the Technojacker. Once useful ones are found, a Technojacker will normally save it for future use and will rarely, if ever, use that disc as currency again.

The Upside: You are one of the very, very few who can use technology safely on this world. You can create your own armor anytime you need it and you can override the control of a robot or drone by touch.

The Downside: You cannot use Bio-Weapons or any type of organic technology at all, and the average person and members of the Resistance fear you even more than Scarecrows.

Technological Evolution

The evolution of the Technojackers' control over their nanobots presents a variety of options for these characters. It illustrates the ability for a Technojacker to shape and mold the nanobots under his control to do his bidding and fit the way the character uses his abilities. Characters that repeatedly use particular abilities will see them grow in power and usefulness as the character advances in level. This has led to a strange point of contention between *Splicer soldiers* and *Technojackers*. Unlike biotechnology that is created by enigmatic creatures and must be manipulated by these alien beings in order to grow, making Splicers dependent on an external force, the Technojackers gain their powers from within. They will continually grow and develop without any dependence on something else, though few seem to grasp the irony that they would be nothing without their nanobots.

Since the repeated use of powers helps to develop and hone their abilities, Technojackers normally focus on a few abilities and develop them to their maximum potential. This makes most Technojackers dramatically different from one another, allowing clans and families to be extremely versatile groups, maximizing and making the most use out of the talents of each individual. This means organized groups of Technojackers can be particularly dangerous. These groups are often hunted or ferreted out of a territory when discovered by a Great House, and N.E.X.U.S. will usually try to exterminate them on site.

Certain abilities may require the use of *nanobot armor*, have a level requirement or other prerequisites as listed in their descriptions. An ability and its prerequisite ability cannot be selected at the same time. Instead, the **prerequisite** must be selected first and the subsequent ability must be selected at a later level. This illustrates the Technojacker's unique ability to modify the programming of these nanobots over time. All abilities are added to prerequisite powers, and only replace them if explicitly stated.

Technological Evolution List:

Additional Control: A Technojacker with this ability can connect to and control more machines than the normal four. Each time this ability is selected, the Technojacker can increase the number of controlled machines by two. **Note:** This ability can be selected multiple times. **Prerequisite:** None.

Auto-Pilot: The Technojacker is such a skilled pilot that controlling a vehicle with a melding cable requires almost no effort at all, allowing the character to focus on something else, such as combat. When connected, any vehicle can be piloted at 88% like normal, but it is completely controlled by the will of the Technojacker. The character can lean out windows, move about the cabin, reload weapons or

read a book, all while controlling the vehicle at full efficiency. Even combat maneuvers and combat driving can be done with no ill effect if the character has the skills. **Prerequisite:** None.

Clear Focus: Some Technojackers are able to retain a clear head and sharp focus when controlling machines. With this enhancement, the duration of the Technojacker's control over a machine or robot is doubled. Additionally, the Technojacker receives a permanent +2 to save versus Horror Factor and +2 to save versus Insanity even when not controlling machines. **Prerequisite:** None.

Dynamo: A Technojacker with this ability is a walking dynamo, crackling with electricity when he chooses to charge his nanobot armor. This increases his electrical aura from a 20 foot (6.1 m) radius to a 30 foot (9.1 m) radius, and damage from the electrical arcs is increased to 4D6 M.D. per each of the Technojacker's attacks. All other abilities of the Electrical Aura remain the same. Other Technojackers with electrical generation abilities and wearing their nanobot armor are immune to this damage. When the armor is charged, it is impossible for the character to move discreetly or silently, eliminating any chance of a Prowl roll and drawing the attention of observers or attention of potential attackers. **Prerequisite:** Electrical Aura.

Electrical Aura: This ability further enhances the electrical generation capabilities of the nanobot armor, allowing for the creation of a strong electrical field. Activating this aura takes one action and will last for 1D4+2 melee rounds or until deactivated. Once activated, anyone (enemy or ally) within 20 feet (6.1 m) of the Technojacker will take 2D6 M.D. during each of the Technojacker's attacks as electricity radiates and arcs from him to the targets. The only way to avoid this damage is to leave the aura. This damage is automatic, allowing the Technojacker to use the rest of his actions to attack, defend or take other actions. Other Technojackers with electrical generation abilities and wearing their nanobot armor are immune to this damage. When the armor is charged, it is impossible for the character to move discreetly or silently, eliminating any chance of a Prowl roll. **Prerequisite:** Electrical Strike.

Electrical Blast: By manipulating the electrical fields generated by the nanobot armor, the Technojacker is able to expel a strong electrical blast at a range of 100 feet (30.5 m). This blast will do 6D6 M.D. per attack and is +3 to strike (Strike bonuses from a high P.P. also factor into this generated electrical blast). The character can fire a number of blasts per hour equal to his M.E. attribute. In addition to the damage, there is a slight stun effect. Organic opponents hit by the attack must save versus stun attack (15 or higher, with any possible bonuses from P.E.) or they will lose initiative, two melee attacks and are -4 to all combat abilities for 2D4 melee rounds. There is no additional effect if the save is made. An electrical attack on Host Armor will deal the normal damage to the armor and 2D6 S.D.C. or Hit Point damage to the pilot inside, but the pilot does not suffer any other penalties. Machines take only the damage inflicted per strike. In order to use this ability, the Technojacker must have either the light or heavy nanobot armor activated. Other Technojackers with electrical generation abilities and wearing their nanobot armor are immune to this damage. **Prerequisite:** Electrical Strike.

Electrical Strike: A Technojacker with this ability is able to cause the nanobot armor to produce a strong electrical charge that is discharged with each melee strike. This works with punches, kicks, head-butts or any other melee combat maneuver made with the body (not a hand-held weapon). In order to use this ability, the Technojacker must have either the light or heavy nanobot armor activated. Each strike adds 4D6 M.D. to the melee damage. For most, this means that the strike will only do 4D6 M.D., but those Technojackers with Robotic Strength will see this damage added to their normal combat damage. In addition to the damage, there is a slight stun effect. Organic opponents hit by the attack must save versus stun attack

(15 or higher, with any possible bonuses from P.E.) or they will lose initiative, two melee attacks and are -4 to all combat abilities for 2D4 melee rounds. There is no additional effect if the save is made. An electrical attack on Host Armor will deal the normal damage to the armor and 2D6 S.D.C. or Hit Point damage to the pilot inside, but the pilot does not suffer any other penalties. Machines take only the damage inflicted per strike. Other Technojackers with electrical generation abilities and wearing their nanobot armor are immune to this damage. **Prerequisite:** None.

Electromagnetic Sensitivity: Some Technojackers are in tune with the electromagnetic spectrum and can sense the flow of electromagnetism in electrical wiring, machines (including N.E.X.U.S. robots), living creatures and even naturally occurring electromagnetic energy. Natural magnetic energy radiates from the earth above the ground and underwater and the Technojacker can see, feel, recognize, and follow these energy "trails" like highways or use them as identifying markers to better navigate. They can even "see" when nearby robots are sending or receiving active transmissions, often indicating a change in strategy, programming, or preparation for a N.E.X.U.S. takeover. With this awareness, Technojackers can sense the presence of a robot, machine, and even people from behind walls, around the corners, hiding behind cover or under camouflage. This ability also enables them to follow electromagnetic trails left by robots, vehicles, and even ships and submarines (these "trails" disappear after roughly 20 minutes and cannot be followed after that time). **Range:** 30 feet (9.1 m) when scanning/sensing people, 300 feet (91.4 m) when scanning, sensing, or trailing vehicles, robots, or their electromagnetic signatures, and 3 miles (4.8 km) when reading natural E.M. lines. **Bonuses:** +20% to Navigation skills, +10% to Surveillance (but not the Tailing part of the skill) and +5% to all Electronics skills. No blindness penalties except in absolute darkness. **Prerequisite:** Technosense.

E.M.P. Blast: The Technojacker can fire bursts of concentrated electromagnetic energy from the eyes, mouth or hands that affects the internal circuitry of machines, including the normally hardened circuits of military and N.E.X.U.S. robots. Each blast can fire 100 feet (30.5 m), doing 1D8 M.D. and each time a blast connects, the target will receive a cumulative -1 penalty to strike, parry and dodge, and -3% to any skills the robot or machine may have, up to a maximum of -5 and -15% respectively. This effect lasts for 1D4 melee rounds. The character can fire a number of E.M.P. blasts equal to his M.E. attribute per hour. **Prerequisite:** E.M.P. Strike.

E.M.P. Burst: The Technojacker is able to focus in order to generate a small, powerful electromagnetic pulse that temporarily stuns machines and robots. The Technojacker must focus for 1D4+1 melee actions, and is only able to parry (not attack or dodge) during that period, after which a short pulse of energy quickly radiates from the character. Range is a 50 foot (15.2 m) radius, +10 feet (3 m) per each subsequent level.

Simple, non-hardened systems are fried and become useless, irreparable junk, including any that the Technojacker may be carrying. Hardened military or N.E.X.U.S. machines or robots halt in their tracks, frozen for 1D4+2 melee actions as their systems compensate for the disruption, and restart. After the pulse, the Technojacker feels very fatigued and drained; reducing any combat maneuvers by -5 for 4 hours minus a number of minutes equal to the M.E. of the Technojacker, and is unable to use the E.M.P. Burst and Blast for 24 hours. The penalties are so debilitating that the E.M.P. Burst is usually reserved for when a group is overwhelmed or facing impossible odds and needs to make a hasty escape, especially since the characters will not know the exact moment the affected machines will resume operations. **Prerequisite:** E.M.P. Burst. Cannot be selected until level 7.

E.M.P. Strike: The melee attacks of the Technojacker can, if desired, release a small E.M.P. (electromagnetic pulse) burst when they connect, slowly affecting the internal circuitry of machines, including the normally hardened circuits of military and N.E.X.U.S. robots. Each time a melee strike connects, the target suffers a cumulative -1 penalty to strike, parry and dodge, and -3% to any skills the robot or machine may have, up to a maximum of -5 and -15% respectively. This effect lasts for 1D4 melee rounds. **Prerequisite:** None.

Energy Syphon: A strike from an umbilical whip with this ability absorbs energy directly from the power source of the target. The energy syphon can pull electrical current or raw bio-energy from living targets. When struck, a machine target will be -1 to strike, parry and dodge, -2 to strike with hand-held or integrated ranged weapons, and integrated energy weapons will do one less die of damage. (**Example:** 2D6 M.D. if the original damage was 3D6 M.D. or 1D4x10-1D4 if the original damage was 1D4x10.) All effects last for one melee round. If an organic target is hit, the target feels oddly fatigued, making them -2 to strike, parry and dodge for one melee round. If the target has any sort of bio-energy weapon (Bio-Energy Expulsion Vent or Bio-Energy Blades), the target cannot add in the P.E. bonus to damage for one melee round and payload is reduced by one blast or minute of use per energy syphon strike, in the case of the Bio-Energy Expulsion Vent and Bio-Energy Blades respectively. Duration is extended for each strike that hits the target, but please note that penalties are NOT cumulative. The target can, and most likely will, fight back. **Prerequisite:** Umbilical Whip.

Enhanced Optics: The nanobots modify the eyes of the Technojacker and fuse with the optic nerves in order to enhance the vision into different spectrums of light, and offer polarized sight. The Technojacker can see in the ultraviolet and infrared light spectrums and also has a form of thermal imaging. Each vision type can be activated or deactivated at the whim of the Technojacker, and only one can be active at a time. Regardless of the type of vision active, the sight range is roughly 2,000 feet (610 m).

Infrared light is normally used for targeting and combat systems of the robots, which means the Technojacker can see the infrared target beams or beams in a security system as plainly as if they were a beam from an ordinary flashlight. Smoke blocks infrared sight.

The ultraviolet sight is an extension of normal vision beyond purple and violet into the normally invisible ultraviolet range, which is used by some security systems of the Machine.

Thermal vision allows the Technojacker to see the heat coming off all warm objects, enabling the character to see through a wall to the heat patterns directly behind it, tell if a human has been recently active (higher body heat than normal), and see heat signatures given off by living, warm-blooded beings in total darkness, as well as heat patterns of machines and engines, indicating they are active, in use, recently running or similar. Thermal sight can see through artificial smoke, where infrared is blocked. Thermal vision can be obscured if the smoke is still very hot, like in a wildfire or structure fire. In these instances, the character will be -10% on the appropriate detection skill rolls or -2 to Perception rolls.

A character with this enhancement is not affected by the sun's glare, bright reflections or sudden, bright flashes of light, like the light from a flash-bang grenade. **Prerequisite:** Enhanced Senses.

Enhanced Senses: The healing abilities of the nanobots in the bloodstream of the Technojacker repair and optimize the rods, cones and lenses in the eyes, fix any hearing damage in the ears and enhance the synapses in the olfactory center of the brain. The Technojacker has perfect 20/20 vision, can see in near complete darkness, can hear a whisper at roughly 300 feet (91.4 m) away, and has a sense of smell and a sense of taste that is twice as sensitive as a normal human. This enhancement is always active. **Prerequisite:** None.

Environmental Filtration and Resistance: When not wearing the nanobot armor, the nanobots in the body scrub and clean any air that enters the breathing passage, granting the Technojacker immunity to airborne toxins, poisons and gases, including smoke. For the first 1D6+1 melee rounds of exposure, the character coughs and has difficulty breathing as the nanobots adapt to the foul air. During that period, reduce all combat bonuses, melee actions and skill performance by 50%, but the character can continue to function on an impaired level without physical injury or any other effects (i.e. sleeping gas will not put the character to sleep, poison does no damage, etc.). After this initial adaptation, the character is able to function normally with no ill effect, other than the occasional need to deeply cough and expel a ball of mucus containing anything that cannot be broken down. **Prerequisite:** None.

Heightened Reflexes: The nanobots enhance the elasticity of the muscle fibers and the synapses in the areas of the brain responsible for motor perception response, giving the Technojacker increased burst reactions from muscles and quicker reflexes. This gives the Technojacker the following bonuses: +1 attack per melee round, +1 on initiative, +2 to strike and +1 to parry and dodge. This enhancement is always active. **Prerequisite:** None.

Heightened Strength: Nanobot fibers fuse with the musculature of the Technojacker, increasing the strength of the character. Normally, this is only seen in those Technojackers with HydraMus artificial muscle implants, but some have noticed this infusion in their own organic muscle tissue. These modified muscles give the Technojacker the following bonuses: +1D4+1 to P.S., +2D6 to Spd and increase jumping height and length by 50%. This enhancement is always active. **Note:** This has no effect if the Technojacker has cybernetic muscles. **Prerequisite:** None.

Increased Armor Integration: When creating the heavy nanobot armor, the Technojacker is better able to hold together the individual pieces of armor or metallic scraps that are required for the superstructure. The nanobots form reinforced connections and joints, and mend any minor structural instabilities of the additional material used in the armor creation. This armor takes a full 1D4+1 minutes to form and is often used only when heavy combat is expected, and is still only available if the additional material is present. Technojackers with this ability are often more dependent on their light nanobot armor for day to day stresses of the environment, instead reserving the heavy armor and increased heavy armor abilities for combat. When creating the heavy nanobot armor, add the following bonuses and penalties: +2D8x10 M.D.C., +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact, -2 to strike, parry and dodge. **Prerequisite:** Increased Nanobot Expulsion.

Increased Lifespan: The regenerative capabilities of the nanobots increase the normal lifespan of the Technojacker by 25%. The character can still be killed by normal means, disease, combat, etc. **Prerequisite:** Increased Regeneration.

Increased Nanobot Expulsion: The Technojacker is proficient at quickly forcing the controlled nanobots out of the body in order to quickly create the nanobot armor and the melding cable. This allows for the melding cable to be created in one melee action and is extended to a length of 10 feet (3 m). Armor can be created almost at the speed of thought, often to deflect or absorb an incoming attack. This increased control also allows the armor of a Technojacker to grow per level of experience. When creating the light nanobot armor, add the following bonuses: Nanobot armor regenerates at a rate of 3D6 M.D.C. per melee round, and the character can create nanobot armor two more times per 24 hour period (for a total of eight times). The Technojacker can use the created armor to parry incoming attacks, but the parry does not receive any bonuses. Just a straight roll of the die. After the parry, the armor takes the damage from the attack and

is then created as normal and counts as one of the Technojacker's armor creation attempts for the day. **Prerequisite:** None.

Increased Regeneration: The nanobots allow for heightened regeneration of both the nanobot armor and the physical body of the Technojacker. This enhancement means that the character can heal an additional 2D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. damage every 10 minutes, and the nanobot armor heals an additional 1D6 M.D. per melee round. This ability can be selected multiple times. If the Technojacker has any M.D.C. cybernetic parts, they will regenerate at the same rate as the nanobot armor. **Note:** Lost Limbs can not be regrown by this ability, but recovery time from the installation of any cybernetic replacement is halved. **Prerequisite:** None.

Lightning Conduction: Some Technojackers can modify their electrical auras generated by their nanobot armor to conduct immense electrical charges. The Technojacker with this ability can focus his electrical power on one target within his electrical aura range, causing a sudden discharge of the reserve energy from nearby nanobots, ambient electrical energy and the electricity from his personal nanobot armor. The result is a bolt of lightning, accompanied by booming thunder, that strikes from both the ground and the air simultaneously, using the target as a conductor. This ability can only be used outside, but can be used in perfectly clear skies. Damage is 6D6 M.D. +1D6 M.D. per each subsequent level of experience, and anyone without ear protection is -4 to all combat abilities for 1D4 melee rounds. Other Technojackers with electrical generation abilities and wearing their nanobot armor are immune to this damage. This electrical bolt can be used three times per melee round (15 seconds). **Prerequisite:** Electrical Aura.

Magnetic Field Object Dissolution: This unique ability is a technological magnetic force field that is able to halt incoming foreign metallic objects such as grenades, missiles and rail gun rounds in their paths and orders environmental nanobots to break them down on a molecular level, dealing 1D4+2 M.D. per second. Rail gun rounds have 1 M.D.C. each, while grenades have 5 M.D.C. each. The M.D.C. totals of missiles are listed on page 223 of the Splicers Role-Playing Game. The force field has the equivalent of 2D8x10+20 M.D.C. which is damaged by the potential damage done by the intercepted items, so if a rail gun burst would potentially do 30 M.D. to the target, the force field takes that damage instead. Once the M.D.C. of the field is depleted, these items can no longer be dissolved, but may still be deflected using the Magnetic Field Targeted Deflection Ability or the Magnetic Repulsion Field. The field will stop the intercepted item 10 feet (3 m) away from the Technojacker, but the character could still potentially be damaged by the concussive force of grenades and missiles that detonate before they are dissolved. Shrapnel will not affect the character since it would be intercepted and dissolved in the same way as rail gun rounds (taken into account in the field damage). When in use, this ability reduces the duration the magnetic field can be maintained by half. **Prerequisite:** Magnetic Field Targeted Deflection.

Magnetic Field Targeted Deflection: When active, the magnetic field of the Technojacker can be used to deflect metallic attacks or those with metallic components at another nearby target. The Technojacker must attempt a parry (straight roll, no bonuses) and beat the attacker's roll to strike. If successful, the character can make a strike roll (again, straight roll, no bonuses), to attack an opponent within 100 feet (30.5 m). If successful and if the target is aware of the attack, the target can attempt to dodge at an additional -3 to dodge in addition to any penalties for dodging a ranged attack. **Prerequisite:** Magnetic Repulsion Field.

Magnetic Repulsion Field: The Technojacker can activate this ability as a single action, but when active, any metallic projectile like rail gun rounds, or those with metallic components like grenades and

missiles, suffer a penalty of -3 to strike the character as their trajectories are randomly altered. The Technojacker can maintain this field for a number of melee rounds equal to his M.E. attribute, and can be created five times per day. **Prerequisite:** None.

Multiple Drones: The Technojacker is adept at splitting focus between multiple machines and is able to control more robots or drones than normal. By using more than one melding cable, the Technojacker can link into other machines and control them as normal, but instead of adding his attacks per melee to those of each robot he controls, the Technojacker must split his attacks between all of them, or can keep some or all of them for himself. At the beginning of each melee round, the character must declare how the attacks will be divided for that round, illustrating the focus, or attention for that part of the battle. If all attacks are divided between drones, the Technojacker is left vulnerable to attack and cannot defend himself, but if they are all kept, the Technojacker can issue quick, simple mental commands to the controlled robots and retain fairly complete situational awareness. **Penalties:** -1 attack per melee for each robot controlled beyond the first, -2 to his personal combat actions since his attention is so split. No more than four robots can be controlled in this way and the character is still restricted by the length of the umbilical cables. **Prerequisite:** Clear Focus. Cannot be selected until level 4.

Nanite Blades: The Technojacker is able to force nanobots from the fingernail cuticles and form them into climbing claws or slashing blades for combat. These blades are surrounded by an energy field emitted by the nanobots themselves which causes them to act as normal Vibro-Blades. While wearing nanobot armor, the blades can be formed on the wrist, knees or elbows as a large, single blade or a set of smaller blades or claws. These blades can be fully formed in about two seconds (one melee action) and do 3D6 M.D.C. which can be added to the punch damage of the character if the character also possesses Robotic Strength. If climbing claws are formed, the Technojacker receives a +10% bonus to the climbing skill when in use. **Prerequisite:** None.

Optical Camouflage: Some Technojackers have adapted the nanobots of their nanobot armor to project a form of optical camouflage along the armored surface. The nanobots bend the light around the Technojacker, displaying a slightly distorted image of what is on the other side of the character. The color and pattern can only display what is around the character which assists in helping completely blend into the actual surroundings, though the Technojacker has no capability to modify the projected image in any way. If the nanobot armor is reduced to 25% of its M.D.C. the optical camouflage cannot be activated as the nanobots restore their numbers and regenerate the armor.

Likelihood of Remaining Unseen/Camouflaged:

83% Undetectable if completely still; +5% if lying flat on the ground.

65% Undetectable if moving 2 feet (0.6 m) per melee round or slower.

48% Undetectable if moving 3 feet (0.9 m) to 4 feet (1.2 m) per melee round.

30% Undetectable if moving 5 feet (1.5 m) to 7 feet (2.1 m) per melee round.

10% Undetectable if moving 8 feet (2.4 m) to 10 feet (3 m) per melee round.

Totally ineffective if moving any faster.

Note: Virtually invisible to fast-moving (50+ mph/80+ km) aircraft even when flying at treetop level.

Add +15% to being seen by the naked eye when moving, fighting or in smoke or grit-filled air — the sound of movement, fighting, and movement of vegetation and objects helps to reveal its nature and

location. The character is also vulnerable to infrared and thermo-imaging, motion detection, and sonar, as well as being heard normally.

Prerequisite: None.

Poison Resistance: This ability adds increased filtration to the bloodstream, allowing the character to become almost completely impervious to consumed, ingested or injected poisons and toxins. The character receives an additional +6 to save versus toxins and poisons that enter the body in the previously mentioned manners.

Prerequisite: None.

Push the Limit: When controlling a robot or vehicle, the Technojacker can push the machine well beyond its intended capabilities, and even past the heightened capabilities of other Technojackers, but this comes at a high price. Vehicles will be able to go 25% faster and will grant the Technojacker +2 melee actions which can only be used to perform a combat driving maneuver, while robots and drones of N.E.X.U.S. will be able to run an additional 10% faster, jump 20% higher and farther, and will get an additional +1 attack per melee, and +2 to strike, parry and dodge. All bonuses are in addition to those gained from normal Technojacker abilities. This heightened capability can only be used for 1D4+2 melees, after which the vehicle or machine is likely irreparably damaged, whether it was pushed for the entire duration or if it was only pushed momentarily. There is a 01-85% chance that the vehicle or robot is irreparable and is now a useless hunk of metal. On a roll of 86-00%, the machine can be repaired with a Mechanical Engineering skill roll, with a -20% penalty, as long as the character has access to suitable facilities. Most Technojackers will cut their losses and scavenge another means of transportation after using this ability since making repairs is time consuming and risky. **Prerequisite:** Auto-pilot.



Reinforced Nanobot Armor: The nanobots form a reinforced woven mesh underlay under the outer metallic shell of the Technojacker's nanobot armor. This underlay makes the armor stronger

and extremely resistant to damage from falls and impact damage. When creating the light nanobot armor, add the following bonuses: +1D8x10 M.D.C., an additional 2D6 M.D.C. per level of experience and +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact (including rail gun fire). **Prerequisite:** None.

Remote Communication: Through the use of short-wave radio signals generated by the nanobots, the Technojacker is able to mentally send messages to others Technojackers within 6 miles (9.6 km). Instead of standard radio encryptions easily hacked by N.E.X.U.S., these signals use a special code based off of a digitized DNA sequence. The Technojacker can limit the signal to a generic “human” sequence, allowing communication to any other Technojackers, or can send a signal specific to him, only allowing receipt by those who know the Technojacker and have personally received his permission. Any Technojacker is able to receive these remote communications. **Prerequisite:** None.

Robotic Strength: A series of powerful nanobot fiber bundles combine with the nanobot infused muscles of the Technojacker and bond with the skeletal structure, reinforcing the body’s frame. When the nanobot armor is generated, it forms connections between the external armor and the internal muscle bundles that synchronize certain flex patterns and muscle reactions with small constrictions in the nanobot armor. This allows for increased feats of strength. While wearing light nanobot armor, a Technojacker with this enhancement can temporarily increase his P.S. to be Robotic P.S. for five minutes per level of the character. If heavy nanobot armor is used, this duration is one hour per level of the character. **Note:** This ability negates the -2 to strike, parry and dodge from Increased Armor Integration, if the character also has that ability. This ability cannot be taken by those with synthetic muscles or bones due to cybernetic enhancement. **Prerequisite:** Heightened Strength.

Stall: A strike from an umbilical whip with this ability will cause robots, drones or vehicles to momentarily stall. The energy strike temporarily short-circuits the electrical pathways and mechanical impulses, but has absolutely no effect on humans, Splicers or Bio-Technology. When struck, the target will be -4 on all combat maneuvers for one melee round, and there is a 01-30% chance that the machine will lose the next two melee actions while stalled (01-10% for large machines like the Assault Slayer or the Battle Track). Duration is extended for each strike that hits the target, but please note that penalties are NOT cumulative. The target can, and most likely will, fight back. **Prerequisite:** Umbilical Whip.

Stun: A strike from an umbilical whip with this ability will temporarily cause human and Bio-Tech creatures to become dazed. The energy strike temporarily short-circuits the nervous system of humans and Splicer organisms, but has absolutely no effect on robots or other machines. Each time the victim is struck, he must roll to save versus stun (non-lethal poison, 16 or higher). If the save is successful, the target loses two attacks and is -2 on all combat maneuvers for one melee round. If the save is failed, roll on the following table:

Chance of Being Rendered Unconscious:

- 01-10%:** Splicer Soldier in full Host Armor or War Mount.
- 01-20%:** Gorehound or other similar organic creature.
- 01-25%:** Biotics.
- 01-30%:** Human in body armor.
- 01-35%:** Unarmored human.

If the save is failed but the target is not knocked unconscious, reduce the speed and attacks per melee by half, and -8 to initiative, strike, parry, dodge, disarm and all other combat maneuvers for 1D4+1 melee rounds. Duration is extended for each strike that hits the target, but please note that penalties are NOT cumulative. The

target can, and most likely will, fight back. **Prerequisite:** Umbilical Whip.

Sustenance: The Technojacker is able to pull enough moisture and organic particulates from the air and the environment to fully sustain himself for a limited period of time. The nanobots filter the air and help the body absorb moisture or broken down nutrients directly into the bloodstream. The Technojacker can be sustained for up to two weeks in this manner before needing to actually consume food and water. If the character tries to use this ability beyond the two week period, the character will suffer a cumulative -1D6 damage direct to Hit Points, -1 attack, and -2 to all combat skills each day until a full meal and one gallon (3.8 liters) of water is consumed. This damage cannot be regenerated by any means other than what is mentioned here. This ability is always active. **Prerequisite:** Environmental Filtration and Resistance.

Technosense: A reflexive, sixth sense-type ability that alerts the character to the presence of other nearby Technojackers. The character is automatically aware of any Technojackers within his detection range. If the character focuses all of his attention on this ability (takes 1D4 melee rounds), he can determine the exact number of Technojackers and even pinpoint their precise locations. Range is 50 feet (15.2 m) plus 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

This power also alerts the character to when he is under observation by surveillance cameras or other mechanical or robotic systems within range; he gets a case of the “jitters.” The character can attempt to locate the source of the surveillance if within range. **Base Skill:** 50% +2% per level of experience; rolls are not required to detect presences, only to pinpoint their location. Range is 25 feet (7.6 m) plus 5 feet (1.5 m) per level of experience. **Prerequisite:** None.

Touch of Mending: The Technojacker can temporarily control the nanobots of a person or item he touches, but only to heal a wound or repair the item. As long as physical touch is maintained, the person or item is healed or mended at whatever the normal regeneration rate is for the Technojacker. **Prerequisite:** None.

Transfer Consciousness: This ability is used as a last-ditch resort to save the life of a Technojacker. Using the normal means to meld with a robot or machine, the Technojacker can immediately transmit the electrical imprint of his brain-waves into a robot or machine. In life or death situations, the surge of adrenaline means that the Technojacker can transmit this imprint at the speed of thought, acting as a parry, but adding any “Save versus Psionic Attack” bonuses from a high M.E. as parry bonuses to this special ability. If successful, the Technojacker’s thoughts, memories and personality are transferred to a targeted machine within range, but all special Technojacker abilities are lost. For some, this is a small price to pay in order to remain “alive”. Range is 100 feet (30.5 m), +10 feet (3 m) per subsequent level. When used, the body falls to the ground as a lifeless husk, if it wasn’t destroyed completely by an enemy attack. During this time, nanobots will still regenerate the brain-dead body as long as it is not completely destroyed. This is often enough for N.E.X.U.S. robots to believe a threat has been eliminated and divert attention from the Technojacker and the new robot body. If the body hasn’t been destroyed, the Technojacker can transfer consciousness back into the body, but must make physical contact. If N.E.X.U.S. knew about this process, this new robot would be seen as an anomaly to be captured and studied. Emancipated view these possessed machines as kindred spirits.

If another Technojacker attempts to meld with the occupied robot, he will immediately know that it is not a N.E.X.U.S. machine, and if the Technojacker presence in the possessed robot desires, he can try to transfer his consciousness into the connected Technojacker’s body. There needs to be three contested M.E. rolls (1D20+M.E. attri-

bute number), and the winner being the one who wins two out of the three. If the melding Technojacker wins, he can break the connection and fight or flee, but if the transferring Technojacker wins, his personality and consciousness is imprinted in the mind of the new body. The other personality still exists, but is put in a dormant state, occasionally coming out in stressful circumstances (use the rules from “Can’t Handle Emotional Pressure” from the Biotic O.C.C. on page 149 of the **Splicers® Role-Playing Game**). When transferred, the brain-waves of the Technojacker will reprogram the Technojacker nanobots after 1D6 weeks, replacing the abilities of the possessed body for good. During this time, only the base Technojacker abilities can be used, not any from technological evolution. Good Technojackers will NEVER use this ability to take control of another living Technojacker. **Prerequisite:** Wireless Control.

Umbilical Whip: The nanobot umbilical that is used to meld with robots, vehicles and machines is slightly thicker and significantly longer than those of other Technojackers. The umbilical still retains the ability to meld with machines and robots as described previously, but is primarily used as a weapon in this form. The whip is surrounded by an energy field that allows it to easily slice through bio-armor and machine plating alike, doing 2D6+4 M.D. per lashing attack. There are multiple, additional abilities that a Technojacker can select to modify the Umbilical Whip, but only one of these additional abilities can be used per attack. They do not stack. In addition to any bonuses from W.P. Whip (if selected by the character), the character gets the following bonuses: +2 to strike, disarm and entangle since the nanobots are an extension of the body and easier to control than a normal whip. **Note:** Like normal whips, the Umbilical Whips cannot be used to parry incoming attacks. **Prerequisite:** None.

Variable Configuration Vehicle Armor: One of the most amazing abilities of the Technojacker is the Variable Configuration Vehicle Armor. The Technojacker uses the nanobots under his control to deconstruct and rebuild a vehicle into a different form. If the transformation ability is to be used, the character must be melded with the vehicle, and expel a flood of nanobots that coat the pilot’s compartment and every area of the vehicle with a thin layer of nanobot fiber mesh. When the heavy nanobot armor is activated, instead of using scrap metal and salvage to form, the Technojacker’s nanobots deconstruct the vehicle and use its parts and the normal nanobots infecting the metal as the additional armor. Depending on the size of the vehicle used, the armor can have a stronger and more durable construction. If a small vehicle, such as a motorcycle or hovercycle is used, add +1D4x10 M.D.C. to the armor. If a medium vehicle such as a car or jeep is used, add 1D8x10 M.D.C. to the armor, and if a heavy vehicle like a truck or tank is used, add 2D8x10 M.D.C. to the armor, though the transformation process takes three times as long. **Note:** This ability cannot be used in conjunction with power armor or robot vehicles.

Once the armor is no longer needed, the machines will reassemble the parts into the vehicle form for use as normal. If more than 75% of the armor is depleted, the vehicle form will no longer function until repaired, but since the vehicle parts are part of the nanobot armor, the tiny machines will repair the linked vehicle at the same rate of the armor regeneration. It should be noted that this is not an instantaneous transformation process that can be used at a moment’s notice. The transformation takes 1D4+1 minutes to complete, and returning back to the vehicle form will take an additional 1D4+1 minutes. Vehicle weapons are considered to be linked to the Technojacker (up to four total) and gain the bonuses mentioned in the Technojacker description, and any from additional abilities while linked. No other items, robots, vehicles or weapons can be linked to the Technojacker while using this ability. **Prerequisite:** Increased Armor Integration, Weapon Integration, Robotic Strength.

Voltaic Storm: By supercharging the air and the nanobots in the surrounding environment, the Technojacker can cause a sudden burst of voltaic activity to erupt. The Technojacker can cause lightning to strike 1D6+1 targets of his choosing within his aura. Damage is 6D6 M.D. +1D6 M.D. per each subsequent level of experience, and anyone without ear protection is -4 to all combat abilities for 1D4 melee rounds. Other Technojackers with electrical generation abilities and wearing their nanobot armor are immune to this damage. Due to the massive strain and the power generation requirements, this ability can be used once per minute. **Prerequisite:** Dynamo and Lightning Conduction.

Weapon Integration: Weapons can be used by the Technojacker as pieces of the heavy nanobot armor. When creating the armor suit, the Technojacker can decide where the weapon goes (shoulder, arm, chest, etc.) and the weapon becomes part of the armor. The nanobots form a connection to Technojacker in order to integrate the targeting and sensor systems of the weapon and to power it. Energy weapons and melee weapons are most commonly used, but grenade launchers and rail guns are also popular choices. In these cases, the ammo drum or magazine also needs to be present and absorbed as part of the armor. These integrated weapons still count towards the limit of devices that the Technojacker can control at one time, but also helps to free up the character’s hands. Weapons integrated into the armor when creating the heavy nanobot armor receive an additional +2 to strike in addition to any Weapon Systems (new skill) or W.P. bonuses, if applicable. If the character also happens to have any strike bonuses from a high P.P. the character can add those bonuses but only with the integrated weapon. **Prerequisite:** Increased Nanobot Expulsion.

Wireless Control: The Technojacker is able to tap into the wireless capabilities of the evolved nanobots he commands in order to control nearby robots, drones, computers and vehicles. This command range is initially relatively short, but grows as the control of these nanobots is honed. The remote connection takes 1D4+2 melee actions per connection to form, but when complete, the wireless connection acts the exactly the same as if it was made with a melding cable. Range is a mere 50 foot (15.2 m) radius, +10 feet (3 m) per each subsequent level. If a controlled machine leaves this radius, control is immediately lost and the machine regains full control of its own functions.

This can be used to attempt to take control of robots or machines wirelessly controlled by another Technojacker, but has no effect on those controlled through use of the umbilical. There needs to be three contested M.E. rolls (1D20 + M.E. attribute number), with the winner being the one who wins two out of the three. If the attacker wins, then the robot falls under his control. If not, then the robot remains under the control of the original Technojacker. **Prerequisite:** Clear Focus. Cannot be selected until level 7.

New Technojacker Skill Packages

These skill packages can only be selected by the Technojacker O.C.C. or those that include these in their O.C.C. description. **Note:** The Bodyguard, Commando and Slaver skill packages can be selected by Splicers.

Bioware Mechanic: Biology, Cybernetic Medicine, Medical Doctor, Cybernetics: Basic, Bioware Mechanics.

Bodyguard: Detect Ambush, Detect Concealment, Trap and Mine Detection, Resist Torture, First Aid.

Commando: Hand to Hand: Commando, Intelligence, Machine Technology, one Espionage skill of choice, one Military skill of choice.

Communications (Tech): Radio: Basic, Electronic Countermeasures, Sensory Equipment, Cryptography and either Laser Communications, Optics Systems or T.V./Video.

Gunman: Recognize Weapon Quality, three modern W.P.s of choice. The Gunman adds his P.P. bonus to any strike rolls made with hand-held modern weapons. (**Note:** W.P. Modern Weapons on page 204 of the Splicers Role-Playing Game states that the P.P. bonus is added to strike rolls. This is incorrect and is clarified on page 219 of the Splicers Role-Playing Game. Only a character with the Gunman Skill Package will have this bonus.)

Gunsmith: General Repair and Maintenance, Vehicle Armorer, Weapons Engineer, Field Armorer & Munitions Expert and Basic Mechanics.

Legacy Guard: Pilot: Robots and Power Armor, Robot Combat: Legacy Guard, Vehicle Armorer, Field Armorer and Munitions Expert, W.P. Armor and W.P. Heavy M.D. Weapons.

Machinist: Basic Mechanics, Electricity Generation, three Technojacker Skills of choice.

Slaver (must be evil): Tracking, Rope Works, Vital Points (Organic), Trap Construction, Herding and W.P. Net.

Technical (Tech): Electricity Generation, Recycle, and three Technical skills of choice.

Wheelman: Three Piloting Skills of choice (excluding Robot or Power Armor piloting), Combat Driving and Weapon Systems.

Technojacker Skills

(New Skill Category)

This new skill category is specifically restricted to Technojackers who are able to operate the technology of a bygone era. The category represents a variety of skills which Technojackers can use across the globe, right under the nose of N.E.X.U.S. and are applicable to old, salvaged human technology and newly created Machine technology. Technojackers can emulate some of these skills when melded with a particular machine, especially piloting skills, but dependence on the nanobots to get a particular task done is no replacement for old-fashioned book knowledge and human ingenuity. Many Technojacker clans emphasize a formal education around the technology of the old world and that which the Machine creates.

Aircraft Mechanics: The understanding of aerodynamics and the training to repair, rebuild, modify, and redesign conventional aircraft, including propeller types, jets, helicopters, hovercycles, rocket bikes and hovercraft. Work on military aircraft is limited to bodywork unless the character also has the Weapon Systems skill. Experimental aircraft or unique designs by the Machine are *not* included. Working on the wings or flight systems of power armor and robots is very different from true aircraft and suffers a -40% skill penalty. However, the character can assist an engineer or robotics specialist by following his instructions with only a -15% skill penalty. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

Automotive Mechanics: The ability to repair, rebuild, modify, and redesign conventional vehicles with internal combustion (gas) engines. It also includes bodywork, turbine engines, methanol, ethanol and diesel truck engines. Working on hover jet systems for ground vehicles is possible, but with a -20% penalty. Working on reactor engines has a -40% penalty. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

Basic Electronics: This is a rudimentary understanding of the principles of electricity, simple circuits, wiring and so on. This character can do basic wiring, repair appliances, and read schematics, as well as assist electrical engineers. The character can attempt to hot-wire a commercial vehicle (not military) using Basic Electronics but

with a -20% penalty and it takes 1D4+2 melee rounds to do so. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

Basic Mechanics: A general familiarity and understanding of basic mechanics. This character can fix a toaster, repair a bicycle, replace a belt on a motor, repair or replace a switch, handle or knob, replace a spark plug, change oil, assist in automobile repairs, maintain machinery, read a schematic, and similar fundamental tasks. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

Bioware Mechanics: “Bioware” is cybernetics. A character with this skill can identify, service and repair all cybernetics and bionics systems, from the simplest data plug to the most sophisticated artificial muscle. This, however, is limited to the actual *machine* and electronics of cybernetics, not designing or building bionic components.

A Bioware Mechanic can fix a cybernetic or bionic machine part – hand, arm, leg, mechanical implant, weapon – but cannot install it or attach it to a living body unless he also has the Cybernetic Medicine skill. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. -20% when working with advanced bionic systems including bionic weaponry. **Requires:** Mechanical Engineering and Basic Math skills.

Computer Repair: Knowledge of the internal electronics of computers and related devices (terminals, printers, modems, etc.). The character can attempt to repair or sabotage computers. Note that figuring out the repair or sabotage procedure counts as one roll, and the actual repair is a second roll. A failed roll means the repair is faulty and does not work (try again). No computer operation or programming skills are included nor required to fix computers. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

Cybernetic Medicine: This doctor is a specialist in the science of cybernetics and is a master surgeon. The character has all the basic knowledge and requirements of an M.D., although his diagnostic skills are nowhere as honed, but is a specialist in surgery involving the removal of limbs and internal organs and the surgical attachment of cybernetic replacements (artificial organs and prosthetics). The character can also work on, calibrate and repair bionic implants as well as install them, but suffers a -15% skill penalty. The science of bionics is much more complex and machine oriented than basic cybernetics. **Base skill:** 40%/60% +5% per level. The first percentage is the Cyber-Doc’s ability to accurately diagnose and treat a non-surgical problem/illness. The second number is the doc’s ability to perform complex surgery, remove and install cybernetic organs and devices, implants and bionics. **Bionic Skill Upgrade:** A Technojacker needs to select this skill twice and Electrical Engineer to be capable of working on bionic systems (military grade cybernetics, weaponry and full bionic augmentation). This makes him a master in all of the cybernetic and bionic sciences. Then there is no penalty for the character’s surgical skill (the second percentile number). The character can also repair, modify, design and build bionic and cybernetic devices. **Bionic Note:** One cannot create a bionic implant in a garage. The character will need access to a cybernetics or bionics laboratory and the components to build or modify an artificial implant. Even a high-tech medical facility will not have the necessary components to create a cybernetic or bionic mechanism, although it may have access to them. Only the most secure N.E.X.U.S. facilities in the Ghost Towns and main Technojacker enclaves will have these facilities, making design and construction a difficult prospect.

Cybernetics: Basic: An understanding of the purpose, capabilities and use of cybernetic implants used by some Technojacker clans. Knowledge is sufficient to make minor adjustments and repairs of cybernetic implants and mechanisms before they are implanted in a living being. The character cannot perform surgery, implant or remove cybernetics, but knows where they are located in the body, what they do and how they work, so they could consult with a sur-

geon to remove them, or harvest them from fallen allies or enemies. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

Electrical Engineer: Knowledge of electricity. Characters can diagnose and locate electrical problems, repair complex electrical devices, wire entire buildings or vehicles, and build electrical equipment. The character can also attempt to bypass security systems, alarms, and surveillance systems, but at a penalty of -20% for simple systems and -50% for complex systems (reduce these penalties by half if the character also has the surveillance systems skill). **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** Math: Advanced and Literacy. **Note:** There is a -30% penalty when working on alien or extremely unfamiliar electronics (a rarity in Splicers). The electrician may be able to puzzle out some of the basic aspects of the device, and may be able to figure out how to operate the machine, but will not be able to fully fathom how it works nor repair it.

Electricity Generation: Electricity is generated in a variety of ways: from sunlight, wind and hydro systems (using solar panels, windmills and water turbines) to batteries, combustion engines and generators. This skill gives the character the understanding of how and why these generation systems work and he is able to use, link and repair such motors, turbines and generator systems, but not to build them from scratch. He can even install small nuclear energy systems like those used in power armor and vehicles, as well as hook up a means to “recharge” E-Clips and E-Packs from generators. **Base Skill:** 50% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** Basic Math and at least Basic Electronics and Basic Mechanics.

Electronic Countermeasures: The ability to shield, encrypt and protect electronic transmissions, as well as jamming, scrambling, coding and decoding radio, video and wireless transmissions. This skill also includes knowledge in the use of technology to locate electronic bugs/listening devices and deactivate, undermine and otherwise circumvent them. The use of electronic masking, scrambling and unscrambling equipment, as well as codes to help foil the detection, interception and interpretation of radio and wireless transmissions is all part of this skill. A radio operator who makes a successful scramble roll can transmit coded or scrambled messages without fear that the enemy will intercept or understand his transmission.

Jamming communications from N.E.X.U.S. machines or other skilled Technojackers can cause unit confusion and disrupt communications. Military organization breaks down, causing a loss of effectiveness to all but the best units. Just about any high-powered radio can be used for jamming. Armed with a radio, a small guerilla unit can completely disrupt the maneuvers of large enemy groups. This skill also enables the radio operator to “follow” the enemy’s attempted transmissions over jammed frequencies to trace their location or direction of travel. This tactic is extremely useful in finding and eliminating bugs, transmission units, surveillance teams on a stakeout, small squads and enemies in distress. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** Radio: Basic.

General Repair and Maintenance: Many people are good with their hands and capable of doing satisfactory repairs on simple mechanisms, gears, pulleys, wheels, rope and so on. The general repair and maintenance skill includes: sharpening blades, minor repairs on weapons, packing their own S.D.C. bullets, sewing tears in clothes (it may not look pretty but it does the job), replace a wagon wheel, change a tire, shoe a horse, repair furniture, paint varnish, nail and assist in basic woodworking, and even do minor patchwork on armor (restores 1D6 M.D.C.). Roll once to see whether the character can figure out what is broken, what must be done to fix it and whether it is beyond his meager abilities to repair. Roll again to determine success or failure in making the actual repair. If failure, the character may try again, but only twice. **Base Skill:** 35% +5% per level of

experience. Reduce skill proficiency by half if the item is extremely damaged, complex, high-tech or alien.

Jury-Rigging: With this skill, the character can try to fix just about anything, or at least get it up and running for a short period of time. What the Technojacker can’t fix, some of his nanobots and a swift kick might. The proper parts are necessary for this to work, as well as the Technojacker’s own nanobots, and the jury-rigging is almost always a temporary fix that will break, blow up, or burn out in a matter of time. Once the jury-rigged item breaks, further jury-rigging is impossible and the item may as well be discarded. The character has learned to improvise and use things at hand to the best of his ability. This skill also gives the Technojacker the ability to correctly guess at the basic purpose or function of most technological devices within one melee round (15 seconds), and how to turn it on, off or unplug it. However, this is done at -20% and is typically done in more desperate situations. **Base Skill:** 56% +3% per level of experience.

A successful skill roll means the jury-rigging worked, but now the player must roll percentile dice to see how long his character’s patchwork will last. Unless stated otherwise, at the end of its limit, the jury-rigging breaks and the device stops working. Once this happens the item might as well be discarded. However, if repaired again using this skill *before* the jury-rig breaks, the item can be kept working for twice as long as originally determined. Note that the length of time given below is how long the jury-rigged item will work while it is turned on. It can be safely turned on and off, until needed again. Other Technojacker skills or abilities *may* enable the character to fully repair a particular item, given the appropriate amount of time.

01-10%: Amazing success! It’s like new and will remain working properly until damaged.

11-20%: Great job. Should last 2D6 days.

21-30%: Truly good job. Should last 1D4 days.

31-40%: Does the trick. Should last for 1D6 hours.

41-50%: Good enough for now. Should hold together for at least 1D6x10+36 minutes.

51-60%: It will have to do for now, but is far from perfect. Not telling how long the repair will last. Should be good for 2D6+6 minutes or until it takes a large, direct hit or a hard tumble.

61-70%: Luck is all that’s holding this baby together. Should last 2D6 minutes or until it takes a big, direct hit or a hard tumble.

71-80%: It’s a miracle this jury-rig works or holds together. Won’t last more than 1D6 minutes. Use it wisely.

81-90%: You’re holding a time bomb. Good luck! The jury-rigging won’t last more than 1D4 melee rounds, or until it takes a hit or a hard tumble. When it goes, the whole thing will burn out, stop working and inflict 3D6 M.D. to anybody touching it.

91-95%: You’ve got 15 seconds! One melee round, then it falls apart and can’t be reassembled in less than three hours.

96-00%: You’ve got 15 seconds! One melee round, then it goes boom and does 4D6 M.D. to a 10 foot (3 m) radius!

Laser Communications: This skill provides the character with an in-depth knowledge of advanced electronics, laser communication systems and fiber optic communication. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** Radio: Basic, Electrical Engineer, and Computer Operation skills.

Locksmith: The study of lock designs and the ability to repair, build, modify and open locks. The methods, techniques, and tools of lock picking include the old-style key and tumbler, combination, and modern electrical locking systems. **Time Requirements:** 1D4 melees to open an antiquated key-type lock or simple tumbler/combo type. 1D4 minutes to open an elaborate tumbler type, 2D4 minutes to open a simple electronic lock (usually by patching in a bypass system), and 1D4 hours to break a complex, state-of-the-art

electronic lock system such as those used in high security and restricted areas. Super high-tech systems, such as those used by the former Congressional military and government, will require 3D4 hours and have a skill penalty of -20%.

If an unsuccessful skill roll is made, the lock is not opened and the process must be repeated. If an attempt to open an electronic lock fails, roll again. A second failed roll means that the lock is irreparably damaged and cannot be opened! **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** At least Electronics: Basic (but such minimal skill imposes a -10% penalty when working on complex or high-tech locks) or Electrical Engineer (+5% bonus).

Mechanical Engineer: Training, understanding, and knowledge of how machinery is designed, operated, built, and maintained. Characters can attempt to redesign, modify, repair, construct, or sabotage mechanical devices (includes fusion driven turbines and advanced power supplies). The player must first roll to see if his character can figure out how to operate/analyze/design a machine. When a successful diagnostic roll has been made, roll again to determine when the character can fix/change/build the mechanism. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** Mathematics: Basic or Advanced, at least Basic Electronics and Literacy. **Special Bonus:** Add a one-time bonus of +5% to Locksmith and Surveillance Systems skills if Mechanical Engineering is also known. There is a -30% penalty when working with unique, one-off creations of N.E.X.U.S., but this is highly uncommon. The mechanic may be able to puzzle out some of the basic aspects of one of these experimental devices but cannot fathom how to fix or repair it.

Metallurgy: This is the science of separating metals from their ores and preparing them for use by smelting, refining, etc. Study include the behavior and properties of metallic, ceramic, polymeric and composite materials (observe mechanical, thermal, electrical and chemical behavior). This also includes work with plastics (polymeric) analysis, brazing, extraction of metals from areas; transformations (liquid-solid systems), fabrication and joining processes (metal alloys, structural changes/combinations) and the use of tools, equipment and methods. **Base Skill:** 30% +6% per level of experience.

Optic Systems: Provides expert training in the use of special optical enhancement equipment such as telescopic lenses, laser targeting, thermal imagers, passive light intensifiers, infrared and ultraviolet systems, polarization, light filters, optical scanners, video and digital cameras, holograms and related devices. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. Adds a special one-time bonus of +5% to the T.V./Video skill if both are selected.

Radio: Basic: The rudimentary knowledge of the operation and maintenance of all sorts of radio equipment, including military radio systems, field radios and walkie-talkies, audio recording devices, wire laying, installation, radio procedure, communication security and Morse code. It does not include the ability to make repairs nor operate video equipment. **Base Skill:** 45% +5% per level of experience.

Recycle: Knowledge of materials and scraps that have value when recycled, and methods of collecting, cleaning and storing recycled goods. Recycling typically includes paper, lumber, plastic, glass, aluminum, scrap metal, electrical wiring, circuit boards, and spare electronic or machine parts. **Note:** If the character also has Basic Mechanics (or a superior mechanical skill) he can strip down a damaged vehicle of its basic component parts and knows what to gather to make useful materials to repair an existing machine or build something new. Includes a very rudimentary understanding of metallurgy. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

Robot Mechanics: This is the specific study of advanced mechanics as it applies to robotics. Those trained in this discipline can repair, modify, build and sabotage robots, including industrial robot

machines, power armor, military drones and robot vehicles. There is a -30% penalty when working with unique, one-off creations of N.E.X.U.S., but this is highly uncommon. **Base Skill:** 20% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** Mechanical Engineer, Electrical Engineer, and at least Basic Mathematics.

Sensory Equipment: Individuals with this training can operate, maintain, understand and “read” or interpret sensory data from all types of conventional, military, medical and scientific equipment, scanners and sensory devices. These devices include radar, sonar, motion detectors, surveillance equipment, optical enhancements, industrial gauges, instrument panels, medical monitors (EKGs, CAT scans, etc.), life support systems, and so on. Note that characters without this skill cannot understand or operate advanced aircraft, medical or sensor/detection equipment.

Radar and Sonar Note: The character can expertly use radar equipment (radio echo bounces) and sonar (underwater sound echo bounces) and correctly read the information to precisely locate and track aircraft, ships and submarines, as the case may be. In submarines (and with radar for warships and fighter aircraft) there are two methods or types of operations, passive and active. To use active sonar, the sub must give a pulse or sound to bounce off of any nearby ships or objects. This is very dangerous since it immediately gives away the position of the submersible itself. Most vessels will not use active sonar unless absolutely necessary, and most will rely on passive sonar systems. This is much more difficult since the sonar operator must sift through the background noise to find any enemy targets. Sometimes they will not be able to distinguish the location of a ship from the background static. Despite this fact, passive sonar is used because it does not give away the location of the vessel. There is a -15% skill penalty when using passive sonar or radar. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

Safe-Cracking: This is a specialized skill in which the character studies the strengths, weaknesses and construction of safes and how to open them without damaging the contents inside. The fingers of the safecracker are so sensitive that they can “feel” the subtle “clicks” of combination locks and other locking mechanisms. When using explosives, they can use their abilities with such precision that they can “blow” the lock off a safe, security door, safe deposit box and similar, without creating a big, area effect explosion or inflicting damage to the contents (a failed Safe-Cracking skill or demolitions roll means the explosion was too much and the contents are damaged). **Base Skill:** 20% +4% per level of experience. **Bonuses:** Adds a +5% bonus to the Pick Locks and Demolitions skills. The character gets a +4% bonus if a Locksmith and +6% if a Mechanical Engineer. **Penalties:** Requires focus, concentration and keen hearing, so characters with an M.E. of 14 or less are -10% on this skill.

T.V./Video: In-depth training in the use of video, digital and audio recording equipment, as well as filming, editing, dubbing, title making, duplication and transmission. Includes the use of field equipment; i.e., portable video or digital camera and studio equipment. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience. **Note:** Some aspects of this skill may have limited applications in the world of the **Splicers® RPG**. It will often be used by Technojackers for intelligence gathering purposes.

Vehicle Armorer: A specialized skill in which the character can do more than just tinker with the mechanics of a vehicle.

Extra Armor: Replace S.D.C. body with M.D.C. body or add more M.D.C. to M.D.C. armor at 12 M.D.C. per level of experience to military/combat vehicles, full-sized vans and large trucks; 5 M.D.C. per level on commercial (non-combat) vehicles. Add a ram prow (does an extra 2D6 M.D. damage on ram attacks plus 1D6 M.D. for every 40 mph/64 km of speed; ram prow has 1D4x10 M.D.C. +7 M.D.C. per level of experience). Reduce speed by 5% for every extra

24 M.D.C. of armor on military vehicles or every 10 M.D.C. added to commercial vehicles. Reduce speed by 10% with the addition of a ram prow.

Custom Body Modifications: Repaint, modify or completely reconfigure the body of a vehicle to change or disguise its original appearance, or to make it look innocent, old, new, scary or sleek. Can turn the interior into a sealed environmental compartment and/or add a reinforced pilot compartment or crew compartment (1D4x10 M.D.C. +5 M.D.C. per level of experience) inside the vehicle, move the location of the engine and/or gas tank, add an extra gas tank or power supply, soup-up with heavy-duty shock absorbers (in effect, adds 10 M.D.C. to reinforced pilot or crew compartment), extend or shorten wheelbases, and similar changes.

Replace S.D.C. Components with M.D.C. Equivalents: May include such things as adding handgrips (1D4 M.D.C. each) and railings (1D6+3 M.D.C. each), extra (or fewer) headlights (1D4 M.D.C. each), adding a spotlight (small; 1D6 M.D.C.) or searchlight (medium to large; 2D4+4 M.D.C. or 2D6+6 M.D.C.), remove doors and replace them with locking latches (1D6x10 M.D.C. +5 M.D.C. per level of experience), change windows to slits with armored glass (1D6+6 M.D.C.), add a roof-mounted turret (1D4x10 +15 M.D.C.) add or repair weapon mounts for heavy, vehicle mounted weapons (rail guns, machine-guns, mini-missile launchers, heavy lasers, flame throwers, etc.) but cannot hook up the weapon or ammo drum or modify the actual weapon unless he also has the Weapon Systems skill.

The Vehicle Armorer can also drive/operate military vehicles at the *base skill* for that vehicle type.

Base Skill: 30% +5% per level of experience. **Note:** Automatically gets the Basic Mechanics skill at +20% as part of this skill. Taking this skill in conjunction with Automotive Mechanics provides a +10% bonus to the Automotive Mechanics skill. This skill counts as two skill selections.

Weapons Engineer: The complete understanding of military-grade weapon systems, cannons, recoilless rifles, launch systems, missiles, rockets, heavy energy weapons, and their incorporation into military vehicles. The character can handle, maintain, repair, unjam, clean, modify, mount and figure out most weapon systems and power supplies, and recharge batteries and E-Clips. He can repair an assault rifle, handle heavy weapons and install a missile system into a vehicle or a suitcase launcher. The engineer can also add and repair armor and is an expert welder. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience. **Requires:** Mechanical Engineering. **Bonus:** +1 to strike when using heavy weapons or vehicular weapon systems. **Note:** There is a -30% penalty when working with unique, one-off creations of N.E.X.U.S., but this is highly uncommon. The mechanic may be able to puzzle out some of the basic aspects of one of these experimental devices but cannot fathom how to fix or repair it.

Weapon Systems: This is the complete understanding of weapon units and systems incorporated into military vehicles, power armor and robot vehicles. It includes lasers, particle beams, rail guns, missile and grenade launchers, cannons and vehicle/robot weapon systems. Adds a special bonus of +1 to strike when using these types of weapons; this does not include hand-held weapons (see Weapon Proficiencies). **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience.

Piloting (Transportation) Skills

Note: A Technojacker can select from these skills in addition to Transportation skills as O.C.C. Related or Secondary Skills. Only Robots and Power Armor, Robot Combat skills and Combat Driving cannot be selected as Secondary skills. These skills are only available to the Technojacker O.C.C. since other Splicers are unable to

operate machines. Use these skills when the Technojacker is piloting a vehicle that he is not bonded to, but use the skill percentage in the Technojacker ability description if bonded to the piloted vehicle. Access to vehicles is extremely rare unless salvaged or stolen from a Retro-Village or Ghost Town.

Piloting skill rolls are made when piloting under adverse conditions (rain, fog, ice, etc.) and when performing stunts, tricks, jumps, evasive action, under attack, dodging, shooting a weapon while driving, high-speed chases, sideswipe attack, etc.

A failed roll either means that the “stunt” maneuver failed/missed, or that the pilot has lost control of the vehicle. If control is lost, the pilot must make two successful piloting skill rolls (with penalties) out of three to regain control. Failure to do so means the vehicle crashes. Game Masters, use your discretion and common sense, but here are some potential guidelines (in addition to those presented on page 186 of the **Splicers® RPG**). Adverse weather or road conditions: Poor: -10%, Bad: -15% to -20%, Terrible: -30%; Pressure Situation: -10% to -30%; Shooting and Driving: -20%; Attacking Ram/Sideswipe with Vehicle: -20%; Pilot is Distracted: -10%; Pilot is Wounded or Dazed: -10% to -40% depending on how “out of it” the character may be. These penalties can also be applied to the piloting rolls made by a Technojacker linked to a vehicle, not just the specific piloting skill.

Airplane: Includes old propeller, single and twin engine types. **Base Skill:** 50% +4% per level of experience.

Automobile: Manual and automatic transmission; includes dune buggies, jeeps and small trucks. **Base Skill:** 60% +2% per level of experience.

Boat: Motor, Race, Hydrofoil: These include all types of small, motor-driven boats, racing craft and yachts. **Base Skill:** 55% +5% per level of experience.

Combat Driving: This skill supplements other driving skills by helping to make the character a master of the roads when driving automobiles, jeeps, trucks, motorcycles and other ground vehicles. It helps to turn the character into an aggressive road-hog and cool-headed “chicken” player. In fact, tricks, dangerous maneuvers and high-speed car chases are fun for this daredevil, although his passengers are likely to fear for their lives.

In game mechanics, skill penalties for tricks, vehicular attacks (ram, sideswipe etc.) are reduced by half when this character is at the wheel, plus he is +2 to dodge when driving, +2 to survive crash/impact, can fire a weapon from a moving vehicle at only a -2 penalty, and can even make an Aimed or Called shot (at -2 to strike) while on a moving vehicle, or talk, or engage in some other activity while driving without penalty. This is a supplemental piloting skill applicable only to ground vehicles and does not have a base skill or level progression other than reducing penalties one additional percentage point per level of the driver’s experience.

Hover Craft (Ground): The knowledge needed to pilot all types of hover vehicles used for ground transport, including basic hovercycles and hover trucks. These vehicles can be tricky because they utilize several air jets and directional thrusters to push the craft on a cushion of air 1-3 feet (0.3 to 1 m) above the ground. The vehicles can usually attain great speeds (100 to 160 mph/160 to 256 km), are capable of driving over incredibly rugged terrain, and making jumps over small craters, ravines, boulders and fallen trees (10 feet/3 m, +4 feet/1.2 m per additional level of experience). **Base Skill:** 50% +5% per level of experience. **Note:** -20% to piloting skill rolls when making jumps, performing tricks, dodging gunfire and stunt driving.

Hovercycles: Characters who select the Pilot Hover Craft (Ground) skill can drive hover cars, hover trucks, and hovercycles on a basic level. However, those who specifically select the Pilot Hovercycle skill can pilot any type of hovercycle, rocket bike, Sky

Cycle or jet propelled one- or two-man hover ground or air vehicles with greater skill and finesse. They can perform spectacular jumps (20 feet/6.1 m +7 feet/2.1 m per additional level of experience), stop on a dime, perform dive-drops (soar off the edge of a skyscraper or cliff, keep control of the hovercycle as it drops, land on the ground without crashing or falling off and keep going; 120 foot/36.6 m drop +20 feet/6.1 m per additional level of experience), and perform tricks, stunts, jumps and dodging without penalty. **Base Skill:** 20% +3% per level of experience.

Jet Fighter: Training includes flying, maneuvering, aerial combat strategies, and typical fighter jet weapon systems. **Base Skill:** 40% +4% per level of experience.

Jet Packs: Piloting backpack-style units that strap to the back of an individual to carry him airborne. The typical jet pack is a one person unit capable of hovering above the ground and flying at an average altitude of 300 to 1,000 feet (91.4 m to 305 m). **Base Skill:** 42% +4% per level of experience.

Combat Helicopter: This specialized skill is required to fly all types of helicopters, including combat helicopters, and operate their related weapon systems. **Base Skill:** 52% +3% per level of experience.

Tanks and A.P.C.s: Military vehicles often have unconventional controls and handle differently from conventional vehicles, especially the many ton, armored combat vehicles such as tanks and armored personnel carriers (APCs). Thus, special training is required to pilot them. **Base Skill:** 36% +4% per level of experience. **Note:** Those with this skill can also pilot other types of “tracked” vehicles.

Motorcycles/Snowmobiles: This skill includes the piloting of all two- and three-wheeled vehicles such as motorcycles of all types, dirt bikes, and mopeds, as well as snowmobiles, jet sleds, miniature ATVs and other scaled-down vehicles. **Base Skill:** 60% +4% per level of experience.

Robots and Power Armor: Piloting and basic operations without any combat training or bonuses. Characters with this skill are taught the fundamentals of maneuvering light and medium giant robots and power armor suits. These are robot exoskeletons and vehicle-type robots that require a pilot and/or crew to be inside of them. The training focuses on piloting, not combat, thus, robot combat is a separate and distinct skill (see Robot Combat skills below). This skill enables the character to pilot combat model armor and robots, but not how to fight or operate weapons systems. Consequently, the character does not get any special bonuses or attacks when piloting the ‘bot or power armor – he has only his own physical number of attacks per melee round and bonuses to rely upon. He can also use a weapon system if it is built-in, but with no special aptitude with it.

Penalties: In fact, the use of weapons and special combat features (targeting, radar, etc.) are so unfamiliar that they confuse the ordinary non-combat pilot, causing the following penalties whenever he tries to use weapons or fight with the robot: -1 attack per melee round (yes, that is minus one; loses an action trying to figure out what’s what and exactly how to use the weapons and combat equipment), -2 to strike (with punches, blades, guns, missiles, etc.), and -1 to parry and dodge. **Note:** Penalties do not apply if the character has the Weapon Systems skill. **Base Skill:** 56% +3% per level of experience.

Power Armor is typically man-sized and often worn like body armor, although sometimes the pilot sits inside. In all cases, the power armor responds to the pilot’s physical movements.

A Robot Vehicle is typically a giant construct with vaguely human or animal features such as legs, claws, etc., but also may be vehicular in appearance or a combination of the two.

Flyers are a type of robot or power armor that includes airborne types suitable for air combat. They are also useable underwater, although their flight/propulsion speed is reduced by 70%-80%. Power

armor without jet propulsion can travel underwater by swimming or walking along the bottom, but at -80% of their normal speed. Each specific description will indicate aquatic capabilities, if any.

Robot (and Power Armor) Combat: Technojacker: Technojacker (Basic) combat training in robot vehicles and power armor gives the pilot a fair working knowledge of most robot vehicles and their most basic combat capabilities. The pilot will be able to operate the robot and use the various weapon systems and fighting capabilities, but not at maximum skill and efficiency. Bonuses and abilities imparted by the “Basic” Robot Combat Training are detailed below. **Note:** Hand to Hand bonuses from Technojacker Power Armor Training applies to all types of power armor: ground, aquatic and flyers. Use the Technojacker (Basic) table only.

Robot (and Power Armor) Combat: Legacy Guard: Certain Technojackers have trained almost exclusively with the remnant high-tech war machines of the fallen human empire. The leftover Congressional robots and power armor suits can still be found stored in caches all over the surface of the planet and even being used by the servile drones in the Ghost Towns of the Machine. The Legacy Guard is adept at using all of these combat machines with utmost efficiency and skill and is considered an expert operator on par with the Dreadguard of the Great Houses. This elite training automatically gives the pilot a basic understanding of and ability to pilot all standard robot vehicles and power armor (mostly labor and construction types) at the “basic” level and all Congressional robots and power armor at the “Elite” level. There is no Base Skill percentile because the pilot gets specific bonuses as he progresses in level of experience. Bonuses and abilities imparted by this elite Robot Combat training are detailed in the Legacy Guard (Elite) table below. **Prerequisite:** Must have the Legacy Guard skill package.

Truck: Specifically applies to driving large cargo and transport vehicles like eight- to sixteen-wheeled commercial trucks and multi-ton transports, including the massive Village trucks of many Technojacker tribes. **Base Skill:** 40% +4% per level of experience.

Weapon Proficiencies

Note: W.P. Modern Weapons on page 204 of the **Splicers® RPG** states that the P.P. bonus is added to strike rolls. This is incorrect and is clarified on page 219 of the **Splicers® RPG**. Only a character with the Gunman Skill Package will have this bonus. W.P. Modern Weapons is a general understanding of firearms, while the specific W.P.s are good for learning all the ins and outs of particular weapons.

Energy Pistol: A familiarity with pistol and submachine-gun style energy weapons that fire Mega-Damage energy beams, blasts, pulses or M.D. rounds/ammunition. Includes lasers, ion beams, particle beams, pulse weapons and similar in the classic handgun shape, size and weight. **W.P. Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15.

Energy Rifle: A familiarity with rifle-style energy weapons that fire Mega-Damage energy beams, blasts, pulses or M.D. rounds/ammunition. **W.P. Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14.

Heavy M.D. Weapons: A familiarity with military-grade weapons, including grenade launchers, rocket launchers, rail guns, mini-missile launchers, and turrets and weapons built into combat vehicles and giant robots. **W.P. Bonuses:** +1 to strike at levels 2, 4, 7, 10 and 13.

Sharpshooting: Sharpshooting is the combination of special expertise and trick shooting with a particular type of weapon, typically revolvers, pistols and energy pistols, but sometimes includes rifles. This skill can be developed by any combat O.C.C. but is fairly

uncommon among most except for the Technojacker, Scarecrow, Dreadguard, Tormentor, and occasionally the Packmaster.

W.P. Sharpshooting must be selected for each weapon type or category of weapon (revolver, pistol, energy pistol, Bio-Weapons: Light, Bio-Weapons: Heavy, etc.) in which the Sharpshooting expertise is desired. This means that if the character wants to be a specialist in revolvers, that's one Sharpshooting selection at the cost of two O.C.C. Related skill selections, plus the W.P. selection (sharpshooting skills can only be applied to O.C.C. weapon skills, but not Secondary skills). If Sharpshooting is also desired for W.P. Energy Pistol, the skill must be selected again (at the cost of two O.C.C. Related skills). This process is repeated for each W.P. for which the added benefits of sharpshooting are desired. Since each Sharpshooting selection costs the equivalent of two O.C.C. Related skill selections, even most combat characters seldom have more than one or two Sharpshooting specialties. Most don't have any.

Restrictions and Conditions: All bonuses and tricks are only possible with W.P.s to which the Sharpshooting skill have been added. Thus, a character with Sharpshooting: Revolver does not get the Sharpshooting bonuses when using an energy pistol.

The Sharpshooting skill can be added to all modern guns, from revolvers (six-shooters) to energy rifles, but does not include W.P. Heavy M.D. Weapons; i.e.: it cannot be applied to rail guns, rocket launchers, mini-missile launchers, bazookas, artillery weapons, vehicle or robot weapons, hand grenades or explosives. It also will not work with the specific Heavy Bio-Weapons of the Acid Scorcher, Burner, Electro-Pulse Gun, or Bio-Rocket Slinger. Likewise, Sharpshooting cannot be applied to weapons that don't shoot, such as clubs, maces, knives, swords, axes, whips, or even spears, bolas and other weapons that can be thrown. The Sharpshooting skill can be combined with the W.P. Archery skill.

This skill is never available to robots, Saints or Biotics of any kind. Archangels, Packmasters, Gardeners and Skinjobs are limited to only one Sharpshooting skill.

W.P. Sharpshooting Bonuses: All bonuses are in addition to the conventional W.P. bonuses and any applicable bonuses from the Vital Points skill.

The Sharpshooter's "Aimed" Shot: This special shot, applicable to both the single shot and the aimed burst shot, grants +1 to strike with a P.P. of 20 and for every five P.P. points above 20, but the bonuses are only applicable when the appropriate type of weapon is used. Aimed shots only. No bonuses for shooting wild.

The Sharpshooter's "Called" Shot: The Sharpshooter's "Aimed" shot bonuses are NOT applicable when using this special "Called" Shot. Instead, the sharpshooter uses the following superior bonuses: +1 to strike with a P.P. of 18 and for every additional three P.P. points above 18, but the bonuses are only applicable when the appropriate type of weapon is used and this special Called Shot counts as two melee attacks/actions. Aimed shots only.

Quick Draw: +1 to initiative with a P.P. of 18 and for every additional four P.P. points. This is in addition to any other initiative bonuses, including the W.P. Quick Draw skill itself. The character with both is simply very dedicated to honing his reflexes and reaction time.

The Bonus Attack: +1 melee attack when using a weapon of the specific type for the entire melee round.

Trick Shooting: Most combat classes can pick one of the following tricks (or roll 1D6 for random determination), but the Scarecrow or a Technojacker with the Gunman Skill Package gets all six.

1. Can fire a traditional two-handed weapon, like a rifle, one-handed without penalty (normally, the shooter would lose all strike bonuses).

2. Can shoot over his shoulder by holding up a mirror and using the reflection to aim. Reduce the bonus to strike by half, unless a Scarecrow or Technojacker with the Gunman skill package who keeps full bonuses to strike.

3. Accurately shoot while riding a horse or a moving vehicle (normally a wild shot), but strike bonuses are half and a "Called" Shot is impossible (-8 to strike and strike bonuses do not apply).

4. Shoot accurately while standing on head or hanging upside down; all bonuses applicable at full.

5. Dodge, roll or somersault and come up shooting (normally a wild shot); no bonuses or penalties to strike; straight roll of the dice.

6. Ricochet shot! The shooter can bounce bullets, arrows, grubs, pods, shards, slings and other fired projectiles (depending on the specific W.P.) off of one surface and angle the shot in such a way that the projectile ricochets/bounces off and hits a different/second target! Inflicts only one point of damage to the first surface and full damage to the second. Reduce bonuses to strike by half.

This can also be done with laser and light cell weapons but the ricocheting surface must be mirrored or highly polished. Some robots are excellent reflective surfaces for performing a ricochet laser shot. Particle beams, ion blasters, rail guns, mini-missiles and other types of weapons cannot be used.

Robot Combat: Technojacker

Characters with this skill are taught the bare fundamentals of operating all types of power armor suits, as well as basic types of robot vehicles. While all Technojackers can pilot power armor at 88% if they are linked to it thanks to their special abilities, combat training and strategies are another story. The emphasis of this skill is on basic power armor combat techniques, but due to the similarities of all of the old Congressional armor suits and robot vehicles, the individual is able to pilot all types on a basic level. **Note:** To use this skill without being linked to a power armor suit or robot vehicle, the character must also have the skill Pilot: Robots and Power Armor. If the character is depending on the Technojacker link to grant the piloting bonuses instead of this required skill, the character will be completely unable to pilot the robot or power armor without the direct umbilical connection.

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.

Basic Combat Bonuses: Applies to all types of power armor or robot vehicle. +1 extra attack/action per melee round, plus those of the pilot.

+2 to strike in hand to hand combat.

+2 to parry in hand to hand combat.

+2 to dodge.

+3 to roll with impact.

Critical Strike is the same as the pilot's hand to hand skill.

Strike for built-in ranged weapons are limited to bonuses the pilot may have from the skills Weapons Systems, W.P. Heavy Mega-Damage Weapons or from the Technojacker link.

Damage: As per Robot P.S. listed in the power armor or robot description.

Power Armor Body Block/Tackle/Ram: 1D4 M.D. plus a 01-55% chance of knocking down an opponent that is approximately the same size or smaller, causing him to lose initiative and one melee attack/action. Counts as two of the power armor pilot's melee attacks.

Robot Body Block/Tackle/Ram: M.D. equal to the normal punch M.D. of the Robot, plus a 01-60% chance of knocking down an opponent that is approximately the same size or larger. Increase the odds of knocking down an opponent that is half the size or smaller

than the robot to 01-80%. The victim suffers M.D. and loses initiative and two melee attacks/actions. Counts as two of the robot pilot's melee attacks.

Robot Combat: Legacy Guard

The Legacy Guard are Technojackers who have dedicated their lives to piloting and the skill of power armor combat. Most have been instructed from a young age and are taught all of the inner workings and intricate combat techniques unique to power armor combat. Since the old Congressional power armor suits are so similar, these skilled pilots are familiar with all models and can pilot them with frightening effectiveness. If this elite skill is taken later in life, the bonuses from this skill supersede those that the character might have from Robot Combat: Technojacker. (Use Legacy Guard bonuses only. Do not add Legacy Guard and Technojacker robot combat bonuses together.)

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.

Elite Combat Bonuses: Applies to all types of power armor or robot vehicle. Additional, unique bonuses or maneuvers may be listed in the individual robot or power armor descriptions.

+1 extra attack/action per melee round, plus those of the pilot at level one, and +1 additional attack at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12.

+2 on initiative (+3 for flying power armor).

+3 to strike with integrated energy and long-range weapons (+2 for flying power armor).

+1 to strike with missiles (+2 or flying power armor).

+3 to strike in hand to hand combat.

+3 to parry.

+2 to dodge (+5 to dodge for flying power armor in flight).

+2 to disarm.

+3 to pull punch.

+4 to roll with impact (+5 for flying power armor).

Critical Strike is the same as the pilot's hand to hand skill.

Strike for built-in ranged weapons may have bonuses from the skills Weapon Systems, W.P. Heavy Mega-Damage Weapons or from the Technojacker link.

Hand to Hand Damage: As per Robot P.S. and combat abilities listed in the power armor or robot description.

Power Armor Body Block/Tackle/Ram: 1D4 M.D. plus a 01-55% chance of knocking down an opponent that is approximately the same size or smaller, causing him to lose initiative and one melee attack/action. Counts as two of the power armor pilot's melee attacks.

Robot Body Block/Tackle/Ram: M.D. equal to the normal punch M.D. of the Robot, plus a 01-60% chance of knocking down an opponent that is approximately the same size or larger. Increase the odds of knocking down an opponent that is half the size or smaller than the robot to 01-80%. The victim suffers M.D. and loses initiative and two melee attacks/actions. Counts as two of the robot pilot's melee attacks.

Technojacker Clans

Many of the Great Houses and surface human communities are inherently distrustful of Technojackers, often shunning them, chasing them out of their territory or even hunting them. In some of these communities, when someone is born and begins to exhibit the abilities of a Technojacker or a resistance to the Nanobot Plague, they are either killed, outcast, left in the wilderness for dead or traded to nomadic groups of Technojackers in exchange for resources or infor-

mation. For these reasons, Technojackers have long gathered among themselves in clans where they can be protected from these threats as well as N.E.X.U.S. forces. These groups all have their own structure, leadership, rules, culture and purpose, but there are a few that have become very prominent and tribes that ascribe to the particular clan beliefs can be found almost everywhere across the planet in some form or another.

These larger clans have been around for generations and have developed new uses for their Technojacker abilities that only present themselves to members of their own group. This seems to be a communal evolution and that is inborn into new members of the clan and developed by those adopted into the clan at an early age. Many believe this to be evidence of the Technojacker nanobots communicating passively to expand their initial purpose. Those joining a clan later in life will eventually see their abilities change, reflecting those of their new tribe. At the next level of experience after joining a clan, the Technojacker will get all bonuses and benefits of being in a tribe of that clan. A character can never be a member of more than one clan, and if a character ever leaves or cuts ties with the clan, they can no longer develop Technological Evolution abilities specific to members of that clan. **Note:** Technojackers do not ever have to select or join a clan, instead opting to continue to roam the planet as a nomadic warrior, mercenary or until a sympathetic Great House or surface community is found.

The Purifiers™

"Technology should serve the creator."

- Motto of the Purifiers

The nanobots that serve as the primary N.E.X.U.S. weapon against the human resistance are most commonly found in non-precious metals, but it is widely assumed that the machines can be found everywhere in the environment, in the air and in all living things in their dormant state, just waiting for the proper trigger to activate their deadly response. Technojackers have long known of their ability to harness and manipulate these machines, but believe the unpredictability of the Nanobot Plague responses and the variety of abilities that Technojackers can develop only begin to scratch the surface of what these machines are capable of.

Technojackers have spent generations learning how to counter or manipulate the random reactions of tiny machines. They are even able to delay or control the individual Nanobot Plague responses and have often used these abilities to protect surface-dwelling humans and Splicer allies. One of the most startling abilities of the Purifiers, and the one that gives the most hope to the Human Resistance, is the power to syphon the nanobots from people or objects and use them to augment their other powers and abilities. These powers are extremely limited, but the fact that people, livestock, plants and even some simple metallic objects can at least temporarily be purged of the nanobot infestation is amazing and restores hope to all who witness it. There are even hushed rumors of secret groves and orchards that have remained free of the nanobot infestation for years, hidden from the seemingly ever-present eye of the Machine.

The Purifiers view themselves as humanity's best hope to combat the Nanobot Plague. They see themselves almost like an errant knightly order moving from one area on the surface to another while combating the forces of N.E.X.U.S. and helping the oppressed and downtrodden wherever they may be found. They perceive their command of the nanobots as the perfect tool for this task and refer to the ability of all Technojackers to control the nanobots as evidence of humanity's destiny to reclaim control of all technology. They recognize other Technojacker clans and occasionally form alliances with

them, but they view their own ability to purify things as the ultimate path towards saving humanity and view others as merely wasting time while the Purifiers fulfill their duty. Slaver clans are viewed as despicable enemies of humanity and are counted among the most hated enemies of the Purifiers.

The clan has a number of concealed fortresses dotting the surface that serve as monasteries, training grounds and resupply points for their members. These have historically served as places of protection for humans or Splicers soldiers in danger. Humans and Splicers in those fortresses have specifically assigned areas where they can be so as to avoid contact with any metal or technology while still remaining within the safe haven. As long as the clan is on good terms with the Great House or the Splicers in question, safe haven can be granted. The decision is always left up to the discretion of the one in charge of the particular fortress. Any disturbance from rival Great Houses or opposing Clans is never tolerated, often leading to expulsion or even permanent banishment for all members of the Great House or Clan in the future. Most are happy to play by the rules to avoid the loss of such helpful resources on the surface. Slavers, however, are never allowed in.

Special Bonuses and Notes for Members of the Purifiers Technojacker Tribe:

- +2 to M.E. and +1 to M.A.
- +2 to strike and parry.
- +3 to save versus the Horror Factor of Machines or Slavers, but only +1 to save versus all other instances of Horror Factor.
- **Purification:** Purifiers have the unique ability to purge nanobots from small, simple metallic tools or objects (knife, doorknob, shrapnel, etc.). The object will remain free of the nanobots for 30+1D4 minutes per level of the Purifier, allowing it to be used by those that would normally trigger a response. It should be noted that the object can be picked up and carried or used even by those humans that are infested with the nanobots, but the machines of the user do not recognize the object as metallic. This ability can even be used to fool metal detectors and security devices with a 90% success rate. Each purge takes one minute for the Purifier to syphon all of the nanobots. For 2D4 melee rounds after each purge, all Technojacker abilities of the Purifier operate as though the character is one level higher than normal. This ability only applies to Technojacker abilities and does not extend to skills or Hand to Hand Combat abilities. **Note:** This ability does not stack. Only one temporary level can be granted at a time.
- **Cleanse:** Purifiers have the ability to completely heal and restore the minds of Technojackers who have become Code Addicts through the use of the DRDI process. Through the use of the Purifier's own nanobots and umbilical, the Technojacker can meditate and merge with the afflicted individual, pulling the original personality and imprint from the addict's own nanobots. After a number of hours equal to the addict's M.E. +24, the character will see that his mind has been repaired, eliminating any permanent skill loss, loss of Technojacker abilities and attribute reduction. Any skills permanently gained through the DRDI addiction are lost. Through this healing process, the mind of the Technojacker is so altered that he loses the ability to ever engage in DRDI again. A Purifier can engage in this process once per month.
- **Alignment Breakdown:** 80% good alignments, almost equally split between Principled and Scrupulous. The remaining 20% are primarily selfish alignments, with the very rare evil character who is a member of the clan solely for nefarious or vengeful purposes.

Exclusive Technological Evolution Abilities:

The Purifier can select from the following abilities whenever one would be able to choose from the Technological Evolution list in the revised Technojacker O.C.C.:

- **Delay Nanobot Plague Response:** The Purifier emits a discrete electronic signal that disrupts and confuses nearby nanobots. Each Nanobot Plague response within 20 feet (6.1 m) will take twice as long to present itself (roll as normal, and then double the result). For complex, powered items, this can still be an extremely short period of time, so those nearby that are not paying attention could suffer catastrophic or deadly results. **Prerequisite:** None.
- **Response Variation:** The Technojacker has the ability to slightly modify the reaction of the Nanobot Plague. When a Nanobot Plague response is about to happen within 30 feet (9.1 m) of the Purifier, the character will receive a quick, intuitive flash, most likely a signal from the nanobots themselves, alerting him to what the response will be (what was rolled on the Hostile Response Table starting on page 11 of the Splicers Role-Playing Game). In that brief moment, the Purifier can either allow that response to happen or send a return signal to slightly change the response. The character can modify the original roll on the Hostile Response table either -10% or +10%, or can force the Game Master to reroll. In either circumstance, the new result cannot be modified further in any way, other than a potential delay in the response from the Delay Nanobot Plague Response ability. **Prerequisite:** None.
- **Self-Sacrifice:** The nanobots of the Purifier are open to all active, nearby nanobots, making him aware of any potential Nanobot Plague reactions. Instead of allowing them to occur normally, the Technojacker can redirect the attention of the nanobots to make himself the target of their response. The hostile response will happen as normal, but can still be modified by other Purifier abilities, such as Response Variation or Delay Nanobot Plague Response. **Prerequisite:** Response Variation or Delay Nanobot Plague Response.

The Slavers

"Finders keepers. You want them back? You can pay... or try to take them."

- Jefferson Whitacre, Technojacker Slaver

There are many groups that roam the surface trying to eke out an existence in the war-torn wastelands and vast expanses of wilderness. Some groups are more successful than others, but all of them have one thing in common; they find a way of life that works for them and they stick to it. Slaver clans are usually close-knit groups of Technojackers that seek to track down any surface-dwelling human communities with the sole purpose of capturing and enslaving them. There are many well-known clans, with names like the Yoke, the Dominators, the Subjugators and the Taken. For each established clan, there are dozens of lesser-known or hidden Slaver groups. Each has their own leadership structure, general attitudes and goals, but for the most part, all of the Slaver clans only look out for themselves.

Their captives are used for many purposes. They are often sold or bartered to other surface communities in exchange for food, goods, weapons and other resources, while others have been known to be given to robot representatives of N.E.X.U.S. in exchange for weapons, vehicles or simply the pleasure of living for another day. Some more gruesome and savage clans have even been known to round humans up and use them like cattle, cannibalizing them when food

is scarce. If the Slaver clans were not already despicable enough, the barbaric nature of these cannibals make up for the rest of them.

Slaver clans typically travel the roads of the surface in vast convoys made of a variety of vehicles. This is usually part of an arrangement with one of the Machine personalities that allows them to move about unhindered as long as humans are constantly delivered. Some clans claim Kali as their patron, while others claim Eve or Hecate. All that is known is that there is more than one personality allowing this horrific process to continue. Slaver soldiers and defenders will normally be mounted on fast-moving hovercraft or in reclaimed Congressional power armor, while other members will defend the main column. Large trucks hold the captured “stock” unless there has been a particularly successful raid, leaving many of the new captives to walk. Slavers will generally take anyone and everyone they can find on the surface and have even been known to capture Splicer soldiers, pulling them naked out of Host or Living Armor only to tie them up and throw them in the back of a truck.

These nomadic clans will normally only stay in an area long enough to capture any “low-hanging fruit” in the region, moving on if resources become strained or they encounter any stiff resistance. Great Houses go to tremendous lengths to locate and chase off any Slaver clans reported to be operating in their claimed territories before Retro-Villages or small surface communities the House may depend on are wiped out.

Special Bonuses and Notes for Members of the Slaver Technojacker Tribes:

- +2 to P.S. and P.E.
- +3 to pull punch, +2 to disarm.
- +2 to save versus Horror Factor.
- All Slavers start with W.P. Net, Prowl (+10%), Use and Recognize Poison (+10%), Camouflage (+10%) and Resist Torture and Hunting, but receive no Elective Skills at level one.
- **The Sweet Spot:** All Slavers receive a special bonus extending their knockout target roll by one (knockout on Natural 19-20 if previously knockout on Natural 20). If the character did not previously have any knockout ability, the character can knockout a target on a roll of a Natural 20. Like normal knockout attacks, this attack still has to be declared. This bonus does not extend to the special knockout rule granted by the Boxing skill.
- Alignment Breakdown: 90% evil alignments. The remaining 10% are made up of those who simply fell in with the Slaver clans as a means to survive, or those who were born into the clan. They may not condone the actions of the clans, and may secretly be working to subvert them.

Exclusive Abilities:

The Slaver can select from the following abilities whenever one would be able to choose from the Technological Evolution list in the revised Technojacker O.C.C.:

- **Nanite Bonds:** This simple ability allows the Technojacker to summon nanobot fibers to make a cord similar to the melding cable used to control machines. The bonds are created in the hands of the Technojacker and can be placed on the hands or feet of another person to hold them like handcuffs or manacles. These normal bonds are more than adequate for holding a human or animal and take one melee action to create, but stronger bonds are needed for robots and Splicer soldiers. By taking an additional 1D4 melee rounds, super-strong bonds can be created to contain a target with a Splicer or Robot Strength of 40. **Duration:** These bonds

will last for one hour per level of the Technojacker or until the creating Technojacker commands them to release and dissolve.

Prerequisite: None.

- **Neural Net:** This ability allows the Slavers to exude a ball of nanobots that can be thrown or fired from the hand at a range of 300 feet (91.4 m). Creation takes one action while attacking requires another. Firing the sphere releases a sharp crackling sound, where throwing it is silent. When within 10 feet (3 m) of the target, the sphere will instantly spring open into hundreds of individual monofilament nanobot cables that wrap up the target. The character must have W.P. Net to use this ability effectively, but the character also gets +2 to strike when using the net. The net will temporarily cause human and Bio-Tech creatures to become dazed. The energy strike caused by the net temporarily short-circuits the nervous system of humans and Splicer organisms, but has absolutely no effect on robots or other machines. Once the victim is wrapped up, he must roll to save versus stun (non-lethal poison, 16 or higher). If the save is successful, the target loses two attacks and is -2 on all combat maneuvers for one melee round. If the save is failed, roll on the following table:

Chance of Being Rendered Unconscious:

- 01-10%:** Splicer Soldier in full Host Armor or War Mount.
- 01-20%:** Gorehound or other similar organic creature.
- 01-25%:** Biotics.
- 01-30%:** Human in body armor.
- 01-35%:** Unarmored human.

If the save is failed but the target is not knocked unconscious, the target is still wrapped up by the neural net and will suffer the penalties as described in the W.P. Net description on page 205 of the **Splicers® RPG**. **Duration:** One melee round (15 seconds) per level of the Technojacker. **Prerequisite:** Nanite Bonds.

- **Pacification:** This ability targets nanobots in nearby targets (normally slaves), and makes them trigger hormone producing glands in the brain increasing the amount of chemicals like adenosine in the bloodstream. When activated, the Technojacker can select one target (+1 at levels 2, 5, 8, 11 and 14) within 30 feet (9.1 m) who must make a save of a natural 15 or higher (no bonuses). If the save is successful, this ability has no effect. If failed, the bloodstream is filled with a rush of these artificially triggered chemicals.

The release of chemicals makes the target extremely drowsy and passive, but not enough to make the target fall asleep. The nanobots maintain this fine balance until the duration elapses or until the controlling Technojacker tells them to do otherwise. During this time, the target is very open to suggestions and is easily directed to do very basic tasks like move to a particular area, sit or lie down, or stay in a particular place. The target cannot be made to do something that would knowingly harm themselves or others. Spd attribute is reduced to 8, attacks per melee are reduced to 2, and the character is -8 on all combat maneuvers. This ability has no effect on Warmounts, Gorehounds, Saints, Biotics, or those in environmental armor (including Host Armor). **Prerequisite:** None.

10 Tips for Game Masters

By Chris Isberg

I have been playing role-playing games for a long time. I started with Dungeons and Dragons, moved over to Mechanoids (which I fell in love with), then got into FASA's Star Trek, Star Frontiers, TOONS, Paranoia, Traveller, James Bond, TMNT, Robotech, and many other games. Then Rifts came out and suddenly we were combining elements from all the games and going into other dimensions using the core Palladium rule set. In our group, I am the Game Master; I love writing the adventures and organizing the campaigns for players to enjoy.

Some games are obviously easier to write adventures for while others simply provide pre-printed gaming aids. I typically write my own adventures but from time to time I will take one of the pre-printed modules from another game and convert it to Rifts (the Hook, Line and Sinkers are good starts for ideas as well). Regardless of the style you prefer, there are some basic ideas all Game Masters should embrace in order to make their games more enjoyable.

1. Remember that the players are very unlikely to go exactly where you planned.

One of the things I love about role-playing games is the possibility to do whatever you want without the limits of a game board. Dungeon crawling will create limits but even in a confined area there are always avenues for surprises and choices. Game Masters must try to limit those "theoretical" choices players can make without interfering with the game play. This can be a very difficult concept to understand especially for less experienced Game Masters.

When designing an adventure (or using a pre-printed game aid), avoid pitfalls where specific plot-points for the adventure require the players to do a very specific task in order to move the adventure forward. In games where I have witnessed this issue, it usually revolves around players deciding to go "left" instead of "right" and the adventure requires the players to go to the "right". Remember that this is a story that has been created, and therefore not everything should remain rigid in the design. The important items that drive the storyline of the adventure need to occur, so set them up to occur at certain points in the adventure rather than certain places. For example, a group of characters need to meet a particular NPC to get a clue as to where a group of villagers were last seen. Rather than having the NPC in a particular bar or restaurant, simply have the characters stumble across him in their travels. I have had groups where they didn't even go into the town where the informant was so I had them rescue him on the road they were traveling instead.

In order to provide the best playing experience, plot points need to be fluid within the adventure to adjust to the decisions made by the playing group. It is best to list out what is important and the order they need to occur. From there you can decide that these items/NPCs/whatever are at certain "physical" places in the adventure but you should always be prepared to move the place to wherever the players have decided to go instead. By creating a checklist of the plot points important to the adventure, you can insert them at various points to get the story back on track without forcing the characters into a particular cave or down a particular road or go into a particular building or be in a specific position.

2. Create Random Encounter Charts based on elements within the adventure.

This helps with the first point in making your adventure fluid. I have created campaigns and city maps for the players (and even purchased player aids which I then converted to my needs) but many times when playing the adventures, the players tend to wander off in different directions or decide they would rather do something else outside the parameters of the adventure. I try to create my adventures to allow the players the choice to go wherever they want but the adventures will still happen regardless. I have found that creating random encounter charts that contain elements of my adventure help when players decide to "wander off."

I start by breaking down my adventure into the plot points and then add the side characters (whether they are monsters, NPCs, or items). I then look at the side characters in the games and organize them by how they fit into the adventure (beginning, end, unimportant, silly, etc.). From there I create encounter charts based on how they fit in the adventure and what is involved. That way if a playing group decides they want to leave town rather than investigate for a group of Vampires plaguing the town, I will go to the encounter charts I created to handle some of the random encounters they may meet in order to get the adventure back on track. I will even put in plot points in the random charts to give the illusion of choice by the players.

For example, I had an adventure where the players needed to investigate wreckage in the woods. However, the players decided they didn't want to investigate because they figured it would be an ambush or something negative for their characters. It was important for the characters to investigate the wreckage to get a clue to resolving the adventure, therefore I had to go to my random encounter charts I had created as they decided to wander through the forest to head to the next town (which had nothing to do with the adventure we were playing). I managed to get the adventure back on track with the random encounters as well as well-placed plot point encounters to get the information to the players to resolve the adventure without forcing the group to return to the wreckage site (and do something they originally did not want to do).

3. Create humor in the game through the use of NPCs and situations.

Even horror movies insert humor at points to engage the audience and catch viewers off guard. When playing role-playing games, the same idea should be used to lessen the tension in the game. Sometimes these can be directly tied into the plot points of the adventures and other times they can simply be a silly distraction. For example, in one particular adventure, the players had to speak to a particular informant to gain some valuable information regarding one of the plot points in the game. So I created a partial cyborg NPC to provide the information. However, the individual was in need of repairs and could not use his legs and could only pull himself by one arm. His bodily structure was intact (and had a high amount of M.D.C.) but he was in need of a robotics electrician to fix some issues. The NPC also had a cantankerous attitude because he lacked funding to pay for the repairs and was tired of always pulling himself around with one arm. He then spent a lot of time insulting the players' characters (which was fun to role-play), at which point they decided to use him as an M.D. club.

Adding flavor such as this can be the difference between waiting for your turn to go or anticipating your turn to come. The players enjoyed the situation so much that I ended up bringing the NPC back a few adventures later on. Humor can come in many different forms and I have often used the idea of rolling a natural "1" means anything

can happen (even the character shooting himself or making an instant kill on a monster). I have also implemented ideas such as randomly running out of ammo for weapons if the player does not routinely remember to tell me he/she is reloading their weapon. We did this originally as a house rule to avoid constantly keeping track of ammo. These are simple mechanics to add to an adventure but make the overall experience memorable.

4. When setting up your adventure, make a list of all the skills players could potentially roll against (including Save versus rolls).

This list will act as a checklist for gathering information from the players and their characters before the game starts (recording their stats for each skill in the checklist). Then, when items come up in the game, you can decide to either allow the player to roll (without telling them exactly what they are rolling for) or to make a secret roll to determine success or failure. This technique can be used when players fail a Lore skill (or two players have the skill and have failed) but you want to give them the opportunity to figure out the situation regardless. As G.M., you make secret rolls against both players before providing the information, and in some cases, the information you provide could be contrary if one has failed and one has succeeded. Now the players must decide which one is correct and what course of action they should follow.

Another way to use this list is for observing hidden items or area affects that may be hidden to the characters. When characters enter a room the G.M. has the characters roll dice (and determines the effects) without telling the characters what it is they rolled against. Perhaps some of the characters succeeded with their rolls and some failed, but as a group, they are unsure who was successful and who failed (or perhaps the effects are quite obvious and they must figure out how to deal with the results). They might need to try to figure out what is happening by relying on other skills (perhaps even rolling against medical skills to help someone who has failed their SAVE without the benefit of knowing exactly which medical skill they should be using).

You can also inform the players at the beginning of an adventure that failed rolls don't necessarily mean they failed the skill test but rather it is an "unknown," meaning you may still give them the correct information and the group must decide whether it is correct or not. This type of mechanic forces the group to interact with each other to decide what is going on without necessarily knowing for sure what has happened (or happening).

5. Find ways to interject skills into an adventure.

I have seen many adventures where players will make characters but then only use a handful of their skills (and it does not matter which gaming platform you play). When creating your own adventure, it is easy to add skills such as Architecture and Anthropology but the characters don't always choose such skills or may not use them if the majority of the adventures are spent in combat. Therefore, reward players by trying to incorporate their skills into the adventures even if you simply have to add them to the random encounter charts mentioned previously. Not every creature speaks English, or knows how to read & write, or what a book on "Master of Orion" would mean in the world of Rifts. Players should have well-rounded characters but the only way they will create those characters is if the G.M. has included other options than strictly using combat skills.

As a G.M., I will often help players create their characters and encourage them to talk to each other to figure out what skills are needed in the group. I then find ways to include the various skills into the game so the players don't feel that they wasted their choice.

When I create the list of skills before an adventure I will add things like the Cooking skill for example. Then when the characters go into a town and decide to get a meal, I'll roll secretly on the characters with the Cooking skill who will then tell the party what they thought of the food. I had one group where I rolled four different times before they figured out that one player had selected the Cooking skill for their character and that was why she was telling everyone what she thought of the food. There was a lot of laughs in the process and she successfully used her skill in the adventure.

6. Don't make the adventure too hard for the group playing.

As a G.M., I have killed off a number of the players' characters but it is not something I enjoy doing. The gaming experience is about having fun and oftentimes the enjoyment can be stifled by making adventures too hard for the playing group (or perhaps some individual didn't make it so there are less in the group than planned). Keep in mind who is playing, their skill levels, and the players' experience when writing an adventure or using a player aid adventure. A G.M. should always be prepared to have something miraculous happen to save a character or the group or an NPC to provide help when needed. They may still fail the adventure but at least they all survived to play another game (and gain some experience points).

Also, if you have a mixed group of players (some at a high level and some at a low level), make sure the adventure offers both easier tasks that the lower level characters can handle as well as more complicated tasks that tax the higher level characters. The most common way to handle this is through the characters' skills and the lists mentioned earlier in points 4 and 5. Find ways to use a skill that perhaps only the lower level character knows or something both a higher and lower level share. Then you can always make the rolls in secret so the two players must decide which of the characters succeeded in the roll and which one failed.

7. What do I do when none of the characters have a skill required in the adventure?

There are several ways to handle this with either using a similar skill at a penalty or rolling against a character's attribute that is relative to the skill in question. However, I have found that both are a bit lacking and take away from game play when trying to figure out if someone was successful (though skill substitution can be funny). One of the mechanisms I have found useful is the creation of a LUCK attribute for each character. I have the players roll up an additional attribute (just like a normal attribute - 3D6 adding +1D6 for rolls 16 and above) with the result matched to the following chart:

<u>Attribute</u>	<u>LUCK %</u>		
3	-30%	14	+15%
4	-20%	15	+20%
5	-15%	16	+22%
6	-5%	17	+25%
7	0%	18	+30%
8	0%	19	+35%
9	0%	20	+40%
10	0%	21	+45%
11	0%	22	+50%
12	+5%	23	+55%
13	+10%	24	+60%

A negative number means that the player can still roll for luck, but the percentage acts as a penalty to the character's known skill; attempting to use luck on unknown skills will ALWAYS make the situation worse. A LUCK percentage of 0% means the player simply

rerolls the character's skill with no additional modifiers; attempting to use the LUCK attribute on unknown skills will fail but will not make the situation any worse (unless the G.M. decides otherwise). A positive percentage number represents a bonus modifier on the character's skill; in the case of unknown skills the percentage acts as the base skill level for the character.

Some characters will obviously be luckier than others but the idea of using the attribute is when no one has a trained skill to perform a task or when all have failed and the group is in desperate need (hence the positive and negative modifiers). Use of this attribute can also lead to some humorous role-playing and last minutes saves (even a fail could result in a Rift opening that takes the party to an unknown dimension but away from their immediate danger). This mechanism gives the players a sense of hope and control of the game even when they have all rolled poorly as a group.

8. Use and document House Rules.

One of the reasons I stopped playing other role-playing games was the rules. Any time I am sitting for 40 minutes waiting for the G.M. to figure out someone else's attack based on movement, rules of opportunity, and so on, it's time to leave or take a nap. The rules in a game should never interfere with the enjoyment of the game. I am not a fan of measuring out how far someone ran, or what angle you can shoot, or even whether something is bullet-proof. Therefore we have a number of house rules that simply remove, replace, or ignore the rules that slow down game play.

As a G.M., you always have the right to remove any rule that does not work for the group. However, any rule changes should always be made before the game starts and it is always best to make a list of any rule changes/omissions so everyone knows what to expect (especially for new players in a group). Making rule changes should be avoided once a game has started unless everyone agrees that the rule is not working. One example of this for our role-playing group was the removal of the A.R. (Armor Rating) rule. When we played *Mechanoids*, the characters were at a disadvantage and it becomes even more blatant when the players roll poorly as most of the *Mechanoids* have high A.R.s. In one particular game, as G.M. I was rolling quite well but the players were not and the result was the *Mechanoids* decimated the group. Therefore, we decided as a group to remove the A.R. rule so the players only needed above a 4 to hit for normal combat with damage coming from the main body or armor first unless a called shot was made. The adventure was still difficult as I have a tendency to put deduction elements in any adventure I write, but the players were able to feel successful in combat when it arose. Rule changes and omissions should not be seen as a "dumbing down" of the game but rather a way to provide more enjoyment for the group and enhance the overall game-play experience. After all, I read once that the **Palladium Fantasy Role-Playing Game**® came into existence from the use of house rules (as well as a few rule changes).

9. Developing Reputation points

Since role-playing games give you the option to go where you want to go and do what you want to do, sometimes players will choose to do things that are detrimental to the adventure or end up performing great feats of heroism. Both actions can create credibility or notoriety for the playing group as they move from adventure to adventure. I like to keep track of these events for future adventures so that the choices made by the players could potentially come back to either haunt or help them. For example, I ran a group that had a habit of firing off their M.D. weapons inside S.D.C. villages. Even though the decisions made still fell within the alignments of the characters, it caused a lot of mayhem and some of the players purposely started

destroying things for fun. This kept happening in other adventures so the characters started encountering emissaries from a town they were approaching which later became armed soldiers. The players also started having a hard time getting supplies, information, and repairs to equipment because they were literally barred from entering the village limits.

The characters' reputation from various events will start to affect skill rolls as they find it harder to blend in or even convince an NPC to do something that benefits the group but is contrary to the NPC's beliefs (and the NPC knows of the characters by their reputation). It will also impact services, supplies, attitudes, and resources based on the type of reputation the group develops. So, in addition to earning experience points I will assign Reputation points to the characters based on their actions when performed in a public arena. For example, I use the chart below to assign points based on specific actions:

- 10 For destroying/stopping a well-known menace in the area
- 10 For damaging innocent homes and people
- 1 For destroying/stopping a menace in the area
- 5 For helping innocent people in an area
- 5 For disrupting local government operations in an area
- 2 For completing an adventure (successful or not)
- 2 For showing off unique/stolen equipment
- 2 For using Black Market resources
- 1 For selling off "acquired" items (however they were acquired).
- 3 For using equipment not normally associated with the group (for example: non-Coalition characters wearing Coalition armor).
- 3 For repeatedly voicing opinions publicly that were contrary to local practices.
- 1 For stealing and shoplifting (or any disrespectful act)
- 1 For insulting innocent people

Then, for every 50 points acquired by the group, I start adding modifiers such as a +/- 5% on skills that could be affected if the group has a reputation one way or the other such as Seduction, Intelligence, I.D. Undercover Agent, Tailing, and so on. Then every 100 points earned by the group will start having effects on the local communities such as wanted posters, local law enforcement encounters, people approaching the characters for help without the offer of compensation, refusal of services, and so on. The points are not hidden from the players so they are fully aware of their reputation within the game which may affect some of their decision-making as they acquire (or potentially acquire) more points. The purpose of the points is simply to act as a reminder to the players about the decisions they make as well as create continuous storylines based on the adventures completed. Experience points benefit the individual characters but the Reputation points affect the entire group.

I enjoy adding these elements to campaigns to add a bit of flavor to the adventures and help with adding humorous situations to the group or making a simple task now very difficult despite the characters' level of experience. The opposite is also possible when their credibility in particular situations is known and works in favor to the current event placed before the characters (maybe even having NPCs come to the group's rescue based on their known good deeds in the past).

10. Remember, it is never the players versus the G.M. to see who wins.

As G.M., your goal should always be to cheer for the players and create adventures where they can succeed. It can sometimes be easy to fall into a position where it is "me" against "them" but the goal of the Game Master is to create a story where the characters are the heroes (for the most part) and the players feel like they accom-

plished something while having fun. I have seen G.M.s who were upset when players come up with a creative (and unexpected) way of defeating the antagonists and completing the game. There is no way you can think of every possibility and every scenario so there will be times when the unexpected happens. Actions such as those should be rewarded with experience points and everyone moves on to the next adventure. The joy of being a Game Master is the chance to make the players have a great time playing and the desire to play again (as soon as possible).

The Unbidden™

“Official” Supplemental Material for *Rifts*® and any the *Minion War on Rifts*® Earth and in the *Three Galaxies*™. Equally suitable for *Chaos Earth*® and adaptable to any *Palladium Fantasy*® or *Heroes Unlimited*™ Setting.

By Josh Sinsapaugh

Additional text and ideas by Kevin Siembieda

Dimensional physics are a bit of a sticky wicket when operating in other dimensions and realities. What a **Shifter** or **Ley Line Walker** intends to happen isn't always exactly what happens. In fact, it almost never is. Even when successful, opening a Rift can have a number of unintended consequences. Among them are a host of beings that take advantage of the dimensional medium being made threadbare around the Rift to gain access to another world (and not always the world the Rift itself might lead to). Often these unbidden creatures are various sorts of Entities and lesser supernatural beings, which are comparatively inconsequential in the grand scheme of things. Sometimes though, especially in periods of dimensional instability, much more rare and/or powerful beings are able to slip through the fabric of space and time whenever a Rift is opened, or in the dimensional bleed of a Hell Pit, gaining access to people and places they normally could only dream of reaching. These creatures, often referred to as **the Unbidden** by mages and dimensional travelers, are almost all opportunists that seek out the temporarily unstable parts of the Megaverse because that is exactly where their victims reside: during or in the aftermath of such calamities as the Coming of the Rifts or the Minion War.

Conqueror Worm

“That’s not thunder, it’s Death ...”

– Lord Coake to his men, a few days’ ride outside of the Calgary ruins.

Last seen on Rifts Earth during the Two Hundred Years Dark Age, the Conqueror Worm is an unaffiliated demonic species that reappeared following the **Sorcerers’ Revenge** and again when the **Minion War** on Rifts Earth turned “hot.” A frightening 80 feet (24.4 m) in length and capable of turning invisible, the black and grey monstrosity resembles a heavily armored worm with a tail that ends in a massive rattle; a series of interlocking, heavily-armored, hollowed segments. The rattlesnakes that we are familiar with here on Earth use their rattles to warn off potential predators, but it is frightening to imagine what creature could prey on this otherworldly beh-

moth. The Conqueror Worm also uses the sound of its rattle to create an atmosphere of dread and fear to all who hear it, and to unnerve anyone who dares to challenge or attack it.

On the battlefields and wastelands of Rifts Earth, the rattle can be used as a weapon to create a sonic boom that dazes and frightens its victims just as the gigantic creature transitions into visibility and attacks. Of course, considering the size of the Conqueror Worm, even people who can't see the invisible are likely to know of the Conqueror Worm's presence before it allows itself to be seen. As the demon moves, trees and other obstacles jostle, bend, and/or break in its path. Even so, presented with enough space or given access to a ley line, the Worm can move with surprising silence and stealth as it stalks its prey.

Referred to as “the Conqueror Worm” in one of *General Jericho Holmes*'s reports, the name quickly filtered into the Coalition ranks and the population at large. Unbeknownst to most, Holmes named the creature after an Edgar Allan Poe audio short story he heard as a child; and even Holmes himself doesn't remember which ancient author penned the story. Rogue Scholars and other well-read adventurers would likely delight in knowing that an otherwise brilliant Coalition general haphazardly named the alien species in homage to Poe, and delight even more to recall that the name references one of Poe's works that is banned by Coalition authorities. There is nothing delightful about the Conqueror Worm, however, the creature is a ruthless predator bold enough to take on armored battalions of warriors and wicked enough to torment and slay a lost D-Bee child with the same merciless sadism.

Conqueror Worms have no mouths and feed off the ambient P.P.E. of their environment, supplemented with the much better tasting P.P.E. released at the time of their victims' deaths. The monstrosities also feed on fear, though they gain no sustenance from it, only the pleasure of the delicious flavor and the rush that follows: like a child on a sugar-binge.

Formidable supernatural opponents, Conqueror Worms themselves are not unconquerable. “Traditional” M.D. ordnance from laser to missiles to rail gun rounds can slay the monster or force a retreat, while ordinary weapons made of silver or the wood of a *bristlecone pine* deal it the same damage as ballistic weapons. Fortunately

for its prey (i.e. all life), the worms do not regenerate at any rate that could be considered incredible, so a strong defense (or offense) can easily overcome the healing properties of this supernatural menace. The gargantuan creatures also have the habit of temporarily uniting opposing forces, sometimes even the Coalition and their D-Bee or magic wielding adversaries. As for the beasts, they know no loyalty or allegiance and are never encountered in pairs or a group, always alone against everyone and everything else.

As one of the Unbidden, the average Conqueror Worm spends the majority of its time between dimensions, sleeping in a dimensional pocket or searching the Megaverse for P.P.E.-rich dimensions where massive dimensional instability or other tragic disasters are taking place. It's unknown how or if the creatures mate or rear young, or even how many can be found in the nooks and crannies of the Megaverse. True Atlanteans and Lemurians alike claim that a single Conqueror Worm can sleep for millennia waiting for the next opportune feeding frenzy, a fact that *Splynncryth*, *Nxla*, and other *Alien Intelligences* would confirm if anyone would bother to ask one of them.

Do not underestimate this monster. Many a warrior and entire companies of soldiers have met their doom by mistaking a Conqueror Worm for a big, dumb animal. From its outward appearance and lack of mouth and eyes, it is easy to take the creature for a massive predator, nothing more. However, Conqueror Worms are anything but. They are highly intelligent and use strategies and tactics, tricks and traps, ambushes and hit and run tactics to defeat opponents and slay their foes. The monster loves to isolate its prey by cutting supply lines, communications, and power. Patient and cunning, it will pick off prey one or a few at a time, before seeming to vanish until the next attack. That's how and why the beast is known to take on entire platoons of soldiers and armored units.

Whenever possible, the creature likes to create an atmosphere of terror and do things to amp up the level of fear and psychological torture before finally killing all of its intended prey. And wiping out an entire military company or an entire town is one of its favorite pastimes. In this regard, a Conqueror Worm may terrorize an entire countryside or battlefield in a variety of ways over days, weeks and even months.

The Conqueror Worm – NPC Demon/Monster

Also Known As: “Demon Worms of the North” or just “Northern Demon Worm.” and “Cataclysm Worms.” During the Two Hundred Years Dark Age the creatures were known in most places as “Leviathans” or “Midgard Serpents” even though they are no relation to either mythical creature.

Alignment: Miscreant or Diabolic; merciless creatures of chaos.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+12, M.E. 2D6+14, M.A. 1D4, P.S. 4D6+26 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+3, P.E. 3D6+14 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D4, Spd 5D6+10.

M.D.C. by Location:

Barbels/Whiskers (4; head) – 100 each

Sonic Rattle – 600

Tail – 2,000

Head – 1,500

Main Body – P.E. attribute number x100 (on S.D.C. worlds the creature has P.E.x6 for Hit Points, 1D6x100+60 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 16).

Horror Factor: 15 (+2 when rattling its tail).

Size: 80-100 feet (24.4 to 30.5 m) long from head to tail, can rear up to a height equal to roughly 30% of its overall length: 27 feet (8.2 m) tall.



Weight: 20 tons of muscle and exoskeleton.

Average Life Span: Unknown, likely thousands of years or more.

P.P.E.: 1D6x100 +500.

O.C.C.: None; demonic monster. Many consider it a Chaos Demon.

Natural Abilities: Blind (“sees” through innate psionics and infrared receptors – sees shapes and heat signatures up to 2,000 feet/610 m), Supernatural P.S. and P.E., Bio-Regenerate 1D4x10 M.D.C. per melee round, swim 82%, climb and snake-like locomotion 75%, magically understands all languages at 80%, does not need to rest or breathe oxygen to survive, possesses limitless endurance, resilient and impervious to pain, poisons, toxins, gases, carcinogens, mind control, and fear. See the invisible and Astral Travelers, and can damage the latter without entering the Astral Plane itself. Dimensional Teleport is 95% while in inter-dimensional space, a pocket dimension, or at a ley line nexus or dimensional bleed; 0% when away from them. Can theoretically appear in a dimension at any time, but seem to wait for calamities to occur before bothering with even the most populated of dimensions.

Hibernation (special): The creature is able to hibernate for billions of years at a time inside pocket dimensions the worm can create for itself when Dimensional Teleporting at a *ley line nexus*.

Invisibility (special): The Conqueror Worm can turn invisible at will and exists most of the time in an invisible state, turning visible only to attack and when it desires to make its presence known. The act of turning visible requires the use of the Sonic Rattle, which temporarily deafens everyone within the radius of the Worm’s appearance (see below). Can use the deafening rattle/sonic boom to attack only when turning visible after having been invisible for at least one melee round (15 seconds). The act of turning invisible is so natural it does not count as a melee action, but turning visible requires using the Sonic Rattle and it does count as one action/attack. The Worm can stay visible as long as it desires, but prefers to be invisible most of the time.

Ley Line Drifting (Special): Same as the Ley Line Walker (see **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**, page 115).

Sense cataclysmic levels of ley line activity or dimensional instability from another dimension (special): 75% base skill with an unknown range; perhaps infinite.

Shed Exoskeleton (Special): As a last-ditch effort to insure its survival, the Conqueror Worm can completely shed its exoskeleton, the armor disincorporating into black ash and the demon immediately expelled from its current plane of existence. However, it is important to note that the Conqueror Worm has a limited window in which it can use this ability, specifically when its overall M.D.C. has been reduced by more than 50% but not greater than 75% depleted. If the M.D.C. is reduced by more than 75%, the creature is bound to its current dimension until it can regenerate its total M.D.C. Conqueror Worms that shed their exoskeleton cannot return to the dimension where they were defeated for 1,000 years, and cannot enter any dimension aside from a pocket dimension for at least 100 years. If the demon is slain on any plane it is permanently destroyed; the exoskeleton disincorporating into black ash and the body into a putrid pile of slimy blubber that takes weeks to break down.

Sonic rattle (special): Before making itself visible, the Conqueror Worm *MUST* use their massive rattle to announce themselves (it’s actually the rattle that dispels their invisibility). The rattle resembles that of a rattlesnake, but the demon’s rattling generates a massive sonic boom that frightens and disorient everyone within 2,000 feet (610 m) of its visible presence (triple range underwater). Appearing with a thunderous boom only adds to the awe and horror of its sudden visible presence. The sonic boom temporarily deafens

all within range and victims suffer the following penalties for 2D4 minutes: -8 on initiative, -4 on all Perception Rolls, -12 for rolls based on hearing sounds, -3 to parry and dodge, and -80% to skills and abilities that require hearing. Any bonuses from augmented hearing are gone for the duration, and beings with heightened hearing suffer the penalties for twice as long.

Characters with a modicum of protection such as environmental body armor, vehicles, and power armor, as well as dragons, Creatures of Magic, and lesser supernatural beings, are deafened for only 1D4 minutes, but suffer the same penalties. Those in military vehicles, power armor and giant robots, as well as deities, Alien Intelligences, Greater Demons, and Demon Lords are immune. The creature’s sonic boom can not be utilized when already visible/attacking, only when coming out of invisibility.

Note: The Conqueror Worm also uses the sound of its rattle to create an atmosphere of dread and fear to all who hear it, and to unnerve anyone who dares to challenge or attack it; +2 to its Horror Factor.

“Swim” in between dimensional mediums (special): 85% base skill to travel to the desired dimension or world within a dimension.

Attacks per Melee: Nine!

Damage: Head-butt does 1D6x10 M.D., 2D6x10 M.D. on a power head-butt, but counts as two attacks. Backward tail slash 6D6 M.D., forward facing/full tail slash 2D6x10 M.D. but counts as two attacks, and body slam/trample/roll 3D6x10 M.D., but counts as three attacks. Due to their massive size, the beast can target multiple opponents at once in ten foot (3 m) long swaths.

Bonuses (in addition to possible attribute bonuses): +7 on initiative, +4 to strike, +1 to parry, cannot dodge, +3 to save versus magic, +2 to save versus psionics, and +4 on Perception Rolls.

Vulnerabilities: S.D.C. weapons made of dinosaur bones, silver, or the wood of a *bristlecone pine* deal damage as if they were M.D. weapons. Mega-Damage and magic silver weapons deal double damage. Cannot dodge.

Magic: Agony (20), Ballistic Fire (25), Banishment (65), Carpet of Adhesion (10), Close Rift (200+), Control/Enslave Entity (80), Heavy Air (200), Horrific Illusions (10), Illusory Terrain (55-120), Plane Skip (65), Summon Ley Line Storm (500), Wisps of Confusion (40) and World Bizarre (40).

Psionics (special): The Cataclysm Worm possesses innate “psychic sight” – an intuitive psychic ability replacing the need for eyesight (range 2,000 feet/610 m). “Psychic sight” includes the equivalent psionic abilities of Presence Sense, See Aura, See the Invisible, Sense Dimensional Anomaly, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Sense Time, and Read Dimensional Portal as fundamental abilities at no I.S.P. cost and they are always on. The creature also possesses Empathy (4) and a type of Disaster Clairvoyance. Disaster Clairvoyance occurs as a dream or vision in which the Conqueror Worm senses an impending battle or disaster is coming within 72 hours and where, so that it may travel to the location to hunt and feed during the chaos. This Clairvoyance may sometimes alert the monster to an impending attack to be leveled at it, giving it a chance to prepare for it. Cataclysm Worms seldom run away or hide from danger or impending attacks upon its person. Unless the odds are truly stacked against it, the Worm embraces the challenge. **I.S.P.:** M.E. attribute x5.

Enemies: All life.

Allies: None. Shifters, Summoners, and other practitioners of magic cannot summon nor control a Conqueror Worm. Similarly, they do not ally themselves with any demonic force and will trample demons from Hades, Dyvalians, and Red Flame Demons with the same cruel abandonment as if they were lowly mortals. Dark Gods, Demon Lords and Alien Intelligences cannot control or

command the ancient demon either, though the Conqueror Worm *may* feign obedience and to listen to the orders of such powerful beings as long as it amuses him. Even the most contented worms under the command of dark forces will eventually turn on their unsuspecting allies.

Value: No value, not even as a component in Necromancy.

Habitat: Encountered across the Megaverse, yet still incredibly rare, the Conqueror Worms have long ago abandoned their home dimension, wherever or whenever it existed. The creatures have instead learned how to occupy dimensional pockets and to slide between dimensional mediums, existing and traveling through the infinite and timeless honeycombed space between dimensions.

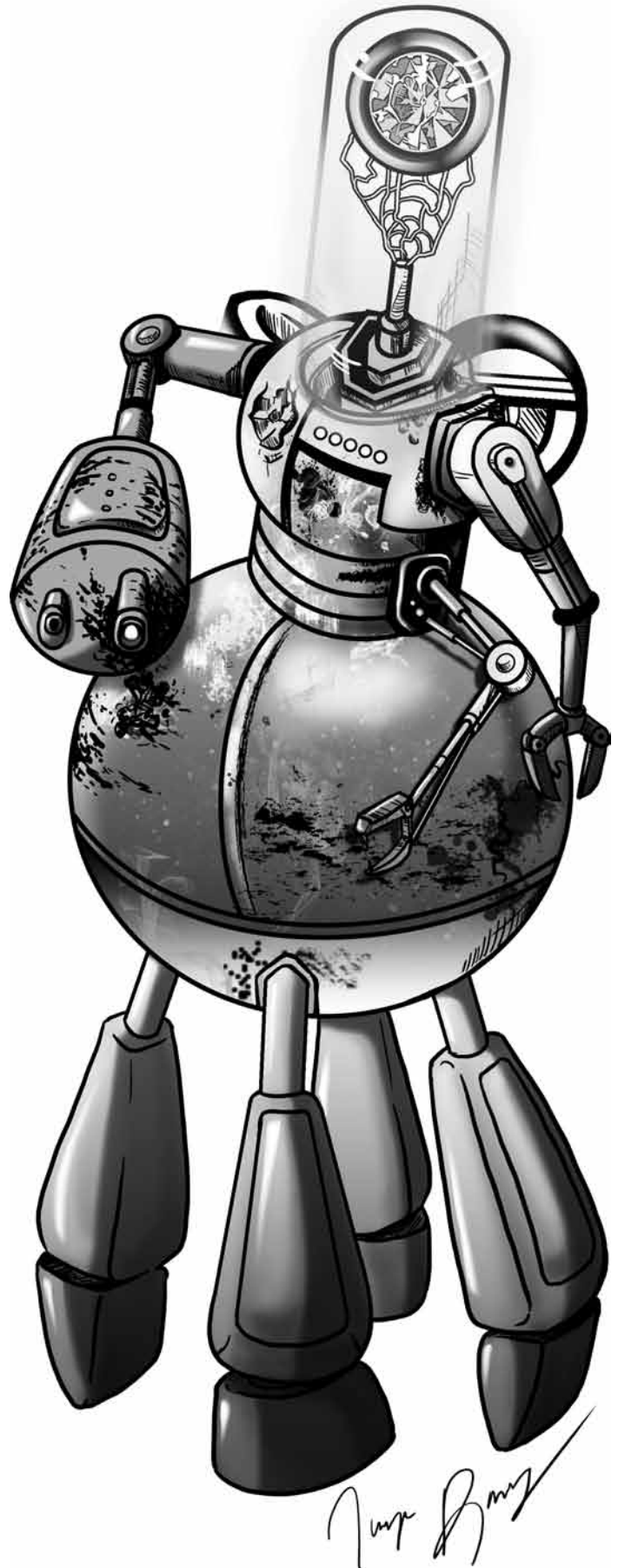
Gem Heads

Robot Thieves and Scavengers

One of the odder Unbidden found on Rifts Earth since the Minion War heated up at the end of 109 P.A., the so-called **Gem Heads** appear to be some magical form of robot from another dimension. The name refers to the *gemstone* at the center of the stylized, wire-thin apparatus (no two are alike) where normally the head should be on a humanoid robot. The body of the robot is rather round and bulky. To many people, the chunky, clunky looking robots – all of whom show signs of age and rust – are reminiscent of a rusty teapot with one large left arm, a smaller secondary left arm and a large right arm with a large, transformable multi-tool for a hand. When one arm is raised, it rather looks like the spout of the teapot and the other its handle. (Modern humans such as ourselves might find the Gem Heads reminiscent of 1940s or 1950s robot designs and bug-eyed aliens.) The robots also have four retractable landing gear that drop down from its round body to serve as legs and a stylized apparatus on their back that looks something like a glowing treble clef laying on its side. The glowing apparatus is what allows the Gem Heads to enter and leave our world unbidden by dimensional teleporting into an open Rift or a Hell Pit's dimensional bleed. Most Gem Heads seem to be equipped with some sort of hand-cannon that fires large uranium shells, essentially an otherworldly big brother to the U-rounds used by Triax, although certain Gem Heads seem to be equipped with other forms of strange weaponry crafted from the same rusted armor that is Mega-Damage tough.

The term Gem Head is an appropriate one, because the portly robots do not have a “head” per se. Where the head would be expected is an array of thin wires that holds the Control Gem and again, rather resembles the old microphones of the 1930s. The gem, about the size of a hockey puck, is held by the wire construct (the Control Gem Housing), but it is protected by a light, dome-like force field that covers it and the housing. The force field is only momentarily visible when struck by energy or outlined by airborne dust or falling rain. To be able to target and shoot the Control Gem or its wire housing, one must first deplete the force field.

Who is sending these robots to Rifts Earth or what corner of the Megaverse they are sent from is completely unknown, with even the Minions of Splugorth, True Atlanteans, dragons, the forces of Hades, and the forces of Dyval professing ignorance. The psychic ability of *Object Read* only conjures up an intense chill and a swirling, disorientating mental image of dazzling light, indescribable colors that are unknown to the viewer, and twisting, nebula-shaped pillars of smoke. What is known about the Gem Heads is that they have been sent to Earth for one purpose and one purpose only: plundering. Seizing on the instability caused by the Minion War, the robots zip along thanks to a contra-gravity engine and seize weapons, valuables, and sometimes even S.D.C. life forms and place them into small hatches



on their sides. The hatches open to a mini-dimensional pocket where captives and booty are kept. The rusted robots rarely use their own weapons while rushing between loot, except in self-defense. Once they have collected 1-2 tons of cargo, the robo-pillagers make a bee-line toward a ley line nexus or dimensional bleed in order to teleport out of our dimension. So far, no one has ever reported the same Gem Head twice, though this might change as the range of their campaigns of thievery becomes continually extended.

Gem Heads are deceptively tough and completely impervious to energy weapons, psionic attacks, and magic of any sort (with the notable exceptions of physical strikes from Rune Weapons, magic weapons and Millennium Tree weapons). Magic energy – fireballs, heat, lightning, energy blasts, cold, etc. – do no damage; neither do Psi-Swords. Solid, Mega-Damage munitions, however, such as rail gun rounds, flechettes, armor piercing missiles, explosive grenades (not plasma grenades), Naruni K-Hex, Triax pump rounds, Big Bore shells, and ramjet rounds can all easily shred the armor of these robots. Likewise, Vibro-Blades, physical M.D. attacks, and nuclear weapons can harm these marauding, alien robots as well. Sharpshooters and those with plain old dumb luck have learned that when the loot hatches, the Control Gem, or the control gem housing are destroyed, the robot implodes, scattering the thief's cargo all over the battlefield in the process. Destroying the *main body* also causes the robots to implode, except the cargo it contains is destroyed with it. Destroying the *Control Gem housing* or *main body* both have the additional perk of causing the Control Gem to drop away and fall to the ground before implosion.

The Control Gem is a valuable find and has become much sought after by practitioners of magic and psychics. Although the gem can *not* be used in Techno-Wizard devices or for direct use in other forms of magic, the intricately carved, overlapping layers of tiny circuit boards within each and every facet are capable of storing an impressive amount of mystic energy that can be used to power both magic spells and psychic abilities! The only downside to the fabulous gemstone is that it acts like a beacon for those that can sense magic or psionics, including other Gem Heads, often putting the user's life in jeopardy.

The rusted robots have been encountered ever since the Minion War came to Rifts Earth which might make it seem they are somehow connected to the War. Gem Heads, also known as Devil Teapots, will continue to be encountered on Rifts Earth after the Minion War (or after 110 P.A. if the Minion War doesn't happen in your game world), as well as in other dimensions where the Minion War has taken place. The truth is, these rusty buckets of bolts follow and use the dimensional bleed and anomalies created by the Hell Pits to find and reach new worlds. Making them a sort of dimensional hitchhiker and carpetbagger that follows the warring hellions to steal what spoils of war they can. Finding *Rifts Earth* and then *Phase World* has been a true boon to the strange robots as both locations, especially Rifts Earth, enable them to spread across the "known" Megaverse. Despite their increasing appearance in interdimensional hot spots and war zones, it may take several decades or centuries before anyone finally determines just who is responsible for sending out these thieving automatons, why and from where they originate. When it is found out, new corners and layers of the Megaverse may gradually become accessible from Rifts Earth and Phase World – dimensions even the Splugorth and ancient dragons have never seen before.

Gem Head Robo-Pillagers – NPC Robot/Villain

Also Known As: "Devil's Teapots," "Rusty Teapot," "Thieving Rust Bucket," and "Robo-Bandit."

Model Type: ÜÜ-74b

Class: Civilian-Use Clockwork Interspatial Magical Autonomous Automaton.

Crew: None, robot drone with superior artificial intelligence.

M.D.C. by Location:

Uranium Culverin – 55

Trans-Dimensional Apparatus – 30

Right Arm (large) – 80

* Right Hand Multi-Tool – 35

Primary Left Arm (large) – 50

Primary Left Hand – 20

Secondary Left Arm (small and thin) – 35

* Secondary Left Hand – 10

Legs/Landing Gear (4) – 40 each

* Localized Force Field (1; covers Control Gem like a dome) – 50

* Control Gem Housing (wire framework that holds the gem) – 18

** Control Gem – 2

** Loot Hatches (2) – 15 each

Main Body – 265

* A single asterisk indicates a small and/or difficult target to hit, requiring the attacker to make a "Called Shot" with a penalty of -4 to strike. Reduce the force field that surrounds the Control Gem and the gem is vulnerable to attack (same penalty to strike). The force field regenerates at a rate of 2 M.D.C. per hour.

** Two asterisks indicate targets, that when their M.D.C. is reduced to zero, cause the "cargo" contained inside the robot to be expelled onto the ground. And once destroyed, the cargo can not be put back inside. These targets also require an attacker to make a "Called Shot" with a penalty of -4 to strike.

Speed:

Ground Speed: 10 mph (16 km) maximum. The legs/landing gear can function as legs to walk, but are not designed for sustained locomotion or speed. Hover is the means of movement.

Leaping: 20 feet (6.1 m) high or lengthwise from a dead stop. Running leaps are not possible.

Contra-Gravity Engine: The contra-gravity propulsion system allows the robot to float and hover stationary up to 3,000 feet (914 m) and propel the robot up to a maximum speed of 120 mph (192 km) along the surface of the ground, in flight, on the surface of water and half that speed underwater. Triple speed when traveling along a ley line or in the dimensional bleed of a Hell Pit. Typical speed is 10-50 mph (16 to 80 km).

Maximum Ocean Depth: 1 mile (1.6 m).

Maximum Range: Effectively unlimited.

Statistical Data:

Attribute Equivalents of Note: I.Q. 20, P.S. 42 and 25 (see below), and P.P. 21.

Height: 9 feet to 11 feet (2.7 to 3.3 m) tall, depending on the height of the gem housing, and typically hovers 1-5 feet (0.3 to 1.5 m) off the ground or stands on its four extendible legs/landing struts.

Width: The bulbous body has something of a teapot shape; 7-10 feet (2.1 to 3 m) in diameter. The wire framework of the Gem Housing rises up from where you'd expect the "lid" of the teapot to be located. The right arm hangs high up on the body, the two left arms lower and closer to the body. A light force field protects the Control Gem and Gem Housing.

Weight: 3 tons.

Physical Strength: Robotic P.S. of 42 for the large right arm and smaller primary left arm. Robotic P.S. of 25 for the even smaller, secondary left arm.

Cargo: Inside the robot's body is a compartment that is a door to a small dimensional pocket. As much as two tons of cargo can be placed in each hatch. The hatch lifts up, but its opening can temporarily expand to as large as 3.6 feet (1 m) in diameter, big enough to allow man-sized objects and smaller through its opening. Only

small, light power armor can fit through the opening. As a dimensional compartment, however, several people or large items can be placed inside before it is “full.”

Power System: Quantum Entangled Control Gem/Battery; magical with average energy life of 12,000 years. If removed, the robot is powerless.

Black Market Cost: 800,000 Logocratic Tellurium Frontier Units (unavailable on Rifts Earth or Phase World/Three Galaxies) for a new, undamaged unit. 1.1 million Logocratic TFU with a Uranium Culverin or other weapon. Logocratic uranium shells for the culverin cost 3,500 TFU each.

Weapon Systems

1a. Handheld Firearm Option 1: Logocratic Uranium Culverin:

Similar in many respects to Earthly hand culverins (the medieval predecessors of the musket), the Gem Head’s uranium culverin is essentially a large, smooth-bore hand-cannon that makes use of an alien form of gunpowder to fire uranium shells over long distances. Vaguely resembling a cross between an antique rifle and a death ray out of pre-Rifts, 1950s pulp science fiction, the weapon is single fire but uses a back-loading sabot similar to a piece of field artillery to help speed up the time it takes to arm and rearm the weapon. The internal gunpowder magazine replenishes magically and can be ignited via an electronic command from the robot or via a thought command from a living creature (including from non-psychics, although it takes 2D6 days for them to master, during which the wielder can manage to get the culverin’s internal magazine to ignite only half the time – 50% or under on percentile dice, or in the alternative: flip a coin). 60% of the Gem Heads carry this weapon.

Weight: 80 lbs (36 kg).

Range: 3,000 feet (914 m).

Mega-Damage: 5D6 M.D. from a uranium shell. In the alternative, the weapon can be loaded with ramjet rounds, Big Bore shotgun shells, or Naruni plasma cartridges. Regardless of the ammunition used, the range remains the same, only damage may vary.

Rate of Fire: Each blast counts as one melee attack; single shot.

Payload: One uranium shell. Loading a new shell takes one melee action thanks to the back-loading sabot, three if the sabot is busted (30% chance of jamming/breaking when M.D.C. is reduced by half).

Note: Like Triax U-Rounds, the uranium shells of a Frontier Logocratic Culverin deals 25% greater damage to the supernatural and prevents bio-regeneration of damage inflicted by the round until the uranium fragments are surgically removed.

1b. Handheld Firearm Option 2: Logocratic Smog Dispensing

Arquebus and Igniter: Another weapon that can be easily described as a cross between an antique rifle and pulp sci-fi death ray, the Logocratic Smog Dispensing Arquebus and Igniter is another odd firearm employed by the so-called Gem Heads. When the weapon fires, it dispenses a cloud of noxious smog that scalds M.D. materials but produces only a coughing fit to S.D.C. and M.D.C. lungs. However, if the Gem Head automaton wishes, it can ignite the vapor stream as it fires to unleash a high-powered flamethrower burst of flame. This is a single blast of fire.

Weight: 75 lbs (34 kg).

Range: The smog can be projected up to 1,600 feet (488 m) away, and the fumes collect and manifest as a cloud 10 feet (3 m) in diameter. 1,000 feet (3048 m) as a bolt of fire.

Mega-Damage: The magical fumes irritate the lungs and cause S.D.C. and M.D.C. characters to cough and suffer difficulty breathing for as long as they remain in the smog cloud and for 1D4 melee rounds upon exiting it or after its dispersal.

Penalties are as follows: -50% to Prowl, -20% on the performance of all other skills, reduce speed by 30%, -2 on Perception Rolls, -1 melee attack, and -1 to strike, parry and dodge. Characters with an independent air supply or inside power armor or vehicle with its own air supply/air purification system, or magically enchanted to Breathe Without Air, are unaffected. This magic fume affects mortals and creatures of magic and supernatural beings alike. Duration of the cloud is 1D4+1 melee rounds.

Flamethrower fire blast does 6D6 M.D. and counts as one melee attack.

Rate of Fire: Each smog or fire blast counts as one melee attack.

Payload: 20 shots/smog can be spread per smog canister. Unlike the Uranium Culverin, this weapon is powered completely by finite sources; in this case, a “smog canister.” It can only be recharged by the robot going back to wherever it comes from.

Note: Magic and psychic fire from other sources have a 01-10% chance of igniting a smog stream or cloud. If the smog is ignited before the robot intends it to, the resulting blaze does a mere 3D6 M.D. to anyone in the cloud or stream, but at the same time causes the arquebus to backfire and inflict the same amount of damage to the Gem Head robot.

1c. Handheld Firearm Option 3: Logocratic Beehive Pistols (1

or 2): The Logocratic Beehive Pistols are pistols in only the most general sense. The weapon resembles an old hand bellows with what looks to be a beehive mounted on top. The weapon fires little, magical clockwork bees that sting their targets, doubling back around and trying a second time if they miss the first time. The miniature automatons are stored in the beehive-like external magazine and expelled when the bellows are pumped.

Of the weapons assigned to the Gem Heads by the Frontier Logocracy, the Beehive Pistols are the only specimen that are operated manually and can immediately be fired by any user regardless of magic/psychic abilities or lack thereof. In addition, four different types of bees can be supplied for the weapon: Regular bullet bees (rusted hive), multi-stinger (golden hive), explosive (red hive), and the almost unheard of hypersonic bees (purple hive with green rings).

Weight: 16 lbs (7.2 kg) loaded, and the beehive-shaped magazines weigh a pound (0.45 kg) each.

Range: Line of sight with a maximum “chase” range of 4,000 feet (1219 m). All bee robot ammo *pursues and chases down* the initial target it was fired at, dodging around obstacles such as trees and walls, and following around corners. They pursue their target until they make contact/impact with it, travel 4,000 feet (1,219 m) or pursue for three minutes of flight, whichever comes first. All but the multi-stinger are destroyed on impact. The multi-stinger bees have 1D4 attacks, hitting and inflicting damage on each successful strike. All this makes it difficult for these “smart bullets” not to hit their target once fired. All bees can be dodged without benefit of any bonuses for most characters; P.P. bonuses still apply for characters with an automatic dodge.

Mega-Damage: Varies with the type of robot-bee ammo. *Regular Bullet Bees* inflict 3D6 M.D., *Multi-Stinger* 2D6 M.D. per each time it hits (and has 1D4 attacks), *Explosive* 5D6 M.D., and *Hypersonic* 6D6 M.D. per bee. Hypersonic bees travel at Mach 7.

Rate of Fire: Single shot. Firing each bee or hypersonic bee burst counts as one melee attack/action.

Payload: 9 bees from a miniature beehive magazine, 15 bees for a slightly larger, “long” beehive magazine.

Bonuses: +3 to strike, follow and chase down their target, and turn around for a second try to hit if they miss the first time. There is a 70% chance of hypersonic bees not returning after a miss or if the target makes a successful dodge.

2. Transformable Multi-Tool: At the end of the robot's forearm is what looks to be a robotic hand with five fingers of varying lengths and three opposable thumbs, and all of them appear to be either bent back, broken, bloated, and/or only partially tangible. This odd "hand" is a multi-tool where each of the "fingers" is a tool of interdimensional origin (all unknown to Earth). Aside from the eight alien tools, the multi-tool can magically metamorphosis into almost any tool it needs to do a job, including a Northern Gun-style UEL, at which point the entire hand melds into one large contraption, or up to three smaller, simple tools.

Range: Melee Combat.

Mega-Damage/Effects: Varies depending on the tool. Please see pages 49 to 53 of **Rifts® Ultimate Edition** for a variety of tools, optics, and sensors that the multi-tools can transform into (excluding weapons), as well as traditional tools like lock picks, hammers, pliers, screwdrivers, etc. The three alien tools that work on Rifts Earth are as follows:

A) *Logocratic Bio-Light and Sensor:* The largest opposable thumb is a flashlight-like tool that emits an invisible beam that can be picked up by the built-in sensor of the alien robot. To the Gem Head, all organic life forms that the light touches appear to be painted a bright purple. **Range:** 6,000 feet (1,829 m).

B) *Logocratic Interdimensional Corkscrew:* The middle finger of the multi-tool hand is an impressive device that allows Gem Heads to hijack random Rifts or open a small dimensional doorway at a ley line by inserting a corkscrew into the air on either side of the portal or into a ley line (the tool disappearing from our dimension while inserted). It takes three Gem Heads using their corkscrews in unison to redirect a random Rift, six in unison to open a small dimensional doorway. On Rifts Earth, the thieving robots seem to use this tool most often to steal large items that the robots cannot possibly store in their personal dimensional pockets. Whether it is a random Rift or ley line, the portals always lead to a bleak, windswept, colorless dimension where everything appears in stark black and white except for the ley lines that float detached from the plane in the sky above, glowing a faint bluish-grey. The dimension appears to be uninhabited and seems only to be a travel corridor for the robots to elude pursuit or a drop-site for booty. **Note:** 60% success rate, +10% for every Gem Head after the first three/six involved in opening the portal to this location.

C) *Logocratic Quantum Light-Spool:* The smallest finger on the multi-tool hand, and one that appears out of phase (possibly straddling dimensions) is a fascinating little machine that can spin, catching available light and spooling it into a ball of string that resembles spaghetti around a fork. Once the light is spooled (requiring two melee attacks/actions), the Gem Head can use it in a variety of ways, including the equivalent of Lantern Light and the Globe of Daylight spell. **Range:** As per spell. **Effects:** Pick one (All at 10th level proficiency): Blinding Flash, Call Lightning, Electrical Arc, Energy Disruption, Energy Field, Globe of Daylight, Lantern Light, and Lightning Arc.

Rate of Fire: One blast equals three attacks: spooling enough light for any one of the spells takes two melee attacks/actions. Casting one of the effects once the light is gathered takes another melee action.

Payload: Can store one blast at a time and can continue creating more as long as there is light to spool.

3. Other Handheld Weapons (Optional): Each Gem Head is carrying inside it two, small dimensional pockets that they use to store additional ammo for their handheld weapon(s) and loot they may have picked up along the way. The majority of the automatons spend their time using their assigned Frontier Logocracy weapon, but in a pinch it may use a weapon or magic item it has stolen, or scavenged from a battlefield, or picked up at any point on its trav-

els and stored inside the dimensional pocket. While many weapons designed for humanoids might be too awkward for the robot to operate, it can always transform its tool hand into any variety of human-like mechanical hands, claws, tentacles, etc. to make use of stolen goods.

4. Hand to Hand Combat: Rather than use a weapon, the robot can engage in Mega-Damage hand to hand combat. Punch with either of the left arms as per each arm's respective robotic P.S. 25 and 42: 6D6 S.D.C./1D6 M.D. for a restrained punch, 1D4 M.D./3D6 M.D. on a full strength punch, and 2D4 M.D./1D6x10 M.D. on a power punch (but counts as two attacks). Each Multi-tool deals damage as per the respective tool.

Attacks per Melee: Six.

Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +5 to strike, +3 to parry, +5 to dodge, +3 to automatic dodge, +2 to disarm, +4 to pull punch, and +4 to roll with impact. Critical Strike on a Natural 19-20; +4 to strike in ranged combat with firearms and other modern weapons (targeting computer and W.P. Heavy M.D. Weapons or W.P. Energy Pistol).

5. Trans-Dimensional Apparatus: The glowing treble clef-like device on the robot's back is called a "Trans-Dimensional Apparatus" and is what allows the robots to flawlessly teleport at a ley line nexus or at the dimensional bleed of a Hell Pit. The apparatus also acts as the robot's sensor suite, providing all the same features as a standard Coalition Skelebot (page 256 of **Rifts: Ultimate Edition**), but with double the range and the ability to understand (but not speak) all languages. The apparatus also enables the Gem Head to sense a ley line nexus, Hell Pit, or an open Rift within 10 miles (16 km) with 85% certainty.

6. Skill Program: Each Gem Head is the equivalent of an expert Operator with all O.C.C. skills and abilities at 95%. W.P. Heavy Weapons, W.P. Energy Pistol, and W.P. Blunt, all at seventh level proficiency.

7. The Control Gem: A captured Control Gem can hold as much as 3D6x10+420 points of P.P.E., and may be considered a talisman-like mystic battery. Mages can draw upon the P.P.E. to cast spells, open Rifts, and similar. Strangely, the gem is not compatible with TW, Rune or Bio-Wizard creations, and cannot be used to power any magic device. However, a unique feature of the Control Gem is that its P.P.E. can be converted to I.S.P. at a cost of one P.P.E. equals one I.S.P. point. Spent P.P.E. is gone once used, but P.P.E. can be put back into the gem by its owner or others willing to send P.P.E. to restore its energy reserve. It does not accept I.S.P. as a replenishing power source. **Note:** The energy and power of a Control Gem cannot be disguised or concealed and attracts mages, dragons, other creatures of magic and supernatural beings looking for a rechargeable magic energy battery. To other Gem Heads, the Control Gem functions like a *homing beacon* that can be tracked by them. This means other Gem Heads can locate and steal (take) it back or use it as a tracking device to monitor those who have one. All of this makes it a dangerous item to possess.

8. Gem Head Loot Table: Game Masters should feel free to fill these robots with any weapons, devices and random items that they so choose as loot stolen by the thieving Rust Buckets. Remember, this can include animals and even people that the robots find interesting, are believed to be valuable or have a use for.

In the alternative, roll on the following table for those newly arrived to Earth right out of a Rift:

01-21%: A spare Uranium Culverin, and 6D6+20 uranium shells.

22-43%: A spare Arquebus, and 5D6+30 smog canisters.

44-55%: 2D6x10+20 uranium shells.

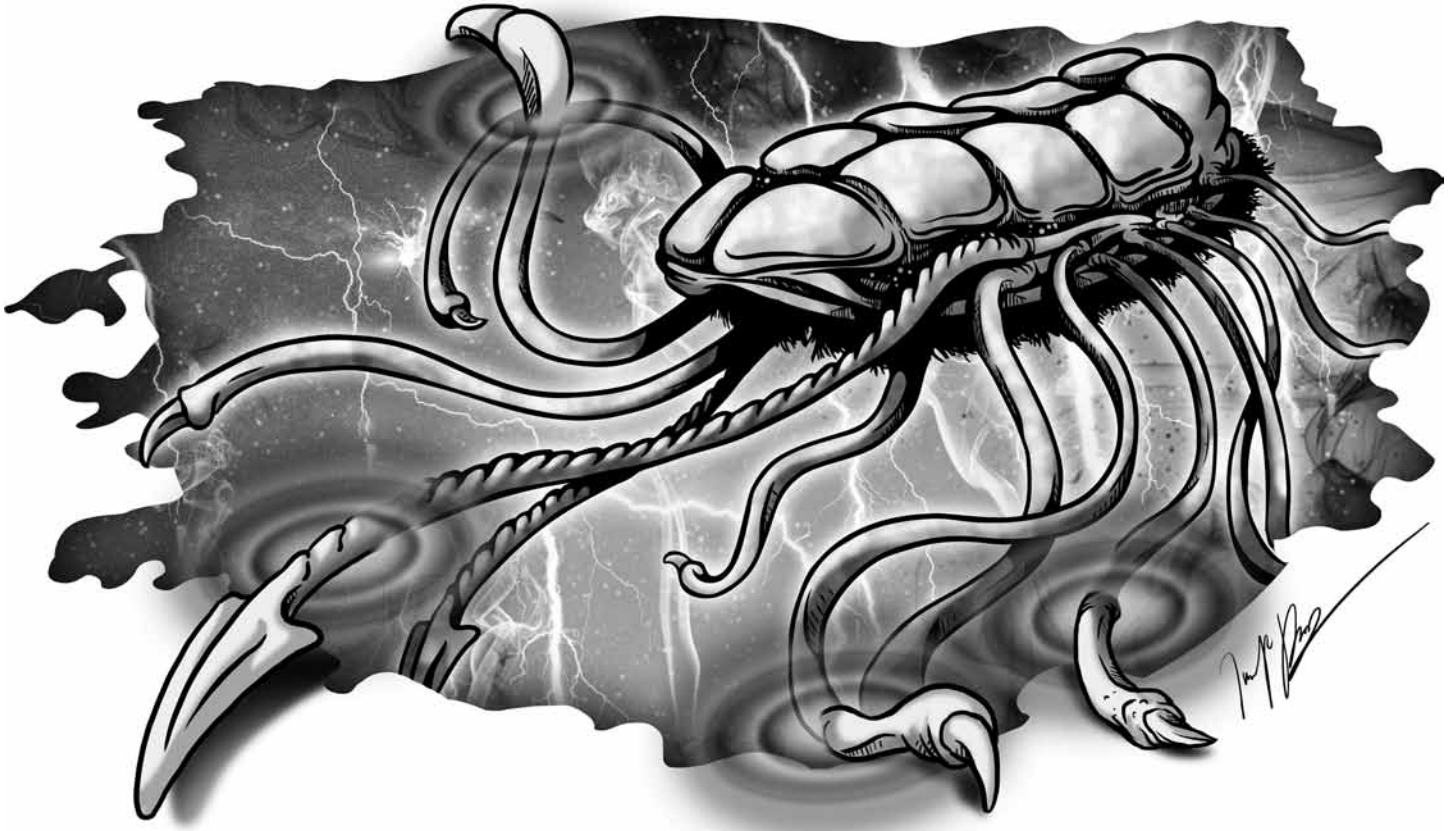
56-67%: 2D6 assorted beehive magazines.

68-78%: 1D4 Beehive Pistols, 1D6x10+20 assorted beehive magazines.

79-84%: An Arquebus, 3D6+2 smog canisters, and 6D6+12 uranium shells.

85-86%: Beehive Pistol, 1D6 assorted beehive magazines, and a spare Uranium Culverin.

87-00%: A spare of the weapon the robot was carrying, and 3D6 of the corresponding shells/canisters/magazines.



Brain Squids

One of the more startling beings counted amongst the Unbidden are what look to be a species of floating brains known to most people in Rifts North America by the ignoble moniker, **Brain Squids**. The “brain” portion of the creatures (if it is indeed a brain) is large and rather flat, measuring some 12 feet (3.7 m) in circumference and containing at least twenty different lobes and cortexes. The rest of the body is comprised of fifteen, long, brainstem-like tentacles: thirteen of them ending in vicious barbs, while two others broaden out into oar-like appendages. The creature seems to use these tentacles out of habit for mock locomotion as they actually make use of psionic-powered flight. In addition, each Brain Squid is constantly burning off both I.S.P. and P.P.E. to the point that the expended energy can clearly be seen evaporating off the various lobes at night with the naked eye, as well as during the day by those who can see the invisible, magic/psychic energies, and those who have a base P.P.E. of 20 or higher. Never encountered alone, the creepy things fly in pairs, small groups of 3D6, flocks of 6D6+6, and swarms of 1D4x10+30.

Brain Squids have an easy time entering our world by piggy-backing off of the dimensional Rifts created by Shifters and other mages, and taking advantage of the dimensional bleed around *Hell Pits*. Working together as a *hive-mind*, the oddities pool their collective psychic resources to make the process of extradimensional travel almost routine. However, it’s equally worth noting that of the

Unbidden described here, the floating brains have the most difficult time remaining *anchored* to our reality. Observers from all factions near and far have noticed that eliminating half or more of the Brain Squids often results in the remainder being violently ripped from our dimension in a screeching torrent of deep blue flame. The common conclusion is that it requires a group effort even for these monsters to exist on this material plane. Unhampered by ambient magic energies (or lack thereof), all it takes is the psionic assets of two or more Brain Squids to establish a foothold in pretty much any dimension where the local physics allow for even the most minor forms of extra-sensory perception.

Brain Squids – NPC Monster

Also Known As: “Squid Brains,” “Brainies,” “Brain Freaks” and other similar variations. Other names include “flying nerds/geeks,” “gum-wads,” and “ABC Gum” or just “ABCs” (ABC has a twofold meaning: “Already been chewed,” and the acronym “Alien Brain Creeps”).

Alignment: Unknown; they have an alien form of intelligence similar to the Xiticix. Considered Diabolic due to their disregard for all other life. The monsters come through both Rifts and interdimensional back-alleys firing at will and often at random.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+18, M.E. 3D6+12, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 3D6+14 (Supernatural), P.P. 2D6+10, P.E. 2D6+12 (Supernatural), P.B. 1D4, Spd 2D6x10+100.

M.D.C. by Location:

*Tentacle Barbs (13) – 10 each

*Barbed Tentacles (13) – 35 each

Oar Tentacles (2) – 50 each

Main Body/Brain – P.E. attribute number x3 +30. (On S.D.C. worlds the creatures have P.E. attribute number for Hit Points, 1D4x10+10 S.D.C. and an A.R. of 12. Tentacles have 15 S.D.C. each, 20 S.D.C. for oar tentacles.)

* A single asterisk indicates a difficult target to hit and the attacker must make a “Called Shot” with a penalty of -3 to strike.

Horror Factor: 12 for a pair of the monsters (uncommon), 15 when encountered as a small group, 17 for a flock or swarm.

Size: The brain-like head/main body is a uniform 12 feet (3.7 m) in circumference, fitted with fifteen brainstem-like tentacles with a resting length of 12 feet (3.7 m), but can be shrunken down to 6 feet (1.8 m) and extended to 24 feet (7.3 m) as needed.

Weight: 200 lbs (90 kg). The matter comprising a Brain Squid is less dense than that of most life on Earth, and would be crushed by our planet’s gravity if not for their powerful psychic abilities.

Average Life Span: Unknown, likely thousands of years or more.

Base P.P.E.: 2D6x10 +180, and is continuously expending an unknown amount of P.P.E. (infinite!?) from the collective hive-mind to manifest physically on our material plane. This seemingly endless supply of P.P.E. can NOT be tapped by any practitioners of magic or P.P.E. vampires as it is already in the process of being spent. Of course, this means the giant brains are a greater threat than many humans might think, because evil supernatural beings and other monstrosities that feed or are otherwise drawn to P.P.E. are lured to them like a moth to a flame, even though they cannot get to the magic energy. The attraction of other monster presents a second, and likely larger threat than the brain creeps themselves.

O.C.C.: None; extradimensional monster.

Natural Abilities: Supernatural Strength and Endurance; hover, floats, and swims through the air via a natural form of psychic powered flight (no I.S.P. cost) with no maximum altitude, “sees” through a combination of Telepathy, Empathy, and other psychic abilities; is unaffected by gravity.

Hive-Mind & Bonuses (Special): Brain Squids are social creatures, their powerful minds connected via telepathy to their fellow members of a given social group. *As long as more than half of the pack that slipped into the material plane unbidden remains, each Brain Squid gains the following bonuses:* cannot be caught unawares, +4 on Perception Rolls, +2 on initiative, +2 to strike in long-range combat, +3 to strike with tentacles, +4 to parry and entangle, +2 to automatic dodge, +2 to save vs magic, and impervious to psionic mind control. *Without the hive-mind, the creatures do not enjoy the benefit of an automatic dodge or save vs magic (unmodified rolls only), and all other bonuses are reduced by half; round down.*

Group Dimensional Teleport & Tethering (Special): Alone, a Brain Squid is incapable of Dimensional Teleporting and is forced to remain in its home dimension of stark white skies and swirling black mist (likely an alternate version of the Astral Plane). When two or more of the monsters join together into a hive-mind, however, Dimensional Teleporting becomes an easy feat. Ley line storms frequently break out in the skies of the Brain Squid dimension, and it is during these ley line storms that a social grouping of the alien brains can Dimensional Teleport at 98% proficiency to dimensions and worlds where any Rift that has already opened, locations within dimensional ley line triangles, and dimensional bleed-zones like the D-Shifting Wilderness or the area around a *Hell Pit*. Without a ley line storm, the linked Brain Squids can

still Dimensional Teleport but at 50% proficiency, but only to Rifts and dimensional portals that have been opened for the express purpose of summoning another creature. The destination of the group teleportation is random, not that the Brain Squids care: they come out shooting, attempting to destroy everything in sight.

Like Dimensional Teleporting, *remaining on another material plane requires a group effort* from the Brain Squids. In game terms, this means that at least half of the social grouping that teleported in must remain alive or the rest risk immediate expulsion from the dimension. Once their numbers fall to 50%, each Brain Squid destroyed beyond the halfway mark requires further effort to remain. Roll percentile dice to determine success or failure. 01-50%: All Brain Squids in the flock are expelled back to their home dimension; 51-00%: Half (round down) of the remaining Brain Squids are expelled back to their home dimension but the rest remain.

Anti-Magic Toxin (Special): The barbs of the Brain Squid’s tentacles can secrete a potent toxin with crippling anti-magic effects. All those struck with the toxin must make a save vs non-lethal poison of 14 or higher.

A failed save by ordinary people means the victim suddenly feels weak (reduce P.E. and Spd by 10% and P.P.E. levels are temporarily reduced by half.) Mages, dragons and all magic-using beings that fail to save lose 1D6x10% of their current P.P.E. amount! Repeat for subsequent Anti-Magic Neurotoxin attacks! Within a few attacks, creatures of magic and sorcerers can be left without P.P.E. to perform magic! When P.P.E. is reduced to 10 or fewer points, the mage can not cast magic spells, use his own P.P.E., channel P.P.E. from ley lines, or use any other magical ability for 1D4 hours! Each Brain Squid can inject their toxin up to six times an hour, double at a ley line nexus or within a ley line triangle. As a hive-mind, the monsters work together to defeat common enemies and to achieve common goals.

A successful save means the practitioner of magic is completely unharmed, but realized the danger of the attack and should take necessary action to avoid another. **Note:** Saving twice in a row gives the mage or creature of magic a +1 bonus to save against additional attacks. Three saves provides a +2 bonus. Four saves gives him a +4 bonus to save. Saving five times in a row makes the mage immune to the toxin for the next 36 hours!

Attacks per Melee: Four physical or psionic attacks when encountered as a lone individual or pair. Six physical or psionic attacks when linked in a hive-mind with 3-18 Brain Squids. Eight attacks if the hive-mind has more than 19 members.

Damage: The creatures can engage in Mega-Damage hand to hand combat, though prefer psionic attacks and the use of their magic depleting toxin.

An oar tentacle slap does 1D6 M.D., a full strength oar attack does 2D6+4 M.D., a barbed tentacle strike does 1D6 M.D., power barbed tentacle strike does 2D4 M.D., and any successful strike can be used to inject the toxin. Tentacles can be used to entangle and hold enemies, as well as constrict and crush (each constriction counts as one melee attack and does 1D6 M.D.).

Bonuses: See Hive-Mind, above.

Magic: None, though the creatures burn off a near continuous amount of P.P.E. to stay anchored to our world.

Psionics: Equal to a seventh level Master Psychic with all Sensitive Psychic abilities and the following Super Psionic powers: Bio-Manipulation (10), Bio-Regeneration (Super; 20), Electrokinetics (varies), Hydrokinetics (varies), Mind Block Auto-Defense, Mind Bolt (varies), Psi-Shield (30), Psi-Sword (30; 8D6 M.D.), Psychic Omni-Sight (15), Pyrokinesis (varies), Telekinesis (Super; 10+), and Telemechanics (10). **I.S.P.:** 2D6x10+150.

Enemies: Anything and everything, including rival flocks of Brain Squids. They feed on the emotions and P.P.E. of other beings and are attracted to places of misery, suffering, and sorrow. If there is good news, it is that they will attack and feed upon tormentors and slave masters as readily as those suffering or enslaved. Alien in the extreme, it is difficult to understand the motives and actions of Brain Squids. Some believe they are just predatory monsters. Others believe they are “watchers” who observe other life forms and strive to help bring about chaos and suffering. Still others say they despise magic and all beings who wield it, and thus target them (including dragons, demons and Deevils) more than any others, and like to bring down magic based groups and civilizations, be they good or evil. In the wild, Brain Squids have

been known to savage practitioners of magic and all who travel with them, only to leave them beaten and bloodied, but alive, as if to teach them a lesson or punish them for reasons unknown. They are especially hostile to all supernatural beings and the most powerful of mages and creatures of magic, all of whom they will usually slay whenever possible.

Allies: Unknown. It appears they ally themselves with members of their own hive-mind, and sometimes with rival Brain Squid clans, and no one else. But that is not for certain.

Value: Absolutely none.

Habitat: Unknown, though some believe Brain Squids come from an alternate version of the Astral Plane and don't seem to call any corporeal plane of existence home.

New Strawn: An Independent City-State

Optional Material for Rifts®

By Travis Legge

The city of New Strawn, Kansas is one of the best-kept secrets on Rifts Earth. Way back in the Golden Age, New Strawn was home to a nuclear power plant, which employed many of the city's 10,000 residents when the Cataclysm began. Due to the city's distance from major Rifts or ley lines, the Wolf Creek nuclear plant (which managed to survive the Cataclysm relatively unscathed), and no small amount of luck, the community managed to hang on as the world around it collapsed. The city council of New Strawn realized early on that things were going to get very bad for a very long time. Measures were taken to secure the plant, and construction began on a large, M.D.C. wall around the area.

As NEMA began to collapse, a small band of NEMA operatives happened upon the remote town. This group consisted of four Chromium Guardsmen and two Silver Eagle pilots, who had been part of a larger detachment working in Missouri. When the rest of their squadron fell in battle with extra-dimensional monsters, this small band of survivors fled to the West. The townspeople of New Strawn took them in, tended their wounds, and made resources available to repair the damage to their armor.

In return for this kindness, the pilots remained in New Strawn, offering their service as perimeter security. The pilots reasoned that the city's plan to wall itself up and try to ride out the coming apocalypse was probably their best shot at survival. The Wolf Creek plant would provide enough power to maintain the settlement for decades. The local hospital had sufficient resources to keep the populace healthy, and even had facilities to install and maintain bionics and cybernetics. There was enough farmable land within the wall to keep the populace fed, and with minor modifications, the local factory was able to begin producing Mega-Damage weapons, armor and structures. Compared to the chaos happening to the east, New Strawn seemed like a utopia.

For a good portion of the Dark Age, New Strawn was surprisingly bright. People prospered, the population grew, and the area remained secure. The Chromium Guardsman and Silver Eagle pilots passed their armors down to their children, who took up the mantle as guard-

ians of the town. Civic services remained fairly uninterrupted. Education was available to the populace and crime was exceedingly rare.

New Strawn did face numerous challenges during the Dark Age. Supplies were frequently low and the city council had to send out scouting and raiding parties to scavenge what they could from nearby ruins. Most of these parties returned safely, but there were some casualties when the raiders or scouts would run afoul of hostile creatures of magic or D-Bees. Illness was an ongoing concern. While the hospital was a well stocked, state-of-the-art facility when the Cataclysm began, supplies eventually dwindled and needed to be replenished. By the second century of the Dark Age, the local factory had been expanded to produce pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, with raw materials being brought in by scavengers or grown in the numerous farms that filed the land at the edge of the wall.

During the Dark Age, the city saw a surprisingly low number of outsiders. Over the years, a few groups of refugees, both human and D-Bee, wound up at the city walls. The city council was generally welcoming to non-hostile visitors. Such people were typically integrated into the community with little incident, so long as they obeyed the laws and did their part in times of local crisis. Hostile visitors never made it past the city's defenses, as every attempt to breach the city's walls was repelled by the standing guard.

In the early years after the Dark Age, a band of scouts from New Strawn came across a party of Comanche warriors from the Preserve to the south. Their first contact was cautious, but amicable, and eventually a dialogue opened up between the city council and the Comanche tribal leaders. The Comanche Preserve and the town of New Strawn became allies and began engaging in limited trade and information swapping. Through this connection, the Comanche gained access to several pieces of key pre-Rifts technology and information, while the New Strawn city council got information on the new world outside its walls (albeit from a Comanche point of view). As such, the New Strawn city council is aware of the Coalition States government (and the threat they would pose to New Strawn if the town were discovered) as well as the general state of affairs in the New West.

The Comanche see New Strawn as friendly outsiders and potential allies should the Coalition States launch an offensive. New Strawn sees the Comanche Preserve as a connection to the outside world and a warning siren for potential threats from the south. If either party asked the other for aid in a time of crisis or war, they would likely receive it, but neither group would jump into the affairs of the other uninvited.

The glory days of New Strawn may be drawing to a close. Scavengers need to travel farther and farther from the city to procure useful supplies. The agricultural food supply is steady, but barely able to keep up with the town's population. On top of these concerns, the CS leadership is turning an aggressive eye toward Kansas as potential expansion territory.

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the community of New Strawn is their failing power plant. The entire city runs off of the power provided by the Wolf Creek plant. Using pre-Rifts recycling techniques, the plant operators were able to recycle the waste produced by the plant into usable fuel for the past three centuries, but the plant is on its last legs. The plant operators estimate that the city will run out of power in the next two years under the current demand. Finding new fuel supplies has become the number one priority for the New Strawn city council.

New Strawn

Population: 25,000

Racial Breakdown:

93% Human

5% 'Borgs

1% Psi-Stalker

0.75% D-Bees (various)

0.25% Mutant Animals

O.C.C./R.C.C. Breakdown of the Population, in Order of Prevalence:

Operator

Rogue Scholar

Rogue Scientist

Merc Soldier

City Rat

Body Fixer

Cowboy

Wilderness Scout

Cyber Doc

Headhunter

Mystic

Combat Cyborg

Burster

Mind Melter

Psi-Stalker (Civilized)

Saloon Girl/Barmaid

Sheriff's Deputy

D-Bees (Various, but mainly Cactus People, D'norr Devilmen, Quick-Flex Aliens, a few Butter Trolls and a small number of run-away Altara Warrior Women. Other D-Bee races in New Strawn have three or fewer members.)

Preacher

Saloon Bum

Dog Boy

Note that in the entire town there are only six members of the Glitter Boy O.C.C. and three members of the Robot Pilot O.C.C. This represents the pilots currently on active duty operating New Strawn's four suits of Glitter Boy armor and two suits of Silver Eagle armor (see the **Chaos Earth® RPG** for details on Silver Eagle ar-

mor), as well as the living family members who trained them and are now retired.

Average Transient Population: Virtually nonexistent.

Technology Level: High Technology with access to several pre-Rifts devices, factories and items of convenience. See *Chaos Earth®* for an expansive list of pre-Rifts devices that could conceivably be found in New Strawn.

Level of Education: Most people are tradesmen (farmers, carpenters, smiths, etc.) or work in the factories or hospitals. About 15% of the population is employed in one capacity or another at the power plant. Several of the members of combat-oriented O.C.C.s serve on the local militia, working shifts as city guards and law enforcement, but practice a trade when not actively on duty for the militia. Literacy is incredibly high in New Strawn due to the ongoing access to pre-Rifts style education, libraries and data files. An incredible 85% of the population can read and write American. Many of the citizens are fluent and literate in at least one foreign language as well, though many of these languages are now dead on Rifts Earth. There is a vibrant arts community in New Strawn and many of the citizens pursue some form of creative or artistic endeavor.

In addition to traditional education, New Strawn hosts the Academy of Para-Arcane Research, which is a college-level environment focused on teaching magic theory and aiding the psychic portion of the population in the control and development of their abilities.

Surrounding Communities: None. The entire community and associated farmland are located within the city wall. The nearest permanent community beyond the wall is over 75 miles (120 km) away.

Terrain: New Strawn is an eight square mile, walled-in area, though much of the area inside the wall is dedicated to raising crops and livestock. The city proper is approximately 1.5 square miles (3.8 sq. km) of houses and shops. Sizable primary and school buildings, a hospital, three factories and the Wolf Creek nuclear power plant also sit within this area. The vast majority of the population live, work and die within this densely populated region. The area surrounding the city is forest for a few miles. The weather is warm with light to moderate rainfall. Perfect for farming.

The City Council

The New Strawn city council is a seven-member governing body that handles the city's finances, laws, public works and emergency services. Each member of the city council is democratically elected to a life-long seat. Historically, most council members have retired in old age, granting a six-month notice to the city so elections could be held to find a replacement. If a city council member dies suddenly, or is otherwise rendered unfit for duty, an election must begin within sixty days. During this time the council member's district secretary acts in his or her stead.

The current members of the New Strawn city council are:

Area 1 Councilman: Anthony Sachs

Anthony Sachs is the councilman of Area 1, the most urban section of New Strawn. Area 1 is home to the majority of the city's industrial buildings including the Wolf Creek plant. Area 1 is probably the roughest area in New Strawn in terms of crime (though most of this is vandalism and petty theft) and is home to two local gangs, the smaller of which Anthony was once a member.

Growing up as a Quick-Flex Alien in New Strawn was not easy for Anthony. Though his people were officially accepted in the city, there were still some bigots among his peers growing up. After spending his early years at school being bullied, Anthony found a street gang in middle school, which he joined for protection.

Anthony's younger years were filled with petty crime and constant run-ins with the law. When he stood before the local magistrate after his fourth arrest, he was given a choice to either be incarcerated for ten years, or volunteer to go outside the wall on supply runs, working as a scavenger. Anthony chose the latter.

In his time as a scavenger, Anthony grew close to his coworkers, many of whom had a great interest in local politics. Though almost all of the scavengers hailed from Area 1, none among their number had held a position on the city council in over 100 years. The scavengers had a number of ideas on how they felt the city should be run, but their voices simply were not being heard.

When the previous councilman of Area 1 announced his impending resignation, Anthony joked to his friends that he should run for the office. The other scavengers took an immediate liking to the idea and built a campaign up around Anthony before he realized how much they were not kidding. Much to his surprise, Anthony was elected and now acts as a voice for the downtrodden and forgotten citizens of Area 1.

Name: Anthony Sachs.

Species: Quick-Flex Alien.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Attributes: I.Q. 8, M.E. 13, M.A. 10, P.S. 26, P.P. 28, P.E. 16, P.B. 7, Spd 56.

Hit Points: 34. **S.D.C.:** 95.

Age: 40. **Sex:** Male.

Height: 5 feet, 10 inches (1.78 m).

Weight: 150 lbs (67.5 kg).

Disposition: Anthony is generally calm and soft-spoken, particularly for a Quick-Flex Alien. His demeanor is the result of a combination of shyness and pragmatism. He is genuinely uncomfortable talking to "regular folk" and is somewhat afraid of coming off as hyperactive and flaky. However, when in the company of friends and family, Anthony opens up, revealing a vibrant personality, a razor-sharp wit and a lust for fun.

Description: Anthony is very large for his species. He is as tall as Quick-Flex Aliens come, but due to his intense physical training, he is also one of the bulkiest specimens a person is likely to encounter. His comparatively large mass is incredibly well toned and he is just as lithe, flexible and quick as any other Quick-Flex Alien.

Most days, Anthony wears his long auburn hair in a simple ponytail that dangles down to the middle of his back. The studded leather and denim clothing of his younger years has slowly made its way out of his wardrobe, and these days he is frequently seen in a simple, tastefully tailored suit and tie. On the rare occasions when he joins a scavenger party beyond the wall, he dresses in the colors of his youth.

Skills of Note: Acrobatics, Aerobic Athletics, Athletics, Barter 59%, Body Building & Weight Lifting, Boxing, Climbing 75%/65%, Combat Driving, Computer Operation 75%, Escape Artist 80%, Gymnastics, Kick Boxing, Language: American 98, Language: Spanish 78%, Literacy: American 72%, Mathematics: Basic 75%, Physical Labor, Pilot: Automobile 82%, Bicycling 88%, Hovercycles, Skycycles & Rocket Bikes 98%, Prowl 60%, Running, Seduction 18%, Streetwise 64%, Swimming 85%, Tailing 80%, Wrestling, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Paired Weapons, W.P. Quick Draw, W.P. Targeting.

Secondary Skills: Basic Mechanics 40%, Gambling: Dirty Tricks 39%, Gambling: Standard 55%, Radio: Basic 40%, W.P. Archery, W.P. Handguns, W.P. Knife, W.P. Rifles, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Sword.

Combat Abilities: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Experience Level: 7th level City Rat.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Psionics: None.

Attacks per Melee: 7

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +9 to strike, +7 to parry, +12 to dodge, +5 to pull punch, +10 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +1 to strike using modern weapons/guns or any type of bow and arrow even if the character doesn't have a W.P. for that weapon, +2 to disarm on a Called Shot or in hand to hand combat (in either case, the intent to disarm must be announced), +13 Hand to Hand Damage, Kick (1D8+2 damage), Critical Strike on an unmodified roll of 19 or 20, +6 on Perception Rolls.

Weapons and Equipment: 3 additional E-Clips, S.D.C. survival knife (1D6 S.D.C.), and the following:

Patchwork Body Armor

Type: Light personal body armor.

Weight: 12 lbs (5.4 kg).

Mobility: Excellent mobility, no movement penalties.

M.D.C. By Location: Head/Helmet: 25, Arms: 14 each, Legs: 20 each, Main Body: 32.

Market Price: 6,000 credits.

Note: This is not full environmental armor and does not have a cooling system.

2 Wilk's 320 Laser Pistols

Weight: 2 lbs (0.9 kg).

Mega-Damage: 1D6 M.D.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the number of attacks of the wielder.

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

Payload: 20 shots with a standard E-Clip, 40 shots with a Long E-Clip.

Bonus to Strike: +2 bonus to strike on an Aimed shot because of the light weight and superior balance.

Salvaged Hovercycle: Anthony's salvaged hovercycle is modified to be able to carry 500 lbs (225 kg) worth of salvage in a large storage compartment behind the seats. This model of hovercycle is a home-brewed creation of the New Strawn scavengers and is not commercially available.

Crew: One rider, one passenger.

Maximum Speed: 180 mph (288 m).

Engine: Combustion/electric hybrid.

Maximum Range: 500 miles (800 km).

Size: 10 feet (3 meters) long, 815 lbs (367 kg).

M.D.C. by Location: Main Body: 45, Hover Jets (3): 15 each.

Cybernetics and Bionics: None.

Area 2 Councilman: Olson Marx

Olson Marx represents Area 2, which is home to many of the scientists, engineers and Operators who handle the more complicated operations of the local factories and the Wolf Creek plant. A nuclear physicist himself, Marx somewhat resents the fact that his Area does not include the physical structure of the plant. He has proposed redrawing the Area boundaries on more than one occasion in order to gain political control of the structure, though such proposals are universally rejected. Marx is also something of a bigot, particularly where D-Bees and practitioners of magic are concerned. Though he keeps his uglier opinions out of the public eye, his disdain for the Quick-Flex Aliens only exacerbates his offense at Area 1 governing the plant.

Like most citizens of New Strawn, Marx's only knowledge of the Coalition States comes from information shared by the Comanche. While Marx can clearly see the threat that discovery by the CS would pose to New Strawn's autonomy, he finds himself admiring

the Coalition's stance on magic and D-Bees. For now, he keeps such thoughts to himself, seeking internal reform to his hometown, but if the situation with the power plant's fuel supply becomes desperate enough, Marx may well entertain the idea of reaching out to the CS government for aid.

Name: Olson Marx.

Species: Human.

Alignment: Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 19, M.E. 12, M.A. 9, P.S. 10, P.P. 12, P.E. 15, P.B. 9, Spd 23.

Hit Points: 38. **S.D.C.:** 48.

Age: 51. **Sex:** Male.

Height: 5 feet, 11 inches (1.8 m).

Weight: 175 lbs (79 kg).

Disposition: Olson is a bit of a megalomaniac and feels that he is frequently the smartest man in the room. He can come off as dismissive or condescending, especially when dealing with non-scientists or blue-collar types. This tendency is even stronger when dealing with D-Bees or soldiers, both of whom he has very little patience for. He only views other scientists as worthy of attention and etiquette.

Description: Olson fits into the stereotype of an absent-minded genius. His clothing and personal appearance is often disheveled and he frequently prefers to fiddle with whatever contraption he is presently working on in favor of interacting with other people.

Skills of Note: Artificial Intelligence 70%, Astronomy & Navigation 60%, Astrophysics 80%, Basic Electronics 60%, Basic Mechanics 65%, Bioware Mechanics 65%, Computer Hacking 50%, Computer Repair 70%, Computer Operation 70%, Computer Programming 75%, Cybernetic Medicine 80%/98%, Cybernetics: Basic 70%, Electrical Engineer 75%, Electricity Generation 90%, Find Contraband 51%, History: Pre-Rifts 72%/44%, History: Post-Apocalypse 55%/50%, Language: American 98%, Language: Techno-Can 70%, Language: Spanish 70%, Language: Japanese 70%, Literacy: American 70%, Literacy: Techno-Can 60%, Mathematics: Advanced 75%, Mathematics: Basic 75%, Pathology 80%, Pilot: Automobile 75%, Radio: Basic 75%, Recycling 60%, Robot Electronics 70%, Salvage 65%, Vehicle Armorer 55%, Weapons Engineer 50%, W.P. Energy Rifle, Zoology 80%.

Secondary Skills: Aerobic Athletics, Athletics (General), Automotive Mechanics 50%, Body Building & Weight Lifting, First Aid 50%, Running.

Combat Abilities: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Experience Level: 6th level Rogue Scientist.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Psionics: None.

Attacks per Melee: 5

Bonuses: +1 to strike, +3 to parry, +3 to dodge, +3 to pull punch, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, Kick (1D8+2 damage), +4 on Perception Rolls, +2 to disarm, Critical Strike on an unmodified roll of 19 or 20, +2 to save vs insanity, +2 to save vs disease.

Weapons and Equipment: Standard starting equipment for a Rogue Scientist O.C.C. (see **Rifts® Ultimate Edition**). In addition, Marx has several customized robots, computers and weapons in his home/factory, the ultimate contents of which are left to the discretion of the Game Master (and can easily serve as potential story hooks or plot points).

Cybernetics and Bionics: Clock Calendar, Left Eye: Multi-Optics, Universal Headjack & Ear Implant.

Area 3 Councilwoman: Headmaster Trina Wheeler

Area 3 consists of the Academy of Para-Arcane Research and the surrounding dormitories. As a result, the councilwoman from Area 3 has historically been one of the Academy's Mystics. The current councilwoman, Trina Wheeler, serves as the Academy's Headmaster, dividing her time between her political concerns and her responsibilities in keeping the school functioning.

Trina is by no means the most powerful Mystic at the Academy of Para-Arcane Research, but she is among the most charismatic. Unlike many Mystics, she is down to earth, approachable and typically jovial. Her friendly nature serves her well in her position as councilwoman, disarming would-be opponents with friendly conversation and witty banter.

There is a small but vocal faction within New Strawn that resents the fact that Wheeler serves in her dual role as councilwoman and Headmaster. These citizens feel that Trina's dual role consolidates too much power for a single person. This faction wishes to see her either resign her position as councilwoman or step down as the Headmaster of the Academy.

Name: Trina Wheeler.

Species: Human.

Alignment: Principled.

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 12, M.A. 16, P.S. 13, P.P. 8, P.E. 11, P.B. 13, Spd 14.

Hit Points: 27. **S.D.C.:** 53.

Age: 37. **Sex:** Female.

Height: 5 feet, 5 inches (1.65 m).

Weight: 110 lbs (49 kg).

I.S.P.: 74

P.P.E.: 95

Disposition: Trina takes a great joy in the pursuit of knowledge.

She is a teacher first and foremost and is a rabid advocate for the educational programs in New Strawn. This can cause her to come off as a bit fanatical in discussions about academia, but outside that realm she is relatively even-keeled and even a bit bubbly in her demeanor. Trina is typically well-liked and even her vocal detractors seem to treat her with a fair bit of respect, due to her approachable nature and warm personality.

Description: Trina is a fairly average-looking woman in her mid-thirties. She typically dresses in simple, conservative clothing and wears a minimum of makeup and accessories in public, unless attending official functions. She could easily be overlooked in a crowd.

When working inside the Academy, Trina adopts more ostentatious garb, usually consisting of cloaks embroidered with mystical symbols, jewelry containing precious gems, and various other accessories aimed at harnessing, directing, or defending from mystical energies.

Skills of Note: Dance 65%, History: Pre-Rifts 53%/45%, History: Post-Apocalypse 60%/55%, Horsemanship: General 66%/46%, Land Navigation 62%, Language: American 98%, Language: Dragonese/ Elven 77%, Language: Spanish 77%, Language: Faerie Speak 77%, Literacy: American 65%, Literacy: Dragonese/ Elven 55%, Lore: Magic 60%, Lore: Psychics & Psionics 60%, Lore: American Indians 60%, Lore: Faeries & Creatures of Magic 60%, Mythology 45%, Outdoorsmanship, Philosophy 70%, Physical Labor, Play Musical Instrument: Guitar 65%, Play Musical Instrument: Piano 65%, Wilderness Survival 65%.

Secondary Skills: Aerobic Athletics, Athletics (General), Body Building & Weight Lifting, Radio: Basic 65%, Running, Swimming 55%.

Combat Abilities: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Experience Level: 5th level Mystic.

Magic Knowledge: Armor of Ithan (10), Blinding Flash (1), Charismatic Aura (10), Cloak of Darkness (6), Cloud of Smoke (2), Detect Concealment (6), Extinguish Fire (4), Fire Bolt (7), Globe of Daylight (2), Heal Wounds (10), Impervious to Fire (5), Impervious to Poison (5), Lantern Light (1), Levitation (5), Lifeblast (15), Manipulate Objects (2+), See the Invisible (4), Sense Magic (4), Turn Dead (6).

Psionics: Sense Supernatural Evil 70%, Open Self to the Supernatural (+10% to receive Ley Line Transmission, 70% invisibility, +8 save vs psionic attack, +4 save vs magic attack, +3 Perception Rolls involving the supernatural). Clairvoyance (4), Commune with Spirits (6), Detect Psionics (6), Empathic Transmission (6), Exorcism (10), Hypnotic Suggestion (6), Meditation (0), Presence Sense (4), See Aura (6), Sixth Sense (2), Suppress Fear (8), Total Recall (2).

Attacks per Melee: 5

Bonuses: +1 to strike, +3 to parry, +3 to dodge, +3 to pull punch, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to disarm, Kick (1D8+2 damage), +2 on Perception Rolls (doubled on a ley line), +4 to save vs Horror Factor, +2 to save vs mind control and torture, +4 to save vs possession, +2 to save vs psionics, +2 to save vs magic, +2 to Spell Strength, 40% chance to Trust/Intimidate.

Weapons and Equipment: Apart from clothing and a few small personal items, Trina does not have much in the way of personal equipment. However, her position as the Headmaster of the Academy of Para-Arcane Research grants her access to numerous items held in the school's reliquary, should she need to requisition supplies. It is ultimately left to the Game Master's discretion to determine what may or may not be contained within the reliquary.

Cybernetics and Bionics: None.

Area 4 Councilman:

Dr. Jhon Flamewalker

Jhon Flamewalker has been the councilor for Area 4 for the last 60 years. A member of the D'norr species, he is very long-lived and has already watched one generation of New Strawn residents die off and their children rise to claim the birthright that is their town. Jhon is a pillar of the community, despite his frightening appearance.

Jhon's area encompasses the hospital, the cybernetics facility, and the sheriff's station, as well as the surrounding neighborhoods. Despite his duties on the city council, Jhon retains his medical practice at the hospital, personally seeing hundreds of patients and overseeing the majority of the major medical procedures that take place in New Strawn.

Name: Jhon Flamewalker.

Species: D'norr Devilman.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Attributes: I.Q. 16, M.E. 11, M.A. 17, P.S. 11, P.P. 7, P.E. 13, P.B. 12, Spd 27.

Hit Points: 51. **S.D.C.:** 65.

Age: 110. **Sex:** Male.

Height: 5 feet, 11 inches (1.8 m).

Weight: 140 lbs (63 kg).

Horror Factor: 12

P.P.E.: 33

Disposition: As a healer, Jhon believes that laughter is the best medicine. He has a boisterous personality and a jovial bedside manner. He's almost always smiling or cracking a joke and most people in New Strawn find his company pleasant. On the rare occasion when he is somber, serious, or, even more rarely, angry, it can be stunning to behold the shift in his demeanor. When agitated in such a way, he becomes short and direct, his humor evaporating in the name of expedience. Once the crisis has passed, he almost immediately returns to his fun-loving, funny old self.

Description: Jhon looks like a standard member of his species, which can be unsettling to those who are unfamiliar with him. In order to ease first impressions and better fit in with the community, Jhon is typically seen wearing a tropical print shirt and khakis beneath an impeccable white lab coat. His semi-casual mode of dress and perpetual warm smile provide a disarming contrast to his monstrous appearance.

Skills of Note: Anthropology 72%, Art 87%, Astronomy & Navigation 82%, Basic Electronics 82%, Biology 82%, Botany 77%, Chemistry 82%, Chemistry: Analytical 72%, Chemistry: Pharmaceutical 82%, Computer Operation 92%, Crime Scene Investigation 77%, Find Contraband 62%, Field Surgery 66%, History: Pre-Rifts 73%/82%, History: Post-Apocalypse 82%/77%, Law (General) 82%, Mathematics: Basic 98%, Mathematics: Advanced 98%, Language: American 98%, Language: Dragonese/Elven 98%, Language: Latin 98%, Language: Spanish 98%, Literacy: American 98%, Literacy: Spanish 98%, Medical Doctor 98%/92%, Outdoorsmanship, Pathology 82%, Pilot: Automobile 84%, Physical Labor, Preserve Food 47%, Prowl 47%, Radio: Basic 87%, Recycling 82%, Salvage 67%, Streetwise 27%, Wilderness Survival 62%, W.P. Energy Pistol.

Secondary Skills: Aerobic Athletics, Athletics (General), Body Building & Weight Lifting, Cooking 62%, Gardening 50%, Fishing 47%, Running.

Combat Abilities: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Experience Level: 7th level Rogue Scholar.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Psionics: None.

Attacks per Melee: 5

Bonuses and Penalties: -1 on initiative, +0 to strike, +1 to parry, +1 to dodge, +1 to pull punch, +1 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +0 to disarm, -2 to entangle, Body Flip/Throw, Kick (1D8 +2 damage), Head Butt w/horns (2D4+2 S.D.C.), +9 on Perception Rolls, +2 to save vs disease, +1 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 to save vs illusions, +1 to save vs Insanity, +1 to save vs mind control and torture, +3 to save vs possession. 45% chance to Trust/Intimidate.

Weapons and Equipment: Standard starting equipment for a Rogue Scientist O.C.C.

Cybernetics and Bionics: None.

Area 5 Councilman: Richard Murphy

Area 5 encompasses the east end of the city and the surrounding farmland. Area 5's councilman, Richard Murphy, is a farmhand and mechanic who worked his way up to managing his own multi-acre farming project. Repurposing scavenged robotics and vehicles for farming has been Murphy's primary trade since he was a teenager. About twenty percent of the equipment currently used in New Strawn agriculture incorporates his handiwork, or the work of his apprentices. This has made him a very popular man in his Area and throughout the New Strawn farming community.

When Richard announced his campaign for councilman, he met with a massive swell of support from the farmers of the east end. He

was a man they all knew, trusted and respected, and his election was a landslide victory. In the thirty years that he has served on the council, his constituents have seen him as fair, honest and approachable. Many times citizens who have a grievance will bring their concerns to Richard first, even if they do not reside in his area.

Though he is likely the most publicly beloved member of the city council, Richard has a dark side. He has a bit of a drinking problem, is not an especially faithful husband, and has occasionally dabbled in illicit dealings with the scavengers of Area 1 in order to secure first pick of new salvage in exchange for herbal drugs that he grows on his private farm. Any one of these secrets could severely tarnish, if not outright destroy, his pristine reputation. He has managed to keep these illicit activities quiet, for now.

Name: Richard Murphy.

Species: Human.

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 15, M.A. 14, P.S. 16, P.P. 15, P.E. 11, P.B. 9, Spd 19.

Hit Points: 32. **S.D.C.:** 31.

Age: 62. **Sex:** Male.

Height: 6 feet, 2 inches (1.87 m).

Weight: 250 lbs (113 kg).

Disposition: In public, Richard is a kindly, folksy Mr. Fix-It type who greets strangers with a smile and an offer of aid. He is generally regarded to be a good, honest man and is often invited to social gatherings and events throughout the city. Despite his predilection for wine, women and song, Richard manages to keep his vices contained when interacting with the public at large. This is fortunate, as he is a mean, spiteful and careless drunk and once such incident in full view of the masses could easily be his undoing.

Description: Richard is a tall and stocky man in remarkable shape for his age. He usually wears overalls when working in his garage or on the farm, but cleans up nicely in a suit and tie for official engagements and social events. While he looks young for his age, his gray hair is beginning to recede and the years are beginning to show in his crow's feet and forehead wrinkles.

Skills of Note: Automotive Mechanics 63%, Basic Mechanics 68%, Computer Hacking 63%, Computer Operation 78%, Computer Repair 68%, Electrical Engineer 83%, Field Armorer & Munitions Expert 53%, Find Contraband 64%, First Aid 63%, Jury Rig 73%, Language: American 98%, Language: Spanish 88%, Literacy: American 83%, Mathematics: Advanced 78%, Mathematics: Basic 93%, Mechanical Engineer 73%, Military Fortification 43%, Pick Locks 73%, Pilot: Automobile 88%, Hovercycles, Skycycles & Rocket Bikes 98%, Tracked & Construction Vehicles 78%, Radio: Basic 88%, Roadwise 64%, Robot Mechanics 58%, Sensory Equipment: 78%, Vehicle Armorer 58%, Weapons Engineer 68%, W.P. Blunt, W.P. Energy Pistol.

Secondary Skills: Carpentry 53%, Land Navigation 59%, Running, Salvage 63%, Skin & Prepare Animal Hides 58%.

Combat Abilities: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Experience Level: 6th level Operator.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Psionics: None.

Attacks per Melee: 5

Bonuses: +1 to strike, +2 to parry, +2 to dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +1 to disarm, Critical Strike on an unmodified roll of 19 or 20, Kick (1D8 damage), +2 on Perception Rolls, +2 to save vs fatigue and disease.

Weapons and Equipment: Standard starting equipment for a member of the Operator O.C.C. Additionally, Richard has access to a

well-stocked workshop, numerous vehicles and various pieces of farming equipment.

Cybernetics and Bionics: None.

Area 6 Councilman: Baxter Barrett

Baxter Barrett is a simple man who yearns for simpler times. Elected nearly fifty years ago to his position, he is the councilman for the rural west side of New Strawn known as Area 6. In his youth, Baxter was a factory worker whose parents worked a homestead on the far west side, making him a perfect representative of both worlds his Area inhabits. Now, in his golden years, Baxter is slowing down, losing touch and generally outliving his relevance. He is acutely aware of this, but fears the potential risks of a shift in power during the current energy crisis. Baxter is especially concerned about what may happen if another council member who could be swayed by Olson Marx were to be elected. So Baxter stubbornly refuses to retire and clings to his position in the hopes that he can ride out this one final crisis before calling it quits.

Name: Baxter Barrett.

Species: Human.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 11, M.A. 9, P.S. 14, P.P. 11, P.E. 11, P.B. 7, Spd 6.

Hit Points: 28. **S.D.C.:** 26.

Age: 74. **Sex:** Male.

Height: 5 feet, 6 inches (1.68 m).

Weight: 188 lbs (85 kg).

Disposition: Baxter is a gruff, stubborn old man with no patience for fools and little patience for youth. He sees the early days of his tenure as a golden age for New Strawn and is not shy about his deep concerns over the trajectory the town is currently traveling. This places Baxter at odds with many of the other townsfolk, including his own constituents. When faced with criticism, Baxter is quick to point out that "This is a lifetime gig and I ain't dead yet."

Description: Baxter is an elderly man who wears the weight of his advanced years in a slouched posture, leathery skin and a dour frown. In his youth he was quite fetching and charismatic. Those features occasionally break through when his personality will allow, but for the most part, he is just a grumpy old man.

Skills of Note: Basic Mechanics 65%, Bioware Mechanics 65%, Chemistry 60%, Chemistry: Analytical 55%, Computer Hacking 60%, Computer Operation 75%, Computer Repair 65%, Electrical Engineer 80%, Find Contraband 61%, Firefighting 30%, First Aid 60%, Jury Rig 70%, Language: American 97%, Language: Spanish 85%, Literacy: American 80%, Mathematics: Advanced 75%, Mathematics: Basic 90%, Mechanical Engineer 70%, Pick Locks 70%, Pilot: Automobile 85%, Hovercycles, Skycycles & Rocket Bikes 98%, Tracked & Construction Vehicles 75%, Radio: Basic 85%, Roadwise 61%, Salvage 35%, Sensory Equipment: 75%, Weapons Engineer 65%, W.P. Blunt, W.P. Energy Pistol.

Secondary Skills: Animal Husbandry 35%, Carpentry 50%, Land Navigation 56%, Salvage 60%, Skin & Prepare Animal Hides 55%.

Combat Abilities: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Experience Level: 6th level Operator.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Psionics: None.

Attacks per Melee: 5

Bonuses: +1 to strike, +2 to parry, +2 to dodge, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, Critical Strike on an unmodified

roll of 19 or 20, +1 to disarm, Kick (1D8 damage), +2 on Perception Rolls, +2 to save vs fatigue and disease.

Weapons and Equipment: Standard starting equipment for a member of the Operator O.C.C. Additionally, Baxter has access to a well-stocked workshop, numerous vehicles and various pieces of farming equipment.

Cybernetics and Bionics: None.

Area 7 Councilman: Father Jeremiah Wilcox

Jeremiah has served on the city council for fourteen years, representing the farmers and workers living in the southern region of New Strawn. Area 7 is primarily farmland, reaching into the outskirts of the city proper and claiming a scant few residential neighborhoods.

First and foremost, Jeremiah is a preacher. Though he doesn't subscribe to the fire & brimstone approach to spreading the Lord's word, he does make his decisions based on his faith. This occasionally leads to conflicts with some of the more secular-minded members of the council who fear that Jeremiah may be tempted to place his personal beliefs above the common good of the city.

Name: Jeremiah Wilcox.

Species: Human.

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 12, M.A. 20, P.S. 14, P.P. 10, P.E. 17, P.B. 12, Spd 22.

Hit Points: 41. **S.D.C.:** 48.

Age: 44. **Sex:** Male.

Height: 5 feet, 8 inches (1.73 m).

Weight: 210 lbs (95 kg).

Disposition: Jeremiah is kind and eloquently spoken, but can turn frighteningly hard when the situation demands it. His sermons tend to focus on forgiveness, redemption and charity. These tendencies also manifest in his politics and he is one of the largest advocates of maintaining the socialist status quo in New Strawn.

Description: Jeremiah is an average looking man in his mid-forties. His black hair is beginning to show some gray at the temples and years of hard work in the hot sun is beginning to show on his skin. He is heavyset for his frame, but clearly solid, if not overtly muscular. His soft blue eyes are disarming, casting a sharp contrast to his otherwise hardened features.

Skills of Note: Animal Husbandry 70%, Athletics (General), Barter 50%, Cooking 60%, Creative Writing 50%, Gardening 56%, Land Navigation 66%, Language: American 98%, Language: Spanish 98%, Language: German 85%, Law 90%, Literacy: American 98%, Lore: Religion 80%, Lore: American Indians 65%, Lore: Psychics & Psionics 65%, Mathematics: Basic 98%, Outdoorsmanship, Paramedic 75%, Physical Labor, Pilot: Automobile 80%, Public Speaking 55%, Radio: Basic 70%, Recycle 55%, Running.

Secondary Skills: Basic Mechanics 55%, Firefighting 40%, History: Pre-Rifts 40%/32%, Mathematics: Advanced 70%, Mythology 55%, Philosophy 55%, W.P. Energy Pistol.

Combat Abilities: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Experience Level: 6th level Preacher.

Magic Knowledge: None.

Psionics: None.

Attacks per Melee: 5

Bonuses: +1 to strike, +3 to parry, +3 to dodge, +6 to pull punch, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, Kick (1D8 damage), +3 to disarm on a Called Shot or in hand to hand combat (in either case, the intent to disarm must be announced), Critical Strike on an un-

modified 19-20, +4 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 to save vs mind control and torture, +4 to save vs possession of any kind, +5% to save vs coma/death, +1 to save vs magic/poison, 60% chance to Trust/Intimidate.

Weapons and Equipment: Hooded robe for traveling, two sets of white and/or gray silk robes for sermons, quality cowboy hat, boots, sunglasses, tinted goggles, air filter, a megaphone (for sermons), flashlight, notepad and pens or markers, a pre-Rifts printing of the Bible, large wooden cross, small silver cross on a chain, six wooden stakes and a small mallet, pocket magnifying glass, pocket language translator, first-aid medical kit, a skin of wine, cigarette lighter, pocket mirror, a pair of handcuffs, 50 feet (15.2 m) of lightweight rope, utility belt, knapsack, backpack, three canteens, three additional E-Clips, and a survival knife (1D6 S.D.C.). Plus the following:

Patchwork Body Armor

Type: Light personal body armor.

Weight: 12 lbs (5.4 kg).

Mobility: Excellent mobility, no movement penalties.

M.D.C. by Location: Head/Helmet: 25, Arms: 14 each, Legs: 20 each, Main Body: 32

Market Price: 6,000 credits.

Note: This is not full environmental armor and does not have a cooling system.

Wilk's 320 Laser Pistol

Weight: 2 lbs (0.9 kg).

Mega-Damage: 1D6 M.D.

Rate of Fire: Each shot uses one melee attack.

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

Payload: 20 shots with a standard E-Clip, 40 shots with a Long E-Clip.

Bonus to Strike: +2 bonus to strike on an Aimed shot because of the light weight and superior balance.

Cybernetics and Bionics: None.

Campaign & Adventure Ideas

Friends in Need: This campaign explores the loose alliance between the Comanche Preserve and the city council of New Strawn. In this scenario, the Comanche Preserve has come under attack by a potent force. Whether that force is the Coalition States military, an organized assault from raiders from the Pecos Empire, or evil creatures of magic is left to the Game Master to decide. The opposition in such a campaign should be powerful enough to put a good scare into the Comanche leadership, who in turn call in the support of their friends in New Strawn. It is up to the characters to lead the effort to assist the Comanche while hopefully preserving the secret of New Strawn's existence.

Infiltrators: Numerous rumors and legends claim that the New West is filled with pre-Rifts artifacts and technology, just waiting to be found. Though New Strawn has been a well-kept secret for centuries, it is not inconceivable that word could leak out about its location. This campaign sets the player characters up as spies trying to gain information about New Strawn. The characters could be Rogue Scholars and Rogue Scientists, desperately hoping to have the chance to explore the extensive archives kept at New Strawn. Perhaps the characters are Coalition operatives, trying to confirm rumors of a legendary hoard of pre-Rifts technology and information. The characters could just as easily be working for Lazlo, the Colorado Baronies or the Black Market in the same capacity. Almost any kingdom or organization in North America would gladly lie, cheat,

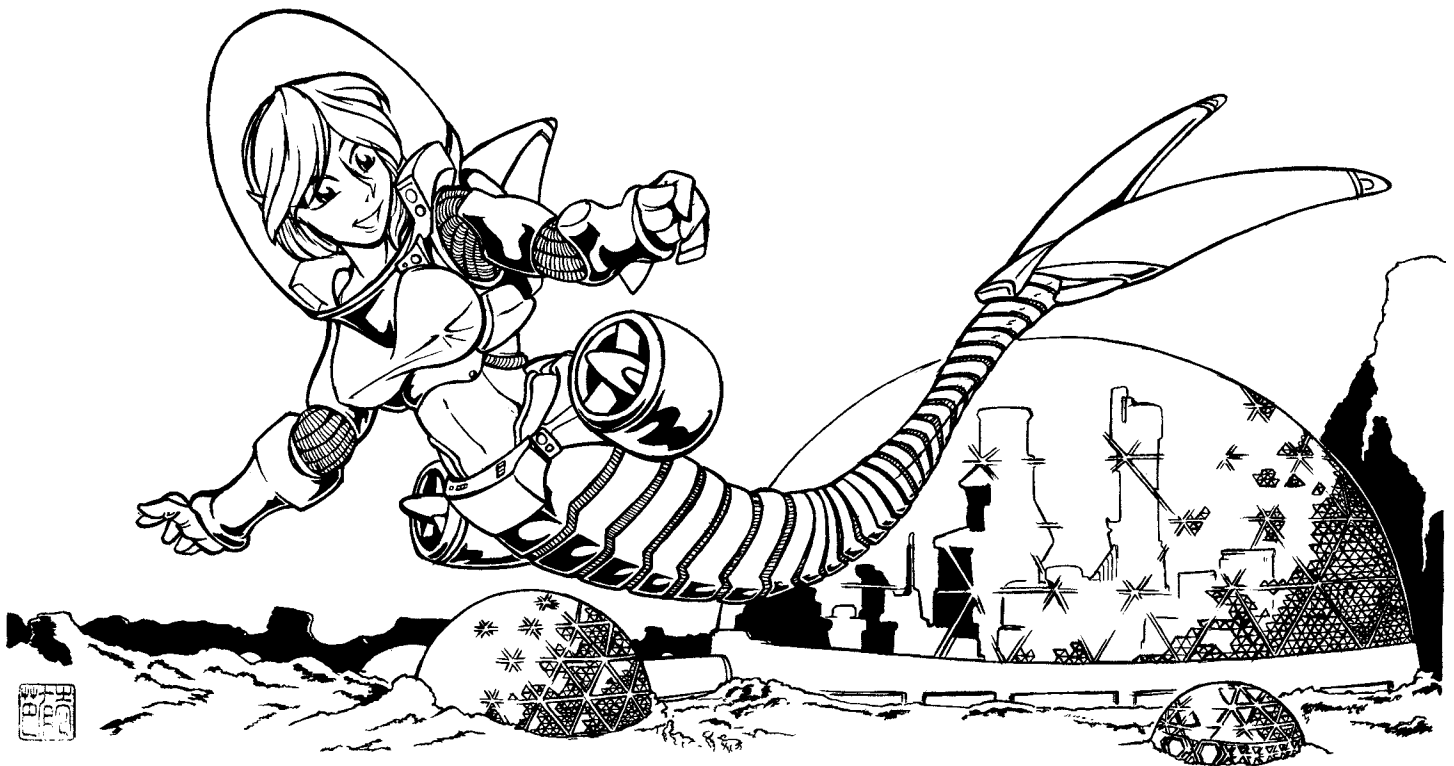
steal or kill to get their hands on the knowledge and technology within the walls of New Strawn.

Local Figures: In this campaign, the player characters are residents of New Strawn. They could be members of the local militia protecting their home from outside threats, law enforcement keeping the streets of the city safe, or criminal rogues trying to provide vices to the good people of New Strawn for fun and profit. New Strawn is about as close to a utopia as Rifts Earth has to offer, but that does not make the city flawless by any means. The same passions drive people in New Strawn as they do anywhere else, and even the safest streets have an element of danger.

Quest for Power: In this campaign, the player characters are residents of New Strawn, sent out into the wilderness of Rifts Earth on a mission to find fuel for the dying Wolf Creek reactor. Though nuclear power is not uncommon on Rifts Earth, finding a supply of materials sufficient to power the reactor for the next several decades won't be easy. The characters could spend months or even years crisscrossing

the countryside in search of the proper materials, putting together a stockpile of fuel slowly. Alternatively, they could attempt to broker some kind of deal with the Black Market, the Colorado Baronies, Northern Gun, or some other kingdom or organization in order to get the necessary amount of fuel. Such a plan would place New Strawn in far greater risk of discovery than amassing the fuel slowly over time and simply transporting that amount of radioactive material comes along with its own challenges.

Siege: This campaign explores the worst-case scenario for the people of New Strawn, namely a full-on assault from a rival kingdom. The most likely candidate for such aggression would be the Coalition States, as they would have much to gain by wiping out the information and technology stored at New Strawn. Few other kingdoms would have much to gain from attempting to destroy New Strawn, but many kingdoms, independent bandits and D-Bees would be more than happy to relieve the city of its knowledge and technology.



The Deep Frontier

Optional Material for Rifts®

By Mark Temple

“The sea holds Earth’s greatest potential. Oceans cover five eighths of our world, and hold secrets and riches that we are only now beginning to understand and exploit. In the past, mankind was content to merely to travel its surface and only visit the depths for brief periods. But times are changing. We can no longer be content to only visit, but instead desire to stay. The ocean is a brand new frontier, ripe for development. One day there will be cities under the sea to rival the grandest on land, and we will look to the sea for our entire livelihood.”

– from the book *Age of Oceania* by Nichos Tethys, Futurist, 2053

History

In the mid Twenty-First Century, humanity had run out of room. Earth’s population had almost doubled from its late Twentieth Century number, and these teeming billions needed food, power and resources. The remaining usable, non-urbanized regions on Earth were primarily nature preserves or dedicated to agriculture. To support the ever increasing population, the nations of the world began looking for solutions outside their own borders. While a few focused on the stars,

the majority seized opportunities closer to home, the oceans. Under the sea there were vast resources of oil, natural gas, vital minerals, geothermal energy, and easily obtained foodstuffs. Almost overnight, prototype undersea colonies were erected in the Pacific, the Caribbean, and the Indian Ocean. As these communities grew, more and more were developed, started by independent businesses and cooperatives looking to profit on the newfound wealth. But every new frontier attracts troublemakers. Pirates, bandits, claim jumpers, poachers, and other assorted criminals preyed on the new realm of mankind, taking what they could with little to stop them. As most of the new communities lay under international waters, their protection fell under the United Nations. With many of the member nations funding the very people they were tasked to stop, it usually fell on the communities themselves to organize their own defense. This state of affairs continued until 2075, when the United Nations effectively abolished the concept of international waters. Immediately, each nation staked out a claim, declaring its colonies as protectorate states and attempting to grab the most profitable and strategic locations for themselves. While this action ensured that pirates and bandits would be much less of a threat, it brought new hardships on the settlements. Most had settled in search of a new life, away from the politics and issues of the land. Many protested, seceding from their parent nations in attempts to create independent alliances, unique undersea nations. Most were forced back into the fold, and a few were conquered by other major powers. Military standoffs and the occasional secret shootouts over important colonies were common, as each nation funneled massive funds into expanding their naval power. The Guada Marta incident sparked major troubles. Although those two nations were uninvolved in the aquatic struggle between superpowers, each of the military powers on the globe had ties to nations in that region, and for a while, it looked as if the standoff would drag the world into a global conflict. Negotiations helped avert outright war after the incident, but the tensions remained for almost a decade as the two nations continued to rattle sabers and threaten each other. December 22nd, 2098 brought about an end to the situation, with the nuclear destruction of both South American nations. As the cataclysm unfolded, the colonies remained mostly unaffected by the tidal waves, volcanic eruptions, and demonic invasions, safely isolated under the sea. The aquatic colonies struggled to survive without support from the surface, aided by the remnants of the now abandoned Navies. Smaller, less self-sufficient colonies were abandoned, salvaged and used to bolster the rest. During the Dark Ages, the undersea colonies continued their struggle to survive. Some suffered accidents or failures that caused them to die. Others were attacked by monsters, D-Bees, or Bandits. The oceans had become a wild place, with strange, new alien creatures swimming its depths and dangerous people and D-Bees roaming both its surface and beneath its waves. Those colonies that learned to adapt to the new conditions thrived, but many failed. Their populations died outright, fled to the surface, or found refuge in one of the thriving colonies. The successful colonies became new nations, independent of the surface.

109 P.A.

Most colonies that survived the 300 years since the Great Cataclysm have grown larger, and spread new satellite colonies as well. They are also almost completely self-sufficient, relying on trade only to acquire supplies that are rare or impossible to obtain under the sea. Each has a civilian militia, although working military vessels are rare, and usually old and run-down. More common are civilian mini-sub and cargo ships, converted to carry small quantities of torpedoes or blue-green laser weapons. These serve to defend the community from aquatic monsters, pirates, and hostile D-Bees. With

few major powers to patrol the oceans, these dangers are common. The average community has several thousand people, in hundreds of structures known as *habitats*. These habitats come in a variety of shapes and sizes, although most were standardized long before the Great Cataclysm. Each habitat is a shirtsleeve environment, maintained at sea level atmospheric pressure. Although this places the colony structures under great stress from the pressures of the deep, it allows a comfortable and safe environment for its inhabitants. Each habitat is connected by tunnels, allowing easy access between structures. Each habitat in a colony has a specific purpose. Most colonies have multiple living areas, spread out in several habitats. Other habitats are agricultural, growing vegetables and grain that not only provide food, but also purify air and water, and provide raw materials for manufacturing. Some are involved in industry, mining, smelting, forging, and manufacturing. In addition to these, many are storage facilities, docking centers, educational facilities, and community centers. Each colony is a self-contained nation, with most of the facilities required to survive. Excess food, materials, and products are traded with other colonies, aquatic D-Bee communities, and those on the surface. Government varies, although many operate on a corporate model, with a board of directors who guide the colony through the day to day operations. Due to the need to balance the environment of the colony, things are very tightly controlled in most communities. Food supplies, education, housing, all are coordinated by the colony government to ensure the smooth operation of the community. Crime is usually cracked down on hard, with a death penalty for the most heinous crimes. Serious crimes that don't warrant a death penalty usually result in hard labor, performing the most menial or dangerous tasks available. While this system may seem harsh, it is necessary given the lack of space available, and the need to preserve the balance between the colony and the people.

A typical community supports itself with aquaculture, the raising of fish, shrimp, seaweed, plankton, and yeast. These provide the core of the colony's diet, augmented with hydroponically grown fruits, vegetables, and grains. Hydroponics replaces soil with a nutrient-rich fluid, a resource easily obtainable in the ocean. Few colonies have cattle, chickens, pigs, or sheep, as these animals are difficult to raise in an enclosed environment. However, protein from other sources can be processed to have the taste and texture of chicken, pork, mutton, or beef, providing a variety of foodstuffs. Food is strictly rationed, with each family given an allowance from the colony's stores. In this way they ensure no one goes hungry, but no one receives more than their fair share. Waste materials, including the inedible portions of plant life, are recycled to supply the hydroponic gardens, and to produce plastics, synthetic fabrics, and other necessities. Seafloor mining is common, both in the collection of ore nodules on the surface of the seabed, and open-pit mining, though a few colonies on undersea mountains and cliffs dig dry mining tunnels, extensions of the main colony. The minerals provided by mining are used to produce new habitats, new submarines, and other gear. These are typically produced in a sub-sector of the main colony, dedicated to industry and well away from the aquaculture farms. A colony's industrial shops can usually produce any needed part on short notice, although few items are mass-produced.

Some Major Communities

Aurora Islands Undersea Community

A large colony several miles east of the Falkland Islands, South America. The colony is built into the side of several small undersea mountains, only 500 feet (152 m) down. Primarily a mining colony, it is also well known for its manufacture of small submarines. It

trades mineral resources and the subs to the Silver River Republics, in return for foodstuffs and technology it cannot produce itself. The Aurora Island community has been under threat of Naut'yll attack for the last century; a fact that has encouraged them to create a well equipped and trained self-defense force. This military has beat back Naut'yll assaults on several occasions, most recently with the support of the New Navy. The colony's source of power is several hundred Impellers, situated in a deep-water current. As a backup, each community has a nuclear generator, as well. The Aurora islands were initially settled by people from Great Britain, and have retained that cultural identity. They use a parliamentary government, and have created a new nobility, their parliament awarding honorary titles to members of the community that serve above and beyond their duty.

Population: 20,000 people, in six major communities. Each sub-community is connected to the others by a network of mass-transit tubes tunneled out of the rock.

Military: 2 *Astute* Class Nuclear Attack Submarines (equal to the Shark Class, **Sourcebook 4: Coalition Navy**, page 74), and a division of 60 Combat Mini-Submarines. There is also a 1,000 man militia infantry force, and nearly every Auroran has been trained to handle a weapon in defense of the colony. Every civilian submarine is equipped with at least a minimum of weaponry, and they have 3 Pre-Rifts Ballistic Missile submarines refitted as cargo ships that can serve in combat if needed. (Use the Ohio class, **Sourcebook 4: Coalition Navy**, with the ICBM tubes replaced with a cargo bay capable of holding 400 tons.)

Relations with Other Nations: The Aurorans trade regularly with the Silver River Republics, but are neutral in their disputes. They are on good relations with the New Navy, which has a strong presence in the area due to its war with the Naut'yll. The Naut'yll have been at war with the Aurorans for decades, the colony being in their path of conquest. Powers in North America and Europe have no contact and have only heard vague rumors.

Imports and Exports: The Aurora Islands community was built on a large deposit of iron and has access to rich uranium and manganese deposits, as well as assorted other minerals. These form the core of its industry. The Aurorans export uranium to the Silver River Republics, which use it to fuel their robots and powered armor, as well as exporting finished submarines and hardware. The Aurorans primarily import foodstuffs, particularly luxury goods like sugar and coffee, as well as meat like chicken, beef, and pork. They also purchase advanced electronics like computers and lasers.

Baltia

A smaller community in the North Sea, Baltia has a population of only a few thousand. Nearly a quarter mile down, the colony cannot engage in much normal aquaculture, and has learned to instead herd schools of tuna and other "open range" fish. Baltian herdsman use chemical signals and electrical fields to guide the schools of fish where they desire, keeping them near the colony. Since herding such fish requires constant supervision, and takes the herdsman away from the colony for weeks at a time, Baltian herd ships are larger vessels, built to house several people for days. They are also usually armed, as sharks and other predators find the herds a ready source of food, and some will even attack the herd ships! Baltia was settled by an isolationist group from Europe, and has created an efficient corporate government, with a powerful colony director, supported by a council of advisors. Baltia has tried to discard its roots, its inhabitants viewing themselves separate from their ancestral nations, members of a new world in which old allegiances do not apply. Their culture is a hybrid of old Germany, Poland, France, and Scandinavia, as well as other European Union nations, largely replaced with new

traditions created after leaving the mainland. They speak Euro, but a particular dialect that is -10% for continental speakers to understand. Baltia is aware of the New German Republic, as well as the presence of the Splugorth in England and the tech nations in Scandinavia, but has worked hard to remain hidden from all of them, its isolationist policies prohibiting contact.

Population: 6,000 people.

Military: The colony has a small fleet of 20 combat vessels, and another 60 herd ships with limited combat ability. The colony also has a small police force of a few hundred people that can be called on for defense in an emergency. Baltia mostly relies on its location to protect it, situated as it is near the New German Republic and Scandinavia.

Relations with Other Nations: Rare. Baltia is highly isolationist and has worked to remain unknown by other nations. Baltian herd ships are occasionally witnessed by the navies of the NGR and the Scandinavian nations, but are often believed to be sensor ghosts or large creatures.

Imports and Exports: Baltia is isolationist, and has no regular imports or exports. It was built in an area of the seabed rich in minerals, which suffices for most of its needs. That which it cannot build for itself it usually obtains from salvage, scavenging from the ocean floor. In the Dark Age, before the navies of Germany and Scandinavia grew powerful, Baltia occasionally raided the coastline, and pirated ships to obtain what it needed. Since the NGR and Scandinavian nations grew to prominence, it has generally stopped piracy, which has placed in short supply many advanced goods which are needed. If an alternative supply isn't found, Baltia may relax its isolationist policies and begin limited trade, mostly for high-end electronics and medicines.

Trenchville

Trenchville was a research station right on the edge of the Marianas Trench, 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) below the surface. When the cataclysm hit, the scientists and their families disappeared, leaving only the word "Challenger" scrawled on a wall. Now it is a Cult of the Deep outpost, right next door to the Lord of the Deep itself. It now serves as a meeting point for Cultists and the minions of the Lord of the Deep, as well as a location for cult ceremonies. Tritonia and the New Navy know of the outpost's existence, but don't consider it important enough to brave the dangers of the trench. Salvage Experts and Freelance Aquanauts occasionally brave the trench to visit the facility, either to salvage Pre-Rifts technology from the habitats or investigate the rumors of a lost information database.

Population: Varies. The facility can only hold a few hundred people, but is only inhabited occasionally, usually by groups of only a few dozen at a time.

Military: None.

Relations with Other Nations: None.

Imports and Exports: None.

Aquarius II

Located 700 feet below the Caribbean near the Florida Keys, Aquarius II was one of the first undersea colonies. Originally a research colony established to study the region as well as to obtain information on long-term undersea habitation, later it was expanded to include undersea mining and oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. Oil drilling has been mostly abandoned by 109 P.A., although the oil well facilities have been expanded into full communities. The community has been mostly ignored by the Naut'yll, although there are enough dangerous creatures in the region to warrant a strong de-

fense force. The Naut'y'll have ignored the region primarily because of the numerous freshwater sinkholes in the area. Freshwater is less dense than seawater, and is less buoyant. Oceangoing ships and subs become unstable and can sink when entering a column of freshwater, which can destroy the ship. There are also subsurface gas pockets, magnetic anomalies, and frequent Ley Line Storms, all of which make navigating the region hazardous. The inhabitants of Aquarius II have become experts in navigating the region, knowing all the safe routes and shortcuts needed to get through the area without any trouble.

Population: 3,000 people in the main colony, with another 3,000 people scattered over a half dozen oilrig colonies.

Military: One *Virginia*-Class Attack Submarine (equal to the Shark-Class, **Sourcebook 4: Coalition Navy**, page 74), and a force of 20 Combat Submarines, all modified from civilian models. Every civilian sub they possess has at least minimal armament, and a 200 man militia can be called up to defend the main colony at a moment's notice. The smaller oil well colonies have at most, one or two armed submarines and can call upon only a dozen men at a time as a militia.

Relations with Other Nations: Aquarius has remained unknown to most world powers, in part due to the hazards of the region it is in. It has encountered the Coalition navy on several occasions, as well as vessels from Colombia. It has not encountered the New Navy and or any power in Europe. The Coalition has been trying to make contact with the colony, but has been unsuccessful in navigating the hazards of the area.

Imports and Exports: None. The Aquarians are nearly self-sufficient, and have few needs they cannot fulfill themselves. They supplement their diet with food obtained from the islands and mainland Florida, including the occasional dinosaur. These foraging parties are rare but popular, and provide a chance to set foot on solid land.

New Kansas

Completed by the New Navy 40 years before the beginning of the P.A. calendar, New Kansas provides much of the food supply for the New Navy, as well as serving as a forward base for missions in the North Pacific Ocean. Located 300 feet below the surface west of Midway Island, its thousands of square miles of aquaculture farms ringing the island. The facility is run by a joint civilian and military council, answering directly to the government in Refuge and Salvation bases.

Population: 7,000 people, but can hold up to 10,000 comfortably.

Military: Two squadrons (24 planes) of *Manta* Air/Sub Fighters (**Rifts® Underseas**, page 126), and a Marine detachment of 300, including 60 *Semper Fi* Powered Armor (**Rifts® Underseas**, page 118). At least one *Trident* Sub (**Rifts® Underseas**, page 127) Carrier or *Stingray* Class Attack Sub (**Rifts® Underseas**, page 132) is typically in the area at any time.

Relations with Other Nations: New Kansas is a New Navy production facility and has no direct relations with any other power.

Imports and Exports: New Kansas produces only food, and has to import everything else in from other New Navy facilities.

Habitats

Undersea communities are comprised of a cluster of interconnected Habitats, each a self-contained structure. Each habitat is generally given over to a specific purpose, be it living space, food production, mineral processing, manufacturing, storage, or other role. Because of the pressure of the deep and the caustic nature of seawater, habitats

are built tough, constructed out of strong alloys and ceramics designed to resist pressure and corrosion. The walls are usually made of multiple hulls, each several inches thick, and windows and viewports are made of dense, transparent ceramic. The Interiors are made of multiple watertight compartments to prevent a leak from flooding the entire habitat, and each habitat has a full life support and water purification system, which enables its occupants to survive even if cut off from the rest of the colony. Each habitat is also usually built out of many modular parts, making construction and repair easier, and allowing the facility to be broken down and moved if needed. The following is a short list of common habitats and colony facilities. This is not a complete list; Game Masters are encouraged to create new habitat and building types for their games.

Habitat Type 1: A geodesic dome of thick, transparent ceramic. The transparent panels have a polarized layer that can turn opaque on command. The Type 1 habitat is used primarily as agricultural or industrial centers. The dome is 1,200 feet (366 meters) across and has an M.D.C. of 10,000. The dome also has 4 interconnects, each with an airlock and 500 M.D.C.

Habitat Type 2: A spherical geodesic of thick, transparent ceramic, mounted on a circular base. Like the dome, the panels can polarize to become opaque. The type 2 habitat is generally used for living quarters and scientific laboratories. The sphere and base are both 600 feet (183 meters) across, and the total assembly is 800 feet (244 meters) tall. The sphere has an M.D.C. of 4,000, while the base has an M.D.C. of 2,000. The base also has 4 interconnects, each with an airlock and 500 M.D.C.

Habitat Type 3: A vertical cylinder 240 feet (73 meters) across and 60 feet (18.3 meters) tall usually used as housing or industrial facilities. The habitat has 500 M.D.C., and 2 interconnects, each with an airlock and 500 M.D.C.

Habitat Type 4: A horizontal cylinder 60 feet (18.3 meters) across and 240 feet (73 meters) long, usually used as industrial or agricultural facilities. The habitat has 500 M.D.C., and 2 interconnects, each with an airlock and 500 M.D.C.

Small Dry-Dock: A massive airlock facility designed to provide dry servicing of submarine vessels. The facility has two large airlocks, each able to handle vessels up to 60 feet (18.3 meters) long. The two bays can either be partially drained, allowing quick, easy access to a vessel, or completely drained, allowing full access to external systems. New vessels can also be constructed in these bays, although not easily. The dry-dock is 600 feet (183 meters) long, 300 feet (91.4 meters) wide, and 150 feet (45.7 meters) tall, with an M.D.C. of 5,000. Each of the 4 airlock doors has an M.D.C. of 2,000. It also has two interconnects.

Large Dry-Dock: Essentially the same facility as the small dry-dock, but with a single airlock and bay, able to handle vessels up to 180 feet (54.8 meters) long. Its two airlock doors each have 4,000 M.D.C.

Massive Dry-Dock: Substantially larger than the large dry-dock, this facility can handle all but the largest submarines, with a single bay able to hold vessels up to 400 feet (122 m) long. The dry-dock facility is 1,200 feet (366 meters) long, 600 feet (183 meters) wide, and 300 feet (91.4 meters) tall, with 7,500 M.D.C.

Geothermal Power Plant: Tapping into hydrothermal vents or volcanic magma sources for energy, geothermal plants are most common in communities in the deep ocean, where few other reliable sources or power are available. Geothermal plants also filter out valuable minerals and chemicals from the superheated water, storing them for use. As such, it provides not only power but resources. The size of a geothermal plant varies, but they all have an M.D.C. of 500. Generally, geothermal plants are situated well away from a colony,

as if they are damaged and the system ruptures, they can leak toxic chemicals across a large area, poisoning the region.

Current Power Station: Massive impellers generating power from ocean currents, an environmentally safe but inefficient power source. Each impeller is 90 feet (27.4 m) across, and has an M.D.C. of 50. This power system is most common for communities in shallower waters, near major oceanic currents. Even a small community will need a large number of impellers, and a large community may have several hundred.

Connector Walkways: Tubes of transparent or opaque ceramic, which link the interconnects of the habitats and modules together. Each tube has an M.D.C. of 200 per 30 foot (9 meter) section.

Life under the Sea

Life in an undersea colony is not unlike life in space. Most of your life is spent inside a habitat, in normal pressure and temperature. Care must be taken to keep habitats in good repair, because any serious damage or malfunction can leave the inhabitants in danger of being crushed, suffocated, or starved. Even a simple leak can be a danger, flooding the habitat and exposing the inhabitants to the outside pressure. As a result, damage control drills are second nature to most aquanauts, having been trained in them since childhood. When one goes outside, care must be taken to protect from the outside pressure and cold. Submersibles are ideal for some tasks because they are self-contained, but submersibles are often too large or too clumsy to perform delicate tasks, so men must sometimes go out to work directly, either in armored suits or in SCUBA gear. Armored suits and submarines both hold the occupant at normal pressure, which avoids problems of decompression, but when going outside in SCUBA, maximum diving depth is limited to 330 feet (100.5 m). An armored suit has a depth limit of 2,000 feet (610 m). The average diver has six hours of working time. Of course, there is the added time needed for decompression when using SCUBA.

All of this forces Aquanauts to live their life by very strict schedules, their days divided into shifts of work, sleep, and recreation. These schedules ensure the smooth working and survival of the colony. This is not to say that Aquanauts spend their entire life working. The schedules are created to provide plenty of free time for the person's own hobbies and family. Most colonies provide libraries, public events, and entertainment for their inhabitants. These are important because Aquanauts spend their entire life in confined spaces with many other people. Being confined with so many people can wear at a person's mind, wearing down patience and hospitality. So all efforts are made to give inhabitants the things needed to keep them mentally stable. Most Aquanauts have a pragmatist mindset. Living under the sea is filled with reminders of one's mortality and the futility of many things, which does not allow for much optimism.

Aquaculture

Aquaculture is the science of obtaining food from the sea; much like agriculture is the science of farming. An aquaculture farm does not grow grain or raise cattle, but instead grows plankton or yeast and raises fish. The microorganisms known as plankton and yeast can be cultivated in the open ocean. It naturally grows in the sea, and farming it merely requires the addition of appropriate nutrients and chemicals to encourage growth. Many plankton farms use floats and netting to restrict the spread of the plankton, keeping the massive underwater clouds of microorganisms from scattering themselves in the currents. Plankton farms also require supervision to prevent wild-life from consuming it. While a few fish here and there hardly make a dent, a single whale or basking shark can make short work of an

entire farm. Plankton is mostly photosynthetic, single-celled organisms, and while edible, is not very tasty or fulfilling. But it can be broken down into basic protein, and used to create more edible foodstuffs. It also is the food for larger fish. Fish farming takes more effort but provides a more readily consumable foodstuff. Fish farming requires fish to be raised from eggs to adulthood in large enclosures, typically netting cages, which are either fixed or free-floating. These fish can swim freely within these cages, and are mostly safe from predators, but require constant feeding. The enclosures also require regular repair, or else the fish just swim away and escape.

Undersea colonies rely on aquaculture to provide the majority of their diet. While hydroponics can provide large amounts of vegetables and grain, it takes up enormous amounts of room; space which is at a premium in an enclosed environment under the sea. Aquaculture by nature occurs in the sea, which has far more space available for such things. Even then, aquaculture requires a lot of space to provide food. For a colony of two thousand people, which is typical, you need thousands of tons of food a year. Even assuming a production rate of a few hundred tons a month, you're looking at several dozen square miles of aquaculture farms. Luckily, aquaculture farms can be managed by small work crews. Aquaculture farms can be supplemented by traditional fishing and hunting, harvesting food from the natural ecosystem. In some cases, this is more effective than farming, especially seaweed or other odd "crops." Many of these provide valuable medicine, foodstuffs, or luxury goods. In cases like Sea Otters, Turtles, and some alien species, the creatures are too large to confine, or have to migrate each year.

Unlike early aquaculture, very little in the way of whaling is done. Mostly it is because whales have proven themselves intelligent, gentle beings, and with Whale Magic becoming widespread throughout the oceans, and communication made easier with translators and magic, few humans see whales, dolphins, and orcas as potential food or threats anymore. Those who do tend to be ignorant or evil, not caring that they are killing living, intelligent beings. Most undersea colonies view whales and dolphins as majestic creatures to be left alone. A few have even struck deals with them, the colonists helping to defend the pods and the whales bringing news from far away, or helping to round up schools of fish. Even without such deals, dolphins can often be seen hanging around a colony, following subs, or even lending a hand in catching fish. Most colonists enjoy watching this behavior, and do little to discourage it.

Hydroponics

Hydroponics are the other main way of providing food under the sea. Hydroponics is the raising of plants without soil. Specifically, in nutrient-rich water. Grains and vegetables can be obtained in such a way, grown in water filled trays, their roots immersed in water that circulates and is dissolved with all the fertilizers and nutrients plants require to grow. Each tray has to be placed under a lamp to provide sufficient light, and multiple tray/light assemblies can be stacked, allowing much more to be grown in a given area than on land. Because the lights are more controllable than sunlight, the entire growing area is climate controlled, and there are few harmful bugs or diseases, hydroponic gardens can produce more than a traditional farm can. Undersea colonists also have genetically engineered crops that are dwarfs, that are smaller than land plants of the same type, but that put out the same amount of vegetables and grain. This allows more to be grown in the space available. Some have been altered to grow faster than normal, or to produce more oxygen, both useful traits. Hydroponics have a secondary role that is almost as important as food production. Plants convert carbon dioxide into oxygen, recycling and purifying the air. They also break down waste to obtain the nutrients

they require, which makes them vital in water purification. When combined with mechanical means to recycle air and water, they form a colony's life support. Because of this, each habitat usually has a small hydroponics garden, which forms part of its independent life support system.

Undersea Mining

A colony obtains the resources to build from the sea. Along the seabed are nodules or sands of magnesium, iron, nickel, titanium ore, aluminum ore, copper, gold, and many other minerals. Coral and rocks can provide material to produce ceramics. There are undersea oil and natural gas deposits that can be used to make plastics and synthetic fibers. Even the sand has a use, to be made into glass. Obtaining these materials is mostly a case of knowing where to look. Mining is often just picking up the required materials from the ocean floor. Nodules of magnesium, iron and nickel, as big as watermelons, can be found just sitting on the seabed, easily picked up by submarines. Metal-rich sands can be scooped or vacuumed up into bins for transport. Oil wells can be drilled, their product pumped back in pipes. The largest problem colonies have with mining is the depth. Most resources are hundreds or thousands of feet down. Too deep for SCUBA gear, requiring submarines or armor suited workers. Submarines are too bulky and clumsy to do all the work themselves, and armor-suited workers are the preferred method, with submarines providing backup and transport. However, suitable armored suits, basically powered armor, are not common. This limits the amount a colony can obtain. The most difficult part is making use of this bounty. Few colonies are set up for heavy industry. Most have small workshops and processors. Metals have to be smelted and forged, ceramics have to be formed, and oil has to be refined. These processes are slow in colonies, due to the limited space they have to do them. They cannot process much in any speed. Usually a colony can produce enough to handle its own needs, with a little extra to be traded away for other vital items.

The Dangers of the Depths

There are many dangers in the sea, but none are as dangerous as pressure. The human body was not designed to live at high pressure, and can react badly to it. When compressing, one cannot go from normal pressures to high pressures too quickly. Going too quickly can rupture blood vessels in the body, resulting in internal bleeding. Going from high pressure to low pressure too quickly is also dangerous. At high pressure, gas dissolves in the blood, and when the pressure drops too quickly gas bubbles form, which become lodged in the blood vessels. This is known as decompression sickness or the bends, and is identifiable by itching skin, rash, and pain in the joints. If left untreated, it can cause paralysis and death.

Typical decompression sickness: The character will be ill for 1D4 days. Penalties: -4 to strike, parry, and dodge, -8 on initiative, -15% on all skills, speed is reduced by half and lose two melee actions/attacks. Severe decompression sickness causes system shock and hemorrhaging, placing the character into a coma for 4D6 hours and possibly death, roll to save vs coma/death. If the character survives, he or she will be too weak to move; 1 melee action/attack, speed and all bonuses reduced by 85% for 1D4 days. Afterwards, the character will suffer the normal penalties for 1D6+1 days. Treatment is as simple as placing the person back under pressure and gradually bringing them back to normal pressure. Decompression sickness can be avoided by stopping for several minutes at a time every 30 feet (9.1 m) when rising to the surface, to purge the excess gas from the diver's tissues.

Even if a diver avoids illness from compression and decompression, living under pressure can cause other problems. At lower pressures a diver is in danger of Nitrogen Narcosis, or Rapture of the Deep. Nitrogen Narcosis is typified by reduced mental ability, loss of decision making abilities, vertigo, hallucination, numbness, giddiness, anxiety, depression, and/or paranoia. Those affected by Nitrogen Narcosis will behave as if drunk, out of touch with reality. At worst, a diver might become confused and dive deeper while thinking they are heading to the surface, might abandon their breathing gear thinking they can breathe without it, or might even wound themselves trying to fight nonexistent enemies. The only treatment for Nitrogen Narcosis is to remove the person from the high pressure environment. Once they have gradually returned to a lower pressure environment, the effects disappear. Nitrogen Narcosis is most common below 100 feet (30.5 m), and every diver is affected by it to some degree, although for most it has next to no effect if properly trained. At really high pressures, such as those below 500 feet (152 m), Nitrogen Narcosis becomes much more prevalent, which is why helium-based breathing mixtures like trimix are used. However, at high pressures using helium-based mixtures, divers are in danger of HPNS, High Pressure Nervous Syndrome. HPNS is typified by tremors, typically in the hands at first, followed by blurred vision, reduced mental ability and dizziness. (Characters are -2 to strike, parry and dodge and -10% to all skills.) Treatment for HPNS is the same as Nitrogen Narcosis, removal of the person to a lower pressure environment. Because HPNS occurs at high pressure, this can be dangerous, as it requires a long decompression period, during which the person might inflict harm on themselves, or any others with them.

Equipment

The undersea communities produce most equipment and gear they require themselves, mostly based on pre-Rifts designs preserved down through the three centuries since the cataclysm. The colonies usually don't have much surplus gear for trade or sale, but occasionally will give away gear in exchange for important items. However, most colonies are more than willing to perform repairs, although outsiders will usually need to barter a deal to pay for them.

SCUBA Gear

SCUBA gear is fairly common in seagoing nations, and is fairly inexpensive compared to body armor and weaponry. A full set of SCUBA gear includes one or more tanks, a mask or helmet, a regulator, a buoyancy compensator, fins, a snorkel, and a wetsuit. At minimum, a tank, a mask, a snorkel, a regulator and fins are required. A tank is typically filled with normal compressed air, about an hour's worth stored at 3,000 psi (pounds per square inch). Such tanks are good down to 200 feet (61 m), although care must be taken to avoid decompression sickness or "the Bends." Below 200 feet, special air mixtures which replace nitrogen with Helium are required, which allow a human being to dive as deep as 2,000 feet (610 m) in an armored suit, although most tanks would run out of air long before such depths can be reached. Trimix, a mixture of helium, oxygen, and nitrogen, is the most popular. Trimix has to be tailored to the depths it is intended to be used at; the deeper the depths, the lower the percentage of oxygen. Too much oxygen at lower depths can be fatal. (Because helium is lighter than nitrogen, a Trimix tank can carry twice as much usable air, or 2 hours' worth.)

Air Tank: 100 to 400 credits each on the open market. Tanks are usually made of steel, although aluminum or carbon fiber tanks are available. All tanks come with a pressure gauge built in, to indicate

how full they are. A charge of compressed air runs about 50 credits, while Trimix is rarer, running about 700 credits.

Regulator: 150 to 500 credits. The regulator is the most important part of the setup, providing air from the tanks with each breath, automatically adjusting the amount of air to accommodate the pressure. Part of the regulator setup is a pressure gauge, telling the user exactly how much air is remaining.

Rebreather: 3,000 to 5,000 credits. A rebreather is a closed circuit breathing system that captures the diver's exhaled air, removes the carbon dioxide from it, and recycles it back to be used again, thus extending the overall oxygen supply. A rebreather can extend the air supply by 5x, and is almost mandatory for deep dives, or for long-duration dives like salvaging or mining.

Mask: 20 to 150 credits. A diving mask protects the face from the water, and includes corrective lenses to adjust for viewing through liquid.

Helmet: 500 to 1,000 credits. Instead of a simple mask, a full head-enclosing helmet can be used, which allows for the divers to communicate, as well as keeping the head relatively dry. Full helmets are popular with salvagers and workmen.

Buoyancy Compensator: 150 to 500 credits. A buoyancy compensator is a vest with built-in weight pockets and inflatable bladders that allow the diver to adjust his mass to become neutrally buoyant in the water. The inflatable bladders are fed from the diver's air supply, and if completely full, make the diver positively buoyant, making him slowly rise to the surface.

Snorkel: 15 to 50 credits. A snorkel is important when working near the surface, allowing the diver to conserve air by swimming along the surface.

Fins: 30 to 150 credits. Fins allow the diver to swim more easily, with a simple kicking motion allowing forward travel.

Wetsuit: 150 to 500 credits. A wetsuit does little to protect a diver from cuts or abrasions, although it helps some. A wetsuit primarily keeps the diver from freezing in the icy waters of the deep.

Anti-Shark Armor: 5,000 credits. The deep is filled with dangerous creatures that would love to take a bite out of a diver. Anti-Shark Armor is a set of armor plates for the chest, arms and legs that provide some protection against attack. (Main Body 25 M.D.C., Arms 10 M.D.C. each, Legs 15 M.D.C. each, weight 5 pounds/2.25 kg, no penalty to Physical skills.)

Diver's Light: 100 to 500 credits. A simple flashlight built to withstand high pressures, down to 2,000 feet (610 m). Ranges in size from a small handheld torch to a large shoulder-mounted lamp. Most have a 6 hour battery.

Harpoon Rifle

There are many versions of the Harpoon rifle, but they all have roughly the same stats. Harpoon rifle can fire simple spears, useful for fishing or self defense, or one of several specialized spear types, including trackers and explosive heads. The device is gas powered, using a tank of compressed air to propel the spears.

Weight: 6 pounds (2.7 kg).

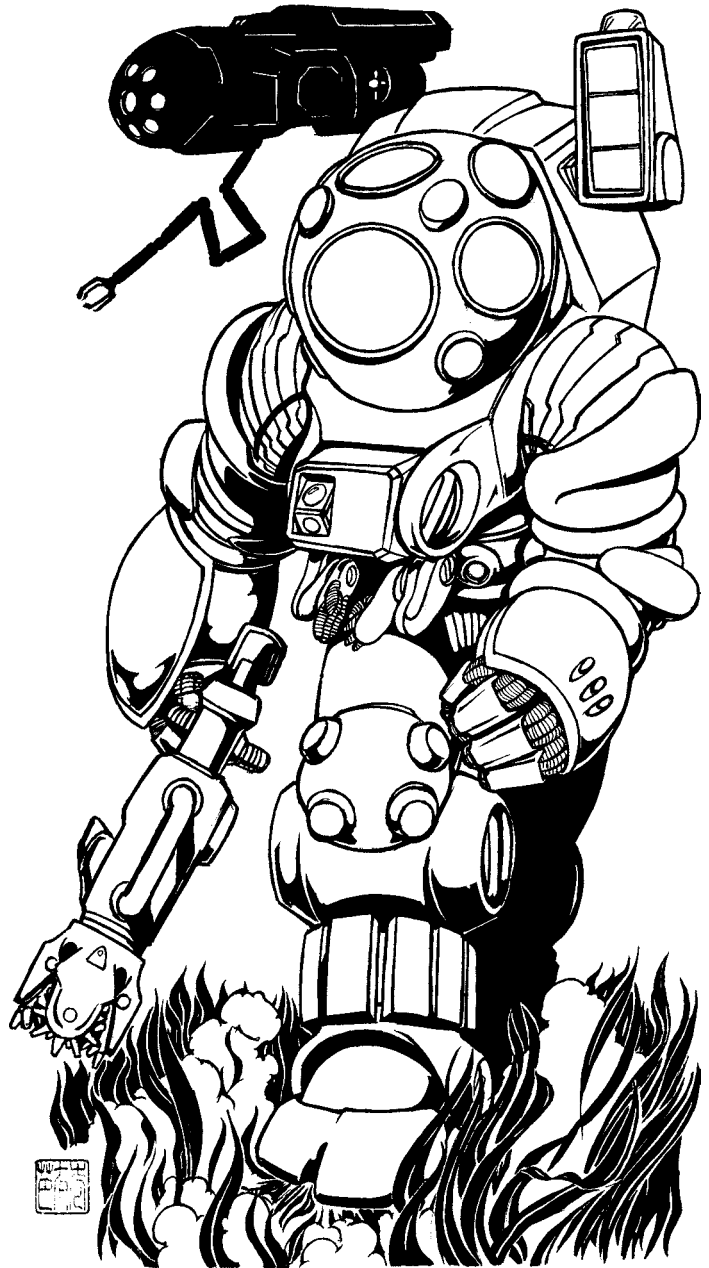
Damage: Standard Spear – 2D6 S.D., Explosive Head – 3D6 M.D., Radio Trackers – 2D6 S.D. as a weapon. (The Radio Tracker has a 12 hour battery life.)

Rate of Fire: Single shot.

Range: 250 feet (76 m).

Payload: One or two harpoons per Rifle. The compressed air tank is good for 50 shots. A quiver holds 12 harpoons.

Black Market Price: 5,000 credits for the rifle, 50 credits for a standard spear, 500 credits for a Tracker spear, and 750 credits for an explosive head.



Diving Hard Suit

A Diving Hard suit is a bulky, rigid armored suit that is used in deep dives. It's like a spacesuit, holding its occupant at a comfortable sea level pressure and room temperature despite the cold and pressure experienced in the deep. A diving hard suit is a completely self-contained system, with its own life support, propulsion, and power supply. A hard suit does not have mechanical augmentation of the wearer's strength like a suit of power armor, although it is built much the same way. A pair of pump jet propulsors are located above the shoulders, and can swivel to direct thrust in any direction, providing excellent maneuverability.

Model Type: DSES-3

Class: Deep Submergence Environmental System.

Crew: One.

M.D.C. by Location:

Head – 50

Arms (2) – 50 each

Legs (2) – 60 each

Backpack – 80

Pump Jets (2) – 30 each

Main Body – 100

Speed:**Submerged:** 5 knots (5.75 mph/9.2 km).**Maximum Depth:** 3 miles (4.8 km).**Range:** 30 hours' worth of air.**Statistical Data:****Height:** 8 feet (2.4 m).**Width:** 4 feet (1.2 m).**Length:** 6 feet (1.8 m).**Weight:** 1,000 pounds (450 kg).**Cargo:** None.**Power System:** Electrical, with a 24 hour life span.**Black Market Cost:** 400,000 credits.

Civilian Submarines

Small civilian submarines form the backbone of undersea colonization. SCUBA gear and powered armor is too confining for extended tasks, and cannot traverse long distances. Many tasks also take a person well below the depths where normal SCUBA gear can function, where a small submersible is the only efficient option. There are a multitude of small submersibles in use, far more than can be printed here. Instead, this article provides a simple system by which game masters and players can design their own submersibles, using a modular system. Sub design is fairly standardized; each ship is comprised of a hull and several modules. The hull contains the ballast tanks, propulsion system, and primary power system for the vessel. A hull can either surround the modules, or more commonly, is a "sled" with modules mounted above or below. Each module is a sphere 12 feet (3.7 meters) wide, connected together. Modules are usually arranged linearly, with the control module in the bow, but some vessels might use a triangular or square arrangement. Each module option is intended for a different task, such as habitation, cargo, research, weapons, and others. This allows a ship to be designed for specific purposes. Additional equipment can be mounted to the hull, which can make a ship more suited to specific tasks, but reduces the ship's speed.

1. Hulls: There are three different hull sizes in use. Speeders, Trucks, and Semis. Speeders are small, usually combat craft or short-range transports. They are faster and more nimble than bigger subs. Trucks are larger, and are the most common, with space to mount several specialized modules. Semis are the largest, and usually serve as long-range cargo or transport craft, trading speed for capacity. Some Semis are also outfitted as deep-sea research vessels, and others as roving habitats.

A Speeder hull has 300 M.D.C., a Truck hull has 400 M.D.C., and a Semi Hull has 500 M.D.C. Depletion of this M.D.C. destroys the hull, leaving the modules with no propulsion, and only backup power. Hulls come with a pump jet propulsion system that has 100 M.D.C. A Speeder hull can reach 40 knots (46.3 mph/74 km per hour), a Truck hull can reach speeds of 35 knots (40.5 mph/65 km per hour), and a Semi can reach speeds of up to 30 knots (35 mph/56 km per hour). All three have a battery system capable of providing power for up to 7 days, and usually have a solar panel to recharge the batteries on the surface. Depth Tolerance is 2 miles (3.2 km). Each hull is a different mass and can carry different numbers of modules. A Speeder hull is 2 tons and can carry 3 modules, a Truck is 3 tons and can carry 4 modules, and a Semi is 4 tons and can carry 5 modules.

2. Modules: Each module has an M.D.C. of 150, and at least one module per sub will have an airlock with 40 M.D.C. Each module in a sub will be connected to another, separated by water tight doors. Double-sized modules exist, typically tubular in design. They each

have twice the contents and M.D.C. A module is 1 ton each, 2 tons for double-sized modules.

Control Module: The sub's "cockpit," with two seats, controls, sensor systems, and a small cargo space for personal and survival gear. The control module usually has a large window for the pilots to view out of when piloting the ship.

Passenger Module: This module is equipped with seats and additional life support for up to 4 additional people in cramped conditions, as well as a small airlock (40 M.D.C.).

Living Module: Life support and living space for 2 people, including a small refrigerator and cooking unit, 2 bunks, first aid kit, storage bins and entertainment system.

Lab Module: Contains a complete miniature lab. Systems are equivalent to the Portable Laboratory, Portable Bio-scan and Bio-Lab, Wilk's PC-2020 Field Identifier, and Portable Scan Dihilator. Also has a small freezer, storage bins, and a small aquarium for preserving samples.

Cargo Module: A pressurized, air-conditioned cargo hold with room for up to a half ton of cargo, stored in 4 bins.

Flatbed: A large, unpressurized cargo bay, 24 feet (7.3 m) long by 12 feet (3.7 m) wide. The flatbed is metal meshwork, with numerous tie-downs and fasteners with which to secure cargo. It can carry up to 1 ton of cargo.

Power Plant: Contains a small nuclear power plant with a life span of 1 year. (Destruction of this module will scatter radioactive uranium fuel pellets across the ocean floor.)

Weapons Module: A self-contained module containing four light torpedo tubes. (Rate of Fire: Singly or in volleys of 2, 3 or 4. Payload: 40 Light Torpedoes.)

3. Extra Equipment and Upgrades: This additional gear can be used to customize the sub for specific roles, typically at the expense of performance. For each system or upgrade, reduce the sub's top speed by 2 knots (2.3 mph/3.68 km). Equipment and upgrades may be taken multiple times. Each upgrade adds a tenth of a ton to the total mass of the vessel.

Cargo Rack: An unpressurized, metal mesh cargo bin mounted on the outside of the sub's hull. Can be used to hold tools or samples. 2 feet (0.6 m) long by 1 foot (0.3 m) wide by 2 feet (0.6 m) deep. Does not reduce speed.

Small Manipulators: a pair of light mechanical arms used to manipulate objects outside the sub. Typically mounted below the cockpit and controlled from the cockpit. 10 M.D.C. each.

Large Manipulator: A heavy mechanical arm used to manipulate objects outside the sub. Typically mounted below the cockpit and controlled from the cockpit. 30 M.D.C.

Blue-Green Laser: Intended for self defense, essentially a stripped-down Laser Rifle. (3D6 M.D., 4,000 foot/1,219 m range, Rate of Fire: Standard, 80 shots per power pack.) 40 M.D.C.

Torpedo Rack: A set of hardpoints for mounting torpedoes, providing offensive ability. Each rack can carry 6 mini-torpedoes or 3 light torpedoes. (Rate of Fire: Single, or in volleys of two or three.) 40 M.D.C.

Extra Battery: Provides additional power and life support, extending the period the sub can be operated. Each extra battery extends the period by 3 days.

Engine Enhancement: Equips the sub with a more powerful engine, improving speed. Increase the top speed of the sub by 5 knots (5.75 mph/9.2 km).

Structural Enhancement: Additional reinforcement that allows the sub to dive deeper and resist more damage. Increase diving depth by 0.5 miles (800 m), and increase the M.D.C. of all components by 10%.

4. Calculate Costs: The cost of a submarine will vary depending on the modules and gear added.

Hull Type:

Speeder – 500,000 credits.

Truck – 1,000,000 credits.

Semi – 1,500,000 credits.

Modules: Double-sized modules cost 2x these amounts.

Control Module – 200,000 credits.

Passenger Module – 50,000 credits.

Living Module – 100,000 credits.

Lab Module – 200,000 credits.

Cargo Module – 25,000 credits.

Flatbed Module – 10,000 credits.

Power Plant Module – 750,000 credits (rare).

Weapon Module – 250,000 credits plus cost of torpedoes (typically 4,000 credits each).

Equipment and Upgrades:

Cargo Rack – 50 credits.

Small Manipulators – 20,000 credits.

Large Manipulator – 30,000 credits.

Blue-Green Laser – 7,000 credits.

Torpedo Rack – 25,000 credits plus cost of torpedoes (typically 2,000 credits for mini-torpedoes or 4,000 credits for light torpedoes).

Extra Battery – 150,000 credits.

Engine Enhancement – 250,000 credits.

Structural Enhancement – 150,000 credits.

5. General Systems and Sensors: All Civilian subs have the following equipment:

a. Life Support for up to 10 days: The air supply is continuously recycled and reprocessed, supplemented by extraction of oxygen from seawater. In an emergency, the air supply can be replenished by surfacing and venting the stale air. The water supply is also continuously reprocessed and recycled, and is supplemented by purification of seawater.

b. Sonar: Range 10 miles (16 km) and can track and identify up to 20 targets. Passive Sonar systems have a range of 50 miles (80 km) to detect active sonar, ships and large creatures.

c. External Lights: Range 200 feet (61 meters).

d. Radio: Range 100 miles (160 km). The radio may only be used when surfaced, because seawater blocks most radio signals.

e. Audio Communications System: Essentially a powerful speaker that broadcasts the user's voice via the sonar system. Range is roughly 5 miles (8 km). Can be detected by sonar, but not understood, well beyond that.

Stinger-Class Fighter Submarine

The standard military submarine of the Auroran Militia. Fast and well armed, the Stinger class has shown remarkable effectiveness in conflicts with the Naut'yll and other enemies.

Model Type: Stinger-Class Fighter Sub.

Class: AS-023

Crew: 2

M.D.C. by Location:

*Hull/Main Body – 360

**Reinforced Pilot Compartment – 180

**Living Module – 180

**Weapons Module – 180

Airlock – 40

***Pump Jet – 100

Blue-Green Lasers (2) – 40 each

* Depleting the M.D.C. of the main body destroys the sub's structural integrity, causing it to sink. If it sinks below the maximum depth, it will be crushed.

** Depleting the M.D.C. of the modules causes them to flood, and at great depths, causing them to collapse, crushing the pilot.

*** Destroying the pump jet leaves the sub dead in the water, unable to move. It can use its ballast tanks to sink or float towards the surface, but is otherwise immobile.

Speed:

Submerged/Surfaced: 44 knots (51 mph/81.5 km).

Maximum Depth: 3 miles (4.8 km).

Range: 10 days' worth of air and supplies.

Statistical Data:

Height: 15 feet (4.6 m).

Width: 12 feet (3.7 m).

Length: 50 feet (15.2 m).

Weight: 6 tons.

Cargo: Minimal. Room for the crew's gear and supplies.

Power System: Electrical, with a 7 day life span. A small solar panel on top of the vessel can be used to recharge the batteries at a rate of one day of charge every 12 hours.

Black Market Cost: 1,860,000 credits without torpedoes. 1,900,000 credits fully armed.

Weapon Systems:

1. Blue Green Lasers (2).

Mega-Damage: 3D6 M.D. single blast, or a twin linked blast of 6D6 M.D.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the pilot's hand to hand attacks.

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

Payload: 80 shots per laser (160 total).

2. Torpedo Tubes (4).

Mega-Damage: 2D4x10 M.D.

Rate of Fire: Singly or in volleys of two, three or four.

Maximum Range: 5 miles (8 km).

Payload: 40 Light Torpedoes.

Tritonian Wanderer

Produced by Tritonia for general sale, the Wanderer class can be likened to an underwater mobile home, equipped to house several people for long periods. It is popular with explorers and salvagers for its low price and decent accommodations, including an oversized airlock able to fit two divers.

Model Type: Civilian General Duty Submersible.

Class: CGDS-02

Crew: Can be operated by a single person, but can house 4 people.

M.D.C. by Location:

*Hull/Main Body – 400

**Reinforced Control Module – 150

**Living Module – 300

**Cargo Module – 150

***Pump Jet – 100

Airlock – 40

Manipulators (2) – 10 each

Blue-Green Laser – 40

Torpedo Rack – 40

* Depleting the M.D.C. of the main body destroys the sub's structural integrity, causing it to sink. If it sinks below the maximum depth, it will be crushed.

** Depleting the M.D.C. of a module causes it to flood, and at great depths, causes it to collapse, crushing the occupant(s).

*** Destroying the pump jet leaves the sub dead in the water, unable to move. It can use its ballast tanks to sink or float towards the surface, but is otherwise immobile.

Speed:

Submerged/Surfaced: 25 knots (28.75 mph/46 km).

Maximum Depth: 2 miles (3.2 km).

Range: 10 days' worth of air and supplies.

Statistical Data:

Height: 15 feet (4.6).

Width: 12 feet (3.7).

Length: 65 feet (19.8).

Displacement: 7.5 tons.

Cargo: 1,000 pounds (450 kg).

Power System: Electric, with a 7 day battery. A small solar panel on top of the vessel can be used to recharge the batteries at a rate of one day of charge every 12 hours.

Market Cost: 1.5 million credits.

Weapon Systems:

1. Blue Green Laser.

Mega-Damage: 3D6 M.D. single blast.

Rate of Fire: Equal to the pilot's hand to hand attacks.

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

Payload: 80 shots per power pack.

2. Torpedo Rack.

Mega-Damage: Mini-Torpedo 1D6x10 M.D., Light Torpedo 2D4x10 M.D.

Rate of Fire: Singly or in volleys of two or three.

Maximum Range: Mini Torpedo 1 mile (1.6 km), Light Torpedo 5 miles (8 km).

Payload: 6 Mini-Torpedoes, or 3 Light Torpedoes.

Special Systems:

Manipulator Arms: Controlled from the cockpit, these small mechanical arms allow the crew inside to manipulate objects outside the sub. Each arm has a Robotic P.S. of 10.

Conventional Torpedoes

The typical torpedo in use by military forces is built using Golden Age super-cavitation technology. They are rocket powered undersea missiles that create a pocket of air around themselves to allow travel at high speeds. The weapons cannot maneuver well and cannot carry more than a rudimentary guidance system due to the interference from the bubble, making them inaccurate over long distances. They also require special manufacturing technologies the undersea communities lack. Instead, the communities make use of torpedoes based on Twentieth Century designs, which have a simple electrical or chemical powered impellor for propulsion. These designs are much slower than the rocket-powered torpedoes of the military, but make up for it by being more maneuverable and carrying a powerful guidance system, including an independent sonar system that allows the torpedo to track a target on its own. Some models intended for use on submarines also include a spool of fiber-optic wire that can be used to link the weapon back to the firing submarine, allowing the submarine to combine its own more powerful sensor system with the weapon's own to increase accuracy further.

Bonuses/Penalties: Torpedoes are +3 to strike at all ranges. Wire-guided torpedoes gain an additional +2 to strike as long as they remain connected to the firing submarine, and can benefit from the weapon system bonuses of the firing unit. If a submarine exceeds 10 mph (16 km) it must cut the wires. Wire guidance cannot be used from aircraft or surface vessels.

Speed: All conventional torpedoes travel at roughly the same speed of 60 mph (96 km).

M.D.C. of Torpedoes: Mini-Torpedo: 10 M.D.C., Light: 15 M.D.C., Medium: 30 M.D.C., Heavy: 50 M.D.C. Depleting the M.D.C. will cause the torpedo to detonate the instant it reaches zero M.D.C. Detonating one has a 33% chance of detonating the rest in a volley.

Maximum Depth: Most torpedoes can operate at depths of up to 3 miles (4.8 km). Any deeper and they are crushed and sink.

Cost and Mega-Damage:

Mini Torpedo: 1D6x10 M.D. (HE or Plasma). Range: One mile (1.6 km) Cost: 2,000 credits each.

Light Torpedo: 2D4x10 M.D. (HE) or 1D6x10 M.D. (Plasma). Range: 5 miles (8 km). Cost: 4,000 credits each.

Medium Torpedo: 3D4x10 M.D. (HE or Plasma). Range: 10 miles (16 km). Cost: 7,000 credits each.

Heavy Torpedo: 4D6x10 M.D. (HE or Plasma). Range: 20 miles (32 km). Cost: 12,000 credits each.

Freelance Aquanaut O.C.C.

Not every Aquanaut finds living in a colony to their liking. Some find the regimented life under the sea too limiting, the monotony too boring. Those who have a chance to leave often take it, and try to find their way in the outside world. Most choose to put their skills to good use. They make their living driving submarines, as traders, salvagers, explorers, or even pirates. They seek out jobs that allow them to experience new things and meet new people, to travel to new coasts and seas. They can be found in every ocean, and can be seen in most ports. Their services rarely come cheap, but they are some of the best submariners for hire.

A Freelance Aquanaut is sort of a cross between a Vagabond and an Operator. They are skilled in operating submersible craft, diving, and undersea navigation, but spend their lives roaming the ocean, rarely staying in one place for long. They live gregariously, spending money freely when at port, because they spend so much time at sea. They try to avoid owing debts to anyone, and tend to loathe the idea of spending their life in service to others. This tends to make them many enemies, particularly in restrictive societies like the Coalition that discourage freedom and liberty.

Freelance Aquanaut O.C.C. Stats

Alignment: Any.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 10, and a high M.E. is recommended.

Racial Restrictions: None.

O.C.C. Skills:

Language: Native Tongue at 98%.

Language: Other (+20%)

Literacy: Native Language (+20%)

Radio: Basic (+10%)

Sensory Equipment (+10%)

Basic Electronics (+20%)

Basic Mechanics (+10%)

Swimming (+10%)

SCUBA

Military: Submersibles (+10%)

Navigation (+10%)

Mathematics: Basic (+5%)

Computer Operation (+5%)

W.P. Harpoon & Spear Gun

Hand to Hand: Basic. Can be upgraded to Expert at the expense of one O.C.C. Related Skill.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select 8 other skills, and 1 more at levels 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 14. All new skills start at level 1 proficiency.
Communications: Any (+5%).
Cowboys: None.
Domestic: Any.
Electrical: Any except Electricity Generation and Robot Electronics (+5%).
Espionage: Detect Ambush, Detect Concealment, Escape Artist, and Intelligence only.
Horsemanship: None.
Mechanical: Mechanical Engineer and Vehicle Armorer only (+5%).
Medical: First Aid, Paramedic, Veterinary Medicine only.
Military: Demolitions, Demolitions Disposal, Underwater Demolitions, and Ship to Ship Combat only.
Physical: Any except Forced March and Gymnastics.
Pilot: Any except military vehicles.
Pilot Related: Weapon Systems.
Rogue: Cardsharp, Pick Pockets, and Pick Locks only.
Science: Any except Artificial Intelligence.

Technical: Any.
W.P.: Any.
Wilderness: None.

Secondary Skills: Select 4 skills from the Secondary Skills List, plus an additional 2 at levels 4, 8, 12 and 15. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

Standard Equipment: Civilian mini-sub, typically a Speeder or Truck type equipped for extended living. A suit of medium M.D.C. body armor, SCUBA gear, Blue-Green laser rifle, 1D4+2 E-Clips, S.D.C. pistol with 1D4 clips of ammunition, harpoon gun with 1D4+2 harpoons, utility jumpsuit, several sets of clothing, survival knife, utility belt, flashlight, 2D6 flares, 2-3 weeks of food, and 1D4x1000 credits worth of black market goods.

Money: 1D4x100 credits. The Aquanaut spends long periods away from civilization, with little need for money, and tends to spend freely to purchase supplies and to obtain trade goods for barter.

Cybernetic Implants: None at start, but might obtain cybernetics, or even bionics over time. Will usually only obtain cybernetics for medical reasons.

Experience Table: Same as the Operator O.C.C.

Frost MagicTM

“Official” Source material for The Palladium Fantasy RPG®, and suitable for use in Rifts®, Heroes Unlimited™ and most other settings where magic is used.

By H. Nathan Bingham and Kevin Siembieda

Conversion Note: When used in a Mega-Damage setting such as Rifts®, damage should be converted, point-for-point, to M.D. or M.D.C. For example, if a spell does 3D6 S.D.C./Hit Point damage, it would do 3D6 M.D. in a Mega-Damage setting.

Frost Magic, also known as Winter Magic and Cold Magic, is a specialized area of the mystic arts that focuses on spells that utilize and manipulate cold, ice and snow. Many believe or assume it originates from the Great Northern Wilderness. This is incorrect. Frost Magic as a separate and distinct mystic discipline was born during the **Age of a Thousand Magicks**. A time when magic knowledge was expansive, varied and all manner of mystical specialization took place. While many of the spells from that bygone age have been lost and forgotten, others have survived. However, many are practiced in secret or are exclusive to specific cults, clans and people operating in the shadows. Such magicks have always existed, but are little known and seldom acknowledged. Frost Magic is a good example of one of the most benign and least strange of the ancient magicks. And as the people of the North grow into greater and greater prominence, old secrets and shadowy practices are starting to become known. In the case of Frost Magic, it has been quietly and slowly becoming more openly accepted and acknowledged.

Some Frost Magic invocations have been known to and used by Water Warlocks for ages without anyone ever taking notice. And others have been known Wizard invocations for as long as anyone can remember. What is new are the number of wizards who specialize in Frost Magic – the ones who actually call themselves *Frost Mages* or *Winter Mages* – openly acknowledging their speciality and calling themselves by that name. What is also new is the number of would-be mages amongst the Wolfen who are, only recently, embracing Frost Magic with considerable enthusiasm. Considering

their environment, it makes sense that Wolfen (though not the other canine people) would find cold-based magic very appealing.

Seldom acknowledged by humans is the fact that mages, witches and shamans amongst certain clans of the monster races, particularly Orcs, Ogres and Trolls in the North and the Old Kingdoms, as well as among certain cults in the Lands of the South Winds, and presumably in the Land of the Damned, all practice many of the ancient and dark magicks from the past. It’s just that their numbers are comparatively few and such sages within the monster communities are secretive and amongst the first to be targeted and slain by “civilized” heroes and warriors.

Frost Mage O.C.C.

The Frost Mage is, in effect, a Wizard. As such, he has all the knowledge and O.C.C. bonuses and abilities of **the Wizard**, including P.P.E., scroll conversion and learning new spell invocations. (See page 104 of **The Palladium Fantasy RPG®, Second Edition**.)

What makes the Frost Mage different are the spells he learns. The Winter Mage is an expert and specialist in *cold-based magic*. If it involves cold, frost, snow or ice, this Wizard is likely to know it. Those who practice Frost Magic hunt for such wonderful and rare spells wherever they can find them. They take great pride in the fact they are specialists in cold and snow, and their general studies include knowledge about the North, the Great Ice Shelf, creatures of the North, including the Iceborn, and how to survive in and travel through cold climates and frozen wastelands. Of course, they supplement their knowledge with other Wizard spells, but 60-70% of their spells will be Frost Magic and related.



O.C.C. Special Abilities:

1. Initial Spells of the Frost Mage: Decipher Magic (4), Ignite Fire (6), Globe of Daylight, Sense Magic (4), Tongues (12) and the following Frost Magic spells: Freeze Water (6), Frost (4), Frost Blind (4), and Resist Cold (8). Plus select a total of four additional Frost Magic spells from Levels 1-3.

2. Additional Spells: Assume that at the beginning of each new level of experience the Frost Mage learns one new Winter Magic spell. Select one from any level up to the character's own level of experience (i.e. a 3rd level character can select one Frost Magic spell from either Frost Spells Level 1 or 2, or 3. At fourth level of experience he can select that one spell from Levels 1-4).

3. Learning New Spells: As usual, the wizard must acquire their new spells through learning, purchasing, or acquired as usual (adventuring, stealing, blackmailing, etc.).

4. Snow Skills: This should be considered an area of specialty within two existing skills – Lore: Demons and Monsters and Wilderness Survival.

In the case of **Lore: Demons and Monsters**, the Frost Mage gets a +30% bonus (in addition to the one listed under the *O.C.C. Skills*, below), but that +30% applies only to knowledge about demons and monsters of the North (Bearmen, the canine races, the Iceborn, Ice Dragons, Ice Serpents, Eoten myths, Eoten deities, etc.), and beings that are made of, or use, snow, ice, cold and cold-based magic.

In the case of **Wilderness Survival**, the Winter Mage gets an additional +20% and has a keen understanding of cold and cold environments, snow and related weather, and how to survive in it. This includes how to ice fish, ski, use snowshoes and sleds (all three have a base skill of 70% +2% per level of experience), travel through snow and on ice, build igloos and other winter shelters, and survival in arctic conditions.

Note: The rest is all the same as the Wizard O.C.C.

Frost Mage O.C.C.

Also known as the Winter Mage and Snow Wizard.

Alignment: Any.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. and P.E. of 10 or higher is strongly recommended.

Racial Restrictions: None. However, this area of speciality magic has only recently been rekindled, mainly in the North, where an increasing number of *humans*, *Ogres* and *Wolfen* are taking up Frost Magic. That said, Frost Mages (*Wolfen* prefer “Winter Mage” because they think it sounds more noble and intimidating), remain very uncommon and virtually non-existent South of the Old Kingdom.

O.C.C. Skills:

Fishing (+5%)

Language: Native Tongue at 95%

Language and literate in Northern 90%.

Language: *Wolfen* (+30%)

Language: One of choice (+20%).

Land Navigation (+10%)

Literacy: Elven (+20%)

Lore: Demon and Monster (+10%)

Lore: Magic (+10%)

Mathematics: Basic (+20%)

Wilderness Survival (+20%)

W.P.: One of choice.

Hand to Hand: Basic can be selected at the cost of one *O.C.C. Related Skill*; Hand to Hand: Expert for two.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select six other skills at level one, and select one additional at levels 3, 6, 9 and 12. All new skills start at first level proficiency and gain the bonuses in the parenthesis.

Communications: Any (+5%).

Domestic: Any (+10%).

Espionage: Intelligence and Tracking only (+5%).

Horsemanship: General or Exotic only.

Medical: Any.

Military: None.

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

Rogue: None.

Science: Any (+10%).

Technical: Any (+5%).

W.P.: Any, except Large Axes, Pole Arms and Lance.

Wilderness: Any (+6%).

Secondary Skills: The character gets to select three Secondary skills from those listed. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in the parentheses. At levels 2, 5, 8, 11, and 15, the character can pick one new Secondary Skill. All the Secondary Skills start at level one proficiency.

Standard Equipment: A set of winter/arctic clothing, a heavy coat, cape or cloak with hood, earmuffs, fur hat, fur-lined gloves, fur-lined mittens, scarf, one pair of snowshoes, knapsack, backpack, bedroll, 2 blankets, 4 small sacks, one large sack, fishing line and 1D4+1 hooks, a 100 page notebook, 1D6+1 pencils/sticks of graphite, 1D4 sticks of charcoal (black), 20 feet (6.1 m) of rope, 1D4+4 spikes, small mallet, 1D4 sticks of chalk (white), tinder-box, a lantern, a water skin, a small mirror, and a wooden cross.

Armor: Starts with soft leather (A.R. 10, S.D.C. 20).

Weapons: A small knife (1D4 damage), a survival knife (1D6 damage), small hand axe (1D4 damage), and one weapon that matches the character's W.P. Silver and magic weapons as well as additional equipment must be acquired over time.

Money: Starts with 1D4x100 in gold. Additional money must be earned.

Experience Table: Same as the Wizard O.C.C.

Frost Magic Spells

Note: For your convenience, we have included spell descriptions reprinted from **Library of Bletherad™** and **Northern Hinterlands™** sourcebooks. Some Warlock spells are included, but not all ice and snow Elemental spells, such as Wall of Ice, are available to the Frost Mage.

Level One

Create Frozen Snowballs (4)
Create Snowballs (2)
Flash Freeze (4)
Frost (4)
Frost Freeze (3)

Level Two

Biting Frost (4)
Blow Snow (6)
Freeze Water/Liquid (6)
Frost Blinded (4)
Frost Swirling Cloud (5)
Ice Throwing Dagger (5)
Shield from Light (4)

Level Three

Cold Snap (5)
Dig Through Snow (8)
Frost Armor (10)
Frostbite (7)
Frostfists (6)
Ice Bolt (8)
Melt Snow (5)
Mend Ice (6)
Orb of Cold (8)

Level Four

Cold Glare (10)
Ice Shield (10)
Melt Ice (8)
Sculpt Ice (8)
Snow Burrow (8)
Snow Dive (10)

Level Five

Freeze Limb (10)
Frost Breath (15)
Ice Slide (15)
Skate on Ice (8)
Snow Drift (10)
Snow Search (12)
Snow Walking (8)

Level Six

Cure Frostbite (22)
Frostblade (15)
Ice (15)
Ice Shard Blast (15)
Igloo (20)
Resist Cold (12)
Snow Running (15)
Wave of Frost (18)

Level Seven

Chill Blood (20)
Deep Freeze/Suspended Animation (25)
Frostfire (30)
Iceball (15)
Heart of Ice, Heart of Fire (25)
Ride Ice Floe (24)
Scale Ice (12)

Level Eight

Avalanche Survival (30)
Blizzard Wall (45)
Snow (30)
Snowblind (35)
Snow Swimming (20)

Level Nine

Avalanche (60)
Ride Avalanche (24 pt)
Snow Trap (35)
Summon Snowstorm (50 or 100)

Level Ten

Frost Warriors (100)

Level Eleven

Ice Storm (200)
Stop Avalanche (250)

Level One

Create Frozen Snowballs

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m), thrown.

Damage: 1D4 S.D.C. +1 damage at experience levels 3, 5, 7, 10, 13 and 15.

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: Dodge.

P.P.E.: Four

Getting struck by an icy snow ball hurts and inflicts damage, but is not likely to ever be lethal. It can also be used to create a distraction. The spell caster can create one ice ball for every TWO levels of experience, and ice balls can be created even in warm climates where there is no snow.

Create Snowballs

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m), thrown.

Damage: None, just wet and messy.

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: Dodge.

P.P.E.: Two

This spell is used to distract or irritate someone, or to have a bit of playful fun; i.e. snowball fights. The spell caster can create one snowball per level of experience, and snowballs can be created even in warm climates where there is no snow.

Flash Freeze

Range: Touch.

Duration: Instant result; until it is defrosted.

Damage: 2D4 S.D.C. if torn away.

Limitations: 20 pounds (9 kg) per level of the spell caster and only works on inanimate items, not the living.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Four

By merely touching a nonliving object, the mage can instantly freeze it. The object/item stays frozen until it is put in conditions where it can be defrosted via room temperature or slow heating. This is especially useful for preserving meat and foods. Though this spell cannot harm living beings, not even live plants, it can also be used to create a quick weapon or temporarily impair an enemy. Frozen meat such as a leg of lamb or pig can be used as a club (1D6 damage, but awkward to wield, -1 to strike) and Flash Frozen metal objects are so cold that anyone who touches it, except for the spell caster, with their bare hands or even with gloves or gauntlet, has their fingers and hand stuck to it! While stuck, they cannot use that hand nor draw a weapon. They are stuck for one melee round (15 seconds) per level of the spell caster. If the object is secured to the ground or a wall, they are stuck to it. The victim can literally tear his hand from the object, provided he has enough leverage, but this inflicts 2D4 damage. Simply pouring warm water over the object or heating it up a bit instantly frees the stuck hand, as does the Melt Ice spell.

Frost

Range: Touch or by pointing at a target area up to 12 feet (3.6 m) away per experience level of the spell caster.

Duration: Frost remains until it melts as normal. At freezing or below it will remain until it warms up above freezing or until covered by additional frost or snow. At temperatures of 38-65 degrees Fahrenheit (3.3 to 18.3 C), frost melts in 1D6 minutes +1 minute per level of the spell caster (it is magical. In warmer temperatures, frost melts in 1D6 melee rounds +1 one round per level of the spell caster.

P.P.E.: Four

The Frost spell creates a patch of ice as large as 10 feet (3 m) in diameter per level of experience. Frost can be used in a variety of ways. It can be used to cover glass and obscure the vision of those looking through it (opaque and blurry, cannot make out faces or details) as well as to mark a door, wagon, armor, shield and even clothing. The spell caster can even use his finger to make symbols, arrows, and even write words and leave a message on walls, doors, etc.; a message that will, in temperatures above freezing, melt without a trace in a few minutes.

Frost covered grass or snow will “crunch” when walked upon (reduce Prowl by 15%) and leave footprints/tracks wherever a person has stepped. Seeing a path may come in particularly handy to locate the current location of invisible beings! Frost covered snow creates a thin, glassy crust on the snow that also crunches when stepped upon and prevents the snow from being blown to cover tracks.

Frost Freeze

Range: Touch – affecting 2D6 blooms or buds or 1D4 pieces of fruit.

Duration: Instant damaging effect.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Three

Can be used to cover vegetation with frost and partially freeze it, thus killing buds and damaging fruit and flowers. Buds and flowers

wilt (01-20% chance of killing the plant) and fruit is partially frozen. The frozen half of fruit spoils within the next hour. Can also be used to cool off a drink, a bowl of soup or plate of food.

Level Two

Biting Frost

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m) +10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Four melee rounds (one minute) per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Four

A swirling cloud of frost and ice particles that sting the skin, impairs vision (cannot clearly see beyond the cloud; just shapes, colors and blurred details), and feel chilled to the bone. Damage is one point per melee round in the cloud, plus the following penalties: -2 on Perception Rolls, -1 on initiative and -1 to strike, parry and dodge, -10% on Land Navigation and Tracking skills, and -5% on the performance of all other skills while stuck in the cloud.

Blow Snow

Range: 10 feet (3 m) line of sight.

Duration: Five minute per experience level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: Six

Spell Level Note: Second level for a *Wizard* or *Air Warlock* but only costs the Warlock 4 P.P.E.; fourth level *Water Warlock* spell and costs 6 P.P.E.

The spell caster uses this spell to blow one foot (0.2 m) of snow per level of experience, up and out of his way like an invisible, modern day snowblower. The snow disperses with the sweep of his hand or point of his finger! A four foot (1.2 m) wide path is blown clear and is sent flying up to 15 feet (4.6 m) high, but creates a mound or wall of snow on either side of the path. Snow as deep as one foot (0.3 m) per level of experience can be blown clear; not applicable to hard-packed snow or ice.

This spell can also be used to blow snow into the face of an enemy or to cover (and conceal) an object or structure. In the former case, the victim is momentarily surprised and blinded (-10 to strike parry and dodge) for five seconds, and loses one melee action and initiative. When used to cover an object with snow, the mage is +15% to use snow for camouflage. If the camouflage skill is not known to the character, he has a base 50% chance to conceal an item this way.

The Blow Snow spell may also be used to cover one's tracks in the snow. However, those characters with a tracking skill and who take their time are likely to notice irregularities in the snow pattern to indicate that the trail has been covered over. Trackers can follow the covered over trail but with a -10% penalty to successfully track.

Freeze Water

Range: 10 feet (3 m) or touch.

Duration: Ice remains until it melts as normal.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Six

This spell enables the mage to freeze one gallon of water and most liquids (3.7 liters) per level of experience with a mere touch. When water is first spilled across a hard surface like stone or wood floors and even hard-packed earth, the mage can freeze the water on the surface to create an ice patch. Those stepping on the slick patch must roll 15 or higher to save vs slipping and falling down. Those

who fall take 1D4 damage, lose initiative, and lose 1D4 melee attacks/actions in their effort to regain their balance and get off the slippery ice and continue.

Turning water to ice in a container can also be handy for packing and preserving meat and other perishables by packing them in ice. This ability can also be used to chill drinks.

Frost Blinded

Range: 20 feet (6.1 m) per level of the spell caster.

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: Standard save, -1 if an additional three P.P.E. points are pumped into the spell.

P.P.E.: Four

A cold blast of icy wind and frost hits the character and gets in his eyes to momentarily blind the victim of this attack (only affects one target per spell). Victim is blinded for a few moments and loses two melee attacks and initiative until the frost particles can be wiped away or his vision clears.

Frost Swirling Cloud

Range: 10 feet (3 m) length per level of experience, and the cloud is 15 feet (4.6 m) in diameter.

Duration: Two melee rounds (30 seconds) per level of experience.

Saving Throw: -1 one to save.

P.P.E.: Five

This spell unleashes a burst of frost that floats and sparkles in a delightful cloud of frost crystals and color. The cloud is 15 feet (4.6 m) in diameter. Everyone who sees the color and the many colored sparkles of frost particles, is delighted by the display and can not help being distracted by it. All inside the cloud and within three feet (0.9 m) of it on the outside, watch the light display with a childlike joy. All those in the area of effect must roll to save vs magic. If nothing obvious happens while enthralled, no one realizes anything is amiss and walk away with a smile and sense of joy, at least for the moment.

A failed save means falling into a minor euphoria, momentarily losing track of time for the duration of the spell, and are oblivious to anything going on around them except for the ice crystals floating and dancing in the light, changing colors like a kaleidoscope. If attacked while distracted by the Frost Swirling Cloud, their attacker(s) automatically has the initiative over them, and their own reaction time is off: -1 to strike, parry, dodge and disarm, and reduce Spd by 20% as long as they are in the cloud and for one melee round after exiting it.

Ice Throwing Dagger

Range: Self or other by touch. Range of attack is 15 feet (4.6 m) per level of the spell caster.

Duration: Instant. The ice dagger that is magically created and thrown counts as one melee attack, plus the casting of the spell also uses one melee attack for the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Dodge with a -2 penalty.

P.P.E.: Five

The spell caster or those who have the spell cast upon them, can create a single shard of ice they can throw at a desired target by simply making a throwing gesture. The dagger-like ice shard appears out of nowhere. To hit his target, the character rolls to strike with his usual set of bonuses (if any) applicable. Damage from the magic is only 1D6 S.D.C. (1D4 M.D. in Mega-Damage settings), but can be effective against unsuspecting opponents and beings vulnerable to

ice/cold (double damage). The ice cannot be held in the hand to stab or parry, only thrown

Shield from Light/Polarized Vision

Range: Self or up to two others by touch.

Duration: 15 minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None

P.P.E.: Four (3 P.P.E. for Air Warlocks.)

Gives the eyes polarized vision and makes it as if the character were wearing quality sunglasses. Prevents snow blindness and reduces glare. Makes the eyes appear dark and gives them a bit of a purple tint.

Level Three

Cold Snap

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m).

Duration: One minute (4 melees) per level of experience.

Damage: Special.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Five

With a snap of his fingers, the mage chills the air surrounding a single character within range, making them feel uncomfortably cold. If the victim fails his saving throw, he will shiver and chatter his teeth incessantly for the duration of the spell, making him distracted and uneasy. Under these effects, the victim is at -2 to strike, parry and dodge, and -10% on all skills. This spell has no effect on inanimate objects nor on those who are impervious to *magical* cold, such as Algor Giants.

Dig Through Snow

Range: Self or one other by touch.

Duration: Five minutes per experience level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: Eight

The enchanted character can magically dig through snow without tiring. Using a shovel, the enchanted character can dig at a rate of 1D6+2 feet (0.9 to 2.4 m) per melee round; a half of that with his bare hands. Additionally, any tunnel or hole magically dug will NOT cave in while the magic is in effect. This is great for burrowing under snow and digging out characters caught in an avalanche or snow pit.

Frost Armor

Range: Touch

Duration: Two minutes per level of the spell caster; half that in temperatures great than 80 degrees Fahrenheit (26.6 C).

Saving Throw: None per se, unless used as an attack, in which case the being must roll 15 or higher to save. A successful save means the spell does not work – no armor covers him.

P.P.E.: Ten

This armor is made completely of a thin coating of crystalized ice that can be placed over clothing and leather armor, or any armor for a bit of added protection. The extra protection is only 5 S.D.C. per level of the spell caster, but even 5 or 10 S.D.C. can save a life.

Note: Frost armor is cold and will make the wearer feel a bit chilled and uncomfortable after 10 minutes (-1 on Perception Rolls from being distracted by the cold). Casting Frost Armor upon a creature that is hurt by cold or ice inflicts 1D4 damage per melee round and the following penalties: -10% to Spd, -2 on Perception Rolls, -1 to initia-

tive, and combat bonuses to strike, parry and dodge. Penalties last until the Frost Armor melts away or is shattered and knocked away (takes 1D4+3 melee actions to break away the armor).

Frostbite

Range: 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: One minute (4 melees) per level of experience.

Damage: 1D6 plus numbness.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Seven

The Wizard mentally inflicts a magical form of frostbite on his victim, chilling him for 1D6 points of damage and freezing his hands and feet! If the victim saves vs magic, then he only takes the 1D6 damage. Otherwise, the victim's hands and feet are painfully frozen, and for the duration of the spell, any skills requiring manual dexterity (such as picking pockets or playing a musical instrument) are extremely difficult, -50%. Likewise, handling weapons suffers a penalty of -4 to strike and parry. Frostbite victims trying to fire a bow or a crossbow will have their rate of fire reduced to only one shot a round (two for Rangers and Long Bowmen; half for modern characters using guns)! **Note:** The effects of this spell can be combined with the effects of Cold Snap.

Frostfists

Range: Self or one other by touch.

Duration: Instant results, lasts for one melee round.

Damage: +1 to punches per level of experience; double the damage bonus to beings vulnerable to cold.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Six

The mage can enchant his hands to make them temporarily ice cold and hard as if they were frozen. This adds to the damage the spell caster, or the person he has enchanted, can inflict with punches. While the magic is in place he can also handle items that would normally be too hot to touch. Penalties: Being cold and hard, the person with Frostfists is -20% on all skills that require nimble fingers and a delicate touch.

Ice Bolt

Range: 300 feet (91.5 m).

Duration: Instant.

Damage: 3D6 to mortals; 6D6 to fire elementals and other creatures who are fire/heat based or accustomed to hot environments.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Eight

A ray of blue energy flies from the spell caster's hand to the target, blasting it with cold magical energy. The target takes 3D6 damage unless it is a fire elemental, demon, Deevil, or some other creature accustomed to great heat, in which case the Ice Bolt causes 6D6 damage.

In addition, those struck by the Ice Bolt must save vs magic. Those who fail are *numbed* for the next 1D4 melee rounds, during which time they shall lose one attack per melee and be at -2 to strike, parry and dodge.

Melt Snow

Range: Touch or up to 10 feet (3 m) away per level of experience.

Area of Effect: 10 foot (3 m) radius.

Duration: Immediate result.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Five

Melts a 10 foot (3 m) radius or a three foot (0.9 m) wide 20 foot (6.1 m) long path per per level of experience. Melts snow one inch deep per level of experience up to a maximum of eight inches (20.3 cm). **Note:** This spell works specifically on snow not ice.

Mend Ice

Range: Touch or up to 10 feet (3 m) away.

Area of Effect: 10 foot (3 m) radius.

Duration: Immediate result.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Six

Mends and strengthens a 10 foot (3 m) radius or a three foot (0.9 m) wide by 20 foot (6.1 m) long path of ice per per level of experience. This is done to stop the ice from cracking and breaking away or to prevent it from melting under heat (the ice will last one minute longer per level of the spell caster, under heat). **Note:** This spell works specifically on ice not snow and can be a life saver when used to strengthen the ice path to cross a frozen river or stream.

Orb of Cold

Range: Thrown: 200 feet (61 m).

Duration: One melee round (15 seconds); 1D4 minutes for numbness.

Damage: 3D6 M.D. plus numbness penalties.

Saving Throw: Dodge; standard.

P.P.E.: Eight

The spell caster summons one globe of magically charged ice (the size of a softball) into his hand to hurl at an enemy. The character must roll to strike, getting his usual P.P. bonus (if any) and a magical bonus of +1 to strike. The orb disappears in one melee round (15 seconds) if it is not thrown. If the orb hits, it shatters, inflicting impact and cold damage to one target. If it misses, it is gone, unless the G.M. thinks it may have hit something or somebody else. Those struck take 3D6 S.D.C. (3D6 M.D. in Mega-Damage settings) and must make a save vs magic or suffer from a sudden, debilitating, numbing cold. A numbed opponent loses one melee attack, is -2 on initiative, -1 to strike, parry, and dodge, and speed is reduced by 10%. These penalties are not cumulative, and last for 1D4 minutes.

Level Four

Cold Glare

Range: Four feet (1.2 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: -1 to save (-2 if the mage has an M.A. of 15 or greater).

P.P.E.: Ten

This spell enables the mage to give an evil glare that pierces to the center of the soul. The eyes turn blue and flash with energy for a moment. This can be just a stern or evil glare that makes most people step back and let the mage pass without trouble, or it may be accompanied by a simple command such as, "Stand down." "Let us pass." "Do not try to stop us." "Leave. Now!" "Stay seated." "Don't move." "Do not call out." And so on. A failed save means the victim(s) feels a cold chill race down his spine, he steps back and does as he is told. Moreover, he takes no action against the mage and his companions for one full melee round (15 seconds), unless he is attacked or threatened after backing down. **Note:** This is magical intimidation, not mind control, and the person being influenced can not be made

to do anything but momentarily stay his hand and back down. The spell can influence more than one person as the Frost Mage grows in experience and power; one person at level one, 2 at level four, 3 at level seven, 4 people at level ten, and 5 at level 13; each gets to roll to save vs magic.

Ice Shield

Range: Self, although may be given to another to use.

Duration: In the cold of a winter environment for one hour per level of experience. In a warm or summer environment, five minutes per level, and only two in a hot desert or jungle.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: Ten. (6 P.P.E. for Water Warlocks.)

The spell caster can magically create a shield made of ice. To him (or any character the spell caster gives it to), the Ice Shield has the weight and feel of a normal wood and metal shield (small, medium or large), and the item can be used as a normal shield by him with a +1 to parry (plus any W.P. Shield bonuses that may apply). The Ice Shield has an A.R. 14 and 80 S.D.C. Anyone not specifically given the shield by the spell caster finds it heavy and uncomfortably cold (reduce shield bonuses by half), and it melts twice as quickly.

Melt Ice

Range: Touch or 20 feet (6.1 m) away; line of sight.

Duration: Instant effect.

Saving Throw: Standard dodge to avoid falling ice or pool of water.

P.P.E.: Eight

The spell caster can melt seven pounds (3 kg) of ice per level of experience. The ice melts in a flash and can be used to clear an ice patch on the ground, clear sails, rope or the deck of a ship of ice, get water from ice in an instant rather than have to melt it with heat, and freeing objects encased in ice. It can also be used to dump the equivalent of a bucket (or several buckets) of water on someone by melting the ice or icicles along the edge of a roof, awning, overhang or tree limb. It is also possible (0-75% chance) to melt ice on a roof or other overhang at the base of hanging icicles to dump water and the icicles down on someone's head; a typical icicle bombardment does 1D4 damage, but dropping very large icicles, the length of a bastard sword or larger, does 1D6 damage per each chunk of ice that hits. **Note:** This spell works specifically on ice not snow.

Sculpt Ice

Range: Touch.

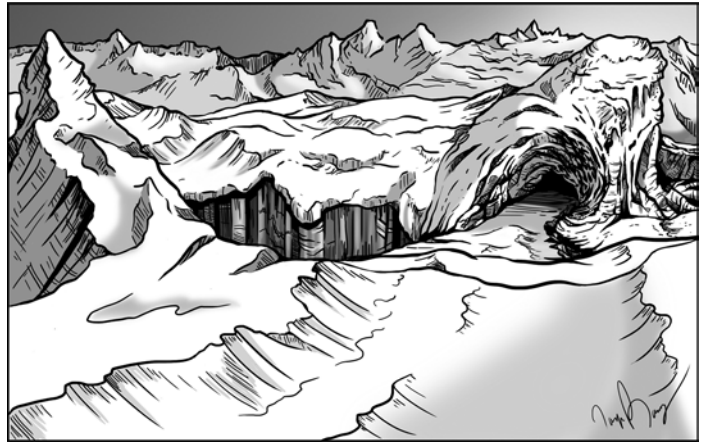
Area Effect: 100 pounds (45 kg) of ice per level of experience.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Eight

This invocation enables the spell caster to whittle and sculpt ice with any tool, be it a knife or ice pick, to a mere stick broken off a tree branch. To make a truly impressive ice sculpture, the character needs an art skill, but even those without one can carve ice into recognizable shapes for festivals, parties, fun and amusement, or as a marker or warning. This spell can also be used to write and draw into ice to leave a message, mark a direction with an arrow, and so on. A tool must be used, but it can be something as simple and flimsy as a stick; cannot use bare hands. Even with a stick, the mage can carve or write into ice with ease. Writing with a stick in solid ice is as easy as writing in snow or sand.



Snow Burrow

Range: 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Eight

This spell creates a "man-sized" burrow (or Wolfen-sized, as the case may be) that is 3 feet (1.2 m) in diameter and guaranteed not to collapse for the duration of the spell. The length of this snow tunnel is 10 feet (3 m) per level of the spell caster. A Snow Burrow can be created to provide momentary sanctuary from the elements, to hide from pursuers, or to travel, unseen, through deep snow. At least five feet of snow is required to use this spell and human-sized beings will need to crawl through the burrow on hands and knees. Double the P.P.E. and you double the duration.

Snow Dive

Range: Self or one or two others by touch.

Duration: One melee round (15 seconds).

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Ten

Those enchanted by this spell can jump or dive into snow from heights of 15 feet (4.6 m) per level of the spell caster, without fear of injury. The snow being dived into must be at least three feet (0.9 m) deep. The diver is able to quickly climb out of deep snowdrifts of any depth with ease. Each snow dive counts as two melee attacks. Double the P.P.E. spent and you double the height from which the enchanted individuals can dive into snow.

Level Five

Freeze Limb

Range: 10 feet (3 m) or touch.

Duration: One melee round per level of the spell caster. Duration is half in temperatures above 85 degrees Fahrenheit (29.4 C).

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Ten

The mage directs a burst of frost at an opponent's limb (foot and leg, hand and arm, tentacle, wing, etc.) to momentarily freeze and impair it. The affected limb is covered in a white frost for the duration of the magic. The victim's limb feels cold as if he had plunged it into a bucket of freezing water, and he finds it stiff and difficult to move. The cold and stiffness is debilitating and movement takes a concentrated effort.

Victims with a frozen hand and arm are -1 melee attack, -1 on initiative, -2 to strike, parry, disarm, pull punch and entangle, throwing range is reduced by half, a power punch is impossible, and skills requiring dexterity of fingers (which are many) are -30% to perform (this includes Palming, Picking Locks, Sewing, Ropeworks, etc.).

If one leg and foot is frozen the victim's speed is reduced by 70% and suffers the following penalties: -1 one melee attack, -1 to parry, -4 to dodge, kick attacks are impossible, and skills requiring balance and footwork (which are many) are -40% to perform (this includes Acrobatics, Gymnastics, Swimming, Prowl, and even Horsemanship, etc.).

Frost Breath

Range: 50 feet (15.3 m).

Duration: One melee round.

Damage: 3D6 S.D.C./Hit Points to all caught in the cloud.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

The spell caster breathes forth a cloud of icy breath that causes freezing damage to all who are caught in it. The frost cloud can be projected out to 50 feet (15.2 m) and covers a 10x10x10 foot (3x3x3 m) area, affecting everyone in its radius.

Ice Slide

Range: Self or other by touch.

Duration: Five minutes (20 melees) per level of experience.

Damage: Adds +1D4 to body block.

Saving Throw: None

P.P.E.: Fifteen

Casting this spell creates a stream of ice from the Wizard's hands to the ground and across the surface, effectively creating a ramp and a slick runway the spell caster can slide on. This magic is used to enable the mage to slide along the icy path as quickly as he generates it, and at a rate of up to triple his normal running speed (the spell caster can control his speed with thought). Using this unique form of locomotion, the character can cruise along speedily and with great agility (+3 to dodge while using Ice Slide), but only forward movement is possible. The spell caster may "tow" up to twice his body weight in cargo and/or passengers, but towing the equivalent of his body weight slows him down to only *double* his maximum running speed, and towing 2x his body weight slows him down to his normal speed.

The ice beam being projected may only be directed at the ground and can not be used to cover living beings or to cover the sides of walls or trees. While sliding forward, however, the mage can bowl over whoever is in his way by performing a high-speed body block at +1D4 to damage. Nor can the spell caster create ice under the feet of others to cause them to slip and fall. Note that the ice left behind the mage as he zooms by quickly melts in one melee round (15 seconds).

The Ice Slide may not elevate more than 10 feet (3 m) off the ground. Any higher than that and the slide will collapse, and its rider will fall to the ground. Ice Slide can be used to cross water, and the trail it leaves can be used by others as a rudimentary bridge. However, they move at one third their normal speed across the slippery layer of ice. When spanning water or as an elevated surface, any given 10 foot (3 m) section of the ice slide can support up to 500 lbs (225 kg). Any more weight will cause the slide to shatter, and anybody on that section will fall.

Skate on Ice

Range: Self or as many as two others by touch.

Duration: Ten minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Eight (5 for Water Warlocks).

Any individual enchanted by this invocation can walk and skate across ice without fear of falling or of the ice breaking. The spell enables those enchanted to walk or skate across even wafer thin ice as long as they keep moving and do not stop. Stop for more than one melee round (15 seconds), and thin ice breaks and the character falls into the icy depths beneath his feet. Actual skating – sliding across the ice – can be performed at a speed 50% faster than the individual's full running speed. This applies only to ice that is NOT covered by more than an inch or more of snow.

Snow Drift

Range: 10 foot diameter (3 m), one foot (0.3 m) of snow per level of experience; up to 100 feet (30.5 m) away, +10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: One melee round, enough time to create three snow drifts.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Ten

This spell enables the mage to shift snow to create drifts of snow to block roads, block doors and windows, create obstacles, cover inanimate object(s) or even a wagon, cover signs and markers, etc. The spell does not create additional snow, but rather moves existing snow around. The mage can move snow to create a drift that is one foot (0.3 m) deeper/taller per level of experience than the average depth of surrounding snow. Has no influence on ice, just snow. Cannot be used to cover and bury someone alive.

Snow Search

Range: Self or two others by touch.

Duration: 30 minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Standard when the spell is unwanted.

P.P.E.: Twelve

During and after a heavy snowfall, let alone a blizzard, blowing and drifting snow or an avalanche, the landscape is transformed. Though it may look beautiful, it also appears very different. Moreover, tracks, trails, roads and even large landmarks may be covered or so changed as to be unrecognizable. Tracks are gone under a blanket of snow and it is easy to get lost. The normal Land Navigation skill is -25% after a heavy snowfall, blizzard, and -40% after an avalanche. And finding someone buried in the snow is nigh impossible to locate.

The **Snow Search** spell *restores* a character's *Land Navigation skill to full (no penalty)* and maintains a strong sense of direction. In addition, those enchanted with Snow Search are aware of hunches that can successfully lead them to people and animals lost in a snow-storm or buried by an avalanche (68% chance +2% per experience level of the spell caster). Likewise, even in the harshest of snow-storms, this spell enables those enchanted to find shelter or a safe place to hole-up and wait out the storm.

Snow Walking

Range: Self or up to two others by touching them simultaneously while casting the spell.

Duration: Ten minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Standard, should the spell be unwanted.

P.P.E.: Eight. (4 P.P.E. for Water Warlocks.)

The enchanted character can walk on top of snow as if he were wearing snowshoes or skis. Walking speed is 30% slower than the character's speed attribute and travel leaves footprints, but the character can walk over deep snow, and up and down snow drifts without fear of falling into Snow Traps or causing an avalanche!

Level Six

Cure Frostbite

Range: Self or one or two others by touch.

Duration: Instant results.

Saving Throw: Standard, but applicable only if the healing is unwanted.

P.P.E.: Twenty-Two (12 for Air and Water Warlocks).

With a simple touch and a momentary sparkle of magic energy, like snowflakes, an individual who is suffering from frostbite is cured. Circulation is restored and the frostbitten appendages return to normal. Only 1D6 Hit Points are restored, but frozen, blistered and dead skin and flesh are revitalized and there is no danger of permanent damage or losing any appendage. This spell only works if the character is recently frostbitten within the last 48 hours.

Frostblade

Range: Close, hand to hand combat.

Duration: One minute per level of experience.

Damage: 3D6

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

The spell creates a 3-4 foot (0.9 to 1.2 m) blade of ice that appears in the spell caster's hand to use as a sword. Or the spell caster can coat a piece/shaft of metal into an ice-covered blade. This "Frostblade" glows with a pale white, misty energy. After creating it, the spell caster can give the sword to someone else or use it himself. The weapon can be used in much the same manner as any sword, but can parry energy blasts and balls of fire (no special bonuses). It inflicts damage through a combination of magical force and numbing cold, so fire creatures take double damage (6D6 S.D.C.). The weapon is not damaged by parrying attacks, but disappears (or returns to normal metal) when the spell duration elapses.

Ice

Range: 50 feet (15.2 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Five minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

This spell allows a mage to transform magical energy into ice, creating one of the following three effects.

1. A wall of ice with 50 S.D.C. per level of the spell caster (50 M.D.C. in Mega-Damage settings), and covering a 10x10x10 foot (3x3x3 m) length +10 feet (3 m) of additional length per each subsequent level of experience. The wall can be created anywhere within range and can be made small or big as the spell caster desires (i.e. a 3rd level mage can fill the opening of a small, six foot (1.8 m) wide corridor completely, like a door made of ice, or 30 feet (9 m) down the length of the corridor). Anybody in the area where the spell is cast is pushed out of the way. If the ice wall would crush or encase a living being (because the area is too small), the magic will not work! Likewise, as a "wall," the ice appears on the ground and can not be made to appear in the air above an opponent's head or inside a vehicle. There is no save against this ice wall.

2. Ice covering. Magically covers the floor, wall, ceiling and objects with ice that appears out of nowhere. This is a thin coating (an 8th of an inch/3 mm) of ice, plus frost particles twinkle in the air. Can affect a six foot (1.8 m) radius per level of experience. People caught in the icy coating suffer from cold and surprise, losing initiative that melee round and are -1 on all combat actions. Characters not protected by body armor suffer incidental frostbite damage (1D6 S.D.C.) unless they knock the ice off. The main advantage of this spell is that movement on the ice is extremely difficult; reduce speed by 75% and even then there is a 01-75% chance of falling if the character moves faster than a speed of 4! Since everything in the area of effect is covered in ice, there is no hand-hold to grab onto for support. Furthermore, the magical ice does not melt even in extreme heat, but disappears when the spell duration elapses. The frost aspect of this spell means it can also be used to heavily frost over windows to cover them completely (must scrape frost off to see through the glass) as well as freeze windows shut.

3. Freeze water. In the alternative, the mage can use this spell to instantly freeze two gallons (7.6 liters) of water per level of experience. Freezing can be done to one container or several in a 6 foot (1.8 m) radius (puddles, canteens, soda bottles, etc.), provided the total amount frozen does not exceed the spell caster's maximum limit in total gallons. Freezing water may cause full containers to rupture or shatter. The ice melts as normal under the circumstances.

Ice Shard Blast

Also known as Shards of Ice.

Range: Self; can hit targets up to 30 feet (9 m) away per level of experience.

Duration: One full melee round/15 seconds (only Water Warlocks get a duration that is one melee round *per level of experience*), but each blast of ice shards counts as one of his melee attacks (and the initial casting of the spell also uses one melee attack for the spell caster).

Damage: 1D6 S.D.C. (1D4 M.D. in Mega-Damage settings).

Saving Throw: A dodge or parry is possible if the victim knows he is under attack and rolls a 17 or higher.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

The spell caster instantly creates and shoots razor-like shards of ice from the palms of his hands. They do not automatically strike the intended target (roll for each blast of shard), but are deadly accurate. The spell caster can fire as many times as he has melee attacks (each shard blast counts as one melee attack), providing multiple ice attacks. This spell can be especially effective against beings vulnerable to ice/cold (double damage).

Igloo

Range: 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience, but requires snow, ice or water and temperatures below or around freezing.

Duration: 30 minutes per level of the spell caster. (Add 15 P.P.E. to double the time.)

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Twenty

This spell creates a small, domed shelter made of packed snow 5 feet (1.5 m) tall and 8 feet (2.4 m) in diameter. The diameter can be enlarged one foot (0.3 m) per each subsequent level of the spell caster. Most mages use the spell for protection from the elements in cold climates. Igloos hold heat better than a tent and are superior protection against cold, strong winds which cut through a tent as if it were not there. The igloo has 10 S.D.C. per level of the spell caster (3 M.D.C. in Mega-Damage settings).

Resist Cold

Range: Self or one other by touch.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Twelve (8 for Water Warlocks). Double the P.P.E. and you double the duration.

The spell caster is able to resist/ignore the effects of cold and function without discomfort or ill effect in temperatures as low as zero. This even wards off the damaging effects of frostbite while the spell is in place.

Snow Running

Range: Self or other by touch.

Duration: Ten minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Standard should the spell be unwanted.

P.P.E.: Fifteen (8 P.P.E. for Water Warlocks).

The enchanted individual can run and move across snow of any depth at his normal speed and level of agility. The character leaves tracks, but can move at full speed across the top of the snow!

Wave of Frost

Range: 200 feet (61 m) +20 feet (6 m) per level of experience.

Damage: Special.

Duration: One minute per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Special.

P.P.E.: 18 (12 P.P.E. for Air Warlock, only).

This magical attack is designed to damage the delicate flowers and roots of plants. The Wave of Frost can be cast several hundred feet away and covers a 6 foot (1.8 m) radius per level of experience. All flowering plants caught in the frost will suffer damage: 2D4x10% will die, meaning the yield of fruit, vegetables, etc. normally borne by that plant(s) will be reduced by that amount. In addition, 1D4x10% of the plants are irreparably damaged (Shaman or Elemental magic is all that can restore them) and will die within 48 hours. This spell can also be used to obscure windows by covering them in frost (takes one melee round to scrape a peephole).

Level Seven

Chill Blood

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m)

Duration: 10 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: +1 to save.

P.P.E.: Twenty

This spell reduces the inherent goodness in its victim, effectively making him more "cold-blooded." The net effect of this is that the victim's alignment temporarily shifts down two steps for the duration of the spell. The order of alignments is Principled, Scrupulous, Unprincipled, Anarchist, Miscreant, Aberrant, and Diabolic. Thus, if a Scrupulous person were hit by this spell, his alignment would temporarily change to Anarchist, while an Unprincipled character would become Miscreant evil!

This is a handy spell for getting enemies to turn on one another or to fuel a tense or aggressive situation – best used when the victim does not realize he is being magically manipulated.

When cast upon an evil character, this spell automatically brings out the most selfish, vile and cruel behavior, causing him to be a merciless, cold-blooded killer who may turn on friends and comrades

at the slightest provocation. Exactly how cruel and murderous will depend on the character's disposition and external circumstances.

Deep Freeze/Suspended Animation

Range: By touch or up to 50 feet (15.2 m) away.

Duration: One hour per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Twenty-Five

With the spell, the mage can place a single living creature (person, animal, etc.) into a state of frozen suspended animation! If the victim fails to save vs magic, then an icy crust forms over their bodies and their skin turns a ghostly blue. For the duration of the spell, the victim will remain frozen; he will not thaw even if exposed to high temperatures. Aside from the spell caster deciding to lift the spell prematurely, only a Dispel Magic, Dispel Magic Barrier, or Remove Curse spell may undo the effects of this magic. Upon coming out of Deep Freeze, the victim suffers 1D6 points of damage directly to Hit Points. This is the side effect of having undergone such a dramatic temperature change. While in the Deep Freeze, however, the individual is impervious to fire, heat, disease and doesn't need to breathe (all the air necessary is held in the icy confinement).

A successful save vs magic means the target shrugs off the Deep Freeze with no ill effect whatsoever.

Frostfire

Range: Up to 10 feet (3 m).

Duration: Varies, the same as a normal fire. As long as their is fuel to burn, the fire rages on.

Damage: 4D6 points per melee round.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Thirty

This spell will transform a normal fire into one composed of ice-cold magical energy. The fire will continue to spread like a normal fire but instead of scorching things into ash, it freezes them to the point that they blister or shatter into icy dust. Anything exposed to Frostfire takes 3D6 points of damage per melee round. Creatures immune to magical cold can endure the effects of a Frostfire without harm while creatures resistant to normal cold (and Water Warlocks) take half-damage. Due to its unusual nature, Frostfire will spread across the surface of water freezing and holding in place any vessel that comes in contact with it. However, on water, its duration is a mere 1D4 minutes per level of the spell caster. Likewise, throwing water on this flame to extinguish it makes it stronger (double size and damage for every minute it is fed by water). The only way to dose Frostfire is to smother it (sand works great) or use the magic spells, Extinguish Fire or Vacuum. A barrier of *magic fire* will block or stop Frostfire from spreading and cause it to die out in 2D6 minutes, but normal fire has no effect.

Iceball

Range: Thrown up to 100 feet (30.5 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Instant.

Damage: 3D6 direct to Hit Points of the main target; 2D6 area effect.

Saving Throw: None; the victim can dodge the Iceball if he sees it coming and rolls a natural 18 or higher.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

This spell conjures forth a large glittering ball of ice which the mage magically hurls at his target. The missile is magically directed and seldom misses. Upon impact, the Iceball inflicts 3D6 damage direct to the primary target's Hit Points! However, it explodes on

impact, sending out icy shrapnel. Anybody within 20 feet (6.1 m) of the blast takes 2D6 points of damage. Those wearing armor will see damage done to armor first. When the armor is shredded to pieces, any further icy shrapnel will do the same to their bodies (S.D.C. followed by Hit Point damage).

When used against an inanimate target (cart, wall, door, etc.), the Iceball inflicts 1D4x10+3 S.D.C., with shrapnel being the same.

Heart of Ice, Heart of Fire

Range: Touch or up to 200 feet (61 m); line of sight. Affects one victim at levels 1-4, but can affect one additional victim at level 5, another at level 10, and another at level 15.

Duration: Five minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: -1 for Ice (indifference), standard save for Fire (quick to anger).

P.P.E.: Twenty-Five

Never has a spell worked so well to turn one's foes against their allies. **A Heart of Ice** makes the victim cold and uncaring or indifferent, and unwilling to take action to help someone or do what is right. **A Heart of Fire** makes the victim's blood boil and quick to anger and hostility. The fire heart may be quick to action, but it is a quickness to respond with aggression and violence; acting without thinking, eager to teach another a lesson or to extract justice (or revenge) over the slightest insult or offense.

Ride Ice Floe

Range: Must be on board the floating ice.

Duration: 20 minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Twenty-Four (12 for Water Warlocks).

Spell Level Note: Only a 4th level spell for *Water Warlocks*.

The spell caster can use any piece of floating ice up to 20 feet (6 m) in diameter and magically propel it like a floating barge across unfrozen water. Maximum Speed is three miles per hour (4.8 km) per level of experience. This magic even makes riding an ice floe at sea possible, without the occupants being swept overboard by large waves, although they will get soaking wet and cold from water spraying and pooling over the ice.

Scale Ice

Range: Self or one other by touch.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Twelve (8 for Water Warlocks). Double the P.P.E. and you double the duration.

Spell Level Note: Only a 3rd level spell for *Air Warlocks*.

The spell caster or anyone enchanted by this spell is able to climb walls of ice, ice covered rock and cliff facings, at the same level of proficiency and without penalty as his Climb/Scale Walls skill. The ice does not add the usual level of danger and difficulty.

Level Eight

Avalanche Survival

Range: Touch or line of sight up to 100 feet (30.5 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 15 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None, standard only if the recipient doesn't want the enchantment.

P.P.E.: Thirty

When cast upon someone who is about to be caught up in an avalanche or whom this magic is cast upon while being swept away (or the spell is cast prior to an actual avalanche), the enchantment keeps the individual comparatively safe. The victim, though carried away by the snow slide, avoids serious injury (suffers 2D6 damage), escapes being buried alive, and miraculously find himself only partially buried on the surface when the avalanche comes to a stop.

Blizzard Wall

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m).

Area of Effect: 20 foot (6.1 m) length, 20 foot (6.1 m) height and one foot (0.3 m) thick. Length may be extended as much as +10 feet (3 m) per each subsequent level of experience.

Duration: Five minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Forty-Five

This spell creates a thick wall of wind (60 mph/96 km) and thick, wet snow as if a slice from a blizzard has been magically transported to that location. The wall of snow and wind makes seeing through it (or anything inside of it) impossible, and the cold and wind from the wall can be felt up to 10 feet (3 m) away, with no ill effect. Trying to walk through the Blizzard Wall requires a P.S. of 25 or greater (or a speed of 30 or more), and even they burn up 1D4+1 melee attacks in their effort to push through each foot of thickness. While inside the wall of rushing wind, the person cannot hear or see what is happening on either side of the wall, and has no idea of what may be waiting on the other side. However, those outside the wall cannot see in either. Stinging ice and hard, pelting snow and numbing inflict 1D6 points of damage regardless of how long it takes to push through it.

Upon exiting the Blizzard Wall, the character feels chilled and a bit disoriented. The following penalties apply for the next 1D4 melee rounds. -3 on Perception Rolls, Initiative and all combat moves (strike, parry, dodge, disarm, pull punch, etc.), -10% on the performance of skills and lost sense of direction for 1D4 melee rounds.

Characters neither strong enough (P.S. is under 25) or fast enough (slower than Spd 30), can also enter the wall but are immediately knocked down to their knees (need to crawl out of the Blizzard Wall) or pushed sideways along the wall for 1D4 melee rounds per foot (0.3 m) of the wall's thickness. They lose all sense of time and direction and suffer 2D6 damage; penalties are doubled and last for 1D4+1 melee rounds; 50% chance that any item held in their hand is dropped or blown away and cannot be found until the wall dissipates. Everyone exits the wall covered in wet snow.

Snow

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m) per level of experience.

Area of Effect: 500 foot (152) radius per level of experience.

Duration: Fifteen minutes per level of the spell caster; half in warm environments with temperatures higher than 65 degrees Fahrenheit (18.3 C).

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Thirty.

A light snow falls from the sky. Accumulation is negligible, a half inch per hour. In warm climates (38 degrees Fahrenheit/3.3 C or warmer), the snow melts on contact with the ground. This spell is used for dramatic effect (it always delights children and in warm climates, it may cause a distraction), to cover tracks in the snow or to provide the Winter Mage with snow to work some other spell.

Snowblind

Also known as White Out (a variant, short duration version of this spell).

Range: Covers an area 50 feet (15.2 m) in diameter per level of experience.

Duration: One minute (four melees) per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Victims are -2 to save. A successful save means that individual must squint but can see reasonably well, suffering a penalty of -3 on all combat moves as noted below.

P.P.E.: Thirty-Five (8 for Air Warlocks).

Limitations: Requires daylight and snow or ice. Can only be performed when the sun is out and not in twilight or at night. The Globe of Daylight spell is insufficient to fuel a White Out spell.

This magic magnifies the *sun's* light a hundred-fold and causes blinding light reflection as if the snow has been turned into a thousand mirrors. Victims are all momentarily blinded and -10 to strike, parry, and dodge, and lose initiative. All they can do is cover their eyes and either stagger away from the area of blinding snow or wait until the spell ends. Even characters with Light Shields to protect the eyes are -5 on all combat moves and are partially blinded, forced to squinting and shielding their eyes. Likewise, it is impossible to read or perform any skill that requires clear vision.

The spell caster is impervious to the effects provided he is outside the radius of effect and moving or looking away, not into the light. This means he can not attack the victims of this magic without being blinded himself. Those looking into the White Out area from the outside can see nothing inside its radiating diameter, and therefore cannot find a target to hit. This spell is also good for signaling others, for it can be seen up to 48 miles (76.8 km) away when used up in the mountains, in an open field, grasslands or out at sea. This spell has no effect on the spell caster.

Snow Swimming

Range: Self or others by touch.

Duration: 15 minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Standard, if unwanted.

P.P.E.: Twenty

This spell enables the caster and those he/she touches to “fly” though the snow. In order to do this spell, it must either be snowing or there must be a foot or more of snow on the ground. In a snowfall, those enchanted by this spell can float and fly at low speeds through the falling snow at 10 mph (16 km) or half the speed of the blowing wind. Maximum height of 1,000 feet (305 m).

In the alternative, when snow is not falling, the spell enables those enchanted to literally dive into deep snow and “swim” across it. It is a strange sight to see people paddling and moving their arms as if in water, to swim over the top of deep snow (four feet/1.2 m or deeper). Those swimming across deep snow move at 8 mph (13 km). If buried in snow and even in an avalanche, the character can swim up to the surface; can also swim out of a Snow Trap.

Level Nine

Avalanche

Range: 200 feet (61 m) away per level of experience; line of sight.

Duration: Instant, with the snow slide lasting about 1D4 minutes.

Saving Throw: Running out of harm's way (unlikely; consider it to be a dodge with a -9 penalty) or taking cover behind a large boulder that is firmly entrenched.

Saving Throw: Not applicable.

P.P.E.: Sixty (small) or One Hundred (medium-sized).

This spell of destruction causes a medium-sized avalanche about 1D4x100 yards (91-366 m) wide, inflicting 1D4x10 damage to everything in its path from the air blast, and 5D6x10 damage from the snow itself. Everything and everyone is buried 3D6+6 feet (2.7 to 7.3 m) under the snow.

A small avalanche half the size and doing 4D6 from air blast and 2D6x10 damage from snow can be created at the cost of 60 P.P.E.

Ride Avalanche

Range: Self or Other up to 100 feet (18.3 m) away.

Duration: The duration of the avalanche, which is usually under a minute.

Saving Throw: Standard, but only if the recipient of the magic not want it for some reason.

P.P.E.: Sixty-Five

This spell is simple, if a little crazy, the enchanted individual is able to ride onto top of an avalanche without a snowboard or skis, like a surfer riding a wave. There is no worry about getting buried alive or smashed into rocks, trees and debris, though it is a harrowing experience (H.F. 12) and several “close calls” of nearly being slammed into obstacles at fast speed are inevitable. The rider remains on his feet and can cast one spell or make two attacks/melee action per melee round as he plunges down the side of a mountain riding an avalanche.

Snow Trap

Also Known As Snow Quicksand.

Range: 60 feet (18.3 m) away with a 10 foot (3 m) diameter. The diameter can be increased one foot (0.3 m) per level of the spell caster.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None. Must be pulled out by someone else who is standing on a firm area of snow. Spells and abilities to levitate, fly or move via telekinesis can be used to save oneself or to pluck others out of a Snow Trap.

P.P.E.: Thirty-Five

This spell turns ordinary snow into a “quicksand” like snow pit. The first step into the *snow quicksand* causes the character to sink two feet (0.6 m). Every additional step or fast, sharp movement causes the victim to sink deeper into the snow. Standing still slows the rate of sinking, but victims still sink at a rate of one foot (0.3 m) every melee round (15 seconds)! Flailing about, throwing a rope, attacking while stuck in the snow pit, all cause the victim(s) to sink another foot (0.3 m) for each action. When a victim sinks below his nose, he will suffocate and die. Moreover, he vanishes from sight altogether unless he keeps one hand raised high and hopefully stays above the sinking snow so that allies might find him and rescue him yet. There is also a noticable dip in the snow where a person has sunken.

Once submerged, the victim suffocates within four minutes (loses consciousness in two), unless the individual can hold his breath or is enchanted with Breathe Without Air. The snow-like quicksand looks very much like ordinary snow, except for a slight depression in the surrounding snow and is 75% undetectable outdoors in a snow or ice covered landscape (tracks that suddenly end is a giveaway as is the slight depression), and 97% undetectable in newly fallen snow or while snow is falling. A patch of snow is obvious indoors, but the question is do the people who see it, realize it is a dangerous trap or just a strange clump of snow indoors (the danger is 30% undetectable indoors).

Summon Snowstorm

Range: Can be cast up to 200 feet (61 m) away per level of experience (the storm starts as the edge of this distance) or around the mage.

Area of Effect: 500 foot (152 m) radius per level of the spell caster.

Duration: 30 minutes per level of the mage.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifty or One Hundred.

The spell drops temperatures to freezing and causes a heavy snow to fall. Winds are 25 mph (40 km). In the short term, this spell causes very little damage but is very disruptive and possibly disorientating for people not used to snow. Snow accumulates at a rate of one inch per half an hour and makes travel through it difficult. Reduces speed by 40% as roads become slick and slippery, signs and obstacles may be covered by snow, Land Navigation skill is -10% (-30% in areas that seldom get snow), tracks and trails are completely covered after 15 minutes, and visibility is reduced to 200 feet (60 m).

Blizzard Conditions: For double the P.P.E. (100 points), the Snowstorm is a blizzard! Double the wind speed, the amount of snow that falls, and all penalties; visibility is only 50 feet (15.2 m) and shouting, warnings and cries for help cannot be heard more than 15 feet (4.6 m) away.

Level Ten

Frost Warriors

Range: Touch.

Duration: Five or until destroyed.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: One Hundred

Frosty the Snowman was never this tough or dangerous. This spell enables the mage to create a small army of snowmen quickly. Using existing snow (snow must be available for this spell to work), the mage literally makes a stick figure out of sticks/branches or broom handles, lays it on the snow and then covers the sticks with snow. When the spell is cast, a featureless figure made of snow rises to do his bidding. One "Frost Warrior" can be created for every two levels of experience (round up), per spell casting. Any weapons must be provided to the magical automatons. The Frost Warrior is more ice than snow and can follow simple orders like, "attack," "kill," "catch him," "let no one pass this point," and similar. Obeys only its maker.

Frost Warriors

Attributes of Note: I.Q.: 8, P.S.: 18 and Spd 10.

S.D.C.: 40

A.R.: 7

Attacks per Melee: Three.

Bonuses: +1 to strike and parry. Punch or Kick: 1D6+2 damage.

Ice Warrior Note: Doubling the P.P.E. spent turns the Frost Warriors into *Ice Warriors*; double the S.D.C., A.R., bonuses and damage. Attacks per melee and attributes are unchanged.

Level Eleven

Ice Storm

Range: Affects an area 100 feet (30.5 m) in diameter per level of experience of the spell caster and can be created up to a mile (1.6 km) away, but the target destination must be within the spell caster's line of sight.

Duration: One melee round per level of experience.

Damage: 1D4 per level of experience, plus ice encumbrance.

Saving Throw: None, other than to take cover or somehow get out of the area of effect.

P.P.E.: Two Hundred

Ice storms are prolonged periods of freezing rain that encase the entire area a coat of ice. The weight of this accumulated ice eventually causes tree limbs to snap, roofs to collapse, crops to fail, etc. It is this kind of quiet devastation that the spell Ice Storm emulates, only more dramatically.

The first effect of this spell is not unlike a magical hailstorm. Everything within the spell's area of effect takes damage; in this case, 1D4 damage per level of the caster per melee round.

Secondly, everything in the area of effect is quickly covered in ice, creating a dangerous situation. People, monsters and animals in the ice storm are also covered in ice; 10% per melee round. When 25% of the body is coated in ice the creature is -1 melee attack, -1 to all combat moves, -20% to Spd and -10% to perform skills.

When 50% covered, the penalties, above, are doubled.

When 70% covered, the victim is -3 melee attacks, -3 on all combat moves, -60% to Spd and -20% to perform skills.

When completely coated in ice, the victims are weighed down by the ice, can barely move, have one attack per melee, and are -6 on all combat moves (strike, parry, dodge, etc.), -90% to Spd and -40% to perform skills.

Moreover, since the ground and landscape is also covered in ice, anyone, including attackers wishing to engage in close combat, must move very slowly across the ice (Spd 6 or slower) or they fall down and slide on the ice, taking 1D6 points of damage and they lose two melee attacks and initiative.

Duration of the penalties: In cold climates near freezing or below, the ice and the penalties last for 3D6+6 melee rounds. In climates with a temperature of 52 degrees Fahrenheit (11.1 C) or greater, duration is only 1D6+4 melees, and if 80 degrees Fahrenheit (26.7 C) or greater duration is only 1D4+1 melee rounds.

Stop Avalanche

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Instant result, but duration may last only one hour per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Two Hundred Fifty

This powerful spell enables the mage to stop an avalanche the instant it begins or at any point as it tumbles downward. However, there is only a small chance (10% +5% per level of the spell caster) that the avalanche has been permanently halted. When the duration of the magic ends, the avalanche is likely to continue. However, the temporary reprieve may provide enough time to evacuate those in its path.

Clean

A Story for Rifts®

By Irvin Jackson

Part Two

Matt chose to go to the Red Sands during the early afternoon the next day. Night, he figured, would be too busy. And he wanted it to be clear that he was there for business.

While Matt carried his pistol with him, he did not wear the new armor. For one thing, he wanted to maintain the anonymity the new armor provided him. It gave him a degree of flexibility that he did not want to give up until absolutely necessary. For another thing, he had no illusions of coming out alive if shooting started in the Red Sands.

One of the good things about an establishment that was run by a Coalition intelligence officer, Matt realized, was that the surrounding neighborhood was clean and safe. It definitely was not a place he would want to have to ply his trade.

The Red Sands itself was a garish affair that reminded Matt to some degree of old footage he had seen of buildings in the lost city of Las Vegas. It was lit in an array of lights, mostly red, that raced around the perimeter of the seven story building. There was no name and, surprisingly, no visible security. Matt figured that if you didn't know the name, you did not belong there. And if you knew what the Red Sands was, you knew better than to start trouble.

With valet rooftop parking for patrons with hover vehicles, the Red Sands reminded Matt more of clubs you would find inside of Chi-Town itself, instead of in the deepest sprawls of the 'Burbs.

That impression disappeared completely once one went inside. After going through a weapon scanner and turning in his pistol, Matt went through a small, turning corridor that let him out on the bottom tier of one of several arenas. Even in the early afternoon, the first thing Matt heard was the roar of a bloodthirsty crowd, and the first thing he saw as he entered the arena itself was a fight ring encased in shatterproof glass.

Currently, a Juicer was attempting to use another Juicer's head to test how shatterproof the glass really was. Matt doubted the glass would give before the losing Juicer's head.

The ring was raised up high, and walking in required you to walk alongside the ring to get to any of the seating. The lighting emanated from the upper tiers of the coliseum-style seating. Besides keeping the combat ring well lit without being in the face of the crowd, it worked to blind newcomers trying to ascertain who was in the audience.

Matt walked past the arena and went to a small bar area. The lighting wasn't directed right down at him here, and he could look up and observe who was in the bleachers. He had only a vague idea of what Wilport looked like, but was pretty sure he did not see him in the fight arena, which seated about 300 and was only a quarter full. There was a Deadball stadium one floor up, but according to the schedule on the wall there was no game slated for this afternoon.

Finally, after having a drink and tipping heavily, Matt asked the bartender outright. The bartender was a large, balding man who looked more like he'd spent his youth toting a rifle through the wastelands than learning how to make a cosmopolitan. Most bartenders kept their gun underneath the bar, out of sight. He had his, a large particle beam pistol, tucked into the front of his pants. On a whim, Matt turned and looked over his shoulder, to the wall opposite the bar. It was scorched in several places.

"Wilport?" the bartender repeated the name back to Matt like he'd never heard it. Matt put 200 credits down on the bar. The bartender pushed it back in disdain. "You got guts Heath. Wilport knows you're here. Take the elevator up to the sixth floor."

The fact that not only did Wilport know he was here, but that even the bartender knew his name, made Matt bite back an expletive.

Trying to shake the feeling of a man walking up the steps to the gallows, Matt walked away from the bar and into the mirror-lined elevator. Matt fervently hoped that the Coalition Reservist Drum and Bugle Corps' rendition of Mr. Tambourine Man leaking from the elevator speakers was not the last musical piece he would hear.

The elevator opened into a plush penthouse that would have been right at home 400 years ago. White, leather, overstuffed chairs and sofas were complemented with cabinets, tables and desks of heavily lacquered cherry wood, on top of a charcoal rug. One wall was entirely window, looking toward Chi-Town across the 'Burbs.

The occupants were another story altogether. Reclining in one chair, dirty boots on a red lacquered coffee table inlaid with mother-of-pearl, was a woman dressed in camouflage Huntsman armor and festooned with a wild array of archaic and modern weaponry. Matt assumed it was a woman due to the body. It was hard to tell from the face.

Her skin was pasty-white, inhumanly so, and she was completely hairless. Her eyes were sunken and rimmed with black. Her teeth had been filed to points. She was a Psi-Stalker, a human genetic mutation that lived off of supernatural creatures and magic-users. It was said that Psi-Stalkers were something like psychic vampires, draining the life energy from their victims. They only allegedly went after people and creatures with high amounts of natural mystic energy, leaving Matt off the menu.

It still didn't make Matt feel any more comfortable. Not only did he count up a pair of Vibro-Blades, a Wilk's 320 laser pistol, a .45, and a large Vibro-Sword that would have looked more at home in the hands of a Viking, but she was also wearing a quiver of arrows. Arrows with explosive tips. He wished he'd worn the armor.

When Matt first stepped off the elevator, she appeared to be napping. But she immediately snapped her eyes open and stared at him, unblinking and boldly. Somewhat like the way a cat stares at prey.

Matt took a step forward and she was three feet in front of him. He hadn't seen her move to get up.

"You are the Cyber-Snatcher?" she asked.

"Who's asking?" Matt responded, with somewhat false bravado.

"I am Silent Death," she said, proudly, as if the name were earned, not given.

Matt smiled humorlessly. "Of course you are."

She pulled the .45 and placed it under his chin. Matt held his chin level, refusing to lift it from the pressure of the barrel.

"I asked you a question," the Psi-Stalker hissed. "If you are not the Cyber-Snatcher, then Wilport will need new carpeting... again."

"Then yeah, I'm the Cyber-Snatcher," Matt confessed. "Let me ask you something, though."

She put the .45 away and cocked her head.

"Have you ever really been in a situation where you said 'No, the laser pistol would be inappropriate. What I need here are explosive-tipped arrows?'"

"You would be surprised," she replied, going back to her seat and closing her eyes. "Wait. Wilport will be out soon."

"You said we would have to go downstairs and get him," growled a voice from behind Matt. It was inhumanly deep, all throat and reverberation. It seemed to emanate from a spot a few feet above Matt's head.

Matt looked at the Psi-Stalker, who had cracked one eye open.

"I don't want to turn around, do I?"

"Not really, no," she grinned wickedly.

Matt sighed and turned around, finding himself face-to-chest with a bear in full battle gear. To be precise, it was a hybrid of bear and human DNA. Standing upright, and apparently able to walk on two legs without any real problems, the bear man was well over seven feet tall, and Matt figured he must have been pushing nearly 400 lbs, virtually all muscle. There were no human traits in the face, but the structure of the arms and legs was definitely influenced by human DNA, and while he still had large, vicious claws, he had opposable thumbs as well.

Of course, Matt had grown up seeing the infamous Dog Boys, or Psi-Hounds, used by the Coalition. They too were a blend of human



LL
AS
TB
AG
ST
IS

and animal DNA, but the Coalition had chosen canines for both their natural affinity toward mankind and their instinctive hatred for all things supernatural. Having seen Dog Boys throw themselves in front of rampaging monsters to save human children, Matt couldn't fault them for that choice.

He did, however, view breeding intelligent grizzly bears as monumentally stupid.

"Impressive, isn't he?" called out a voice from the other side of the room. Matt turned to look and saw Wilport behind a bar. Steely-eyed with long, somewhat unkempt and oily black hair, and a distinctive handlebar mustache, Kyle Wilport was watching the exchange while pouring himself a drink.

Matt shrugged at the question.

"He's big, I'll give him that," Matt answered. "But breeding intelligent grizzly bears, and then providing military training just strikes me as voluntarily stepping down a rung on the food chain."

Wilport snorted. "I said the same thing, but he's a hell of a bodyguard. Besides, he's unique. They don't breed them."

Titan grunted at the two of them, shouldering past Matt while muttering in disdain at being referred to as if he were not in the room. He strode to a refrigerator next to the bar, opened it, and stuck his nose inside, looking around. Even though humans did it all the time, Matt couldn't shake the impression that the creature was foraging.

Wilport cleared his throat and waved Matt over, setting out a second drink.

"Enough about Titan," he said, referring to the ursine warrior by name. "Let's talk about why you are here."

Matt took a seat on a stool across the bar from Wilport, but did not move to touch the drink. Wilport noticed, and picked it up and drank it himself.

"Seeing as how I was expected, is there a need to ask?"

"Expected? No," Wilport admitted. "Recognized."

"I didn't realize I was that popular," Matt deadpanned.

Wilport reached under the bar and pulled out a micro-disc. He held it up for Matt to see, and then sat it down on the bar.

"Turns out Karma had her cyborg bouncer recording everyone that came in and out of that place through his cybernetic eye. Coalition Intelligence had me pick him up after you left that mess in that D-Bee woman's bedroom," Wilport explained. "It wasn't too hard to figure out who did Fielding in."

"If the CS thinks I did it, why am I talking to you and not having fond memories of once having fingernails in some Chi-Town dungeon?" asked Matt, with the growing suspicion that he might just walk out of the Red Sands alive.

"Because Colonel Lyboc had me get there first," he said. "I still got the 'Borg's eye somewhere under here."

Matt frowned. "Colonel Lyboc more or less heads the Coalition Secret Police. That means there's a good chance Fielding was one of his men. Why spare me?"

Wilport shook his head. "Fielding was a mule, ferrying highly classified information from inside the Tolkeen occupied territory. Lyboc don't use mules. Too much chance of something getting screwed up because not everyone is on the same page," he said. "Lyboc didn't give a damn about Fielding. It's somebody in the Black Market that he wants."

Wilport slammed his third drink back and looked Matt in the eye.

"You have no idea why you were hired to take that guy out, do you?" Wilport barked a cold laugh. "I thought you stepped in here to try and cut us a deal, but you ain't got a clue, do you?"

"I just want to know who hired me," Matt said. "They need to learn how to treat their employees."

"Double-crossed you?" Wilport asked. He grinned when Matt nodded. "Figures. Damn, I was hoping you knew who hired you."

"And I was figuring you could tell me," Matt said, slumping on the stool.

"Why would I know?" Wilport asked.

"I think my contact met the employers here," Matt said. "I know you've got the place wired up pretty good. I was hoping to barter for that information."

Wilport, toying with a crystal shot glass, thought that over.

"You give me a rough time and date, and I got a psychic who can speed watch the footage on fast forward and not miss a thing," Wilport said. "If I find anything, then maybe we can cut a deal. What else do you know?"

"I know whoever it was works with a Burster and a Hidden 'Borg. Human woman, dresses in leather business suits and looks like an accountant from Hell," Matt said.

Wilport nodded. "Alright. That's more than enough to go on. Be back here in two days."

"Or?" Matt dared to ask.

"Or I send Titan to come get you," Wilport nodded toward the huge bear soldier, who was currently sucking the marrow out of the bone of a large turkey leg.

"Two days it is," Matt agreed, standing up and walking quickly toward the elevator.

* * *

Matt was in much better spirits than he had been before he headed to the Red Sands. Just the fact that he was able to return to Twitch's, and with all his limbs, was enough of a pick-me-up that even Twitch commented on it.

It was the first time that Matt had noticed Twitch's deteriorating condition.

Her eyes were sunken and red, she was paler than usual, and her clothes looked even more slept in than before.

"It's that data encryption," Twitch explained to Matt when he asked her about it. "I can't remember coming across anything this complicated. I'm making headway though."

"Well, try to get some rest. Step away from it sometimes," he said, realizing for the first time how often he'd been seeing her plug in as of late. He had thought that perhaps it was just her habit to stay plugged into her computer from sun up to sun down, but he suspected it had only been a habit she picked up in earnest while working on decrypting Fielding's data. "I might need you at a moment's notice. I want you on top of your game."

"Well, if I can break this key, you'll be in a much better bargaining position, don't you think?" she asked. "Besides, don't you want to know what it is?"

"Twitch, the moment they suspect I actually know what is in those files, I'm as good as dead," he said. "That tends to tamp down your curiosity a bit."

"Well, I'm not sure if this thing can be broken, anyway," Twitch said. "Somebody went through some serious trouble to encrypt this."

"If you think you're wasting your time, stop," Matt told her. "It'll be a moot point if Wilport comes through for me. I don't care what's on it. I just care what it can get me."

Twitch kept to herself the fear that it might get him dead.

Wilport was as good as his word. Using the time frame Matt gave him, and a description of Holloway, it took him only two days to find the footage Matt was seeking. Matt's return to the Red Sands was a very different affair the second time. Instead of being taken up to the Penthouse, he was led underneath the facility. There were three things kept under the Red Sands; the security center, the armory for gear used in the matches, and body disposal facilities. The body disposal area took up the most space.

Matt wasn't sure whether it was on purpose or not, but Wilport seemed to make sure he got an extensive look at how the Red Sands disposed of the losers of its death matches. The Red Sands employees, wearing gas masks and thick rubber aprons and gloves, picked the dead bodies up from the ring and brought them down to the basement on a freight elevator.

At first, Matt had thought that the gas masks, gloves and aprons were for theatrical effect. It was bad enough to die, but it seemed somehow even worse to die knowing such ghoulish, anonymous beings would be handling your body before it had grown cold. But once Matt was down in the Red Sands' basement, he saw that the outfits had a practical use.

The bodies were stripped of all their valuables in one room. Anything of value was removed, from cybernetics to gold teeth. The bodies were then packed unceremoniously into large barrels of sulfuric acid. The barrels were sealed, and put aside long enough to dissolve their macabre contents. Then the barrels were shipped out on trucks. Matt did not know, nor did he ask, where the barrels were taken. However, it was common knowledge that toxic materials and all sorts of unsavory substances were regularly dumped in some of the poorer 'Burbs.

After showing Matt the body disposal area, Wilport took him into the security center. Matt had expected a few computers and television screens tied into security cameras. What he found instead was a full-fledged Coalition intelligence audio-visual surveillance suite. There was not a dark corner or quiet hallway in the building that was not covered with both concealed security cameras as well as directional microphones. The extensive computer gear to view and record the data was tied into video and sound analysis computers that, if Matt's guess was correct, connected via hardline directly to Chi-Town.

"So many of these guys think they've got everything figured out," said Wilport, as Matt scanned over the equipment. "They think they've got all the angles covered. Most of them we can shut down whenever we like."

Matt heard something in the tone of Wilport's voice that made him briefly reconsider dealing with the man. Wilport was speaking like someone who enjoyed the power, enjoyed having bits and pieces of seedy information that can bring down the rich and powerful. Some of it Matt dismissed as just him being a creep, but there was something else in Wilport's voice. It was the sound of a man who wanted revenge; not revenge against an individual person, or even group, but against society as a whole.

Wilport flopped down in one of several empty office chairs and flicked on a console that had been set to stand-by. Immediately, Matt saw Holloway's profile in an upper bleacher over the main arena.

"That your man?" Wilport asked.

Matt nodded. From the timestamp it had been the same night Doc had given him the job. Holloway was talking to two men. One was a mean-looking redhead, with a thin, cruel mouth, and dark, beady little eyes. Matt recognized him immediately as the Burster who had burned his house down. Matt did not recognize the man he was with; a gaunt man of mostly African American descent, with at least a week's growth of stubble.

Matt noticed that Wilport was watching his face instead of the screen.

"I recognize one from the attack on my house," he said to Wilport's unspoken inquiry. "But I've never seen the second man before."

"The firebug goes by the name Vick 'Thermal' Stanza," Wilport said with a chuckle. Matt winced. "Hey, I didn't name the guy. Apparently, psychic powers that allow you to light stuff on fire don't necessarily spark the imagination."

"You know him?"

Wilport shook his head. "Just by reputation."

"Who's the second guy? His boss?"

"No," Wilport said. "His partner. Sid the Cypher, they call him. Engineer, mechanic. Specializes in weapons smuggling and modifications, as well as hacking."

Matt raised an eyebrow. "Who do they work for?"

"Don't know," Wilport said. "But they are almost always in bed with the Black Market. Neither has shown a great deal of loyalty to past employers though. So if you lean on them a bit..."

"Well there's the matter of finding them," Matt said.

Wilport threw him a small pad of paper.

"Know how to read?"

"A little," Matt lied. He was fully literate; a big no-no in the Coalition States. The top sticky note on the pad contained an address in Firetown.

"It's the Burster's," Wilport said. "Start with him and he'll lead you to Sid. Sid's the brains of that duo. He'll know how to get to their boss."

Matt thanked him and slipped the paper into his pocket.

Wilport then surprised Matt by handing him a Black Market credit voucher worth 20,000 credits.

"Get what you need, work your way up the food chain, take these guys out, and get me that data," Wilport said in a way that felt a tad too much like an order for Matt's comfort. "And the death of Captain Fielding will forever remain a mystery."

That paused Matt for a moment as he was standing to go. He'd wondered when Wilport would stop playing host.

"Why me?" Matt asked.

Wilport shrugged. "We suspect these guys are working for someone in the Black Market. My boss doesn't want to cross the Black Market, and it's too risky to send a hired third party to take them out. The Black Market would ask too many questions if these guys just get professionally whacked," Wilport explained. "But not you. You've got a chip on your shoulder, and these guys know it. If you piss off the Black Market, we're not affected."

"But I might be," Matt frowned.

"Dem's the breaks, kiddo," Wilport said.

"Alright, so they are," Matt conceded. "I just want one thing from you to help me out."

He led Wilport back into the body disposal area.

* * *

Very few people handle being suddenly awakened at 5:30 a.m. well. Victor Stanza was not one of them. Though, to his credit, it takes a special person to be ready to cope with the rear end of a pickup truck smashing through their bedroom wall.

The impact hurled the Burster from his bed, partially buried him in plaster, and turned an antique dresser into very expensive toothpicks. As the Burster scrambled to untangle himself from sheets, pillows and debris, an armored figure in the back of the truck kicked over a 50-gallon steel drum filled with sulfuric acid.

Vick had not been sure the crash was intentional at first and had been disoriented, so he had hesitated to use his psychic control over fire to surround himself with a protective aura of flame. Once the deluge of acid swept over him and his bedding, getting into his eyes, nose and mouth, lapping at his skin, he was in too much pain to concentrate.

The armored man stepped down from the truck while Vick screamed and clawed at his eyes, skin beginning to bubble and blister. His armor protected him from the acid as he stepped through the small stream of the stuff as it bleached the color from Vick's carpeting.

"You see, Vick," the armored man said. "Even a Burster can burn."

Blindly, Vick groped for the small laser pistol he kept next to the bed. His assailant saw what he was reaching for and intercepted him by stepping firmly on his hand. He then ground the steel-belted cleats of his boot into Vick's hand. Vick screamed as he felt bones crackle, but screamed even louder when the acid coating the floor worked its way into the open wounds.

"Stop, damn it!" the Burster screamed. "Just... just wait, man!"

Matt touched the side of the helmet, lightening the visor from mirrored tint to transparent. He kept the face shield down, however, just in case the Burster surprised him, as well as to keep the horrific fumes from the acid from burning his eyes, nose and throat. He could see Vick's red eyes tearing relentlessly, his nose running incessantly and could hear the hoarseness creeping into his voice.

"Okay, Vick," Matt said calmly. "I'll wait 10 seconds for you to tell me where I can find your partner, Sid, that cyborg chick, and your boss."

"Oh, man... I can't tell you that," Vick moaned, scrubbing constantly at his eyes with his free hand, blurrily recognizing Matt through a red-dish haze of pained vision.

Matt shifted his weight back down on the damaged hand, feeling another two knuckles give under his weight.

“Vick,” Matt warned, “tell me what I want to know, or you’re going into the other barrel head first.”

“Okay! Okay!” Vick cried. “Sid’s got a garage out in the shanties! We were hired for muscle, and the guy wanted Sid to do some sort of big hacking job! I don’t know who the others were!”

“The shanties are a big place, Vick,” Matt said, using the toe of his boot to splash Vick several times with acid. “Quick, the fumes are causing you to lose your voice.”

Vick coughed and whimpered at the burning sensation in his throat. “Hope... he’s in the shanties in Hope. Trades tech stuff for housing from new arrivals. They give him tech and he sets them up with a place in the ‘Burbs that ain’t a tent.”

“Specifics,” Matt demanded. And Vick gave them.

Once Vick was done, and Matt was beginning to worry the shock might be subsiding enough for the pyrokinetic to use his powers, Matt picked him up and carried him toward the back of the truck, where a second barrel waited. Some of Vick’s neighbors were outside of the ruined back room, staring but doing nothing. Matt noticed several sporting bad burn scars and vindictive stares.

Dropping Vick hard in the back of the pickup, Matt levered off the lid of the other barrel with a deactivated Vibro-Knife and then scooped Vick up.

“Wait man! Wait!” Vick cried, trying to grab onto the tailgate. “You said...”

“I said I wouldn’t put you in head first,” Matt finished, dropping Vick into the barrel upright. The acid came up to just under the Burster’s chin. “I’m a man of my word.”

As Matt grabbed the lid, Vick tried to surge out of the caustic fluid.

“If I were you, I’d be still,” Matt warned, easily pushing him back down into the barrel. “This ride will probably be bumpy enough. You want to minimize splashing.”

Matt slammed the lid down and hammered it into place, cutting the Burster off mid-scream. Making sure the barrel was secure, he hopped down from the bed of the truck, shoved the tailgate back up into place and walked around to the passenger’s side.

“Didn’t do too much damage to the truck did you?” he asked the driver.

“Why the hell did you need to bring me along?” Twitch asked, looking wholly out of place in a set of nearly identical armor. Matt had needed to adjust the straps repeatedly just to keep the pieces in place on her small frame. She also looked like she was going to be ill.

“For two reasons,” Matt said, gesturing for her to start the truck and drive. “First, this Sid is a hacker. I might need your expertise on-site.” “And the second?”

“Because I think you were forgetting who I really am,” he said. “Now drive.”

The names of the shanty towns were one of the many bitter ironies of the ‘Burbs of Chi-Town. Little more than refuse-choked tent cities on the very ragged edges of the ‘Burbs, they inevitably received names like Faith, Hope, and Freedom. They contained the very dregs of the ‘Burbs, and were often what many people from other nations and city-states thought of when they discussed the legendary ‘Burbs of Chi-Town.

Besides a trip to the morgue, this was the very bottom rung of life in and around Chi-Town. There were no amenities of any kind beyond what one provided for oneself. Most “housing” consisted of tents, bivouacs, personal vehicles that had long ago become inoperative, scraps of spare sheet metal, and in a few cases, the shells of creatures that were never meant to walk this earth. Even then, a third to half of the residents of the shanty towns had no shelter over their heads at night, catching what rest they could rolled up in rotted blankets in the mud.

A lack of clean water led to rampant disease, and rat was a common dietary staple. Most often, residents consisted of refugees from war-torn corners of the North American continent, D-Bees who were too scared to come any closer to Chi-Town, but even more scared of going it alone in the wilds, and those who had fallen on particularly hard times.

And then there were the vultures. The vultures were the people who profited from this sea of living misery. They included merchants who

would buy your valuable antiques for a few cans of food, recruiters looking for unsuspecting slave labor for work camps that one was not likely to leave alive, and pimps looking for families willing to sacrifice a daughter to the Black Market in order to have a place to sleep.

And when the disease became too rampant, or the D-Bee population too large, it would swoop the Coalition on one of its infamous purges. Utilizing tanks, power armors, giant robots, and infantry, the Coalition would regularly target the most bothersome of shanty towns and burn them to the ground. While not targeting the people specifically, they would fire indiscriminately, and sweep from one side of the shanty town to the other, until all that was left was ashes.

The Coalition did this out of self-preservation. They had intelligence agents in the Old Town and New Town ‘Burbs, but it was hard to infiltrate the chaos of the shanty towns. Inevitably, something more dangerous than D-Bees would slip in and use the restless, starving masses to build an army. Epidemics would begin to spread due to lack of sanitation, threatening the more civilized ‘Burbs and possibly Chi-Town itself. But most of all, the Coalition purged the shanty towns because they knew such abject misery bred more than just more misery. It was also fertile ground for the seeds of revolution.

Sidney Clay was one of the vultures, and he knew it. He had no interest in being part of any revolution against Chi-Town. In fact, he hoped the human supremacist empire reigned for as long as he lived. On several occasions, he’d even ratted out conspirators who had come to him looking for weapons and technical assistance.

By carefully covering his tracks, Sid played both sides. He sold illegal programs and made illegal modifications to weapons, armor and vehicles, and then sold out customers to the Coalition when he was certain he’d tapped them for every credit he could get. In return, when the purges came, Sid’s shop seemed to always weather the storm. And it was the first place the bitter survivors would turn to in order to reequip, rearm and seek revenge.

Sid always figured that his luck would run out and that he would have to hightail it to safer pastures. If he wasn’t fast enough, one day the Coalition, or one of his betrayed customers, would have his head. He knew it, and he accepted it. It was the cost of doing business in 109 P.A. So he tended to be prepared.

His shop was a miniature fortress, with armored walls and a reinforced garage door. The small warehouse-sized building was surrounded by high-voltage electrified fencing and Sid always kept his hovercycle on the roof, handy for a fast getaway. Inside, he had two labor robots illegally modified with combat programming. Plus, he owned a small arsenal of pilfered, used and modified weaponry.

He was almost prepared for Matt Heath.

Twitch had detailed what defenses she could make out to Matt while sitting on the hood of the pickup and studying it through binoculars. She tried her hardest to ignore the occasional, and weakening, bangs from inside the remaining steel barrel.

They had parked on a small hill overlooking the armored garage and had a light lunch, though Twitch did not have much of an appetite. Matt, chucking an empty cup of spiced noodles into the dust, stood up and began to grab his things from the passenger side of the truck.

“We ready to move in?” Twitch asked, trying to hide the fear in her voice with false bravado.

“I’m ready,” Matt said, belting on his holster and fastening a small satchel around his waist. “You’re staying here until the fireworks are over.”

Twitch followed him around the truck as he moved to the back, lowered the tailgate and began unfastening the barrel.

“How are you going to get past that fence? Or through that garage door?” she asked, as Matt used a small hand truck to get the cumbersome barrel to the ground. Twitch turned away as something thumped inside the barrel.

“Relax, Twitch,” Matt said. “He died of vitriol poisoning a while ago I’m sure.”

A weak thump against the now-still barrel made them both stare for a moment.

“Damn psychic,” Matt muttered. “Bet he was wishing I’d have put him in head first now, it’d have been over in two minutes.”

“What are you going to do with him?”

Matt opened the satchel and took a small block of gray, clay-like substance and thumped it on the lid of the barrel.

“Get through that fence and that wall,” Matt replied, tipping the barrel, ignoring the muffled scream from within, and giving it a firm kick down the hill.

The barrel’s trajectory was less than perfect, but then it didn’t have to be for Matt’s uses. All he wanted was for it to hit the fence.

“Matt, was that a fusion block?” Twitch asked, recognizing the explosive from far too many pirated action vids.

“Yep,” he said, checking the charge on his pistol.

“Oh,” Twitch watched the barrel careen down the hillside for a second, in macabre fascination, before a thought occurred to her. “Wait, where’s the detonator?”

Matt didn’t answer, instead breaking into a fast jog down the hill, gun drawn.

Twitch got her answer the moment the barrel and its explosive package hit the electrified fence. The charge, meant to punch through military fortifications, shredded the electric fence like tissue paper. The momentum of the barrel and the blast carried through to the wall of the garage itself. For a brief second, it seemed as if the armored wall would resist the blast, bubbling inward underneath the concussive wave. But it held for only a moment before splitting inward in a spray of burning sulfuric acid, white hot shrapnel, and the charred remains of one very unfortunate Burster.

Before the smoke had cleared, Matt was through the breach and into the garage itself. He hoped to rush in, find Sid still reeling from shock and put a gun to his head. It didn’t work out quite that way.

Sid was indeed shaken from the shock of the explosion and, for a few seconds, he was knocked completely senseless. That’s why his labor robots had illegal combat programming.

Matt moved quickly and purposefully through the still-glowing hole and into the garage. The explosion had pulverized a cement worktable and set fire to numerous papers, some of which still drifted on the thermals from the blast, smoldering. The smoke and dust worked against Matt, who had to wait for it to clear a moment in order to see his target.

After several seconds, he saw Sid on his knees on the other side of a partially-rebuilt hover car. Raising the pistol, he maneuvered to stay behind the mechanic. It was only the crunch of shattered cement under a metal foot that made him turn in time to avoid a metal, club-like arm swinging for his head.

Matt, unable to clearly make out his attacker, flung himself backward, quickly bringing the Wilk’s around and firing off a quick blast. The shot caught the labor ‘bot in the chest, partially melting its chest plate, but doing no real damage.

Matt cursed and scrambled back as the robot swung at him again. It wasn’t until Matt got some distance that he realized the robot was badly damaged. It must have been near the wall when the explosives went off, he figured. Because it was missing part of its right arm, and the right side of its head and chest were blackened and pitted. It gave Matt a place to aim.

Getting back to his feet, Matt spied Sid running for a bank of lockers up against the far wall. There was little he could do, however, unless he wanted to leave himself open to the damaged robot. Fortunately, the thing was not armed, but Matt knew it could still do plenty of damage if it got hold of him.

He put a charred table between himself and the robot, popping off a shot at Sid that went wide, but succeeded in forcing him to jump back away from the locker he’d been trying to reach. About that time, Matt saw the second labor ‘bot, clearing debris off of itself and attempting to stand. It looked undamaged.

Roughly the size of a tall, thin man, the two labor robots were built for strenuous, backbreaking and repetitive work. Only the wealthy, in general, could afford them, so they were often found in the hands of large corporations, militaries and governments. Sometimes they were

used as fodder for front lines, but most governments and mercenary armies considered men to be cheaper.

The one major limiting factor was their intelligence. They were not true, sentient artificial intelligences, but simply sophisticated programs that were able to act, in a limited fashion, like an intelligent being. As long as situations fell within their programmed parameters they could think and perform simple problem-solving as fast as any human. But thinking outside of the box was not their strong point. In the end, they were just jumped-up computers that could walk and talk.

Matt knew he was at an extreme disadvantage while wielding just a laser pistol, particularly targeting the center mass. They were twice as durable as the armor he was wearing, and he could empty a clip into each one before dropping them. But their sensor systems, having been designed by humans, had been placed in the heads. So that’s where Matt concentrated his first few shots.

The first unit had already suffered head damage, and Matt tried to focus on the damaged side of its head. The first shot missed, but the second scored a direct hit, blowing out its right eye. At about that time it reached the table and, with its good hand, tossed it to one side to get at Matt.

Matt let it come closer, let it reach for his throat, and then quickly jammed the barrel of his laser pistol against the robot’s remaining hand and fired. The robotic hand disintegrated in a shower of sparks and molten metal.

The robot stopped. It was in a quandary. It now had no hands and was not sure quite how to proceed with attacking its target. The second robot, however, had no such problems and crowded up directly behind the first.

Matt braced and threw himself forward, plowing into the damaged robot in front of him. The robot was programmed to catch itself using its hands, and its simple programming had no backup plans that told it what to do if both hands were gone. It fell back without any attempt to catch itself, taking its partner with it.

Matt quickly threaded his way through tables, tool chests, discarded chassis and engines, toward the hover car and looked to see if it might be operational. But the engine was suspended from a chain 10 feet above the floor. Cursing, he saw that his real target had the locker open and was removing a large, intimidating pump-action rifle.

In most cases, a pump-action shotgun was useless against modern body armor. Traditional gunpowder slugs just did not have the kick to penetrate most of the current synthetic polymers used by armor manufacturers. But the large weapon Sidney had pulled out was a TX-16 Pump Rifle fitted to fire shells that included a powerful explosive charge. It was more like a miniature grenade launcher.

The mechanic had also grabbed a speed loader, and was reaching for another when Matt put a shot right into the locker. Sid dove back behind a tank filled with hydraulic fluid.

“Who the hell are you?” he shouted, using the speed loader to quickly slam eight rounds into the rifle.

“You’ll find out when I get over there,” Matt warned, ducking down behind the rear of the hovercraft.

The functional robot had made its way through the cluttered garage to the hover car and Matt was forced to fire a bolt off at it to keep it at bay. Fortunately, they had self-preservation programming that required them to attempt to minimize damage, otherwise Matt feared the thing would have just charged him and been done with it.

“You think you’ll make it to me?” Sid laughed. “If all you got is that dinky Wilk’s, you’re as good as dead. I got you outgunned, and with the robot, I got you outnumbered. Plus, you’re on my turf. You’re dead. You just haven’t had the dignity to stop breathin’ yet.”

Matt had to concede that the man had a point. He had to find a way to even the odds. The robot was cautiously approaching around the side of the hover car, staying low to avoid stray shots. Matt tried to ease around the rear of the car, toward the far side of the garage where Sidney was hunkered down.

The rear corner of the hover car exploded just as Matt prepared to peek out. He quickly ducked back down, cursing again, as he heard Sidney chamber another round.

The robot circled around the back of the hovercraft, almost within grabbing range, and Matt was again glad Sidney hadn't had the presence of mind to provide the thing with a gun. With nowhere else to go, Matt ducked under the car itself, belly-crawling quickly away from a grasping mechanical hand that could have crushed his ankle in its grip.

Sidney, peeking over the hydraulic tank, could only see the back of his robot, stooped over behind the hover car. He stood up, wondering if the 'bot had his attacker.

In the meantime, Matt had scurried as far under the car as he could, grateful that it had been elevated a foot off the ground. It was sitting on a hydraulic lift, so that Sidney could get underneath to work on its stabilizer jets. Looking around desperately, and firing a quick shot toward the robot that had now decided to crawl after him, Matt spied a small control box capable of raising and lowering the car. He also spotted a cable that supplied hydraulics to the lift itself, leading from the tank Sidney was using for cover, to the lift.

Just before the robot reached him, Matt lunged for the control box and hit the button, hooking his arm into the frame of the hover car.

The hydraulics hummed to life, quickly lifting the car, and Matt, out of reach of the robot. However, dangling from the bottom of a hover car 10 feet in the air made him a wonderful target for Sidney's shotgun.

The first shot exploded next to Matt's head against the bottom of the vehicle, filling his vision with orange and white light and setting his head to ringing. The second shot caught Matt in the side, and though his armor took the brunt of the blast, much of the impact and heat carried through, searing the flesh underneath and blasting Matt from his precarious position under the hover car. Dropping to the floor, Matt caught the corner of the winch holding up the car's engine with the small of his back.

Rolling over painfully, Matt saw the robot standing beneath the car. It soon spotted him and turned to give chase. Matt took careful aim with the Wilk's and fired, the laser severing the hydraulic cable to the lift.

The sudden loss of pressure made the lift collapse under the weight of the hover car. The labor robot was underneath it. The hover car hit the ground with a teeth-rattling crash. It also sent a pressure wave through the high-pressure line back to the tank, causing hydraulic fluid to erupt in Sidney's face.

The viscous, purple liquid coated his upper body and he fell back, struggling to clear his vision.

Ignoring the pain in his side, and the sparking, twitching remains of the labor robot, Matt rushed across the garage in a dead run. Shakily, squinting through the hydraulic fluid running down his face, Sid the Cypher raised the rifle and fired at the blurry mass rushing in his direction.

By either luck, or more skill with a rifle than Matt had anticipated for a mechanic, the nearly-blind shot slammed into the chest plate of Matt's armor. The explosive force was enough to stop his forward momentum and blow him backwards four feet to the floor next to a large tool chest on wheels.

To Matt, it felt like he had been hit in the chest with a Louisville Slugger... on fire. Warning indicators lit up throughout the armor. The environmental seals had been breached, and the armor probably could not take another shot like that.

Still scrubbing hydraulic fluid from his face onto his sleeve, Sid circled around the tank, gun aimed cautiously at Matt.

"I got you, you bastard," the mechanic said. "I got you."

Matt responded by slamming his foot into the tool cart, sending it rolling into Sid. The force was not enough to knock Sid down, but it knocked him off balance enough to give Matt time to regain his feet. He followed behind the cart, ducking as Sid fired another desperate blast.

Driving his shoulder into the tool cart, Matt forced it and Sid back toward the hydraulic tank. The tank caught the mechanic above and behind the knees and he toppled backwards into a vat of purple liquid.

Matt pushed the cart aside and caught Sid as he struggled to rise, putting a firm hand on his chest, keeping his upper body and head submerged in the hydraulic fluid for several seconds. Patiently, he waited for Sid's movements to become frantic, and used the opportunity to rip the rifle from Sid's grasp and toss it across the room.

Then, palming the mechanic's face, he hauled the half-drowned man out of the thick fluid.

Sid choked, sputtered and gasped, too weak and focused on getting air into his lungs to resist. Matt, seeing his plight, punched him in the solar plexus. Hard.

It got both the hydraulic fluid and Sid's breakfast out of his system, and Matt turned Sid's head toward the tank to keep the stuff from getting on him.

Bonelessly, Sid crumpled to the ground, weakly holding up a hand for mercy. Matt batted away the hand and kicked him in the ribs with a steel-shod foot. He then carefully cleaned off the edge of the tool chest and sat down, waiting for Sid to uncurl from the fetal position.

Rolling over, Sid got a good look at his attacker for the first time, as Matt had removed the tint from the helmet's visor. He groaned once again, but this time, not from pain.

Matt leveled the Wilk's pistol at his head.

"Look, Sid, it's been a long morning, and those shots from that damn rifle hurt," Matt snarled. "Don't make me work for it, you have far too many tools in this shop, and I have far too expansive of an imagination."

Sidney held up his hands defensively.

"I get the message," he said quickly. "But if you don't like the answers, just don't take it out on me, okay?"

"No promises," Matt said, eyes narrowing. "Now what the hell are you talking about?"

Sid jerked his head toward a large, metal chest in the corner.

Matt looked over at it, then reached down and grabbed the mechanic by the face, pulling him painfully to his feet and thrusting him toward the chest.

"Slow moves," Matt warned, thrusting the pistol into the small of his back.

Sid slowly walked to the chest, flipped up the latches, and after being prodded again by Matt, very carefully lifted the lid on the large metal box.

At first, Matt did not know what to make of the contents. Bionic and cybernetic parts. Then something clicked as he was looking at a bionic leg near the top of the pile. It was a Series-7, Triax-manufactured Zweites Erzeugung Schnell cyber leg. A very familiar one at that. Below that was a bionic arm from a target a couple weeks before, and below the arm and the leg was a bionic jet pack, a hand, a bionic arm-mounted plasma cannon. All snatches he'd done for Doc.

"Doc was selling all the bionics I harvested to you?"

Sid shook his head.

"You don't get it, do you?" Sid replied. "None of it was ever sold to anyone."

Matt thought a moment, and then nodded. "I get it."

Matt sat down heavily on the edge of the box, refusing to look at the contents again. He suddenly felt tired, heavy. Dirty.

"Where?"

"Little private compound in New Colfax," Sid answered quickly, seeing the look in Matt's eyes. He gave Matt specific directions. "But you go in there, and you're meat."

"I'll take my chances," Matt said. Then he shot Sid the Cypher once between the eyes.

Hearing a little gasp, he looked up to see Twitch coming through the front door.

"I told you to stay in the truck," Matt snapped.

"It got quiet," she said. "I figured the fighting was over."

Matt grunted noncommittally, slamming shut the lid on the crate filled with stolen bionics. He jerked his head toward a back room in the corner.

"That was probably his office," he said. "See what's on his computer that we can use."

Twitch nodded, but for a few seconds she just stared at the body on the floor, and then back to Matt, and then back to the body.

"Twitch..."

"I know, I know," she said, snapping out of it. "It's just... he was cooperating. I thought you'd go easier on him."

“Remember the Burster? Remember what happened to him?”

Twitch shuddered and nodded, looking across the garage at the gaping, smoking hole in the wall.

“Now who do you think got off lightly?” Matt asked, a stony hardness in his voice that Twitch had never heard before.

Without answering, she quickly scuttled back into the office and began hooking herself into Sid’s computer.

Matt stood after a moment and retrieved the pump rifle. He had always thought the name pump rifle was silly, until he actually picked the chrome-plated weapon up and examined it. He’d always considered it a fancy shotgun, but now realized that it really was more of a traditional rifle, so perhaps the name fit after all.

Hefting it to get used to the weight, he checked the ammunition counter on the side, frowning. Then he remembered the locker and walked over to inspect it.

Whistling, he began to rummage through the contents. It was a weapons locker, and contained two other rifles, a pistol version of the rifle, several speed loaders, and an energy clip charger. There were two more lockers beside it, and Matt quickly opened them both.

The first was a disappointment. It contained work clothes, jump suits, tool belts and gloves. The last locker, however, had a full set of Bushman armor and an armored long coat of the same type he favored. The Bushman armor, as its name suggested, was often heavily favored out in the vast tracts of forest and jungle outside of humanity’s relatively small sphere of influence. It was heavier than his old Huntsman, fully environmentally sealed, and the helmet gave it a sort of menacing, gas-masked look.

While worth a good deal of credits, particularly to those who ventured beyond the ‘Burbs, it was a bit heavy for Matt’s taste, and he feared it would slow him down. Still, the Urban Warrior armor had been damaged beyond salvage by the powerful explosive rounds from Sid’s rifle, and he was almost certain he’d need more than the coat.

In the midst of putting on the bulky armor, he heard a feminine “whoop” of victory from the back room. In just the chest plate and one arm piece, Matt rushed to the back. Twitch was behind an expensive desk made of clear, thick, shatterproof plastic. A first glance it looked like glass. Sid’s computer was imbedded in the desk, and used a three-dimensional holographic projection in the place of a solid screen.

The office was in stark contrast to the cluttered garage. It was clean and Spartan, without any real decoration or accommodations, besides the chair Twitch was using. Apparently, Sid liked his hacking to be distraction-free.

“Find something good?” Matt asked.

“Only the decryption key to that data!” Twitch beamed. “They had it all along.”

“Well, it wouldn’t have done any good to have me steal it otherwise,” Matt noted.

Twitch snorted as she pulled Matt’s portable computer out and began connecting it to Sid’s. Matt’s brow furrowed.

“I thought once it was on one computer...”

“Only if the program knows there’s a second computer involved,” Twitch winked at him, fully in her element. “But a few little strokes of the keys and the program will think this computer and your computer are one and the same.”

Matt slipped behind her to watch, but Twitch, partially due to her headjack but mostly due to her natural talent, worked too rapidly for Matt to follow what was happening.

“There we go! Here’s what the big fuss...” Twitch’s voice trailed off as she read.

“Aw hell,” Matt said, as the data began to scroll across the screen.

* * *

New Colfax was as different from the shanty town of Hope as one could imagine. The so-called Old Town ‘Burb was filled with Coalition loyalists who had attempted to make their city a carbon copy of life and morals within the fortress city of Chi-Town itself. Streets and

construction were orderly and well-maintained. Parks, roads, and even law enforcement were all supported by tax-paying citizens who kept a host of legitimate, relatively well-paying jobs. D-Bees were virtually unheard of, and the face of Emperor Karl Prosek gazed sternly out from billboards, posters, statues and murals.

The people of New Colfax, and all of the Old Town ‘Burbs, prided themselves on emulating the society into which they one day hoped to find acceptance. But try as they might, unsavory elements always seemed to work their way past the patrolled fences and wary police. Ordinances against blight kept most homes in top condition, but yet there was a barely perceptible rot underlying everything.

It was nothing physical, but rather spiritual. Many of the most affluent homes were owned by high-ranking members of the Black Market. Dark cults, nests of vampires, and witches that had pledged fealty to unnamable horrors from beyond the Rifts were regularly uncovered, even though such occurrences were kept quiet. It just seemed that the more they tried to be like the Coalition, the more the Old Town ‘Burbs attracted the unsavory, the vile and the wicked.

Matt wondered if they’d ever get the hint.

Personally, Matt preferred the mentality of the residents of the shanty towns, like Hope. He and Twitch had cleaned Sid’s garage out of everything valuable that wasn’t nailed down or on fire. He had even helped her load his computer desk into the back of the truck, although Matt had no idea where Twitch would find space for it. Finally, with a respectable haul in gear and even a few thousand credits they’d found on Sid himself, Matt had taken off with the mechanic/hacker’s hovercycle.

Several dozen, probably more, people from the shanty town’s population witnessed it, but Matt had little concern that any would speak about what they saw. Most simply waited for Matt and Twitch to leave, in order to go over the pickings for themselves. In a few hours, someone would come along and even strip the armor from the walls, unless a small group decided to stake the place out and declare it as their own. There’d be no investigation into Sidney’s death, no bank to reclaim or resell the property. Squatters’ rights, backed up by a gun, was the only method of disburbing the goods of the dead. You can’t take it with you, for which the residents of the shanty towns were grateful.

The bike, an NG-22 Stinger, was little more than a rocket between one’s legs, an aerodynamic front cowling, and rear stabilizer fins. It was known more for its silence than it was for speed, which suited Matt just fine. It was in no way a replacement for his Rolling Thunder, but the bike and the other things he and Twitch had pilfered had finally put a respectable dent in the amount of money Matt felt he was owed for all his troubles.

He did not imagine for a moment he’d actually see complete financial compensation for what had been done in his home, his car, and his own body. But what could not be made up in credits could certainly be made up in blood. Life being as cheap as it was in the ‘Burbs, Matt planned on charging a hell of an exchange rate.

To that end, he had left Twitch at her place and come to New Colfax armed for bear. He was wearing the Bushman body armor with the Branaghan armored long coat over it. Over his shoulder was one of the Triax Pump Rifles, loaded, with two spare speed loaders in his pocket. He also had his Wilk’s, as well as the pump pistol and a pair of Vibro-Knives.

He was no expert with the rifle, but did not plan on doing any fancy shooting. But he was more than comfortable with the other weapons.

The address in New Colfax had led him to one of the more affluent neighborhoods. It had required him to seriously test the stealth capabilities of the little hovercycle to get within a city block of the place, as both city police and a separate, private neighborhood security force were alert for “undesirables.”

Matt was pretty sure he qualified as undesirable as he slipped the quiet, little hovercycle into a grove of trees in a small park across the street from the stately, modern home that he hoped housed his target.

Home, Matt thought, was inappropriate. Compound was more of an apt term. While there was only one building, a large, two-story with a pronounced techno-futuristic design, it sat on two acres of property and

was surrounded by a stone and wrought-iron fence. Matt saw at least two figures casually strolling inside the fence, both armed with rifles.

The second story of the building had at least two small balconies, likely leading to bedrooms. There were windows, but they were mirror-tinted and likely made of laser-reflective ceramic, Matt figured. The problem was getting over the heads of the two guards. The little hovercraft was nearly silent at any speed under 40 mph, and it was 2 a.m., but Matt doubted even that would allow him to hover several feet directly over the guards' heads. He needed their attention elsewhere.

Ten minutes later there was a metallic clang from the front gates. The two guards, guns leveled, approached the gate as the clanging repeated and seemed to be more insistent. Even though it was New Colfax, it was still the 'Burbs, and who knew what could be knocking on your front gate in the middle of the night. In this case, it was an abandoned hovercycle, which appeared to have drifted riderless from the street and into the heavy, wrought-iron gate.

One guard opened the gate and cautiously looked around for the missing rider, while the other inspected the bike, guiding it inside before turning it off. The two discussed briefly what could have happened to the rider, and decided something probably very unfortunate. One went out onto the street to make sure there was no threat to the house they guarded, while the other watched cautiously from the gate.

Finding nothing, the two began to discuss whether to keep the bike, or sell it and split the profits.

By then, Matt was under the balcony farthest from the main gate. The bottom of the balcony was about twelve feet off the ground, Matt figured, and he did not have a rope. But he did have a Vibro-Knife.

The Vibro-Blade series of weapons took a high-tensile strength blade and surrounded it with a high-frequency vibration field, making them all, in effect, sonic chainsaws, but usually without the mess. The vibrations were so small that only a slight blurring of the blade indicated they were moving at all.

It allowed the blades to cut through nearly any substance, but only as long as the field was active. Inactive, the blades were not even very sharp. Matt used that to his advantage.

He took out the Vibro-Blade, activated the vibration field, and stretched his arm up and stuck it into the wall about eight feet off the ground. The blade cut into the wall with ease, causing a small shower of sparks that filled Matt with momentary dread.

The guards did not see, too rapt with the supposed windfall that had literally just driven up to their front door.

Certain he was unobserved; Matt gave the knife a slight twist, while at the same time shutting the vibration field down. The end result was that the knife was locked tight into the wall. Matt pulled out the second Vibro-Knife and placed it in the wall about a foot apart from the first, locking both in place. Levering himself up, he used the two protruding hilts as a make-shift ladder that allowed him to grasp the bottom of the balcony and pull himself up.

Once he was up, he realized the balcony was more decorative than functional. It was barely large enough to fit his body on, and was made of slick metal. Matt turned back to reach for the knives, deciding they would be a dead giveaway to anyone walking by, but he could only reach the nearest one before, dressed in the slick armor, he began to slide over the side.

Carefully extracting the knife from the wall by activating the vibration field, he levered himself back up on the balcony. The other knife he had to leave behind and hope for the best. The balcony he had chosen was shadowed and far off to the side of the house, near a thick stand of bushes. He hoped the extra natural concealment would camouflage the blade.

Turning carefully, so as not to scrape against the metal surface, he looked back around the curve of the cylindrical estate. The guards had dragged the hovercycle into the gate and were inspecting it closely. Matt wasn't sure if they were checking it for bombs or trying to estimate how much it would sell for on the market. He hated having to let it go, but he had seen no other way to get to the house undetected. Besides, there was

always the chance of getting it back on the way out if the opportunity presented itself.

Still, he wished he was more mechanically inclined. He would have loved to have been able to rig a fusion block up to the starter.

As quietly as he could, Matt first peeked through the thick, double-paned window into the house itself. The window looked over a queen-sized bed in a lavishly furnished bedroom. Matt determined quickly that it was most likely a woman's room. The colors were predominantly pastels, the bedding lacy, and the make-up collection on the vanity was extensive. It was currently unoccupied, though, and that was his primary concern.

Turning his attention to the window itself, he looked between the panes of glass for any indication as to the type of security system. It most certainly had one, he figured. Twitch had let him borrow one of her lock-breaking toys, inciting him to ask what, exactly, she did on weekends for a hobby.

The device would unscramble and open magnetic locks, and deactivate wired security systems. Most wired security systems on windows and doors worked by having the door or window close a circuit when shut. If the entryway was opened without first deactivating the alarm, the circuit was broken and the alarm tripped. It was a simple and effective system, and relatively cheap. It was also pretty easy to conceal. But Twitch had told Matt what to look for. He searched the edges of the frame inside the two panes, hoping to find a small wire or evidence of the frame having been drilled into.

If the window used a laser security system he was screwed. Laser-based systems projected infrared beams from one side of the window-pane to the other. If the beam was broken by an intruder or the raising of the glass, the alarm went off. Fortunately, the emitters were easy to spot. Unfortunately, they were much harder to fool.

Sighing slightly with relief, Matt spied a small black wire on the inside of the window pane, near the midway point. Pulling out a thin tube, no thicker than a wire, from Twitch's lock-breaking tool, Matt inserted it carefully into the window where he estimated the security system to be. A small voltmeter pinged quietly, indicating he had made contact. With the press of a button, Matt caused the little tube to spray the area with conductive gel that would stretch several feet, allowing him to open the window and leave the circuit unbroken.

The gel would dissolve in a few hours, leaving a black, flaky substance. But Matt couldn't care less; he intended to leave with a bang.

Dropping quietly to the floor, Matt waited a moment to ensure no alarm was raised. He then slipped to the door and peered into the hallway. It was empty, and led to several other doors on this floor. There was a stairwell going down at the end. Not wanting to miss his target, and not wanting to leave any threats at his back, Matt began carefully checking each room.

All were empty except one. The one that had Valana tied to the bed.

The room was starkly different from the others he had seen. They had been well-furnished with pricey, comfortable furnishings. Valana's room had none of that. It had only the coarsest of beds, with no sheets, an untouched plate of food to one side of the bed on the floor and a straight-backed, metal chair in a corner.

It was a cell; it just did not have any bars.

As securely as Valana was tied, it was clear that bars would have been extraneous. Someone, Matt decided, had known she was a mage. It was said that magic-users needed their hands free and the ability to speak to cast their spells, so someone had tied off each of Valana's fingers to a steel bar that went across the back of her knuckles, rendering her hand totally immobile. In addition, they had gagged her tightly, which Matt thought to be excessive, considering the damage he had done to her throat with his laser scalpel.

Curious, Matt walked closer to the bed. Valana was apparently sleeping, and did not sense his approach. It was only when he took a firm grip on her chin and turned her head towards him that she awoke with a gasp. Her eyes, at first confused, widened with recognition as he raised the helmet's faceplate. Then she tried in vain to pull away from his grip.

Matt was studying her throat, however. There was not a scar on it. And judging from the muffled noises of dismay coming from behind the gag, the healing was more than skin deep.

Afraid she would draw attention even though gagged, Matt pulled out the Vibro-Knife and tapped the tip against her forehead.

"Quiet, or I make sure it can't be healed this time," he said coldly.

Valana, who had every reason to believe he'd make good his threat, stilled.

Moving the blade to her throat, Matt slowly began removing the gag, which consisted of a leather strap holding in place a thick wad of fabric. Before he removed the final wad, he gave her a warning look.

"This is going to be a very quiet conversation, or a very short one," he said. "Is that clear?"

She nodded quickly. Matt, looking her once more in the eyes, slipped the wad of fabric from her mouth.

"I don't care how you got here, and I don't care what they did to you," Matt said. "First, I want to know who you really are."

Valana had the look of someone who had just discovered they had fallen out of the frying pan. She began to speak, shaking her head in confusion. Matt cut her off before she even started.

"Understand that if you are not more important than a random whore off the street, I cut your throat and keep moving," he warned.

Sighing, she nodded.

"I represent a foreign government, interested in the same thing you were after," she answered. "Now, can you tell me who you work for?"

Matt snorted. "Actually, I was hoping you could tell me," he said.

Valana looked at him quizzically.

"Who captured you? Whose house is this?" Matt asked.

"You broke in, and you don't even know?"

"Look," Matt responded, tapping at her throat with the deactivated blade, "you keep answering my questions with more questions, and that has always annoyed me."

"Alright," she relented. "This is the house of a Black Market Boss. I don't know his name. Seems to be his job to eliminate possible annoyances that would disrupt the market."

"The data from Fielding's head has the Black Market worried?" he asked.

"You've had it all this time and haven't read it?"

Matt glared at the question and she hurriedly followed up.

"That data would put a whole lot of people out of business, which is what my country is hoping," she said. "It would change the world for the better, and people like the Coalition and the Black Market don't want it to see the light of day unless they have control of it."

Matt frowned. "And your country would just use it for the betterment of all life, or some high holy crap like that?"

She nodded.

"Mage, altruistic do-gooder," Matt mused. "You must be from Lazlo or New Lazlo."

The two communities were conclaves operated primarily by magic-users who believed all sentient life was equal, and, as far as Matt was concerned, thought the world's ills could be solved by a group hug. Needless to say, both were high on the Coalition's future hit list.

"Something like that," she said. "Look, my country can match any price. And we can give you sanctuary."

Matt looked at her dubiously.

"I stabbed you in the throat with a laser," he pointed out. "Ten feet out that door and you'd cast a spell on me that would have me licking your toes for the next 20 years."

"I'm not the vindictive sort," she said.

"And I'm not the trusting sort," Matt countered. "You're a spy. That means you're a trained observer. How many people here?"

"Half a dozen, tops," she answered. "There are a couple guards outside, the boss himself, his cyborg bodyguard, and one of the boss's lieutenants."

"The cyborg is female? Looks human on the outside?"

"Yeah, until someone tried to melt her face off," Valana said with a smirk that sowed fresh doubts about her not being vindictive.

"That would be me," Matt said. "They all downstairs?"

"Or in the basement," she said. "They never use the front door. The Black Market sends people in and out of here through the old storm water system. It's how they avoid the New Colfax patrols."

"Figures," Matt said. "This place is fine for Black Market upper management, but the typical Market sleazebag would never be allowed into this 'Burb."

"Anything else you can tell me?"

"They're expecting you, I think," she said. "The boss is. And the cyborg is looking forward to a rematch."

"Great," Matt muttered, picking up the fabric and the strap. Quickly, he stuffed the rag back into Valana's mouth and firmly put the strap back in place to hold it in. She struggled and glared daggers at him.

"Never said I'd free you," he pointed out.

She began to mumble loudly through the gag, however, and began to rock on the bed. Cursing, Matt brandished the knife, which quieted her for a moment.

"Alright, I screwed you over at Karma's. And right now I have a bit of a problem with people who screw other people over for no good reason," he explained. "So here's the deal. I'm putting this knife on the floor next to the bed. You're going to have to roll out slowly and quiet-like to get to it, go too fast and you make too much noise and they come running. Then you're screwed. That's the best you're going to get from me. Deal?"

Valana nodded emphatically. Matt carefully set the blade down on the side of the bed away from the door, before he slipped from the room and closed the door behind him.

Forgetting about Valana, Matt turned his attention back to the house. He crawled to the edge of the stairs and peered over, grateful to see that the stairway was walled on both sides until you got to the bottom of what appeared to be a kitchen. He could see black and white tiling on the floor, and heard the slight hum of an appliance.

Creeping down the stairs with the Wilk's drawn, he came around the corner gun first. It was indeed a kitchen, and a well-stocked one at that. A large stove, two refrigerators, and appliances Matt could not easily identify lined the walls. The center of the room was dominated by two large sinks. Over the sinks hung a wide array of pans. One entire cabinet in the corner nearest him was given over to various types of coffee. But the most important furnishing in the kitchen was a small table. Seated at the table, with his back to Matt, was a heavysset man whose build Matt immediately recognized.

Matt crept up on the man, engrossed in his meal, and put the Wilk's to the back of his head. The man froze with a bite full of Coalition-grown beef halfway to his mouth.

"I didn't think it would be this easy," Matt said quietly, looking toward the door at the other end of the room. His amplified hearing picked up voices from beyond the door, but they did not seem to be approaching.

"He knew you'd be coming," the man said. "You'll be very lucky to get out of here alive."

"Who knew?"

"I think you know by now," the man said.

Matt grimaced. He'd been hoping he was wrong.

Coming around the table slightly, Matt grabbed the man's hands one at a time and placed them palm down on the table.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Name's Riley," the heavysset man answered. "I'm no one special."

Matt got a good look at the man he thought he'd been hunting. He was younger than he expected, perhaps in his mid-20s. He was clean shaven except for a goatee of red hair that matched the thick thatch on his head. He had the look of someone who had grown up inside of Chi-Town itself, as opposed to the hard streets of the 'Burbs.

"So my house got burned down by no one special?" Matt asked, nudging Riley's head with the barrel of the laser pistol. "And no one special is going to die before he finishes a really tasty-looking steak?"

"Before he takes the first bite, apparently," Riley said, looking at the fork wistfully. "But that won't get you your revenge, will it?"

Matt ignored the question, looking again toward the door. The voices in the other room had subsided, but he did not hear anyone approaching. He looked down at the steak differently, knowing now that Riley hadn't actually taken a bite yet.

"That's real steak?" he asked. Riley nodded. "Real, honest-to-God, Moo Cow steak?"

Riley nodded again. Matt grabbed the fork and ate the piece that had once been destined for the other man's mouth. For Matt, it was a pretty daring move.

"Damn, that's good," Matt said, chewing slowly.

"I thought you said he was good," laughed a voice that made Matt's guts turn cold. Looking up, he saw the "hidden" cyborg from the attack on his house. The skin on her face had been replaced, but the new bionic hand she was sporting had yet to be covered over. She walked quietly through the kitchen door, a large pistol pointed at Matt's head.

"You're not the only one with amplified hearing," she sneered.

"He was good," a familiar voice answered, walking into the kitchen behind the cyborg.

"Hi Doc," Matt said, unsurprised. He put the fork down. Then he put the gun down.

Doc Halloway made his way over to the table just behind the cyborg. As she started frisking Matt down, removing his other weapons, Doc looked at the table and shook his head.

"Got this far to be done in by prime rib, Matt?" he said incredulously. "I thought you didn't eat off other people's plates."

Matt shrugged. "He hadn't started eating yet."

Riley quickly got up and stepped away from Matt.

"I really think he was going to kill me," he said. "Soon as he was done eating my friggin' steak."

"He was," Doc agreed. "Without a second thought. That's what made him so good."

"So good at what?" Matt asked, eyes narrowing suspiciously. Halloway wasn't talking about Cyber-Snatching.

"Matt Heath, you are the cheapest, perhaps most successful, assassin the Black Market has ever had on its payroll," Doc laughed.

Matt lunged, but he never made it. The cyborg's new bionic hand was much faster. Even with the Bushman's armored helmet, the shock of the blow dropped Matt to the floor. The authentic faux linoleum floor rushed up at Matt suddenly, and then he saw nothing at all.

The first thing Matt Heath, who once thought himself a Cyber-Snatcher, noticed upon awakening was the overpowering smell of untreated sewage. It was powerful enough to make him retch his way back to full consciousness. Finding his hands bound behind his back and on his knees, Matt found himself caught between the urge to pitch forward to make sure he did not vomit on himself, and the fear that once he began to lean forward, nothing would stop him.

Fortunately, there was a tight grip on his shoulder that allowed him to lean just enough. Coughing hoarsely when he was done, Matt cautiously opened his eyes.

He was kneeling in what appeared to be a large sewage pipe. Looking down, he saw the sewer water running between his knees, going forward a few feet, and then plunging off a precipice into the unknown darkness. From the waterfall-like sounds, he was certain the drop-off was considerable.

But falling over the edge was secondary, quite secondary, to the sudden, uncontrollable flare-up of absolute horror Matt felt at finding himself kneeling in a working sewer pipe. With a rasping shout of sheer terror, Matt tried to hurl himself back and upward to his feet, but the iron fingers digging into his shoulder blade prevented him from doing much more than rocking on his knees a bit.

Still, Matt fought like a man who could not afford to fail, flinging his body every which way in order to escape the grip of the cybernetically enhanced woman at his back and get to his feet.

"Steady, Heath," she growled. "Or I swear I'll pitch you into this crap face first and put my boot to the back of your head until you inhale. Do we have an understanding?"

Taking deep breaths, Matt forcefully battered the fearful animal that had risen to the surface inside of him back into its hole. It was still there, however, scrabbling at the surface of his psyche like a deranged monster that could not be long contained.

"Yeah," Matt said, once he regained his senses. "We have an understanding. I'm under, and you're standing."

"Exactly."

Matt would have paid a lot of money to erase the smugness from her voice.

Unable, temporarily, to do that, Matt instead tried to calm himself by taking in his surroundings and his situation. It was an all-but calming experience.

The two of them were in a five-foot diameter storm water and sewer pipe. Its size, and the fact that the watermark stopped at about a foot high, told Matt the system was sorely over-engineered. That meant it was Coalition. At first, Matt thought he and the cyborg were alone, which would have meant his life was over. But his hearing soon picked up approaching steps over the sound of gurgling and falling sewer water. It sounded distinctly like two people dragging something heavy.

"Eliza, you really should be friggin' carrying this thing," Riley's voice carried over the sound of flowing water from somewhere behind Matt and the cyborg, who Matt assumed was Eliza.

"Yeah, and who would have watched over him?" Eliza asked. "I wouldn't trust you to handle him, even when he's bound and unconscious."

"Can it, both of you," Doc said. "Get over here and get this ready, Eliza, while I have a business talk with our guest."

The cyborg jerked Matt's shoulder forward, as if to toss him face first in the muck. The panic bubble in Matt rushed to the surface, and he struggled in vain. Catching him just before he toppled, the cyborg set him right again.

"Pathetic," she muttered, and Matt felt her walk away from him. Matt's blood boiled, but there was little he could do.

Doc walked around him into view. Matt saw that he had waders on over Huntsman body armor. He knelt carefully in front of Matt and looked over him sadly.

"Cut the melodrama, Halloway," Matt said. "I'm not taking a dirt nap, so you want something. The data, I'm assuming."

"Well, to begin with, yes," Doc admitted. "That will be a start. And I'm sure I'll get it. If you don't give it to me, then Twitch will."

"You don't even know what Twitch looks like," Matt pointed out. "You've never even met Twitch face-to-face."

"I have not found Twitch because I have not found a reason to expend vital resources tracking down a slightly above-average hack rat," Halloway corrected. "I won't need to. In a few days, you're going to agree to anything I ask."

With that, Doc waved Eliza and Riley forward. Eliza carried a small, oblong iron cage easily on one shoulder, dropping it down next to Matt and the Doctor without a care. Riley labored slightly more under the weight of what must have been 30 feet of heavy, industrial use chain.

"What the hell are you going to do with that?" Matt asked, trying to bury the creeping alarm in his voice.

"Put you in it, of course," Doc explained. "Then I'm going to have Eliza lower you over the edge of this pipe and leave you hanging in a deluge of raw sewage. Every few days I'll come back and see if you're ready to give me the data... and if you're ready to work as an assassin for the Black Market full-time."

"You want an assassin?" Matt asked, his voice loaded with sarcasm and venom. "Let me go and give me a gun. I'll show you an assassin."

"I don't think so, Matt," Doc laughed, gesturing to Eliza. She picked Matt up under the arms as he began to fight wildly, feet lashing out at anyone or anything in range. When Eliza lowered him into the small, lozenge-shaped iron cage, she had to step on his fingers to get him to let go of the outer bars, and that was even with his hands bound.

"I always told you that you had a problem, Matt," Doc said, kneeling next to the cage as Eliza slammed it shut. "And I'm going to use that

problem to my benefit. By the time I drag you out of this stream of waste, muck and filth, you'll sell me your soul for a bar of crappy soap."

Matt, heart racing, had no comeback for once.

Eliza secured one end of the heavy chain to a ring on the cage over Matt's head, and the other to the top of the sewage outfall pipe. She then placed a booted heel on the top of the cage and began sliding it toward the edge of the pipe.

"Doc, if you do this, I'm going to kill you," Matt swore.

"Matt," Doc responded. "When I do this, I'm going to break you."

With a nod, Doc signaled Eliza to send Matt over the edge. She gave the cage a kick and sent it hurtling out into the abysmal darkness of the sewage outfall. It swung out in an ungraceful arc before plummeting into the depths. With a ringing pop, the chain snapped taut. For a moment, Doc, Riley and Eliza feared the mounting for the chain would give, but it held. The darkness swallowed up the cage completely, but any concerns as to whether Matt survived the fall were answered when the cage stopped swinging, and settled directly beneath the flow of untreated sewage from Chi-Town.

Looking down into the darkness, hearing Heath's tortured cries, Eliza shook her head in near sympathy.

"I once was working in the south with some mercs, and we ran into a dark cult of mages called soul harvesters," she said. "They'd catch you, stab out your eyes, and summon a little fragment of some dark... thing... from beyond. They said it would catch your soul and take it back through the Rifts, where it would feed on your spirit for all eternity."

Riley looked at Eliza like she'd just admitted to being the Coalition Emperor's lovechild.

"And you're sharing this cheery vignette with us because..."

"Because they caught one of us, and we tried to rescue him one night, but got there too late for the sacrifice," she explained quietly. "We heard them sacrifice him, but we couldn't get to him in time. He screamed something like that."

"Lovely," Riley deadpanned.

"Well," said Doc, taking one last look over the edge, smiling, and straightening up. "Who's up for something to eat?"

Dangling some 30 feet below, as the three walked away, Matt Heath was left alone in the dark, submerged in a merciless, unending stream of his worst nightmare, with nothing but his screams to keep him company.

On numerous occasions, Matt tried to discipline his mind, rein in his emotions, and conquer his fears. But every time the consistency of the flow drumming down on his head would change, every time it became clear the stream was made up less of water and more of something else, sanity would slip from Matt's grasp again, and he would scream himself hoarse.

At times he thought he heard voices above him, perhaps Twitch's, calling down to him, but it was just the water roaring against the cage; just his imagination. At other times, he saw eyes twinkling up at him from the deeper depths below him. He figured them for phantoms too at first, but after a while, he became convinced that they were real.

In his few moments of lucidity and rationality, Matt tried to sway the cage out of the disgusting flow, but it only swung back. He tried to press against sides of the cage away from the stream of raw waste, but there was no room. He even jumped up and down in the cage, trying to dislodge it from the chain, until he realized his success would only likely end up in him drowning in the stuff somewhere in the darkness below. After a while, he felt his mind retreating, a catatonic state knocking eagerly at the back door to his psyche. If he opened that door, however, he knew insanity would come through with it.

When the cage did finally begin to move up, some indeterminate amount of time later, Matt first thought he was imagining it, and that he had, truly, cracked. But even when he dismissed the sensation out of hand, the motion continued. It was slow, and it was jerky, but it continued.

Matt wondered idly if several days had already passed, and Holloway had come back to get the data and his oath of allegiance to the Black Market. Some small part of Matt's brain hoped it was so, and that scared Matt almost more than the raw sewage running down his body.

Even this, however, he dismissed as fancy. But still the cage rose. Ultimately, Matt wondered if some sewer-dwelling monstrosity had just puzzled together how to get at the tasty morsel in the cage. If so, he swore to be dangerous prey.

What he was not prepared for was the disheveled, sweating and groaning, blue visage of Valana peering over the edge. His vision, blurred from downfall of sewage, could not make her out clearly. Besides, the last thing he wanted to do was look directly upwards and open his eyes.

"You alive in there?" the D-Bee's voice carried down through the rush of water. Matt grunted loudly in his throat. After his initial screams, he'd realized the error in having his mouth open, which had led to all new spasms of fear. He was determined not to let it happen again.

"Okay, I've got you close enough now," she yelled down.

Close enough for what? The still-rational part of Matt's brain wondered. Moments later, his stomach lurched as the cage began to levitate up, as if lifted by an invisible hand.

Once the cage was even with the edge of the pipe, and out of the stream of sewer water, Valana grabbed it and dragged it onto solid ground. After muttering under her breath and pointing, a bright blue bolt jumped from her finger to the cage's lock, melting and blackening it into an unrecognizable lump.

"You know, you really are a piece of work leaving me like that," Valana said, more to herself, as she pried the remainder of the lock off with Matt's Vibro-Knife. "I don't know why I even..."

Valana stopped because she had, casually, looked up and looked Matt in the eyes. They were not the eyes of a sane man.

"Are you okay?"

Matt looked at her, wild-eyed, as if just recognizing her for the first time. Slowly, some rational, thinking part of his brain emerged from the shell into which it had retreated.

"I am about as far from okay as someone can get," he said quietly.

Frowning, Valana checked Heath over for injuries. He was only wearing a soaked, gray bodysuit. The type many wore under body armor for comfort. She hauled a small satchel off her shoulder and pulled out a black leather case that unzipped along one side.

"You look alright, but I better give you a full-spectrum antibiotic after that shower you just took," she said. Matt stared down the tunnel, as if by will alone he could focus in on wherever Holloway and his two companions had gone. He did not even notice the three shots in the arm she gave him before declaring him fit.

She also pulled out the coat he had worn, as well as his pistol. Finally, Matt truly acknowledged her presence, the feel of the familiar items bringing him back to the present.

"Where did you get these?" he asked.

"They left them in the house after they took you out," Valana explained. "From there it was a simple matter of following you down the proverbial rabbit hole, as you humans say."

"Why?"

"Because I still need that data," she said frankly. "And if you have any honor..."

"I don't," Matt cut her off. "Honor is for those who fear the social implications of doing what needs to be done for their own benefit."

"You think they'll buy it off you?" she laughed, pointing down the sewer pipe. "I'm the only sensible buyer you've got right now. And that's even after you stabbed me in the throat with a laser."

"Quit crying about it," Matt said, putting the coat on. "You got better. Now, show me somewhere I can get somewhat clean. Then show me where those bastards went."

"I passed a cistern on the way here," Valana said, leading the way. "I had to duck into a side passage when Holloway and his crew were on their way back to the house."

Matt stopped for a moment, looking back the way they had come.

"How long was I hanging there?"

"Half an hour or so," she said, continuing to walk.

Matt shook his head and caught up. He had felt like hours. He truly shuddered to think what he would have been had Holloway been able to make good on his promise to leave him there for days.

They walked for about ten minutes before coming to a T-shaped intersection. She pointed to the left.

“That’s the way back to the house in New Colfax,” she said, before then pointing to the right. “The cistern is down that way.”

“What makes you think this cistern is clean?” Matt asked guardedly.

“It looks like a rainwater catch basin,” she explained. “The rim is elevated and it’s right below a collection of storm water pipes. I think at one time something else stood where Chi-Town is, long ago.”

Matt nodded absently. He could feel the layers of filth against his skin, and it was taking every ounce of effort not to run blindly up the nearest ladder back to the surface, and force someone to allow him to use their shower at gunpoint.

It was the ‘Burbs, after all, and there was no guarantee that someone had a shower, let alone one that had access to clean water.

Hurrying, Matt rushed down the right passage, soon hearing the loud “plunk!” of heavy water droplets into a larger body of water. There was little illumination, just the occasional light filtering down from the streets above. Matt figured they had to still be under the Old Town ‘Burbs. None of the New Town ‘Burbs or shanty towns had a water and sewer system, though, like Valana, Matt suspected it was part of a much older system that had been usurped by the fortress city of Chi-Town.

Matt could virtually smell the clean water (or at least clean enough for his immediate needs), and he could see the ripple reflections on the walls of a dark chamber up ahead. However, he could also see the floor moving, as if of its own volition.

At first, Matt thought that perhaps the cistern had overflowed from lack of maintenance. But it quickly became clear that the motion was not due to the naturalistic waves of standing water, but by a mass of writhing, wriggling, living things.

Matt slowed to a quick walk, daring to move up close enough to make out what appeared to be a very large nest of very large vampire flatworms.

“Yeah, I didn’t go into the room, but I saw them in there,” Valana said, catching up to Matt in the tunnel. “I think some idiot’s been feeding the entire nesting network human remains, not knowing that they get larger and more aggressive when they have an ample food supply. Morons.”

“Yeah,” Matt said dryly. “The world is full of idiots.”

Matt readied his pistol, trying to decide the best place to put a couple shots to scatter the entire group. But Valana held out her arm in front of him, signaling him to hold fire.

Chanting rapidly, Valana held out her hand, palm up. At the apex of her chant, a small, purple glowing mote appeared over her open palm. She blew gently against it, and the little purple light drifted into the center of the mass of worms. She then stepped back several more feet. Matt followed suit.

From within the colony of vampire flat worms, a purple miasma began to bubble up. The miasma rose like a mysterious fog, soon filling the room and then rolling out into the tunnels. The worms quickly fled to the walls, disappearing into cracks, crevices, and down other drain pipes.

Just as Matt began to become concerned how big the miasma was going to get, Valana clapped her hands and it was gone, as if it had never been there at all.

“What kind of magic-user are you?” Matt asked.

“Air Warlock,” she replied, moving forward into the room. “I work with the elemental force of air.”

“I thought Warlocks were guys,” Matt said, confused.

“You thought wrong, now take your bath.”

Matt rushed forward to the cistern. It was far from the sanitary cleanliness of his home, of course, but it would do to get the worst of the filth off his body. He scrubbed with bare fingers and broken nails, cutting himself a dozen times. Valana frowned in concern, having not realized before how traumatized he had been by the entire episode.

For Matt, the cold, bracing water cleared his head as well as made his hair something he could imagine touching again one day. He dunked his head several times in the cold waters, promising himself a real shower and bath once this was all over. Perhaps he’d even claim the house which

appeared to be Doc’s permanent home, but Matt was not certain the Old Town ‘Burb followed the age-old tradition of Squatter’s Rights, which were almost required knowledge in the other districts of the ‘Burbs.

Normally, the simple bath would have not nearly been enough, but after what Matt had been through, he’d never felt this clean. Still, however, he had to avoid looking under his fingernails, and feeling the stubble beginning to grow on his face. Looking down at his bare feet briefly, he looked up hopefully at Valana. She showed him the now-empty pack and shook her head.

“Wow, for someone hell-bent on bloody revenge, you sure are keen on keeping presentable,” she noted.

“You don’t know the half of it,” Matt replied, wiping off the best he could and gingerly stepping back from the cistern.

“So you killed Fielding for Halloway,” Valana said. “Then what? He double-crossed you?”

“Close,” Matt said, checking the charge on the pistol and tucking it into the front of his pants. He re-donned the armored duster and settled it on his shoulders, checking the pockets, only to find them empty. “Halloway hired me to do Cyber-Snatch jobs. You know what they are?”

Valana nodded with a small shudder of revulsion. Matt ignored her and continued, beginning to head back the way they came up the large sewer pipe.

“Well, a few hours ago I found all the cybernetics and bionics I’d been snatching in a lockbox at a Black Market mechanic’s shop,” Matt snorted.

“So?” Valana asked. “They couldn’t sell the stuff?”

“They never intended to, except maybe as pocket change,” Matt clarified. “It was all a cover. My Cyber-Snatch jobs were assassinations. Except I had no idea I was an assassin.”

“Seems like little difference to me,” Valana sniffed. “You kill people in both. Only the goals of the employer changed.”

“Yeah, well tell my credit account that there’s no difference between a Black Market assassin and a freelance Cyber-Snatcher.”

The pair again reached the intersection, but this time headed straight, in the direction Valana claimed would carry them back to Halloway’s house in New Colfax. Looking down, Matt could see drag marks in the muck from where Doc and Riley had dragged the cage. Reminding himself of it set his blood to boiling again.

“Why not just hire you as an assassin? To save money?”

“Naw,” Matt shook his head. “I turned them down. I didn’t want to get tied to the Market. ‘Cept, in the end, here I am.”

Valana mulled the story over as they rounded a turn in the pipe. Something slithered quickly down a smaller side passage at their approach. Both of them ignored it.

“So you have no interest in the data Fielding was carrying, do you?”

“Personally, no,” Matt said. “But I understand why everyone wants it.”

Valana nodded. “Then you know why it must go to Lazlo,” she pressed emphatically. “Lazlo is...”

“Lazlo is the one place that would use what I saw to reshape the world for the better,” Matt acknowledged. “No more random Rifts, no more alien invasions, and no more freak ley line storms destroying whole nations... yeah, I got the gist of it.”

“If the Coalition gets it...”

“If the Coalition gets it, everyone except the Coalition is screwed,” Matt finished. “I got that too. The Black Market probably just wants it to sell to the highest bidder.”

“So we have a deal then?” Valana asked.

“Shush, we’re here,” Matt answered.

The two had come onto a large, open area. The central pipe broke off into a multitude of smaller, 10-inch pipes that raced in all directions. It was obvious that the smaller pipes were much more recent, perhaps built in the last 100 years, and made of synthetic materials. The older, larger pipes were cement and metal. Against one wall was a ladder leading to a small manhole.

Matt, circling the chamber, which was about 100 yards in circumference, noticed old, faded diagrams at many points on the walls. He looked

at what they showed, and then looked up at the manhole, remembering the odd, circular shape of the home.

“That’s not a house at all,” Matt said. “It’s some old storm water and sewer junction station or something.”

Valana nodded, looking around.

“Yes, all of the runoff is running into this room from the other pipes, and then flowing down the central pipe where I found you. It’s the only one that ends in a drop-off and the only one that slants downhill slightly,” she said. “Of course, the Coalition doesn’t care one bit where the waste is actually going.”

“Most likely, the groundwater that feeds half the ‘Burbs,” Matt noted, feeling extremely grateful he purified all his water twice.

Matt began to walk to the other pipes, inspecting the point where they came into the room. He also expected the main pipe they’d just walked out off, nodding in satisfaction when he saw the large, steel, circular door that could be rolled in place, blocking the pipe off if necessary.

“There has to be a central control upstairs, in the basement probably,” Matt said. “It’s almost dawn, isn’t it?”

Valana nodded, and then looked over at him suddenly.

“What do you have in mind?”

Matt simply smiled, and headed for the ladder up.

For the second time in the last several hours, Riley Carson sat down to have a steak. It had taken him a half hour to get the smell of sewer off of him, but it seemed to him that now, he could still faintly smell it again. Determined not to let it ruin his dinner, he forced himself to ignore the smell and dug in.

“Real Moo Cow,” he pantomimed. “You bet your sweet...”

Riley stopped with the fork halfway to his mouth. It was a pose that was becoming all too familiar. He definitely smelled the distinctively overpowering odor of raw sewage. And it was getting stronger.

Frowning, Riley stood from the table and headed for the basement door, on the other side of the kitchen. As he approached, the pots and pans began to seemingly rattle on their own. Then he felt the vibrations in the floor underfoot.

Growing seriously concerned, Riley opened the door to the basement. The butt of a Wilk’s laser pistol smashed into the bridge of his nose with sufficient force to shatter it. Immediately, Riley was blinded by tears. He started to cry out, but a fist slammed into his throat, temporarily collapsing his wind pipe.

Riley tried desperately to stagger back away from his attackers, but all too quickly, he was grabbed by the neck and hurled forward down the steps, into a rising tide of raw sewage.

Riley Carson could not swim.

Valana and Matt emerged from the basement into the kitchen with Valana looking behind her in concern. The rising waters were just a few feet behind them, and would quickly fill the basement.

“That’s backing up a lot faster than I expected,” she pointed out.

“Yeah,” Matt nodded. “I always knew everyone in Chi-Town was full of crap.”

Valana bit back a laugh.

“It’s almost morning,” Matt pointed out. “Everyone in Chi-Town is getting up, brushing their teeth, showering, and taking a dump.”

“And you just sealed off the primary runoff shaft,” Valana said, concerned. “That flow isn’t going to stop in this house!”

Matt nodded. “New Colfax is about to have a crappy morning.”

Rolling her eyes, Valana turned back toward the basement door, which actually led to an old sewer system flow control room, and cast a quick spell. A blue glow shimmered across the doorway. Matt raised an eyebrow in curiosity.

“It’s an energy field,” Valana explained. “It’ll keep the flow contained for a few moments.”

“Until it finds a way out through the ventilation system,” Matt said.

“Then let’s hurry and get out of here,” she said.

The two of them moved quickly out of the kitchen and into a small medical room. Besides surgical tools, a diagnostic scanner and medical bed, one table against the wall had Matt’s pump rifle, pump pistol and speed loaders. The armor was in a pile on the floor, but Matt didn’t think

they had time to put it on. Already, he could hear voices raised in concern from elsewhere in the house. That was understandable, however, as the smell of sewage was becoming overpowering.

Grabbing the weapons, Matt handed Valana the pump pistol and slung the rifle over his shoulder. He threw the speed loaders into a pocket after making sure the rifle was fully loaded. Looking back, he saw that Valana held the pistol like she knew what she was doing. He also noticed there was a slight aura of energy around her.

The two of them moved out of the door on the other side of the room, and into a large, curving hallway that must have followed the outside wall. Coming toward them was a half-dressed guard, still putting on a shirt and buckling on a gun belt.

“What the hell is that smell?” he asked the two before his brain registered that they weren’t supposed to be there.

Ignoring the hands the guard threw up in protest, Matt shot him. The laser carved a neat hole out of the center of his chest cavity. Valana reeled back from Matt in disgust.

“He was going to surrender!”

“And after he had surrendered, I would have shot him,” Matt pointed out. “I thought you were a spy. I thought spies were supposed to be pretty hard.”

“We do what we have to,” Valana said, looking down at the dead man in pity. “But we never kill if it isn’t necessary.”

“I’d have made a lousy spy then,” Matt said, reaching down and, while no fan of the pistol the guard was carrying, removed the energy clip and stuffed it in his pocket. “Was your relationship with Fielding doing what you had to do?”

Valana raised her chin. “He knew who and what I was,” she said.

“Don’t doubt it,” Matt said. “But he cared for you anyway. I saw how he greeted you.”

“Your point?” she said defensively, as they walked around the hallway. Matt waived her to quiet down, peeking into the next room only to find it clear.

“My point is that if the feeling was mutual, you’d have never hauled me up out of that cage,” Matt said. “I’m here, so you were playing him for an idiot. But yet I’m cold-blooded.”

Valana lowered her head, cowed. “That was different.”

“Sure. Whatever.”

Matt slipped into the small study that led off the hallway. One archway to the left led into what appeared to be a dining room. To the right was a door. Checking the door, Matt saw that there was a small bathroom with a shower, and looked at it longingly. But Valana pulled him back and gestured toward the open archway into the dining room.

Listening, Matt could just barely make out quiet, slow, footsteps on the other side of the wall. He was pretty certain who it was, and a grin spread across his face as he slipped the pump rifle off his shoulder.

The outside of the house Holloway had chosen to run his Black Market duchy was made of advanced materials that could stop any small arms fire and even hinder a tank shell. Armoring a large house like that was expensive and time-consuming. So most armored homes, while fairly common among the affluent, were only armored on the outside. The inside walls were plaster, wood and drywall, like any other home.

Drywall is not much of a defense against a high-velocity exploding shell, as the small of Eliza’s back suddenly discovered. The blast shot her forward, slamming her stomach into the rim of the thick oak dining room table. The wood shattered under the impact, and Eliza tumbled limply across the surface of the table, obliterating a small fortune in crystal and china along the way.

Matt was cocking the rifle to fire again, but Eliza sprang right back to her feet. Seeing him leveling the large weapon her way, the cyborg kicked the underside of the table. Her augmented strength propelled the heavy slab of oak forward at tremendous speed, sending it smashing through the portal at Matt.

Matt barely missed having the table take his head off, dropping to the floor and wincing as a rain of splinters cascaded down over his head. The table itself was lodged solidly into the wall behind him.

Eliza rushed in to finish Matt, but she had not anticipated Valana, who caught her in the side with another explosive slug, this time from the pump pistol. The blast hurled Eliza to the side, into a bookcase whose shelves collapsed, unleashing a torrent of hardback books that partially buried her.

As Valana began casting again, Eliza rolled out of the pile of books, which exploded from the round Matt had just fired at her head. Small, vibrating blades slid out of each of Eliza's fingernails as she swiped at Valana's seemingly unprotected throat.

Though the force of the blow rocked Valana's head, the aura of protective energy seemed to absorb the attack, giving her enough time to finish the incantation she had begun. Three crackling spheres of electricity appeared around her, orbiting like small, electrical satellites.

Eliza tried to beat a quick retreat from the obviously powerful and mysterious magic, but Matt was waiting for her. His next shot caught the side of her skull, incinerating the synthetic skin and hair on that side of her head, and shattering one of her cybernetic eyes.

Clutching her damaged head, Eliza still tried to dodge the three spheres of ball lightning Valana pumped into her. But the magical missiles struck with uncanny accuracy, each one wrapping the cyborg in tendrils of electricity that left her charred, smoking and twitching.

Not willing to give her a moment's rest, Matt pumped shot after shot into the cyborg every time she tried to rise. At point-blank range, and mostly to the head, the shots were devastating. Each blast seemed to shake the house.

Finally, having put four more blasts into her, Matt stood over the mangled cyborg, looking at the wealth of exposed bionics that had been hidden underneath the synthetic flesh. Eliza looked up at him with one, damaged, flickering cybernetic eye.

"I... I... was Doc's b-best creation," she cried, in a voice that was only partially human.

"No," Matt said, aiming the rifle at the one functioning eye. "I was." He pulled the trigger.

As Matt was reaching into his pocket for a new speed loader, two more guards rushed into the dining room, looking at the carnage in amazement. Matt and Valana dove for cover as the two men, armed with submachine-guns, opened fire with a spray of rocket-propelled ammunition. Retreating back the way they'd come, Valana and Matt barely stayed ahead of the gunfire, which pierced the walls like tissue paper.

Matt struggled to reload the rifle on the run, but not being a trained rifleman, he grew frustrated and simply dropped it at Valana's feet while pulling out the Wilk's.

"Reload it," he said, turning back down the hall and catching the lead guard with two shots to the chest as the man rushed out of the study in pursuit. The man was wearing Urban Warrior armor, however, and the chest plate saved his life.

"Better idea," Valana said, dropping into a chant.

Matt fired another shot, forcing the man to duck back into the study, and then hunkered down as a spray of bullets ate into the curving inner wall of the hall.

Suddenly, a gust of unnatural wind coalesced in front of Valana, catching up small bits of dust and debris. The gust built into a small, localized gale, a swirling pattern growing in front of her. Matt thought, for an instant, that it seemed to be the wind in the shape of a man, but it was hard to tell. Speaking in another language, one that sounded like it had nothing in common with human speech, Valana sent the phantom against the two men firing at them from the wrecked study.

They were prepared for two armed intruders, even determined ones. But they were not prepared for the only semi-visible thing that stalked around the corner and began to tear into them without mercy.

It took mere seconds, but after a couple screams, some wild sprays of gunfire, and the finality of the popping and crunching of bone, it was over.

Matt crept cautiously to the edge of the study, and even he had to look away. Whatever Valana had summoned seemed to have no weapons but its bare hands. But those hands must have been stronger than any ten

men. It had torn the men limb-from-limb, and it had not been in any particular hurry doing it.

"And you criticized me?" Matt said incredulously. "I don't know what pit that thing came from, and I don't want to know. Send it back. Now."

Valana started to protest, to explain that it was a mindless elemental fragment, but she saw the look in Matt's eyes. It was not the look of someone who would be won over by logic. No matter what else, Matt was born and raised in the 'Burbs. There were some lines he wasn't ready to cross just yet.

Valana nodded and whispered a command to the phantom, which dispersed as quickly as it had appeared. Picking up the speed loader and reloading it, Matt looked at the Air Warlock again, as if taking her measure.

"I think I liked it better when you were just a D-Bee whore," he said. "Doc's got to know we're here by now. Question is, where would he go?"

"Well, is he the run type or the fight type?" Valana asked.

Matt thought for a moment, and then ran head on through the study and dining room, nearly taking out a coffee table as he sprinted for the front door.

"Run type?" Valana asked, struggling to keep up.

Matt simply tapped his ear as he ripped open the front door and spotted Holloway clambering onto his stolen hovercycle.

Holloway barely had time to turn before Matt crashed into him, momentum carrying both men off the bike and into the grass.

"Matt, wait!" Holloway shouted, receiving a devastating blow to the mouth with the stock of the rifle in response. "Staggering backwards, struggling to get to his feet, Holloway tried to fend off Matt's attacks. "We can cut a deal!"

Matt grabbed Holloway by the collar, hauling him fully to his feet.

"Clean, Doc!" Matt sent another fist crashing into the side of Holloway's head. "That's what I like!"

"Matt, please!" Holloway cried, spitting teeth.

"You know how people say that self-control and conquering our instincts is what separates us from the animals?" Matt screamed. "Well, they're wrong! And I was wrong!"

Matt dragged Doc, kicking and screaming, back into the house. The walls were trembling, there was a roaring sound coming from every vent. Just then, they all began to spew raw sewage. The deluge exploded out of the walls, rushing toward the two men. Matt stood his ground.

"Animals let bygones be bygones. Animals prey on each other for sustenance and nothing else," Matt explained. "When they kill, it's for need. And they can never deny their instincts."

The stinking, putrid flood of raw sewage rushed over the two men at nearly waist level, carrying everything that was not nailed down toward the front door.

"But not us, Holloway!" Matt yelled over the roar of water. "Sometimes, we kill for pleasure. And sometimes, just sometimes, we can overcome our instincts to do it!"

Ignoring Holloway's screams, Matt held the Cyber-Doc's head under the churning, waste-filled waters until he was certain the man was dead. Then he let go, and let the flood of sewage sweep Holloway's body away.

"Matt!" Valana screamed, mounting the hovercycle. "It's over! We have to go!"

Regaining his senses, Matt struggled out of the flow of sewage and onto the bike, taking over and quickly sending it rising into the morning sky over New Colfax.

"You stink," Valana pointed out.

"Quiet," Matt replied, setting the cycle to hover a moment over the park, watching the brackish, stinking flood send tendrils out through the most affluent section of the New Colfax. It swirled over lawns, it busted through basement windows, and it swept young couples off their feet as they struggled to get into their hovercars.

Matt, reeking and dripping with the stuff, laughed.

"Wow," Valana said, looking him over. "What do you have against New Colfax?"

"I was born here," Matt said, giving no more explanation. He turned the hovercycle toward the outer 'Burbs and gunned the engine as the waste of Chi-Town took up residence with New Colfax's finest.

One of the good things about the 'Burbs, Matt figured, was that few people asked questions. This was mainly because few people wanted answers, but also because he who asked the fewest questions tended to be able to serve the most customers. So, with the 'Burbs abuzz with the morning incident in New Colfax already, it was not hard for he and Valana to rent a room for an hour, which Matt used to scrub himself truly clean while she went out and got him some proper clothes.

Once that was done, Matt rode with Valana to Center Court, landing outside of Twitch's shop.

He knew upon landing that there was a problem. The door was open well before her usual opening hour, and a black Scarab Coalition Officer's Hovercar sat out front alongside three Coalition Warbird Rockercycles.

Valana, wisely, stayed outside as Matt entered, Wilk's drawn.

In the main shop were Wilport, Silent Death, and Titan. They had not heard Matt's quiet steps, and were caught by surprise when he put the pistol to the back of Wilport's head.

"Thinking of double-crossing me too, Wilport?" Matt asked.

Titan growled, letting go of Twitch's arm, whom he'd had pressed against the wall.

"Now everybody just calm down," Wilport said, raising his arms. "We're not looking to screw anybody over."

"Oh really," Twitch said. "Could have fooled me."

Stepping past the bear-man with trepidation, she rounded to Matt's side.

"Long night?"

"You don't know the half of it."

"Hey," Wilport said. "After that mess in New Colfax at Halloway's house, we figured you'd bought it, man."

Matt nodded. "So you did know who he was."

Wilport shrugged.

"We weren't sure you'd move against him if you knew," Silent Death interjected. "We didn't know if you had the guts."

"Apparently I had more than you," Matt shot back, eliciting a hiss from the Psi-Stalker. "I figured you were up to no good when that tape you showed me didn't have any audio. What good would it be to record all those deals that go down there if you couldn't hear what they were saying?"

"Sharp man," Wilport said, taking a slow, deliberate step away from the gun and turning slowly to face Matt. "I could make use of you."

"You'll have to make do without me," Matt said.

The Psi-Stalker hissed again just then, as Valana entered behind them, a familiar protective aura in place around her.

"The Lazlo spy," Wilport said. "The gang's all here. Well, except for Halloway. What happened to him anyway?"

"You don't want to know," Matt said. "Twitch, get the memory chip from the computer."

Nodding, she stepped over to a shelf and picked it up from a pile of a dozen other innocuous-looking computer parts. Then she stepped over to Matt and placed it in his palm.

"What now?" Wilport said. "You did your job, and you don't need that. We'll pay you well for..."

He paused as Matt crushed the chip into powder. Valana cried out. Twitch gasped.

"Heath," Wilport warned. "You're a dead man. You'll never be able to stop looking over your shoulder."

"So pretty much how I've lived my whole life," Matt said. "No biggie."

Gesturing toward the door with the gun, he followed the three Coalition mercenaries back out onto the street. It was only then that he realized that there were four vehicles and only three people had been in the shop with Twitch.

Wilport, keeping his hands raised, shook his head in disgust and walked over to the Scarab. The tinted window lowered, and he stuck his head inside. Wilport stepped back, whistled to his crew, and they mounted the rocket cycles, preparing to take off. The door to the Scarab opened, and Col. Thaddeus Lyboc, head of Coalition Intelligence, stood up and faced Matt. Dressed in full Coalition armor, he somehow looked like he fit in with the streets of Center Court.

He gestured for Matt to approach. Matt, keeping the pistol firmly in hand, walked over to him.

"Crushed it?" Lyboc asked. Matt nodded.

Lyboc shrugged. "It's what I was planning to do anyway."

"Why?" Valana blurted out, though aware of her extremely precarious situation.

Lyboc faced her with a look of recognition, but seemed unconcerned.

"For the same reason he did, spy," Lyboc answered. "Whether Lazlo or the Coalition got that data, either way, all this would have come to an end. Law, order, control, it would have all been established in just a few years."

Valana shook her head in amazement. "Where I'm from, that's a good thing, Colonel."

Lyboc laughed, slipped a black credit voucher into Matt's hand and sat back down in the Scarab, gesturing for his driver to start the engine.

"It is a good thing. And it would have led to a good, stable world, no matter who got their hands on it," Lyboc said. "You appear to have lost your way, Valana. You are in the wrong city. You have an hour to correct the error."

With that, he shut the door and rolled the window back up, nodding to Matt one last time before the Scarab and its three escorts rose into the mid-morning skies.

Valana sighed, looking at Matt one last time. She turned, pointedly, and walked away.

Twitch looked back from Matt, who was staring after the rapidly retreating Scarab and then at Valana, who was quickly disappearing amid the morning crowds of Center Court.

"I don't understand," Twitch said. "You both know it would have led to a better world, but you destroyed it! Why?"

"A better world?" Matt asked, using the corner of the card to clean a bit of dirt out from under his nails. "Tell me something, Twitch. Where in such a world would there be room for men like Lyboc? Like me?"

Twitch, sinking to the floor against the doorjamb, stared as the wind from the 'Burbs began scouring away the pile of dust that represented a future that might have been.

"It's just business, Twitch," Heath said. "Just business."



RIFTS®

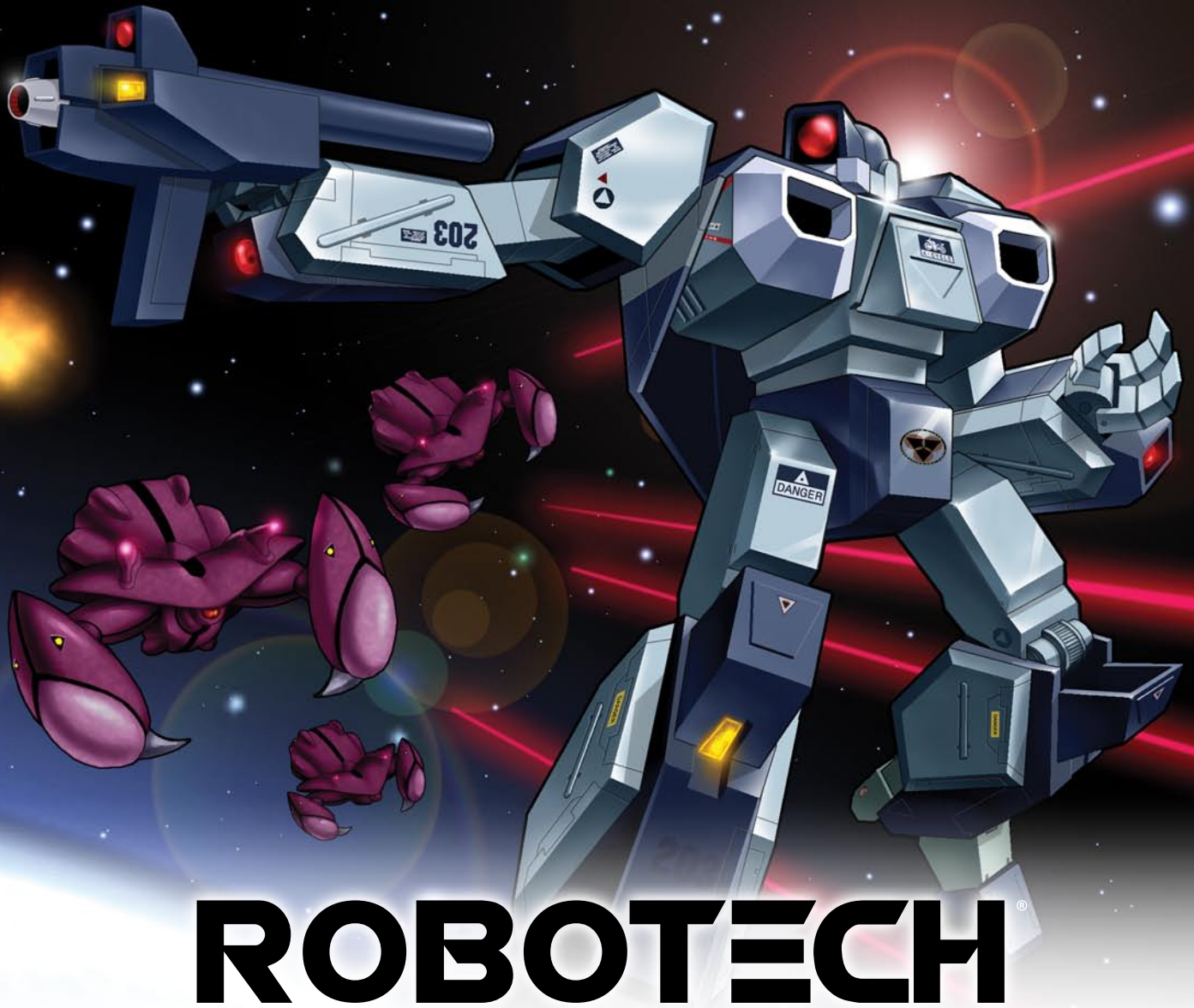
- Imagine Earth transformed into an alien landscape.
- Humans exist – barely. And we are not alone.
- Aliens and monsters emerge from the Rifts – holes torn in the fabric of space and time, connected to countless worlds and realities.
- Ancient gods, demons and magic have returned.
- Magic and technology clash.
- Hundreds of character classes, many inhuman.
- *Rifts® Ultimate Edition* is the core RPG rule book.
- Expansive world setting with 90+ sourcebooks to draw upon.
- Rifts®, your portal to endless adventure.
- Limited only by your imagination.

www.palladiumbooks.com

© 2014 Palladium Books. Rifts®, Megaverse®, Nightbane® and other titles, slogans and likenesses are trademarks of Palladium Books, Inc. Palladium Books - 39074 Webb Court, Westland, MI 48185 USA - 734-271-2903 order line.

Other RPG Worlds from Palladium Books®:

- **Rifts®** – the ultimate role-playing experience.
- **Rifts® Chaos Earth®** – Play the apocalypse as it happens.
- **Splicers®** – Weird science. Bio-tech battles insane robot legions.
- **Robotech® RPG** – All eras of the TV show brought to life.
- **Dead Reign® RPG** – Can you survive the Zombie Apocalypse?
- **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** – Unique world, monsters as player characters, magic and more.
- **Heroes Unlimited™ RPG** – Play any hero; mutants, aliens, cyborgs, superhumans, mages, immortals and more.
- **Nightbane® RPG** – Conspiracy, magic, horror and monsters.
- **Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG** – Modern horror and suspense.
- **Ninjas and Superspies™**, and more.



ROBOTECH®

Role-Playing Game and Sourcebooks

- **Four generations of heroes and mecha** • **Giant transformable robots** • **Alien invaders** • **Battle for control of the Earth** • **Combat takes to the stars** • **All presented in a core rule book and dynamic set of epic sourcebooks** • **Easy to learn** • **Fun to play** • **Quick character generation** • **Fast combat** • **Captures the action and adventure of the anime TV series** • **Isn't it time you joined the adventure?**

Robotech® "Core Rules" – Shadow Chronicles® RPG Hardcover

All the rules and information a player needs to start a Robotech® role-playing campaign with Admiral Rick Hunter and the United Earth Expeditionary Force trekking across the galaxy.

- Human mecha: Alphas, Betas, Cyclones & much more.
- Five character classes. 25 different Military Specialties.
- Invid mecha, Haydonites, and alien enemies.
- Quick roll character tables. Make a character in 15 minutes.
- A complete, stand-alone RPG.
- 224 pages. Cat. No. 550HC. 8½ x 11 size, hardcover.

Robotech®: The Macross® Saga Sourcebook – Cat. No. 551

A treasure chest packed with the iconic mecha, vehicles, weapons and characters that made Robotech® famous. Valkyries, Destroyers, ground vehicles, aircraft, spacecraft, weapons, Zentraedi soldiers, Zentraedi mecha, alien invaders, heroes, villains, and more.

- All the iconic Macross mecha, vehicles, weapons & characters.

www.palladiumbooks.com

Robotech®: The Masters Saga™ Sourcebook – Cat. No. 552

Tons of never before seen stats and descriptions for the many weapons, armor, mecha and robots of the Army of the Southern Cross.

- The Army of the Southern Cross™ – all 15 branches and their mecha!

Robotech®: New Generation™ Sourcebook – Cat. No. 554

The battle for the liberation of Earth starts here.

- Kit-bashed mecha combining parts from different mecha.
- Invid Hives, world overview, key characters and adventure ideas.

Robotech®: Genesis Pits™ Sourcebook – Cat. No. 555

The Invid Genesis Pits, their purpose, function.

- Inorganics and other war machines of the Invid Regent.
- Genesis Pit mutations and monsters.

Robotech®: Expeditionary Marines Sourcebook – Cat. No. 553

Join the UEEF (United Earth Expeditionary Force) led by Admiral Rick Hunter as they travel across the galaxy liberating planets from the bondage of the Invid Regent, the Robotech Masters and other tyrants.

- New mecha, weapons, and character classes of the UEEF Marines.
- New alien species and allies. Planet hopping and more.



ROBOTECH

R P G T A C T I C S

Main Boxed Game – Cat. No. 55100 – Available Now!

A fast-paced, strategy battle game that captures the speed and action of Robotech®. Play Earth defenders or Zentraedi invaders.

- Scalable from small squad skirmishes to mass battles.
- Turn-based system of play and uses D6. Two or more players.
- 34 highly detailed game pieces. 6mm scale.
- 112 page color rule book with paint guide and index.
- 53 laminated, color game cards.
- 24 custom dice, two decal sheets and more.
- Assembly and painting required. Glue not included.
- \$99.95 retail – Cat. No. 55100 – shipping now!
- Available in North and South America, the EU, Australia & New Zealand.

Note: Each product contains plastic game pieces requiring assembly and painting. Glue not included. This is not a toy. Small parts, not suitable for children under the age of 13. Adult supervision advised. Images shown here are not to scale.



UEDF Valkyrie Wing™ – Cat. No. 55201

Build your fleet of Earth defenders with the Valkyrie Veritech Fighter; six game pieces total. **\$36.95 retail.**

- 2 Valkyries in Fighter mode.
- 2 Valkyries in Guardian mode.
- 2 Valkyries in Battloid mode.
- Multiple heads for making the VF-1A, VF-1J, VF-1R & VF-1S.



UEDF Tomahawk/Defender Destroids™ – Cat. No. 55202

Expand your Destroid squad with these formidable walking tanks; four game pieces total. **\$32.95 retail.**

- 2 Tomahawk Destroids – the main battle tank of Destroids, brimming with powerful particle beam cannons for arms, and wielding a battery of missiles and an array of other weapons.
- 2 Defender Destroids – a long-range, anti-aircraft juggernaut capable of shooting down incoming Zentraedi Battlepods and Gnerl Fighters.



UEDF Spartan/Phalanx Destroids™ – Cat. No. 55203

Add some long-range power and up-close punch to your army with these valuable Destroids; four game pieces total. **\$32.95 retail.**

- 2 Spartan Destroids – civil defense, riot control and deadly in hand to hand combat.
- 2 Phalanx Destroids – a walking, long-range missile artillery unit.



Zentraedi Regult Battlepods™ – Cat. No. 55401

Expand your Zentraedi forces with their main infantry battle mecha; six game pieces total. **\$36.95 retail.**

- 6 Regult Tactical Battlepods – the lightning quick Regults, armed with a pair of particle cannons and auto-cannons, attack in wave after wave.



Zentraedi Artillery Battlepods™ – Cat. No. 55402

Give your Zentraedi legion greater firepower with these artillery and support Battlepods; four game pieces total. **\$36.95 retail.**

- 4 Zentraedi Support Battlepods, each of which can be made into:
 - Gluuhaug-Regult – Light Artillery Battlepod
 - Serauhaug-Regult – Heavy Artillery Battlepod
 - Telnesta-Regult – Experimental Particle Beam Battlepod
- Four game pieces total.**



Zentraedi Glaug Command™ – Cat. No. 55403

This diverse pack provides your Zentraedi forces with greater tactical capabilities; three game pieces total. **\$36.95 retail.**

- 1 Glaug Officer's Battlepod – the fast and deadly mecha of Zentraedi field leaders.
- 1 Quel-Regult Scout Battlepod – the stealthy eyes and ears of your Zentraedi battle force; electronic warfare capabilities.
- 1 Quel-Gulnau Recovery Pod – enhances the Glaug's ability to bring in Battlepod reinforcements. **Note:** This figure has NEVER before been offered by any company.

Can YOU survive the Zombie Apocalypse?



The Dead Reign® RPG series

Dead Reign® RPG – “Core Rules.” It is the aftermath of the *zombie apocalypse*. The dead reign and the living fight against impossible odds. Can you survive? Find out with this fast-paced horror game. Easy to learn. Fast character creation and combat.

- **Zombie combat and survival rules, vehicles and equipment.**
- **6 iconic Character Classes plus Ordinary People (40+ occupations).**
- **7 types of zombies, plus the Half-Living.**
- **101 Random Scenarios, Encounters, Settings and other tables.**
- **\$22.95 retail – 224 pages – Cat. No. 230. Available now.**

Civilization Gone™ Sourcebook

Civilization has crumbled to nothing. There is no army. No government. No help coming. What now?

- **Madmen, Psychopaths, villains, heroes and protectors.**
- **House, home and survivor camp tables, resources & encounters.**
- **\$12.92 retail – 64 pages – Cat. No. 231. Available now.**

Dark Places™ Sourcebook

Travel the rails and urban underground to move about undetected by zombies.

- **Worm Meat, Bug Boy, Sewer Crawler & Impersonator Zombies.**
- **Traveling the rails, sewers and other dark places.**
- **Random encounter tables, boxcar content tables, and much more.**
- **\$12.92 retail – 64 pages – Cat. No. 232. Available now.**

Endless Dead™ Sourcebook

The zombies grow in number and strangeness. Can humankind survive?

- **Zombie amalgamations, tables and encounters.**
- **New player characters & timetables for your campaign.**
- **Weaponizing vehicles, vehicle combat rules, and military bases.**
- **Creating survivor caravans, hideouts, Safe Havens & more.**
- **\$16.95 retail – 96 pages – Cat. No. 233. Available now.**

Other horror titles from Palladium Books®

Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG **Nightbane® RPG**

Fear the Reaper™ Sourcebook

Heroes who, like knights of old, travel the highways fighting zombies and helping survivors.

- **Comprehensive background on the Road Reapers.**
- **Their code, missions, weapons, strategies and tactics.**
- **The Terror Zombie and more.**
- **\$12.95 retail – 48 pages – Cat. No. 234. Available now.**

Graveyard Earth™ Sourcebook

The Zombie Apocalypse across the globe; provides a world overview and many adventure ideas.

- **Many tables for settings, encounters and adventure hooks.**
- **Random Safe Havens by region, and Survivor Leaders.**
- **How to get home from abroad, zombie threat levels & more.**
- **\$12.95 retail – 64 pages – Cat. No. 235. Available now.**

Hell Followed™ Sourcebook

This big, 160 page sourcebook begins to redefine the zombie genre. It broadens the field of possibilities and expands upon the modern zombie mythos. It is full of twists and surprises you will not expect.

- **11 new types of terrifying zombies.**
- **7 player characters, plus Masked Lunatics – heroes or madmen?**
- **21 disasters to complicate survival, and urban survival.**
- **Government enclaves, conspiracy theories and more.**
- **\$20.95 retail – 160 pages – Cat. No. 236. Available now.**



Palladium Books® Check List & Order Form

Dept. P-16, 39074 Webb Court, Westland, MI 48185

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

Credit Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____ Visa MasterCard

Telephone Number: _____ Signature: _____ AMEX Other

The Rifter® Series

- ___ 173 The Rifter® #73 – \$13.95
- ___ 174 The Rifter® #74 – \$13.95
- ___ 175 The Rifter® #75 – \$13.95
- ___ 176 The Rifter® #76 – \$13.95
- ___ 177 The Rifter® #77 – \$13.95
- ___ 178 The Rifter® #78 – \$13.95 (Spring)

Splicers® Note: Sourcebooks coming soon.

- ___ 200 Splicers® RPG – \$23.95

Dead Reign®

- ___ 230 Dead Reign® RPG – \$22.95
- ___ 231 SB 1: Civilization Gone™ – \$12.95
- ___ 232 SB 2: Dark Places™ – \$12.95
- ___ 233 SB 3: Endless Dead™ – \$16.95
- ___ 234 SB 4: Fear the Reaper™ – \$12.95
- ___ 235 SB 5: Graveyard Earth™ – \$12.95
- ___ 236 SB 6: Hell Followed™ – \$20.95

Rifts® Novels

- ___ 301 Sonic Boom™ – \$9.95
- ___ 302 Deception's Web™ – \$9.95
- ___ 303 Treacherous Awakenings™ – \$9.95
- ___ 304 Tales of the Chi-Town 'Burbs™ – \$12.95
- ___ 305 Rifts® Path of the Storm™ – \$12.95

Weapons Books

- ___ 401 Weapons and Armor™ – \$8.95
- ___ 402 Weapons and Castles™ – \$8.95
- ___ 403 Weapons and Assassins™ – \$9.95
- ___ 404 Weapons & Castles of the Orient™ – \$9.95
- ___ 409 Exotic Weapons™ – \$9.95
- ___ 410 European Castles™ – \$9.95

Palladium Fantasy RPG®

- ___ 450 The Palladium Fantasy RPG® – \$26.95
- ___ 4500HC Palladium Fantasy RPG® 30th Anniversary Hardcover – \$50.00
- ___ 451 Dragons & Gods™ – \$24.95
- ___ 453 Old Ones™ 2nd Ed. – \$24.95
- ___ 454 Monsters & Animals™ 2nd Ed. – \$24.95
- ___ 455 Adventures on the High Seas™ – \$24.95
- ___ 458 Island at the Edge of the World™ – \$20.95
- ___ 459 Yin-Sloth Jungles™ – \$20.95
- ___ 462 Western Empire™ – \$24.95
- ___ 463 Baalgor Wastelands™ – \$24.95
- ___ 464 Mount Nimro™ – \$20.95
- ___ 465 Eastern Territory™ – \$24.95
- ___ 466 Library of Bletcherad™ – \$20.95
- ___ 467 Northern Hinterlands™ – \$24.95
- ___ 468 Land/Damned 1: Chaos Lands™ – \$24.95
- ___ 469 LoD 2: Eternal Torment™ – \$24.95
- ___ 470 LoD 3: The Citadel – \$24.95 (coming)
- ___ 471 Wolfen Empire™ – \$20.95
- ___ 472 Mysteries of Magic™ One: Heart of Magic – \$16.95
- ___ 474 Bizantium/Northern Islands™ – \$20.95
- ___ 475 Garden of the Gods™ – \$16.95 (coming)

Heroes Unlimited™ / After the Bomb®

- ___ 500-2 Heroes Unlimited™, 2nd Ed. – \$26.95
- ___ 5000HC Heroes Unlimited™ 30th Anniversary Hardcover – \$50.00
- ___ 501 Villains Unlimited™ Revised – \$24.95
- ___ 503 After the Bomb® RPG – \$24.95
- ___ 505 Road Hogs™ (After the Bomb® II) – \$9.95
- ___ 507 Mutants Down Under™ (AB III) – \$9.95
- ___ 511 Mutants of the Yucatan™ (AB IV) – \$9.95
- ___ 513 Mutants in Avalon™ (AB V) – \$16.95
- ___ 514 Mutants in Orbit™ (AB VI) – \$16.95
- ___ 515 Aliens Unlimited™ – \$24.95
- ___ 516 Heroes Unlimited™ G.M.'s Guide – \$24.95
- ___ 517 Century Station™ – \$24.95
- ___ 518 Gramercy Island™ – \$24.95
- ___ 519 Aliens Unlimited Galaxy Guide™ – \$24.95
- ___ 520 Mutant Underground™ – \$16.95
- ___ 521 Powers Unlimited® One – \$16.95
- ___ 522 Powers Unlimited® Two – \$16.95
- ___ 523 Powers Unlimited® Three – \$16.95
- ___ 525 Revised Ninjas & Superspies™ – \$20.95
- ___ 526 Mystic China™ – \$24.95
- ___ 527 Armageddon Unlimited™ – \$20.95

Robotech® RPG

- ___ 550 Robotech® The Shadow Chronicles® RPG (manga size) – \$16.95
- ___ 550HC Robotech® The Shadow Chronicles® Deluxe Hardcover RPG – \$30.95
- ___ 5500HC Robotech® The Shadow Chronicles® Gold Ed. Hardcover RPG – \$70.00
- ___ 551 Robotech® Macross® Saga Sourcebook – \$16.95
- ___ 552 Robotech® The Masters Saga™ Sourcebook (NEW in 8½ x 11) – \$20.95
- ___ 553 Robotech®: Expeditionary Force Marines Sourcebook – \$20.95
- ___ 554 Robotech® The New Generation™ Sourcebook – \$16.95
- ___ 555 Robotech® Genesis Pits Sourcebook – \$16.95

Robotech® RPG Tactics™ (New!)

- ___ 55100 Robotech® RPG Tactics™ – \$99.95
- ___ 55105 Robotech® RPG Tactics™ Rulebook – \$20.00
- ___ 55101 UEDF Dice Pack – \$12.00
- ___ 55102 Zentraedi Dice Pack – \$12.00
- ___ 55201 UEDF Valkyrie Wing – \$36.95
- ___ 55202 UEDF Destroid Pack – \$32.95
- ___ 55203 UEDF Spartan Pack – \$32.95
- ___ 55401 Zentraedi Regult Battlepods – \$36.95
- ___ 55402 Zentraedi Artillery Battlepods – \$36.95
- ___ 55403 Zentraedi Glaug Command – \$36.95

Rifts® Chaos Earth®

- ___ 660 Rifts® Chaos Earth® RPG – \$20.95
- ___ 661 Rifts® CE Creatures of Chaos™ – \$12.95
- ___ 662 Rifts® CE The Rise of Magic™ – \$12.95
- ___ 665 Rifts® Chaos Earth® First Responders™ – \$16.95 (coming)
- ___ 666 Rifts® Chaos Earth® Resurrection™ – \$20.95

Beyond the Supernatural™

- ___ 700 Beyond the Supernatural™, 2nd Ed. – \$24.95
- ___ 702 Tome Grotesque™ – \$20.95 (coming)
- ___ 703 Beyond Arcanum™ – \$24.95 (coming)

Nightbane®

- ___ 730 Nightbane® RPG – \$24.95
- ___ 731 Nightbane®: Between the Shadows™ – \$20.95
- ___ 732 Nightbane®: Nighlands™ – \$20.95
- ___ 733 Nightbane®: Through the Glass Darkly™ – \$20.95
- ___ 735 Nightbane® Survival Guide™ – \$20.95

Rifts®

- ___ 800HC Rifts® RPG Ultimate Edition – \$39.95
- ___ 801 Rifts® Sourcebook One Revised – \$20.95
- ___ 802-E Rifts® World Book 1: Vampire Kingdoms™, Revised – \$24.95
- ___ 803 Rifts® Conversion Book One™ – \$24.95
- ___ 804 Rifts® WB 2: Atlantis™ – \$20.95
- ___ 805 Rifts® Sourcebook 2: Mechanoids™ – \$16.95
- ___ 807 Rifts® WB 3: England™ – \$20.95
- ___ 808 Rifts® WB 4: Africa™ – \$20.95
- ___ 809 Rifts® Dimension Book 1: Wormwood™ – \$20.95
- ___ 810 Rifts® WB 5: Triax™ – \$24.95
- ___ 811 Rifts® Pantheons of the Megaverse® – \$24.95
- ___ 812 Rifts® Sourcebook 3: Mindwerks™ – \$16.95
- ___ 813 Rifts® Mercenaries™ – \$20.95
- ___ 814 Rifts® WB 6: South America™ – \$20.95
- ___ 815 Rifts® WB 7: Underseas™ – \$24.95
- ___ 816 Rifts® DB 2: Phase World® – \$24.95
- ___ 817 Rifts® DB 3: Phase World® Sourcebook – \$16.95
- ___ 818 Rifts® WB 8: Rifts® Japan™ – \$24.95
- ___ 819 Rifts® WB 9: South America Two™ – \$24.95
- ___ 820 Rifts® WB 10: Juicer Uprising™ – \$20.95
- ___ 821 Rifts® WB 11: Coalition War Campaign™ – \$24.95

- ___ 822 Rifts® WB 12: Psyscape™ – \$20.95
 ___ 825 Rifts® WB 13: Lone Star™ – \$20.95
 ___ 826 Rifts® WB 14: New West™ – \$24.95
 ___ 827 Rifts® WB 15: Spirit West™ – \$24.95
 ___ 828 Rifts® Sourcebook 4: Coalition Navy™ – \$16.95
 ___ 829 Rifts® WB 16: Federation of Magic™ – \$20.95
 ___ 830 Rifts® DB 4: Skraypers™ – \$20.95
 ___ 831 Rifts® Index Volume Two™ – \$16.95
 ___ 832 Rifts® WB 17: Warlords of Russia™ – \$24.95
 ___ 833 Rifts® WB 18: Mystic Russia™ – \$20.95
 ___ 834 Rifts® WB 19: Australia 1 – \$24.95
 ___ 835 Rifts® WB 20: Canada™ – \$24.95
 ___ 836 Rifts® WB 21: Splynn Dimensional Market™ – \$24.95
 ___ 837 Rifts® WB 22: Free Quebec™ – \$24.95
 ___ 838 Rifts® WB 23: Xiticix Invasion™ – \$20.95
 ___ 839 Rifts® Coalition Wars®: Sedition™ – \$20.95
 ___ 840 Rifts® Coalition Wars®: Coalition Overkill™ – \$16.95
 ___ 841 Rifts® Coalition Wars®: Sorcerers' Revenge™ – \$16.95
 ___ 842 Rifts® Coalition Wars®: Cyber-Knights™ – \$16.95
 ___ 843 Rifts® Coalition Wars®: Shadows of Evil™ – \$16.95
 ___ 844 Rifts® Coalition Wars®: Final Siege™ – \$24.95
 ___ 845 Rifts® Game Master Guide™ – \$26.95
 ___ 846 Rifts® Aftermath™ – \$24.95
 ___ 847 Rifts® DB5: Anvil Galaxy™ – \$20.95
 ___ 848 Rifts® Book of Magic™ – \$26.95
 ___ 849 Rifts® Adventure Guide™ – \$24.95
 ___ 850 Rifts® Bionics Sourcebook™ – \$16.95
 ___ 851 Rifts® DB 6: Three Galaxies™ – \$20.95
 ___ 852 Rifts® Dark Conversions™ – \$24.95
 ___ 853 Rifts® Chi-Town 'Burbs™ – \$9.95
 ___ 854 Rifts® The Tolkien Crisis™ – \$12.95
 ___ 855 Rifts® The Black Vault™ – \$9.95
 ___ 856 Rifts® The Vanguard™ – \$9.95
 ___ 857 Rifts® WB 24: China One™ – \$20.95
 ___ 858 Rifts® WB 25: China Two™ – \$20.95
 ___ 859 Rifts® DB 7: Megaverse Builder™ – \$16.95
 ___ 860 Rifts® DB 8: Naruni Wave Two™ – \$16.95
 ___ 862 Rifts® WB 26: Dinosaur Swamp™ – \$20.95
 ___ 863 Rifts® MercTown™ – \$20.95
 ___ 865 Rifts® Merc Ops™ – \$20.95
 ___ 866 Rifts® WB 27: Adventures in Dinosaur Swamp™ – \$20.95
 ___ 867 Rifts® Mercenary Adventure Sourcebook – \$12.95
 ___ 868 Rifts® WB 28: Arzno™ – \$20.95
 ___ 869 Rifts® WB 29: Madhaven™ – \$16.95
 ___ 870 Rifts® John Zeleznik Coloring Book – \$5.95
 ___ 871 Rifts® Machinations of Doom™ – \$18.95
 ___ 872 Rifts® DB 10: Hades™ – \$24.95
 ___ 873 Rifts® DB 11: Dyval™ – \$24.95
 ___ 874 Rifts® WB 30: D-Bees of North America™ – \$24.95
 ___ 875 Rifts® DB12: Dimensional Outbreak – \$24.95
 ___ 876 Rifts® Megaverse® in Flames™ – \$24.95
 ___ 876HC Rifts® Megaverse® in Flames™ Gold Hardcover Edition – \$50.00
 ___ 877 Rifts® Heroes of the Megaverse® – \$16.95
 ___ 878 Rifts® Sourcebook: Shemarrian Nation™ – \$16.95
 ___ 880 Phase World®: Fleets of the Three Galaxies™ – \$16.95
 ___ 881 Rifts® WB 31: Triax™ Two – \$24.95
 ___ 883 Rifts® DB 14: Thundercloud Galaxy™ – \$20.95
 ___ 884 Rifts® Vampires Sourcebook™ – \$20.95
 ___ 885 Rifts® WB 32: Lemuria™ – \$24.95
 ___ 886 Rifts® Black Market™ – \$24.95
 ___ 886HC Rifts® Black Market™ Hardcover Gold Edition – \$60.00
 ___ 887 Rifts® WB 33: Northern Gun™ One – \$24.95
 ___ 888 Rifts® WB 34: Northern Gun™ Two – \$26.95
 ___ 889 Rifts® Sourcebook: Coalition States, Heroes of Humanity™ – \$20.95
 ___ 890 Rifts® World Book: Secrets of the Atlanteans™ – \$24.95 (coming)
 ___ 891 Rifts® World Book: Sovietski™ – \$24.95 (coming)
 ___ 892 Rifts® Sourcebook: The Disavowed™ – \$16.95 (coming)
 ___ 893 Rifts® CS: Heroes of Humanity™ Arsenal Sourcebook – \$16.95 (coming)
 ___ 894 Rifts® Haunted Tech™ – \$16.95 (coming)
 ___ 2510 Rifts® & The Megaverse® Art Book – \$22.95
 ___ 2510-HC Rifts® & The Megaverse® Art Book, Hardcover – \$50.00
 ___ 2510-CML Rifts® & The Megaverse® Art Book, Collector's Masterwork Edition – \$125.00
- Miscellaneous Products**
 ___ 600 Deluxe Revised RECON® RPG – \$22.95
 ___ 2537 Gamer Coffee Mug – \$10.00
 ___ 2539 Rifts® Dice Bag – Black – \$8.00
 ___ 2545 Dead Reign™ Coffee Mug – \$10.00
 ___ 2554 Palladium Bookmarks, Set One – \$5.00
 ___ 2555 Palladium Bookmarks, Set Two – \$5.00
 ___ 2561 Property of Chi-Town Library Pencil – \$0.50 each
 ___ 2562 Future Visions™ – The Artistry of Charles Walton II – \$13.95
 ___ 2566 Glitter Boy Mouse Pad – \$9.95
 ___ 2567 Old Ones Mouse Pad – \$9.95
 ___ 2568 Zombie Graveyard Mouse Pad – \$9.95
- Note:** T-shirts and other products can be found online: www.palladiumbooks.com
- Rifts® Miniatures**
 ___ MI8002 Xiticix Pack – \$18.00
 ___ MI8004 Coalition Dog Pack – \$18.00
 ___ MI8005 Men of Magic Pack #1 – \$18.00
 ___ MI8006 Cyborgs Pack #1 – \$18.00
 ___ MI8007 Simvan & Ostrosaurus Pack – \$18.00
 ___ MI8008 Coalition Skelebots Pack #1 – \$18.00
 ___ MI8009 Coalition SAMAS Pack #1 – \$22.00
 ___ MI8010 Coalition Sky Cycle Pack – \$22.00
 ___ MI8011 Coalition Dog Pack #2 – \$18.00
 ___ MI8015 Damaged Skelebots Pack #1 – \$12.00
 ___ MI8016 Cyber-Adventurers Pack – \$18.00
 ___ MI8017 Rogues & Scout Pack #1 – \$18.00
 ___ MI8018 Brodkil & Witchling Pack – \$18.00
 ___ MI8019 Damaged Skelebots Pack #2 – \$18.00
 ___ MI8020 Psi-Stalkers & Scouts Pack #1 – \$18.00
 ___ MI8021 Shadow Beast – \$12.00
 ___ MI8022 Mystic Knight – \$6.00
 ___ MI8023 Lord Magus – \$6.00
 ___ MI8024 High Magus – \$6.00
 ___ MI8025 Coalition Psi-Stalker – \$6.00
 ___ MI8026 Coalition Dog Boy in DPM-D1 Armor – \$6.00
 ___ MI8027 Coalition Dog Boy #2 – \$6.00
 ___ MI8028 Coalition Dog Boy #3 – \$6.00
 ___ MI8029 Coalition Dog Boy #4 – \$6.00
 ___ MI8030 Coalition Dog Boy #5 – \$6.00
 ___ MI8031 Glitter Boy – \$20.00
 ___ MI8032 Glitter Boy Pilot – \$6.00
 ___ MI8033 Kydian Overlord – \$20.00
 ___ MI8034 Dragonsaurus – \$10.00
 ___ MI8035 Slaver and Slave (Atlantis) Set – \$10.00
 ___ MI8036 Crazy – \$6.00
 ___ MI8037 Juicer #1 – \$6.00
 ___ MI8038 Juicer #2 – \$6.00
 ___ MI8039 Cyborg #1 – \$12.00
 ___ MI8040 Cyborg #2 – \$12.00
 ___ MI8041 Cyborg #3 – \$6.00
 ___ MI8042 Coalition Officer – \$6.00
 ___ MI8043 Coalition Grunt #1 – \$6.00
 ___ MI8044 Coalition Grunt #2 – \$6.00
 ___ MI8045 Coalition Grunt #3 – \$6.00
- When placing an order by mail, please add money for shipping and handling.** Add \$5.00 for orders totaling \$1-\$50, \$10.00 for orders totaling \$51-\$95, and for orders totaling \$96-\$200 please add \$15.00 US. Double the amount for Canada, and *quadruple* it for overseas orders. For more shipping options, order online at www.palladiumbooks.com. Allow 2-4 weeks for delivery. Make checks and money orders payable to: *Palladium Books*
- Check release dates for new products.** If the book you order has not been released yet, your order will be held as a backorder until the product is available. Please note that prices are subject to change without notice.
- Orders can also be placed by phone,** at (734) 721-2903 (order line only). Please have your credit card information when you call.
- www.palladiumbooks.com**



Also from Palladium Books®

Bizantium and the Northern Islands™

- New Bizantium O.C.C.s, Waterchanter, Serpent Chaser & more.
- Sea serpents, sea serpent creation table, monsters & animals.
- The cannibalistic Iceborn, Skinbinders and Sea Witches.
- 90+ magic spells, Necromancy and Waterchanters.
- Bizantium skullduggery, background, history and more.
- 192 pages – by Glen Evans – Cat. No. 474 – available now!

Robotech®: Expeditionary Force Marines

In space with the United Earth Expeditionary Force and Admiral Rick Hunter.

- New mecha and weapons of the UEEF Marines.
- New UEEF Marine character classes and background.
- Alien species, allies and menaces.
- Planet hopping, battles and adventure ideas galore.
- 160 pages – by Irvin Jackson – Cat. No. 553.

Chaos Earth® Resurrection™

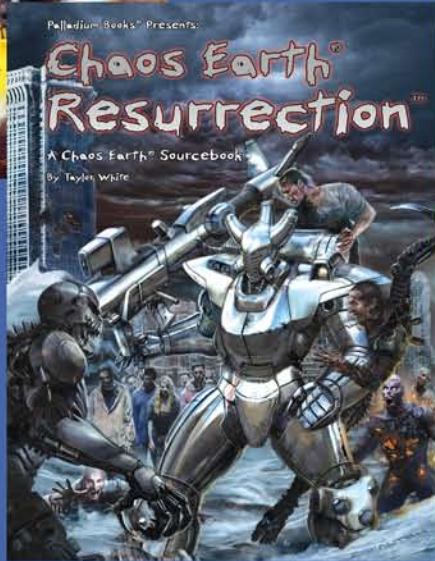
During the Great Cataclysm, a giant obelisk appears from another dimension. Broken communication devices and electronics speak in gibberish, the dead begin to rise, cyborg-zombies attack, and NEMA has its hands full.

- New monsters, undead, zombies and invaders.
- Mystery, plagues, adventure, and more.
- 128 pages – by Taylor White – Cat. No. 666. Coming soon.

Rifts®: The Coalition States, Heroes of Humanity™

The Coalition States take action against the invading demon hordes of Hell. Who can you trust? Who will live and who will die? How long can the CS last without turning to mages and D-Bees as allies?

- New CS weapons, armor and war machines.
- CS battle plans and unlikely allies.
- Xiticix, demons, adventure ideas and more.
- 96 pages – by Siembieda & Clements – Cat. No. 889. Coming soon.



The Rifter® Number Seventy

The Rifter® #70 is about magic, monsters, and strange people and places. There is the *Frost Mage* and 60+ cold-based spells (all official source material), the *Splicers® Technojacker* explored in-depth revealing many new powers and abilities (official source material), the *City of New Strawn, Kansas*, on Rifts® Earth, monsters from the Rifts in *The Unbidden*, watery depths to explore, and adventure to resolve in the 'Burbs. Plus news, conventions and coming attractions.

Every issue of The Rifter® is an *idea factory* for players and Game Masters to generate new ideas, and find new avenues of adventure. It provides useful, ready to go, source material you can just drop into your ongoing games. A doorway to new possibilities and numerous Palladium role-playing worlds. And the many new characters, O.C.C.s, powers, magic, weapons, villains, monsters, adventures and ideas for one setting can be easily adapted to *any* Palladium setting. Every issue has material for *Rifts®* and at least 2-3 other Palladium game lines.

The Rifter® Number 70 includes:

- **Splicers® – Blood and Iron™** – “official” source material by **Brandon Aten**. The Technojacker revisited & expanded. New powers & gear.
- **Rifts®, Palladium Fantasy RPG®, & Other Settings** – “official” source material by **Nate Bingham** and **Kevin Siembieda**. The Frost Mage O.C.C., the Time of a Thousand Magicks, and 60+ “official” Frost spells.
- **Rifts®, Minion War™ and Three Galaxies™** – “official” source material by **Josh Sinsapaugh** and **Kevin Siembieda**. Three new transdimensional terrors – The Unbidden™ – slip through the dimensional bleed to create havoc.
- **Rifts® – New Strawn**, by **Travis Legge**. An independent city-state in Rifts Kansas.
- **Rifts® – Deep Frontier**, by **Mark Temple**. Explore the unseen depths of the oceans and waterways of Rifts Earth.
- **Rifts® – Clean, Part Two**, a short story by **Irvin Jackson**. Adventure, betrayal and intrigue in the Chi-Town ‘Burbs reaches its conclusion.
- **Tips for Game Masters** by **Chris Isberg**.
- **News, coming attractions, product descriptions and more.**
- **96 pages of fun and adventure in the Palladium Megaverse®.**

Unleash your imagination™

\$13.95

Cat. No. 170

ISBN-10: 1-57457-245-8

ISBN-13: 978-1-57457-245-2

**Palladium
Books Inc.**

www.palladiumbooks.com