

WORLDS AT  
WAR

VIGILANCE PRESS COMICS GROUP



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# AMAZING STORIES OF WORLD WAR II



FEATURING:

# HOMEFRONT HEROES

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# HOME FRONT HEROES



In 1938, before the coming European War could ensnare the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt created USHER, the United States Headquarters for Emergency Response. Its first (and for awhile only) agent was the 1930s pulp hero known as Deuce. His job was to secretly go out amongst the American People and find those who had knacks or powers that set them apart and slightly superior to the regular populace and bring them together into a force to meet the menace of the German Eugeniks Brigade.

This was a top secret mission. Therefore it took nearly three months before details were circulating amongst the population on a common gossip level. The Police Gazette had to skip an issue, but copies of the censored issue got out. From that article, it was found that the mystery men were being assembled in Tuskegee, Alabama. And the folks with a knack, a strange ability, showed up in droves. After all, it was a chance for a government job, and jobs of any kind were scarce. And there shouldn't be any danger, ol' FDR promised to keep America free of European entanglements.

Many came, few were chosen. Women and disabled or otherwise disqualified (for age or importance to the war effort elsewhere) men were the first eliminated. Several mystery men whose only "powers" were a mask, a talent for skulking in shadows, and a good right hook were re-directed to the regular military (where many ended up in the OSS). Most minority volunteers were also declined, the nation being what it was at the time. The rest were tested for usable super powers and the physical ability to participate in military missions. They rarely passed. Deuce's screening process had already found most of those who qualified.

Most of those rejected went back to their normal lives. Some, realizing that they might not have the endurance or gender or race to be accepted on the American super team but were still powerful in terms of dealing with common criminals and careless saboteurs, set out on a free lance hero career. As a matter of policy, if a deserving but unqualified candidate expressed an interest in this, they were advised on proper procedure (often made up on the spot) and given contact information for their area.

This is their book.

## THE GOLDEN AGE OF COMICS AND WORLD WAR II

The period between 1938 and 1945 is commonly considered the Golden Age of Comic Books. Many extend the time period to 1949, or 1951. During this period the genre flourished and faded and many of the mainstays of comic book superheroes to this day first saw light of day.

One of the great boosters of this period was the Second World War. Not only were pre-teen and barely post teen boys reading the books, but their older brothers in uniform were picking up the books in the PXs and carting them all over the world. They were easy to carry, light weight, and could distract a soldier for ten minutes to an hour when that was all the time available.

The heroes of these books tended to fall into one basic type. White, male (with very few exceptions), with a name that sounded like it was taken from Burke's Peerage or the Social Register. Many of these heroes had no powers at all. Just a fancy

WRITTEN BY: STEVE PERRIN ART: JON GIBBONS

EDITED BY: CHARLES RICE LAYOUT: JESSICA MCDEVITT

PLAYTESTED BY: ANDREW "CAPTAIN AWESOME" AND "LAMPLIGHTER" CATOR, MARY "CRIMSON CYCLONE" AND "IRON CHIEF" SORENSEN, CLINT "THE VOLUNTEER" AND "BRONZE BOMBER" WARLICK, SHERYL "WHITE LADY" AND "FREEDOM SONG" CASCADDEN

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costume, perhaps a few gimmicks, and good right fist.

When the war arrived, and all athletic young men were expected to put on a uniform and do their duty, this posed a problem for the comic books. Some of the heroes did, in fact, put on uniforms or take up the spying trade and go off to war. But if the really powerful heroes did this, why wouldn't they just win the war?

The obvious answer was that the other guys had heroes, too, but this was very rarely mentioned in the Golden Age. It is a very popular theme in more modern comics that hark back to that time, but during the war the books were full of Axis badguys with exotic names and some with exotic abilities, but most of them were one shot wonders. They popped up, performed some evil act, and were knocked down or killed by the good guys and that was that. The Red Skull was one of the few repeating Nazi villains. Captain Nazi in the Fawcette books was another, and Wonder Woman had a couple of repeaters. But mostly they came and disappeared.

Modern retcons have established mystical reasons why the big guns of the Allied heroes didn't just waltz over to Berlin and give Hitler what for, but the comics of the time mostly ignored the problem, though some heroes were shown to have necessary-for-the-war-effort jobs that would keep them out of uniform and at the home front. And some, like Steve "Captain America" Rogers and Jack "Minuteman" Weston just joined up, and somehow managed to keep their sergeants and commanding officers from getting too riled about their frequent disappearances from camp.

This book deals with a world in which the Axis has its own super-powered representatives. Groups like the Eugenics Brigade and the Pearl Harbor December group have been described in other volumes. The military-oriented groups on the Allied side such as Vigilance Force, the Crown Guard, and the People's Revolution are also available for confrontations with the Axis on the battle front. This book deals with the heroes who were left behind.

A campaign that stays on the home front is actually modeled on about 75% of the comics published during the war. There are gangsters to subdue, saboteurs to thwart, mystical menaces to confront, and monsters to crawl out of the bedrock when military construction digs a hole in the wrong ancient sacred ground and/or mystical prison.

This is the book about the Home Front Heroes.

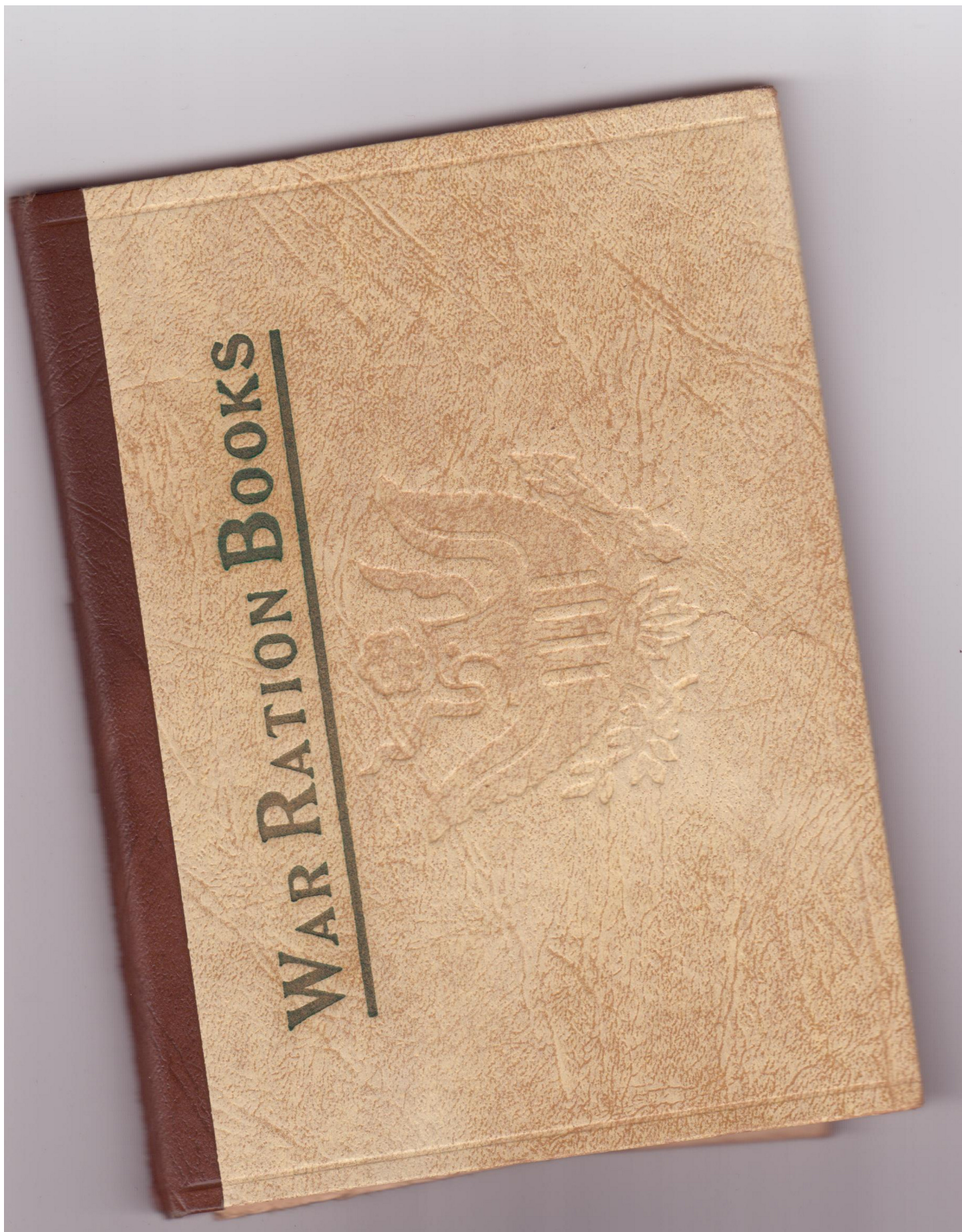
### *PRELUDE TO WAR*

The world marched toward war in the late 1930s, though many American politicians did very well for themselves by insisting the United States must not get dragged into foreign entanglements. Many Americans felt that the United States had suffered by being involved in The Great War and did not want to repeat the experience. Prominent Americans like Charles Lindbergh were among the Isolationists.

Many others, including President Roosevelt, knew that the United States was eventually going to have to confront Nazi Germany, but most of the industrial sector, including the entertainment establishment, did not want to rock the boat. After all, the movie studios, in particular, had offices and production facilities in Germany.

Only Warner Brothers was willing to actually paint Nazis as villains before the war started. Likewise, popular comic books would reference fictitious totalitarian regimes or not name them, even when their agents sported obvious German accents. Only Timely (now Marvel) pictured Hitler and other Axis leaders as villains before the war. A famous cover of Captain America punching Hitler in the face drew down diplomatic ire in 1940.

The symbolic first blows of the Second World War were struck in 1936, when the American Olympic team in Berlin featured the track and field exploits of Jesse Owens, a black track star who left his Nazi competitors in the dust, even when the German judges blatantly cheated to try to rob him of his victories.



As if in retribution, in 1936, German former Heavyweight Champion Max Schmeling exploited a perceived weakness in Joe Louis's style to knock the Brown Bomber out in the 12<sup>th</sup> round of a fight that was supposed to give Louis a shot at the heavyweight title. Anti-Nazi sentiment and some fancy business maneuvers allowed Louis to win the title from James J. Braddock, then meet Schmeling again in 1938; Schmeling lasted less than three minutes.

In 1937, Japan brought itself to American attention by attacking and sinking the USS Panay, an American gunboat stationed in China. The Japanese apologized profusely, saying they saw no indication the Panay was an American ship, despite several very prominent markings and an American flag at the masthead.

On 31 October, 1941, more than a month before Pearl Harbor, the USS Reuben James was sunk by German U-Boat 222 off Iceland. By this time, American ships were escorting convoys of American aid to England to Iceland, where escort duties were taken over by British ships.

But political America was determined to maintain its neutrality until December 7, 1941, when Japanese aircraft sank or damaged the battle line of the American fleet in Pearl Harbor. At that point, the United States was in the war.

## THE WAR ON THE HOME FRONT

The attack on the World Trade Towers on September 11, 2001 cost over 3000 lives. The resulting wars have extended approaching 10 years as of

this writing. The attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 cost 2,335 military and 68 civilian lives, and the war was over in four years.

Setting aside all of the problems of fighting an insurgent war, perhaps one reason the Second World War took so much less time was that the United States went on a total war footing. Today, the American troops fighting and dying on foreign soil are a mention on an evening newscast. Life goes on as it has for the last 65 years without any real reference to the conflict or feeling any obvious effects from it. In the 1940s, (heavily censored) news of the war filled the newspapers, the radio broadcasts, and the movie newsreels, not to mention being the subject matter of many films. And in many ways, every person in the United States went to war.

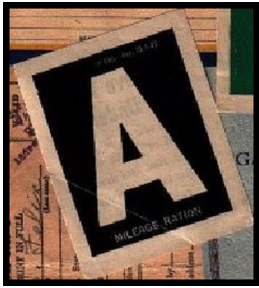
Many vital resources needed by the military became severely rationed on the home front. Every citizen, including babes in arms, was issued a ration book. Every book had coupons that had to be provided whenever one of the vital items was purchased. If you were out of coupons, you were out of luck in obtaining the items. These items included rubber tires, gasoline, butter, meat, eggs, oil, coffee, leather goods, boots, silk stockings, and sugar. Large appliances like washers and refrigerators, and cars, were just not manufactured as the factories turned to war production.

Each coupon only qualified the user for a certain amount of the good. For instance, the basic A coupon for gasoline only allowed for four gallons a week.

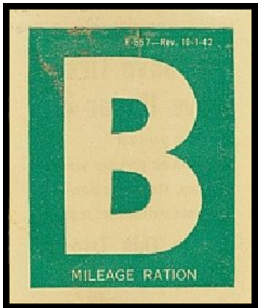
Rationed Items	Rationing Duration
Tires	January 1942 to December 1945
Cars	February 1942 to October 1945
Bicycles	July 1942 to September 1945
Gasoline	May 1942 to August 1945
Fuel Oil & Kerosene	October 1942 to August 1945
Solid Fuels	September 1943 to August 1945
Stoves	December 1942 to August 1945
Rubber Footwear	October 1942 to September 1945

Rationed Items	Rationing Duration
Shoes	February 1943 to October 1945
Sugar	May 1942 to 1947
Coffee	November 1942 to July 1943
Processed Foods	March 1943 to August 1945
Meats, Canned Fish	March 1943 to November 1945
Cheese, Canned Milk, Fats	March 1943 to November 1945
Typewriters	March 1942 to April 1944

And frequently, local merchants might not have the item, even if you had a coupon. “Don’t you know there’s a war on?” was a common response. One good result was there was also a price freeze for the items that were available.



By the end of 1942, half of U.S. automobiles were issued an ‘A’ sticker which allowed 4 gallons of fuel per week. That sticker was issued to owners whose use of their cars was nonessential to the war effort. Hand the pump jockey your Mileage Ration Book coupons and cash, and she (yes, often female service station attendants because the menfolk were *over there*) could sell you four gallons a week, period. For nearly a year, most of 1943, A-stickered cars were not to be driven for pleasure at all.



The green ‘B’ sticker was for driving deemed essential to the war effort. For instance, industrial war workers could purchase eight gallons a week.

Red ‘C’ stickers indicated physicians, ministers, mail carriers and railroad workers who needed gas for erratic emergency calls. Recognized superheroes who need motorized transportation might get a C sticker if they ask politely, but only for their official vehicle.

Truckers supplying the population with supplies had a T sticker for unlimited amounts of fuel.

The rare ‘X’ sticker went to members of Congress and other VIPs.

Of course, there was a very active black market in stolen and counterfeit coupons.

Everyone was encouraged to buy War Bonds. “Keep ‘em flying,” was a common salutation, referring to the need to have a large and active Air Force. Mothers and children were encouraged to gather up surplus paper and give it to the military for recycling into military paper uses. It was during these paper drives that many a young lad’s comic

book collection was recycled, later to drive up the prices of the surviving Golden Age comic books.

Other things like tin cans and bottles were also recycled, of course, and mostly the substances went into bomber windshields and bullet casings, not more soda pop bottles and soup cans. Steel recycling was vital – the furnaces absorbed scrap iron at a prodigious rate.

Of course, there were Americans rich and well-connected enough to not feel the pinch of the war, but they were few and frequently denigrated in popular movies, books, and comic books. Many very wealthy people went out of their way to sponsor steel drives, or run piecemeal production shops to support war production. Many Hollywood stars ran such shops during the war, including the Marx Brothers.

## THE ARCHETYPES

There are twelve archetypes associated with the home front heroes of WWII. They can be divided into two divisions. The first division consists of the sort of hero depicted in the comic books of the actual period. The second division includes archetypes that historically can be assumed to appear in the World War II era, even though comic books of the period did not depict them for various reasons.

The following is a very brief listing, expanded on the following pages with examples.

### HOME FRONT HEROES, DIVISION ONE - THE ORIGINALS

**The Genius Kid.** Legally a child who can’t go to war, but with an overwhelming urge, and the ingenuity, to do his or her part on the home front.

**The Favored Child.** This is a somewhat less common archetype, the youngster who has power bestowed upon him or her by a benevolent power source.

**The 4F.** This is the patriotic soul who cannot be accepted by the military for physical reasons but has powers or resources that let him still contribute to the War Effort.





**WHITE LADY, CAPTAIN AWESOME, CRIMSON CYCLONE**

# HOME FRONT HEROES

**Necessary To The War Effort.** This is the person who must stay at the home front because his skills or employment are too important to be risked in battle, but still wants to make a contribution.

**Other Than Human.** This is the ghost or alien or ancient master mage who cannot be brought into the war effort because they literally do not exist as citizens of the country.

**The Frail Fragile Flower Of Femininity.** Beautiful but not Amazonian young women who use their hidden powers or skills or weapons to fight the evil of the streets.

**The Oldtimer.** A hero who exceeds the usual age of military service, or also fulfills another task, such as “homemaker” that places them in the “older generation.” Often a source of humor.

## HOME FRONT HEROES, DIVISION TWO - HISTORICAL RETCON

**The Old Warrior.** Older heroes who otherwise fill the category of hero despite not being of war-going age.

**The Minority Hero.** Heroic battlers against despotic evil who did not meet the criteria of white Anglo Saxon name and features that dominated Golden Age comic books.

**The Pacifist.** The conscientious objector to the killing fields of war who is still willing to use his gifts to keep the home front safe while the troops are away.

**Rosie The Riveter.** This icon of the war effort, the archetype of the woman who goes to work while the men are away, got very little play in the Golden Age comics.

**The Wounded Lion.** Wounded in war, demobilized as unfit for duty, but not lacking in determination to use their skills or powers to defend the home front.

## THE GENIUS KID

**Examples:** Supersnipe, the Star Spangled Kid, and Little Boy Blue, as well as members of such groups as the Newsboy Legion and the Young Allies.

This is the kid who wants to do his (or sometimes her) part in the War Effort but is too young to put on a uniform, get issued a rifle, and fight. Instead, they put on a costume, equip themselves with whatever weapons their circumstances or ingenuity, can provide them, and fight whatever threats to the home front they can find.

For the most part these young warriors have no powers. They also have no access to the weapons of war. What they have is ingenuity and endless enthusiasm. Some, like the Star Spangled Kid, have adult partners, and others, like the Newsboy Legion, have adult overseers, but it is the child who initiates activity and leads the way, generally with the adult attempting to follow along and pick up the pieces.

## CAPTAIN AWESOME (42 PTS)

Prowess 3

Coordination 4

Strength 2

Intellect 6

Awareness 5

Willpower 5

**Stamina 7**

Determination 2

**Specialties**

Science - Chemistry

**Powers**

Wizardry (Devices) 6

*Stun Blast:* Slingshot

*Snare:* Pea Shooter

Invulnerability 2 (Device: padded Jacket)

Super-Speed 2: Skates

**Qualities**

**Epithet:** Smart Aleck Kid who sticks his nose where it doesn't belong

Inventive

## Challenges

13 years old

Rivalry with super genius kid at the other school

## Background

Sydney Johnson desperately wanted to help with the war effort, but the recruiting sergeant insisted on seeing adult ID and a note from his parents. At age 13, neither was easy to provide.

But if the Army (or the Navy, or the Marines, or the Coast Guard, he tried them all) would not have him, then he would help out at home. Collecting newspapers and tin cans and stuff was okay, but there were more important jobs just going looking. He would become a super hero and fill in for all the adult heroes who were away fighting the war.

Fortunately, Sydney was super smart. He was originally stymied by the unavailability of high explosives and other ordnance to 13 year olds, but he resolved to make do with what was available.

Using household chemicals, he managed to whip up a "stun load" for his slingshot that would send a shock through the body of his target, potentially stunning or knocking him out. Some bleach and leftovers from previous chemical experiments developed an expanding gum that would pin a target to a nearby wall or tree, immobilizing them. His greatest discovery was concealing skate wheels in his shoes that gave him amazing mobility along with a miniature motor to give them more speed.

In a matter of weeks, Captain Awesome was ready to strike a blow for justice as a Home Front Hero.

## THE FAVORED CHILD

**Examples:** Captain Marvel (Fawcett), Kid Eternity (Quality), Toro (Timely)

These are the ultimate wish-fulfillment characters. They only have to be deserving in some way, and a mighty wizard, or perhaps an angel, bestows upon them great power. The ranks of this sort of hero are amazingly scant when you consider the target audience for comic books, but

they include the best-selling comic book character of the Golden Age, Captain Marvel (known these days as Shazam). The Human Torch's partner, Toro, is a marginal version, in that he actually had the powers but did not know how to use them until the Human Torch awakened his powers in him.

## FREEDOM SONG (53 PTS)

Prowess 2 (4)

Coordination 2 (4)

Strength 2 (6)

Intellect 3

Awareness 4 (7)

Willpower 3 (6)

**Stamina 5 (12)**

Determination 2

## Specialties

**Performance:** Singing

**Power:** Force of Freedom

## Powers

Wizardry (Cosmic) 7

Light of Freedom (Blinding)

Force of Freedom (Blast)

Song of Freedom (Aura)

Freedom of the Skies 4 (Flight)

Freedom From Harm 4 (Force Field)

## Qualities

Courage

Curiosity

## Challenges

10 year old girl

Adult supervision of secret ID

Must sing or powers end (roll Willpower at -1, then -2, etc.)

## Background

Julie Jefferson was in Times Square with her mother when the headlines suddenly announced the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. People in that place on that day had many different reactions to the news. One group of complete strangers, which included Julie and her mother, began to sing. They started with America, then segued into the Star Spangled Banner. Then they swung into My Country Tis of Thee. The voices soared, and many of the other passerbys joined in. As the phrase "Let Freedom Ring" was sung, Julie found herself transported to a spot far above the crowd, looking down upon the gathering, and also seeing the Statue of Liberty out in New York harbor. With her, she realized, was another entity, one that seemed to partake equally of the Statue and a warlike female figure in archaic armor. The other being said, in a decided French accent, "There are terrible forces in the world who wish to deny freedom to all. La Belle France is ground under the tyrant's heel, America is next."

A conscientious and patriotic young woman, Julie asked "What can I do?"

"I bequeath unto you the power of millions of people seeking freedom. But say the phrase 'Let Freedom Ring' and the power of their song is yours. As long as there are those who yearn to breathe free, the Freedom Song shall live." And Julie found herself again on the street. The crowd was singing Yankee Doodle Dandy. She joined in, initially thinking she had just acquired a great imaginary friend.

Two weeks later, Julie stumbled upon a plot by saboteurs to destroy the Statue of Liberty. As the saboteurs closed in on "the meddlesome brat," she thought to sing out "Let Freedom Ring!"

Instead of a weak 10-year-old girl, the saboteurs were suddenly confronting a tall warrior woman whose voice could shatter weapons and fists beat out a paean to freedom against their skulls that they could not stand against.

Julie left as the police arrived. She experimented with her powers and discovered that she could emit the blinding Light of Freedom, sing the weap-

on and shackle shattering Song of Freedom, soar with the Freedom of the Skies, and strike down villains with the Force of Freedom.

But she could not stay indefinitely as Freedom Song, as she dubbed herself. The manifestation lasts as long as she can sing, and begins to fade as she does anything else with her voice but sing. She can sing softly for purposes of stealth and letting others be heard, but she must sing. If she stops to talk for more than a few seconds, the powers fade, and extended speech without song dissipates the adult body, leaving the 10-year-old girl. And as Julie Jefferson, she has her own obligations.

As long as she can think she can sing. "Silence Fields" have no effect, though a Willpower roll may be necessary if she doesn't hear herself sing.

Freedom Song's repertoire of music is eclectic, running to big band pop, patriotic songs, gospel, and traditional children's songs. Generally, the song fits the situation, and she will switch from one appropriate song to another, more appropriate, one if the situation changes. Fortunately, Julie's parents are music teachers.

## THE 4F

**Examples:** pre-Captain America Steve Rogers or Clark Kent, who accidentally looked through a wall and read the wrong eye chart.

This category can, of course, also include those who were truly 4F, such those with heart conditions (perhaps from Scarlett Fever) or maimed limbs, or psychological problems. Aside from the examples cited, however, this was not a common archetype. Golden Age comics did not like to admit that anyone could not become a soldier if they wanted to.

## THE INVALID

(49 PTS)

Prowess 4

Coordination 4

Strength 4

Intellect 6

Awareness 3

Willpower 3

## Stamina 7

Determination 2

## Specialties

Science of Electromagnetism

## Powers

Wizardry (Gadgets) 6

Flight

Force Field

Blast

TK of ferrous items

## Qualities

High upper body strength

Inventive

## Challenges

Weak legs

## Background

Jerry Thomas considered himself lucky. He was a teenager in the 1930s when he was struck with the scourge of polio, a plague that killed thousands every year in the United States. He came out of the experience with legs that needed help to bear his weight. Other survivors were imprisoned in iron lungs, or paralyzed and tied to wheelchairs. With a couple of canes, he could get around fine. His mind was unaffected, and his father was the chief maintenance engineer of a major utility, insulating him from the financial depredations of the Depression. In December, 1941, he was a junior engineer at the same utility with an impressive college degree behind him and a bright future ahead of him.

Pearl Harbor resurrected his old despair of living a normal life. He volunteered immediately for the military, but the recruiters took one look at his legs and turned him away. He was 4F, unfit for service.

If he couldn't fight as a soldier, then he would find another way. He heard about Vigilance Force

and the "talent search" for heroes. He had no powers, but he was smart and had the facilities of the major utility at his command. He would create super powers for himself.

What he found was a principle of magnetic energy that he could master with his extensive knowledge of electromagnetic forces. With a certain flair for the ironic, he crafted his creation into the semblance of a crutch. Along the ground he was still slow and halting, but the Crutch would let him fly. It also protected him against most projectiles and electromagnetic forces, and he could use its energy to either project a damaging force beam or boost the impact of the Crutch when Jerry's already impressive upper body muscles swung it at a bad guy's noggin. He could even use it to lift and move ferrous materials around.

With this impressive slate of powers, he put on a costume based on the Union uniform worn by his Grandfather during the Civil War and flew himself down to Tuskegee to volunteer for Vigilance Force. He picked the name The Invalid for its irony. Invalid was the term used for men who were the equivalent of 4F during the Civil War.

When he arrived, he collapsed. He woke up in the hospital. The extended trip had been too much for his fragile constitution; especially after all the sleepless nights he had spent putting his device together. Vigilance Force would not have him because he might collapse in the middle of a mission.

They did commend his initiative and ingenuity, and asked him to use it on the home front. They also paid him for his power source for the Crutch, which was used on several other devices. Sadly accepting his limitations, the Invalid took the train home, rededicated to using his abilities to defend America while Vigilance Force was gone to war.



**FREEDOM SONG, BROTHER SURVIVOR, INVALID**

## NECESSARY TO THE WAR EFFORT

**Examples:** Roy Lincoln, the Human Bomb, Dan “Manhunter” Richards, Bruce “Batman” Wayne

When the whole country goes to war, some citizens are so necessary to the war effort that they cannot be risked on the battlefield. Whatever their own inclinations, they are kept on the home front. This necessity can be based on their knowledge (scientists and engineers), their jobs (policemen, military technology workers, war plant workers) or their connections.

Many of the Golden Age heroes of the comics stayed home from the war because they were either scientists whose knowledge skills were needed in home front research projects, men who held jobs necessary to the war effort like policeman, or men of wealth, who can always find some reason for not going to war.

### LAMPLIGHTER

(52 PTS)

Prowess 4

Coordination 5

Strength 4

Intellect 6

Awareness 4

Willpower 3

#### Stamina 9

Determination 3

#### Specialties

**Science:** Electromagnetic physics

**Martial Arts:** Boxer

#### Powers

Wizardry (Gadget - Light Staff) 6

Blast

Blind

Strike

Force Field

#### Qualities

Impulsive

Inventive

#### Challenges

Secret ID Watched by Supervisors

#### Background

Henry Jenkins PhD, was ready to fight for his country. But before he could finish his current project and put his affairs in order, he was drafted, to be a scientist on the Home Front. His work in the propagation of electromagnetic forces was too valuable to allow him to be cannon fodder on the battlefield.

But Hank Jenkins had been an athlete in college as well as a science student. Some said his best field in science was the sweet science of boxing; he was on the 1936 US Olympics boxing team as a heavyweight.

As he worked on a project dealing with microwaves and radio frequencies, he realized that it had some applicability to his previous, civilian, work in the destructive qualities of visible light. An attempt to bring this to the attention of his commanding officer was futile. He realized that combining his work with some work colleagues were doing in compact power sources (based on the power source used in The Invalid's crutch) could produce a device that could project blinding flashes of light and powerful beams – a veritable heat ray.

Determined to have a personal hand in defending his country, he created a staff that resembled the staves used by lamplighters in their work a century before. It wasn't hard; his grandfather had been one of the last of the lamplighters.

Devising a costume based on the garb of Colonial-era Americans, he took to the streets when he could evade the observation of his government keepers, and found criminals and saboteurs whose activities needed to be brought into the light provided by The Lamplighter.

## OTHER THAN HUMAN

**Examples:** The Spectre (though Jim Corrigan did eventually split off from Spectre and go to war) and Mr. Justice, and also mystical types like Doctor Fate who are pretty much off the grid. This also includes living heroes like the Spirit, who are thought to be dead and therefore not registered for the draft.

This is commonly a supernatural archetype, though it can also include aliens who do not masquerade as humans. In essence, the character has no legal existence in the country, though he may well be a true American Patriot. He might defend the land of the free from enemies at home or coming from abroad, or guard the world against mystical menaces beyond the walls of the world.

Stories with this sort of hero are often horror stories, or sometimes potential horror stories that the hero can mitigate. These heroes often get mixed up in the toils of a plot started by Mad Science that either accidentally opens a mystic gate or creates a monstrous entity that must be stopped.

### BROTHER SURVIVOR (51 PTS)

Prowess 3

Coordination 3

Strength 6

Intellect 3

Awareness 7

Willpower 6

**Stamina** 13

Determination 2

#### Specialties

Military

Occult

#### Powers

Wizardry (Cosmic) 7

ESP

Blast (Affects material)

Phasing

#### Qualities

Protective

Drawn to mystical threats

#### Challenges

Ghost

Cannot be conscious over water

#### Background

George Sullivan was the oldest of the five Fighting Sullivan brothers. On November 13, 1942, the ship they all served on, the USS Juneau, was torpedoed after the Battle of Savo Island as it tried to reach safety and repair. The survivors were not found for over a week, thanks to wartime secrecy and bureaucratic SNAFUs. By November 17, the last of George's four brothers died. He raged in grief and guilt; as the oldest he should have "protected" the others. George slipped off the raft he had been riding and sank beneath the waves. As he sank, he was caught up in a whirlpool and brought before a being on a throne in a watery throne room. "Why do you enter my realm in such dismay?" asked the mysterious sea power.

"My brothers are all dead! I should have saved them!" cried George.

"Many people need saving in these days. My own halls grow overcrowded. The sea is not meant to be the last resting place of those who breathe air." The being mused, then said, "I am sending you back to the land. There is nothing you can do for your brothers of blood, but you have many brothers of spirit that need your protection. Do try to keep my halls from being so crowded."

George awoke upon the beach in Hawaii. He was immaterial, apparently a ghost. For weeks he was a wraith, unable to interact with anyone or anything, but gradually he found he could influence the mortal world and make others see him. He also found he could not move over water. He was restricted to the land. Finally he snuck aboard an air transport going to the mainland. Rather



than being torn out of the plane as it went feet wet (which he half expected), he instead went into and stayed in unmoving stasis until the plane became feet dry over California.

He made his way to Davenport, Iowa, his home town. He found that his parents and sister and sister-in-law and nephew were already adjusting to the loss of their loved ones. He resolved to keep a watch over them from a distance. There was no use disrupting their lives further.

Then he discovered a plot by former Bundists to kill the rest of the Sullivan family as a “lesson to them all.” He used his new powers to break up the plot.

After that, he found other uses for his powers, including stopping the attempts of mystical entities of evil to gain a foothold in the mortal world. For all anyone knows, he continues to do so today.

## THE FRAIL FRAGILE FLOWER OF FEMINITY

**Examples:** Sandra “Phantom Lady” Knight, Danette “Firebrand II” Reilly.

This is not the stalwart strong icon of femininity. After all, Diana Prince, Wonder Woman, was a member of the military. These are the healthy but not obviously athletic young women like Sandra Knight (Phantom Lady) or Danette Reilly (Firebrand II) who use hidden powers or skills or a potent weapon to equalize their battles with evil men.

### WHITE LADY

(45 PTS)

Prowess 5

Coordination 6

Strength 4

Intellect 3

Awareness 6

Willpower 6

**Stamina** 9

Determination 4

### Specialties

Master of Martial Arts (+3 to combat damage and Prowess)

Acrobatics (+1 to Coordination to avoid damage)

### Powers

Resistance 5 (Mental Attacks)

Resistance 5 (Afflictions)

Super Speed 1

### Qualities

**Catchphrase:** “You should not depend on firearms.”

**Epithet:** 100 lbs of feminine fury

Beautiful

### Challenges

Maintain secret ID as a social butterfly

### Background

Gabrielle Hendricks was the picture of a 1930s California blonde, and she particularly stood out from her friends, as they were mostly second generation Japanese-Americans, known as Nisei. A budding gymnast, she showed her routines to many of her friends. This caught the attention of Master Kanakiwa, the “uncle” of one of her friends. Master Kanakiwa made his living teaching martial arts to the young Nisei, and he invited Gabby to join them.

Gabrielle proved to be a natural. She had to hide her achievements from her mother, who was not sure that gymnastics was a proper interest for a young lady, much less a discipline where she was expected to actually hit someone. Gabby would leave home for flower arranging class, then divert to Master Kanakiwa’s dojo, where she rapidly became a star pupil. Even as she became an adult, she used every possible moment to train.

Then came the day her friends had been dreading, when they all had to pack up and be shipped off to the American desert to internment camps. Gabby thought this entirely unfair. Her own family was of German descent, but they weren’t being shipped anywhere.

Before he left, Master Kanakiwa talked to Gabby, who by now was a young woman teaching physical education. "We have been discriminated against because we look different and act different. You must use what I have taught you to show our neighbors and those in charge that we have much to offer, and we should not be feared, but welcomed."

Taking this to heart, Gabby devised a costume of flowing white robes and a white samurai mask, broken up only by her flowing blonde hair. Taking her cue from the costume, she named herself White Lady, and set out to demonstrate the value of an eclectic education.

White Lady almost never uses any weapons. She has mastered her ki so that her entire body is a weapon, and she uses it well. Given any opportunity, she will lecture her comrades and opponents on how her discipline and training shows the superiority of a martial arts trained approach. Being a school teacher, she is pretty good at it.

## THE OLD-TIMER

**Examples:** Includes billy gunn, vigilante's sidekick, and "uncle" marvel, the wc fields-like conman who mentored mary marvel.

A genre that appeals to youngsters gets nowhere using oldsters as heroes, but a few heroes that exceeded 30 years of age crept into the mix, often as comedy relief. Generally their age is considered comedy in and of itself, and the character generally acts as if playing a comic sidekick in a B Western.

### CAPT. WHIZ BANG (49 PTS)

Prowess 4

Coordination 6

Strength 3

Intellect 4

Awareness 5

Willpower 5

**Stamina 8**

Determination 3

### Specialties

Acrobatics

Martial Arts (slapstick) (Add one to Prowess)

Military

### Powers

Super-Speed 6

Fast Attack

Surface Speed

Strike 5

### Qualities

Curious

Overconfident

### Challenges

Over 60 years old

Can strain self in attack (Stamina Roll or collapse)

### Background

Jacob Olstorm is a veteran of the Great War. He was a United States Marine for 20 years, including his Great War service. Now his country is at war again and the years are catching up to him. His wind is not what it used to be and if he over exerts his heart starts beating overtime.

But unknown to most of his comrades in the Marine Corps, for all this time Jacob has been a meta man. He learned in the Spanish American War, when he was a raw recruit that he could move faster, much faster, than his fellows. He had spent his early years as a runner for the local mob in Minneapolis, and now he realized just how good he was at this.

He spent both of his wars hiding his abilities, but using them when they would help his unit. He volunteered at every opportunity to run messages and scout the way, and he was very successful at it.

He's too old to help his beloved Marines now, but the home front has its own hazards, and a Marine knows to step forward when he's needed.

IRON CHIEF, BRONZE Bomber, CAPT. WHIZBANG



FOR

Jacob took his new costumed name from the popular post-Great-War magazine Captain Billy's Whiz Bang (see the lyrics for "Trouble" in The Music Man) and he thinks it describes his methods perfectly. Capt. Whiz Bang does not actually run faster than anyone else. He controls his personal friction quotient, so that ground and air do not slow him down anywhere near the way they do normal folk. When he is moving at speed, he looks like he is skating, rather than running. There is a distinct Whiz sound when he goes by, and his impact on a target definitely produces a bang.

Rather than try to hide his age, Jacob makes a great deal of it, talking like a movie oldtimer sidekick and complaining about aches and pains. Whenever he can he tries to make his captures in a slapstick style that (1) puts any bystanders at ease and (2) makes his targets underestimate him.

## THE OLD WARRIOR

Rather than the comic relief dodderers of the Golden Age, this category acknowledges that there were lots of older men and women who still had a lot to offer the War Effort on the home front, including veterans of the Great War, pulp heroes who still have a few good cases left in them, and powered beings whose alter egos happen to be older than draft age.

### THE VOLUNTEER

(42 PTS)

Prowess 6

Coordination 4

Strength 2

Intellect 4

Awareness 4

Willpower 7

**Stamina** 9

Determination 4

**Specialties**

Military

Occult

### Powers

Telekinesis 5 (Ring of Thoth)

Paralysis 5 (Ring of Thoth)

Invulnerability 3 (Ring of Thoth)

### Qualities

Inquisitive busybody

High Sense of Duty

### Challenges

Over 60

Frail Health (Strength 2)

### Background

Col. Geoffrey Lockhart, ret., has served his country well in past wars. He started as an Indian fighter, then went to Cuba as a junior officer with the Rough Riders and topped off his career as a regimental commander during the Great War. For the last twenty years he has been retired, and pursuing his interest in Archaeology and collecting interesting artifacts.

Getting the Ring of Thoth was pure good fortune. He took a trip to Europe and Egypt, using connections he had developed while working with British officers during the Great War. His connections gave him access to a new find that had barely been uncovered. Away from the Valley of the Kings (where King Tut's tomb had been discovered a few years before) he was allowed to participate in the uncovering of the tomb of someone who had apparently been one of the builders of pharaohs' tombs. Finding a secret panel, he found within a ring with the hieroglyph for Thoth inscribed on it. His collector instincts came to the fore and he took the ring away with him without telling the dilettante British Lord who was sponsoring the dig.

It was years before he found his keepsake actually had mystic powers. It can raise objects and move them telekinetically and paralyze a target with pain by apparently simultaneously shocking all of his organs with a telekinetic punch to the whole body.

Until Pearl Harbor, Geoffrey carried the ring as a keepsake and possible help if suddenly threatened. With the advent of war, he realized that he could do more with it. He has become more frail with the years, but with his great willpower backing it, the Ring has the chance to build again; this time monuments for peace and justice.

## THE MINORITY HERO

Despite the evidence of Golden Age comic books, black, Hispanic, and even Oriental Americans were citizens of the United States of America and wanted to help America win the war. Modern comics about the Golden Age have attempted to alleviate this neglect with characters like Amazing Man, and the current version of Golden Girl (originally a blonde in the 1940s).

## THE BRONZE BOMBER (46 PTS)

Prowess 5

Coordination 6

Strength 6

Intellect 3

Awareness 4

Willpower 4

**Stamina** 10

Determination 2

### Specialties

Master of Martial Arts (Boxing) (+3 to Prowess)

**Science:** Demolition

### Powers

Strike (Explosive Punch) 5

Immunity to Explosions

Invulnerability 3

Leap (Explosive Leap) 45

### Qualities

Dogged determination

### Challenges

Negro in 1940s America

**Secret ID:** Military private

### Background

Maurice "Mauler" Mack was an up and coming young heavyweight boxer, making progress in one of the few careers that a black man could in America of the 1930s, when he was inducted into the US Army. Like many Negro soldiers, he was assigned highly dangerous duty on the home front, loading and transferring munitions from one conveyance to another. In this case he works at a transshipment rail yard in his own home town.

One day, he arrived on duty early to find the gates unguarded. Investigating, he found saboteurs about to set off a bomb hooked to the munitions that would devastate the rail yards and probably a three mile radius around them. His parents and siblings lived in that radius!

He attacked the saboteurs and laid them all out with his signature "bombs away" right cross, but it was too late, the bomb was about to detonate. He flung himself on the bomb. There was a devastating explosion, but it only destroyed the immediate ammo stores. Much of the force of the blast was somehow contained. And Mauler Mack found himself in a neighboring tree, his uniform shredded but himself apparently untouched.

Maurice later discovered that if he thought about it, any part of his body would cause an explosion that he was immune to. Resolving to do something about saboteurs and other dangers to his community, he devised a costume and mask. During his career as a fighter, he had been called The Bronze Bomber as a takeoff on the Brown Bomber, Joe Louis. He adopted that name and began to carve out a reputation as a defender of the ghetto and the innocent.

PEACEMAKER, LAMPLIGHTER, VOLUNTEER



## THE PACIFIST

Even in the war that “everyone” felt was just, there were those who refused to kill their fellow men for reasons of conscience. Some were imprisoned, others chose to do war work at home or non-combat direct military support. That such a person, gifted with power, might want to help the Home Front against those who might want to despoil it, is well within the bounds of possibility.

### PEACEMAKER

(48 PTS)

Prowess 3

Coordination 6

Strength 4

Intellect 4

Awareness 3

Willpower 4

### Stamina 8

Determination 2

### Specialties

Medicine

Power (Touch)

### Powers

Paralyzing Touch 6

Mind Control Touch 6 (Uses STR of target instead of Willpower, no range)

Stunning Touch Affliction 6

Regeneration 4

### Qualities

Passive Resistance

Talks instead of Acts

### Challenges

Code Vs. Killing

Rivalry with punching heroes

### Background

Jeffrey Taylor was convinced that the war was a great mistake. The participants had bungled their way into it and there was no reason for anyone to die over the mistakes of the Men in High Places. Dedicated to a peaceful solution to all problems, he managed to convince the draft board that he would be no use as a soldier. The fact that he willingly volunteered to be a test subject in some medical studies aimed toward keeping American troops safe from tropic diseases also acted in his favor.

But Jeffrey’s metabolism was just a bit different from his fellow testees. The combination of the diseases he was exposed to and the drugs given to him (or perhaps they were placebos) to fight the disease affected him strangely. His heart rate increased, and he seemed feverish, but he felt no impairment of his facilities. In fact, he felt healthier than ever. Taking his cue from the questions of the doctors and aides, he pretended to be adversely affected and he was taken out of the study and put in a medical facility.

While in recovery, he found that he could paralyze people who stood near him. He could render someone unconscious with a touch. He could even speak to someone and effectively control their actions and even convince them to change their minds about an attitude or intended action.

He realized that this was his chance to bring some peace; perhaps not to the world, but to the local people. With the local city pacified, who knew what further opportunities would arise.

Jeffrey is a man with a mission, and he is well-meaning. There is ample opportunity for his new talents to lead him astray into megalomania and attempts to Take Over the World. Only the future can show what path he will take.

## ROSIE THE RIVETER

She is competent, intelligent, duty-bound, and very very tired. While the men are away at war, she steps in to work in the offices and the factories; and in many cases she still has to fulfill the usual functions of a wife and mother. She proves in the process

that a woman can do any job a man can do, which may be one reason this archetype got very little play in the Golden Age comics. Occasionally they get mentioned and receive a pat on the back for “a job well done,” but none of these real heroines of WWII was immortalized as standing in for the other mostly-male occupation, mystery man.

This character might have the power to physically stop traffic, but rarely has the beauty to do so. She is a normal housewife or fiancée, perhaps cute or pretty when she dresses up but essentially anonymous, particularly when dressed in the usual clothes of her new job. She has a job; she may well have children to take care of, and has very little free time. This is not the sort of person who steps up to be a mystery crimefighter, unless the cause is very pressing.

## CRIMSON CYCLONE (41 PTS)

Prowess 4

Coordination 5

Strength 6

Intellect 4

Awareness 5

Willpower 5

**Stamina** 11

Determination 2

### Specialties

Martial Arts (street brawling) (+1 to Prowess)

Homemaking tools and materials

Stealth

### Powers

Strike 3 (sucker punch)

Time Control 2

Super-Speed (Personal to Extended in one move)

Fast Attack (Attack two opponents in a turn)

Invulnerable 2 (Device-Protective costume)

### Qualities

Fiercely protective of home, family, and neighborhood

### Challenges

**Enemy:** Local mob enforcers

**Secret ID:** Must keep secret to keep children from harm

Children want to get into the act

### Background

Matilda “Ma” McCarthy’s husband, Fred, went off to war right after Pearl Harbor, leaving Matilda and their two children, Freddie and Agnes, to cope as best they could on what small part of his pay the government sent them. With two small (8 and 10) children to take care of, Ma decided that trying to be a factory worker would not work for her, so she hit on the idea of taking in laundry and doing cooking for the other women in the neighborhood who were joining the work force. An inventive and efficient worker, this actually gave Ma a fair amount of free time and still paid the bills. She also took advantage of her ability to speed up time around herself, so that work was accomplished quicker. If she tried that in a factory, questions would have been asked. At home, everybody knew that Ma was a fast worker...

She spent that free time listening to the radio and reading the specialty magazines following the adventures of the costumed mystery men of Vigilance Force and free lancers like Captain Liberty. When she read that women like Freedom Song and the Hornet were also putting on the Mask and Cape, she dreamed about how things might have gone differently.

Then poor old Bernie the Grocer on the corner was beaten nearly to death. Protection rackets were commonplace in the city slums where Ma and her brood lived. You paid them off, you allowed for a bit of pilferage, and life moved on. But now two mobs seemed to be trying to muscle in on the same territory. Bernie had paid one, and the other’s thugs had beaten him up. In a retaliation strike, Mrs. Dunfee was shot and killed by a



stray bullet. Then PS 172, where Freddy and Agnes went to school, was the scene of a stabbing of Jack Benoit, who everyone knew was a snitch – but he had never gotten anyone in the neighborhood in trouble.

The cops were helpless, or maybe just well bribed. Something had to be done, and Ma realized she was the one to do it.

Mr. Dunfee (who like Ma's husband was off to war) had red longjohns that fit Ma's stocky frame. A cracked cooking pot would make a good helmet and occasional weapon once she cut out the cracked area into eyeholes. A loose, sleeveless sweater would help disguise her femininity and a butchers apron help protect vital areas. A light blue-grey blanket would provide a cape, and household gloves and the steel-tipped boots her husband wore when he was home and working finished out the costume.

Her first encounter with Boss Shark's enforcers supplied her name. They told the cops that took their story that they had been hit by a fella "who's like a red cyclone, he moves so fast." One statement that the "Crimson Cyclone" protects the Dread Falls neighborhood was all that was needed.

While dressed as the Crimson Cyclone, Ma never talks to anyone if she can help it. When she does she affects a thick Irish accent and lowers her voice to sound like a man. Mostly she talks to her targets, promising them dire retribution if they don't mend their ways and make amends. And she means it.

## THE WOUNDED LION

Not quite the same as the 4F, these are veterans of the early stages of the conflict (Such as Pearl Harbor or the defense of the Philippines) who are officially too crippled by wounds to continue to fight. They may still have the ingenuity and perseverance to keep the fight going on the Home Front. Golden Age comics never really addressed this resource, possibly because of distaste for admitting that a soldier might return home disabled.

## IRON CHIEF

(48 PTS)

Prowess 3 (5 in Iron Chief)

Coordination 5 (3 +2 in Iron Chief)

Strength 3 (7 in Iron Chief)

Intellect 5

Awareness 4 (2)

Willpower 5

**Stamina** 8 (12)

Determination 1

### Specialties

**Science:** Steam technology

### Mechanics

Expert Pilot (Iron Chief) (+2 to Prowess and Coordination in robot)

### Powers

Growth 2 (Adds +2 Strength and +2 Invulnerability) – Iron Chief Vehicle

Ability Increase 2 –Strength (total +4)

Strike 2 (+1 to Strength damage)

Super Speed 4 (Personal to far range in one move)

Resistance to Bullets 5 (Includes any solid projectiles – arrows, stones, etc.)

Blast 4 (rocket "cigars")

### Qualities

**Epithet:** 10 tons of angry metal

**Catch Phrase:** Express Comin' Through!

### Challenges

American Indian

Wheelchair bound

Vision and hearing restricted in Iron Chief

## Background

Arnold Greenbush was an American Indian machinist on the Panay in December 1937 when it was attacked and sunk by Japanese aircraft. His rescuers had to cut off his legs and his left arm to get him off the sinking craft. He was also the son of an Oklahoma Indian chief.

Invalided home, he felt imprisoned in his wheelchair and sought any method he could find to walk again and lead an active life.

He found other mechanics amongst his tribe and decided to try to fashion a vehicle that would give him the mobility he wanted. Using steam technology and an elaborate set of gear and hydraulic pistons, they put together a humanoid armored vehicle over ten feet tall. As a joke, they gave the robot the features of a Tobacco Store Indian, complete with "cigars" in its hand that were really rockets. He hauled the robot to Tuskegee, but his application to become a member of Vigilance Force was turned down because (1) the Iron Chief vehicle made too big a target, (2) the vehicle might be unwieldy on the battlefield and get stuck in the mud, and (3) Arnold was too unhealthy to survive the rigors of a military deployment.

However, following the established guidelines, they allowed him to return to Oklahoma with his Iron Chief vehicle, and some of the armorers even gave him some pointers for improving its performance.

Shortly thereafter, Arnold got wind of an effort by Nazi saboteurs to cause an Indian uprising while the American military was overseas. He climbed into the Iron Chief and, with the backing of some of his old friends on the reservation, broke up the meeting and captured the saboteurs. Iron Chief was on its way to glory.

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