



WARGAMES I:

**SUPERHERO ROLEPLAYING
IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE COLD WAR**



**VIGILANCE
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INTRODUCTION

Why a book about supers in the late Cold War?

Well... *because*.

Because the Golden Age of comics birthed fistfuls of flag heroes - but hasn't really given them much to do since 1945.

While movies such as *Red Dawn*, the lamentable *Iron Eagle* franchise, and *Rocky IV* (heck - Dolph Lundgren's entire filmography) used the Cold War as an interesting backdrop for dramatic stories, comics (not always, but too often) were strangely removed from it. Rather than capitalize on such rich material, they were content to let Captain America type characters continue to confront an endless cycle of generic villains of the week or recycled WW2 threats such as the Red Skull and Baron Zemo.

To be clear, this is not a thought exercise about how the Cold War would have "really" been different if superheroes existed. Not at all.

This is what I wish the 80s and 90s had been like for flag heroes in superhero comics. This is the Iron Age that never was. This was a time in comics when Captain America, Union Jack and Captain Britain were side-by-side facing down their spandex-clad Soviet opposite numbers

across the Berlin Wall and engaging in a shadow war of a super-powered covert adventures.

Why a book about supers in the late Cold War?

Because it's a niche that hasn't been done before.

There are supplements that do a great job of covering the Golden Age, the Silver Age, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age of comics.

But one that tackles an alternate Iron Age where the focus was on battles between the flag heroes of the NATO Alliance and Warsaw Pact? *That* I have not seen.

Why a book about supers in the late Cold War?

Well....

Because, when you really think about it, wouldn't *Red Dawn* have been a whole lot cooler if Captain America had been in it?

If you answered that question in the affirmative, then this book is for you.

Hope you like it.

RELATIONSHIP TO RPG OBJECTS VIGILANCE UNIVERSE AND HALT EVIL DOER!

Readers of the *Halt Evil Doer!* (from Phipps Gaming Studio) universe may note numerous characters, concepts, and ideas from that setting that have been incorporated into *Wargames*. This is a reflection of both authors' (Charles Phipps and Mike Lafferty) love for

each others settings. As such, the two settings should be considered as one in official canon.

Those who do not own *Halt Evil Doer!* should just assume all the extra names and references are simply there to add verisimilitude and

to make the setting more realistic. We've provided all the information Game Masters and players need to handle their own Cold War themed games here.

Those who want to use *Wargames* as a supplement to their own settings should feel free to just ignore any references that they find extraneous. We hope that fans of all three settings will enjoy the mixture.



ROLEPLAYING SUPERS IN THE COLD WAR

Comic books were influenced by the Cold War, albeit to a much lesser extent than they were by World War 2. Comic book creators such as Stan Lee created characters like the Crimson Dynamo and Titanium Man as part of their efforts to use the conflict with the Soviets as a backdrop for dramatic storytelling. The famous

Marvel hero Iron Man was initially conceived (several retcons ago) as an anti-communist character that fought attempts by the Soviets to steal or sabotage his advanced technology.

As we entered the age of détente, the changing mood of Cold War called for a gradually more sympathetic portrayal of Soviets. In the late 1960s, formerly villainous characters like the Black Widow were allowed to defect while in the 1980s communist characters like the October Guard in *G.I. Joe* were treated less as determined, deadly enemies and more like rivals who could sometimes cooperate for the greater good. By the time of the Soviet Union's collapse, the era of the communist villain was long over. Only a rare few characters, like Omega Red, maintained their villainous status past the Soviet era.

This section will examine some of the issues confronting super heroes during the Cold War and what Game Masters can do to make the conflict a centerpiece of their games.

TOPE OF A COLD WAR CAMPAIGN

The seminal comic book series *Watchmen* describes the hypothetical countdown to destruction that hung over the heads of the world during the Cold War. A constant and pervading theme in a *Wargames* campaign is this threat of annihilation. While both sides are aware of the horror that WW3 would bring, neither is willing to compromise or give up their advantages to end the ever present threat.

It may be difficult for modern readers to remember this looming feeling of dread. Even when the United States and Soviet Union had reached a détente, there was always a persistent undercurrent of suspicion and fear. The conflict came close to a shooting war on

WHAT WILL CAUSE WORLD WAR 3?

One thing every player character will wonder about is: what exactly will trigger the outbreak of war with the United States and the U.S.S.R? In a Cold War era supers game, the player characters will want to know how they have affected the balance of power and what might ultimately result in a thermonuclear war. This threat should always be looming during the Cold War but it is wrong to oversell the point. Not every mission should run the risk of Armageddon.

In general, most dust-ups between the Soviet Union and the United States will be pushed under the rug. After the Cuban Missile Crisis, both sides are aware that neither side will survive an atomic war. So the conflict became indirect; with a series of covert missions and proxy wars waged by both sides and heavy use of propaganda to attempt to undermine the other's regimes.

This doesn't mean that player characters can't get involved in conflicts. Take the movie *Top Gun* for example. The climax results in Soviet military advisors getting into a shooting match with our heroes. There are casualties on the Russian side and the matter ends with no expectation of a war to break out over the issue. A certain amount of losses, especially of covert forces, is expected by both sides. If a Russian super

hero kills an American super hero no one is going to go to war over it. The American side may even deny he was killed by the enemy and the truth will be covered up for decades.

"Plausible deniability" is the key. If the player characters journey over to Moscow and incinerate the Kremlin, then they can be expected to be disavowed by their government and declared international criminals. That won't stop fanatics on both sides from trying to trigger global Armageddon however. *Octopussy*, (a Roger Moore classic that could have easily taken place in the universe of *Wargames*) shows a rogue Russian general's plan to remove the threat of nuclear weapons so that a conventional invasion of the West is possible.

In the world of comic book super heroes, there may even be a McGuffin that will make it possible to survive nuclear warfare or eliminate the atomic weapons of one side or both sides. In which case, the Cold War may change drastically as the threat of mutual destruction disappears and you could easily end up with full blown conventional world war (which, it should be noted, many experts at the time thought the Soviets would win.)

multiple occasions when only the threat of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) prevented World War 3 from breaking out. Arguably, on at least a few occasions, only dumb luck prevented an accidental nuclear exchange.

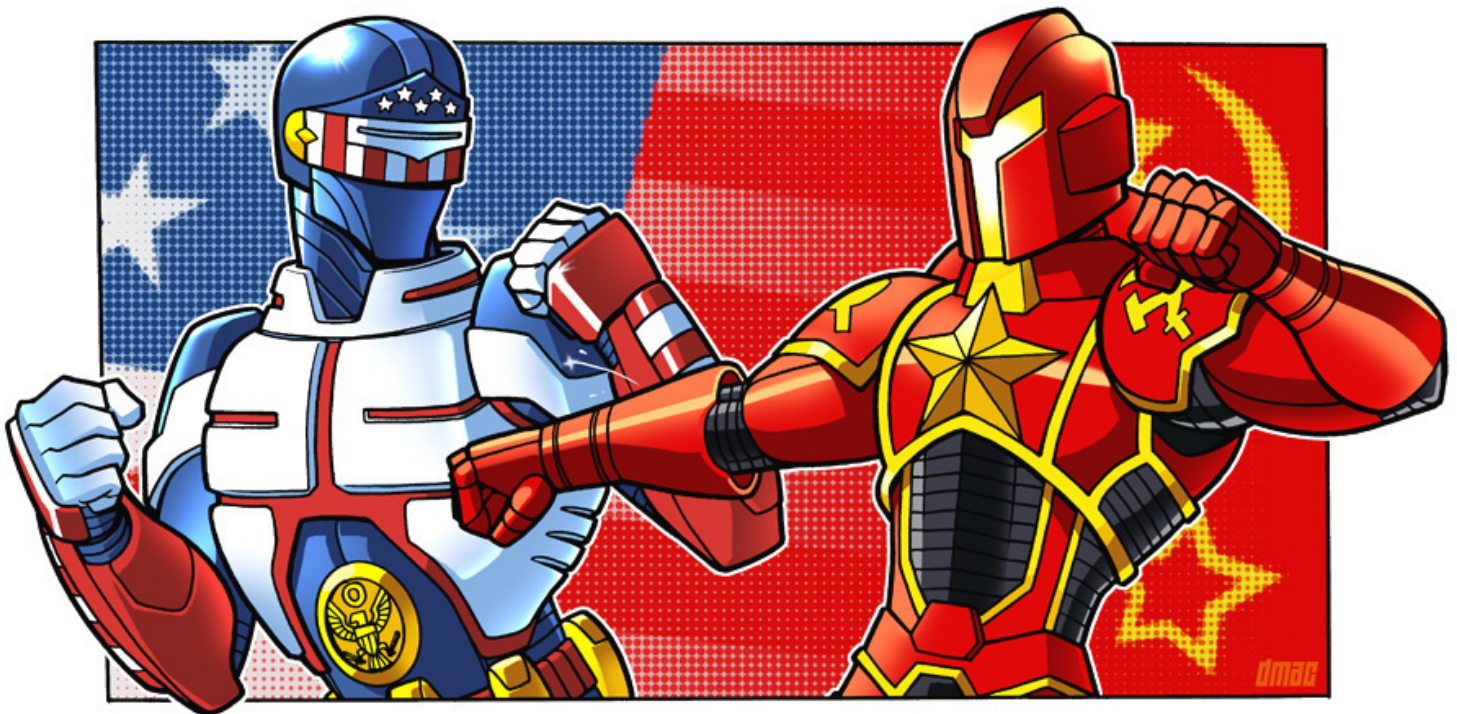
In the face of total global destruction, both leaders and super-soldiers are willing to perform acts that they wouldn't normally. The stakes literally couldn't be any higher. An individual American or Soviet hero may become so concerned of his nation's (and the world's) destruction that he would do

things he'd never consider or even become a traitor to his allies or chain of command in order to prevent it.

Unlike *Defcon 1*, which was a book designed to treat the Cold War era super-teams as basically friendly rivals, in *Wargames* it is assumed that the two sides are fundamentally hostile to one another. The Berlin Wall is a stark reminder that peace will not be achieved between the

two sides any time soon.

However, having said that, the enemy isn't always the guy on the other side of the wall. In the world of *Wargames*, while the designated enemy is on the other side of the Iron Curtain, there are genuinely evil people (with a capital 'E') operating on both sides of the divide that need to be stopped.



THE ROLE OF SUPER HEROES DURING THE COLD WAR

While the United States has perhaps the longest history of utilizing patriotic themed heroes for propaganda, super-soldiers serve as valuable PR tools for both sides.. Even when governments are unpopular, rarely does the tarnish extend to its super human champions.

Soviet superheroes are amongst the few government organizations that maintain any credibility with the public at large in the last

decades of the Cold War. There is something mythic and undeniably inspiring about a man who can fly and their heroic efforts are well-publicized by the state. The average Soviet citizen may have mixed feelings about their government but they *believe* in Battle Czar and the Red Hammer. As a result, they are often carted out for state events or for high profile missions where they can publicly humiliate their nations' enemies.

ADVENTURING IN THE COLD WAR

Aside from their propaganda value, in a very real sense superheroes in the world of *Wargames* can be a wild card within the Cold War.

Their very existence changes the nature of a conflict that (in our world) relied on atomic weaponry as the means of ensuring global détente. A single sufficiently powered (or sufficiently delusional) super soldier could theoretically trigger the war that ends the world or tip the scales in favor of his faction. Even more unsettling is the fact that some (mistaken) military leaders on both sides recklessly believe that their super soldiers could win a full-scale war against their enemy in a quick and decisive manner.

While player characters should not take it for granted that their characters may have serious effects on how the Cold War progresses, in the world of *Wargames*, it *is* possible for characters to change the course of history dramatically. A brilliant super scientist could take over the Soviet Union, repair its infrastructure, boost its agricultural production and push its weapons technology years ahead of the West's - guaranteeing the supremacy of the Warsaw Pact and driving the West to take increasingly desperate measures to close the gap. A meta-human with enhanced stealth and speed could find a way to disable or circumvent all of the United States' (or the Soviet Union's) defenses as a prelude to a surprise *Red Dawn*-style invasion. On the other hand, a peace-loving charismatic hero (or one with powerful mind-control abilities) might reconcile East and West and the two power blocs could work together to peacefully transform planet into a prosperous, unified global society.

The two power blocs are quick to use superheroes for covert operations against the other side that demand their larger than life abilities or as spies when circumstances make it impossible to get normal agents behind enemy lines.

These missions may be dealing with super-powered and super-technology wielding terrorists, preventing the defection of a meta-human to assist the other side, or sabotaging a project that could give the enemy an overwhelming military advantage.

The Cold War setting adds an interesting aspect to global threats that require cooperation from both power blocs to defeat. Whether the characters are dealing with conquest-minded aliens, inter-dimensional invaders or uppity Atlanteans out for revenge on the surface-dwellers, the paranoia of the time should have the both sides asking: "Is this just a ruse by the Russians/Americans?", "Can I trust my former enemy enough to fight alongside them?", or (in the case of more Machiavellian characters) "How can I turn this event to the advantage of my side?"

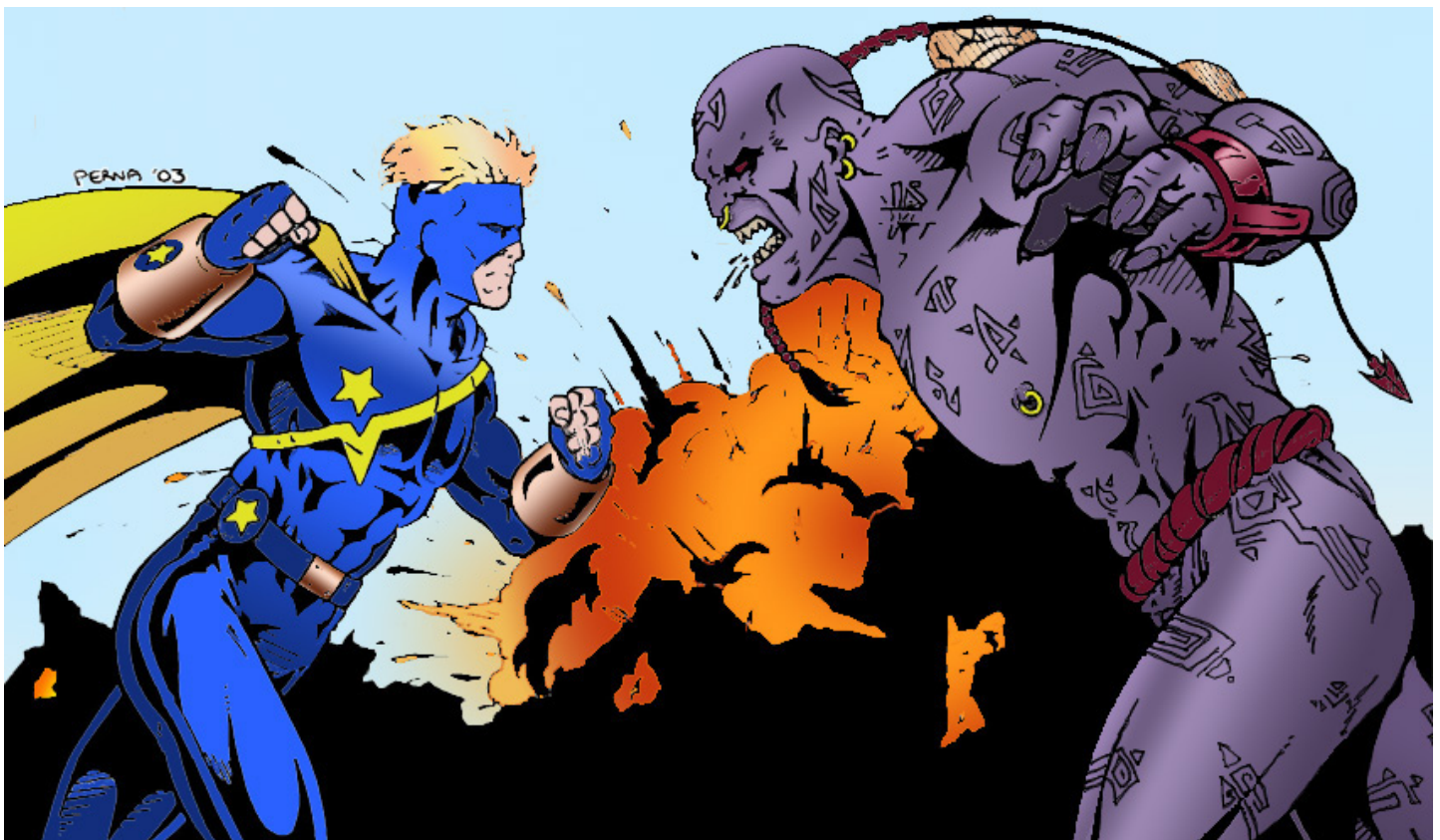
THE TREATMENT OF SUPER HUMANS DURING THE COLD WAR

The United States and Soviet Union approach the “problem” of meta-humans with very different philosophies and treatment of super humans is markedly different from the East to the West.

The United States makes an active effort to recruit super heroes into the military. Whether they are born with their powers, acquire them from accidents (or from government programs such as Project: Icarus), or gain them through mystical study; the United States desires to make use of such beings. Service is not *mandatory*, however. There is a strong vigilante tradition in United States super heroics and they have made little effort in enforcing anti-super hero laws since the time of Nixon. The United States’ NATO allies tend to take a similar view

of super humans, preferring to recruit them if possible but not draft them into service. In fact, often the NATO nations make use of part-time freelancers who perform government missions then go back to their normal lives of independent super heroes.

Life is considerably harsher as a meta-human in the Soviet Union. Russian-born meta-humans who voluntarily join the Warsaw Pact’s super soldier program are treated as royalty. They live lifestyles that are significantly better than most other Soviets and are equivalent to upper level party members. Those from satellite nations often have to prove themselves first but are also generally given the royal treatment. Super-human crime is somewhat lower in the Soviet Union due to the fact that most



are either pressed into the State's service or arrested (or possibly summarily killed) if they refuse to serve.

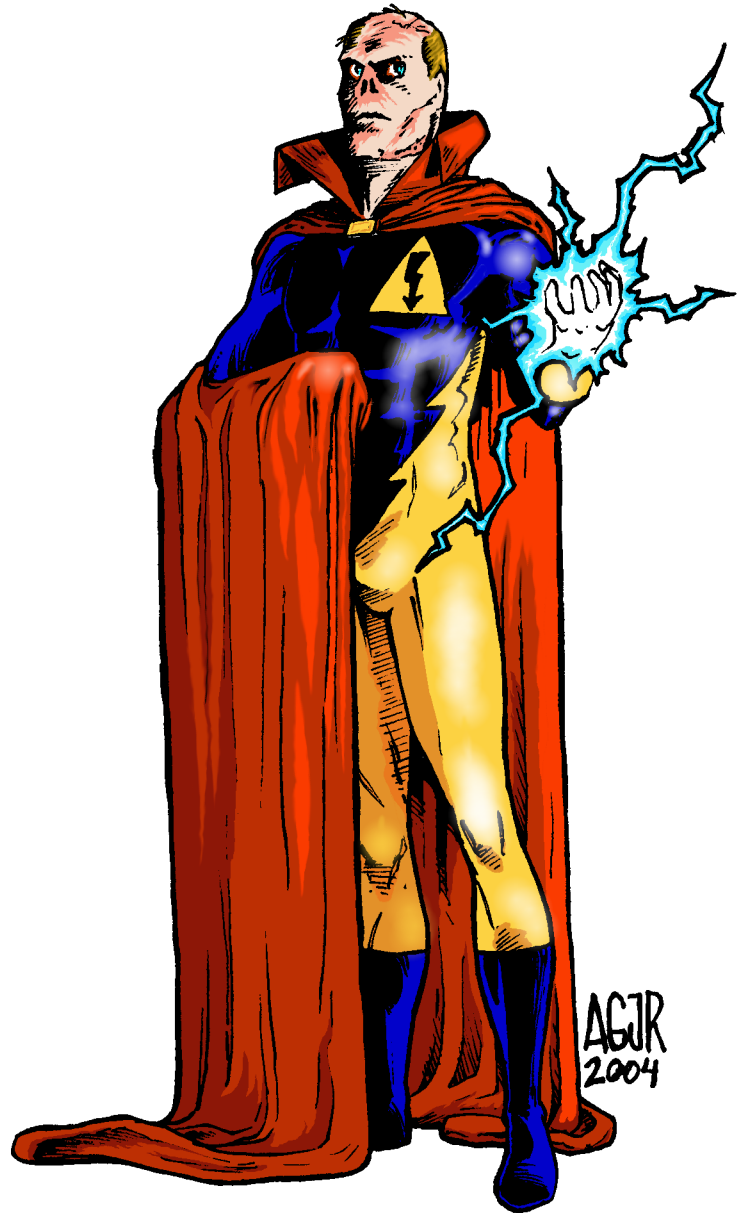
Those super humans in the Eastern Bloc that are unwilling to serve on government sanctioned teams are treated harshly. The KGB is willing to use any and all means to recruit super humans into their ranks and routinely resorts to methods like blackmail or kidnapping. Even peaceful meta-humans can be imprisoned or executed if they repeatedly refuse state service. This draconian approach led many meta-humans in the Eastern Bloc to become vigilantes or terrorists.

Super-powered vigilantes in the Soviet Union are hunted down mercilessly and (if caught) either "rehabilitated" into government service or killed by the agency that oversees most superhuman affairs, the Red Directorate.

MAGIC

Neither the US nor the Soviet Union governments officially devoted resources to developing magical assets during the Cold War. The Soviets couldn't because of ideological conflicts; the Americans couldn't because of the outcry it would raise amongst its deeply religious populace. However, since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, it has been confirmed that magically empowered meta-humans served covertly on the super-soldier programs of both nations.

There was a conscious and vigorous effort on the part of the Soviet Bloc to downplay and, in some cases, even deny the existence of magic. On those occasions when government sponsored teams clashed with a magic based threats (holdout Nazi Thule Society sorcerers, rampaging oni in Tokyo, vampires, Atlantean sorcerers) an official disinformation campaign



would attempt to explain away the supernatural elements as psychically generated illusions, mass hallucinations or something similar.

Allies of both the super-powers had fewer qualms about using sorcery. The United Kingdom notably had an extensive and highly classified organization, the Stonehenge Agency, which employed magic-using agents and was specifically dedicated to monitoring and countering supernatural threats. France,

Mexico, Israel, India, Romania and Japan also had official magic programs during the Cold War.

Additionally, since the fall of the Iron Curtain, it has been revealed that (although there were official sanctions against it) rogue agencies in the governments of both the US and the USSR knowingly employed magic-using operatives. The National Security Agency in the US maintained a pool of sorcerers to assist with information gathering and cryptanalysis at its headquarters at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland. On a similar note, the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Russian Armed Forces General Staff (known more commonly by the initials GRU), a shadowy Soviet intelligence agency that was little known outside of analyst's circles during the Cold War, had no compunctions about employing mages to gain an edge in the competition with their institutional rival, the KGB. In one notable case, the GRU employed a neo-pagan spellcaster (Idunn) on the People's Revolution Auxiliary in East Berlin to keep tabs on a few KGB sponsored superhumans about whom they had suspicions.

American or Soviet super-soldiers with a magical origin for their powers will have felt persistent official pressure to cover it up and explain it away as a naturally occurring mutation. American supers who had refused to cover up the magic origin of their powers would have been drummed out of the force and might have faced public scorn - especially in the Midwest and Southern states. Soviet supers taking the same stand might have faced much more severe repercussions. Characters from allied nations serving with the NATO Alliance super-soldier team will not face official coercion but might be advised to "keep quiet about it" by the own government to avoid confrontation on the issue.

SUPER-SOLDIER ARMS RACE

After the emergence of the Iron Curtain, there were expectations among factions on both sides that their super-soldier programs would tip the balance of the stand-off in the Cold War one way or the other. With the American Project: Icarus and the Soviet Project: Hammer, both sides devoted substantial resources to feverish analysis of the remaining scraps of the Third Reich's notes on the Nazi's various super-soldier programs.

The Soviets had the most powerful being on the planet in the alien warrior Urielus (who chose the codename Battle Czar) who had adopted Russia as his homeland. Battle Czar's battles against the Nazi super-humans during WW2 were legendary and the US was more than a little nervous about how their team would fare if they ever had to face him. When Battle Czar was soundly defeated by the combined force of the Western Bloc super-team during the Cuban Missile Crisis it became obvious that neither side had an insurmountable edge in the super-soldier race.

Since, statistically, the Eastern and Western Blocs seemed to have an equivalent number of naturally occurring meta-humans, funding for both Project: Icarus and Project: Hammer was greatly increased in an attempt by both sides to shift the scales in their favor. However, neither East nor West was able to reliably create enough super-soldiers to give them a significant advantage (although both could intermittently produce handfuls of low to mid-level powered operatives - while killing many test subjects along the way.)



BATTLE ARMOR TECHNOLOGY

The US enjoyed an edge in the area of battle armor design thanks to the second Steel Commando's (Jack Washington Junior) engineering genius.

Under Washington's direction, the US military built a brigade strength force of mass produced battlesuits based on his designs that were more

heavily armored, more agile and packed more firepower than their Eastern Bloc opponents. Although the US and its allies enjoyed a definite edge in this arena for years, they were never too far ahead of their competition. Thanks to double-agents in the American military-industrial complex, the Shturmovik agency (the Soviet military directorate that fielded teams of power-armor clad commandos) was usually mass-producing battlesuits based on the latest US blueprints within a year or two of a new model being approved.

(One small historical note: Although America was the undisputed leader in battlesuit technology, Kenneth Richardson of Canada had been building highly advanced battlesuits that could hold their own against the American designs since the mid-1940s. His amphibious WW2 battle armor design - the Supermarine Spitfire (named in tribute to a Canadian built fighter) - was a fearsome adversary of the

German U-boats in the North Atlantic and of the Luftwaffe's Messerschmitts in the Battle of Britain. Richardson's designs tended to emphasize speed and maneuverability while the US battlesuits emphasized heavier armor and increased firepower.)

When Jack Washington Junior went rogue in the 1970s and became the super-villain General Venom, he destroyed the American arsenal of battle armor and left the US military with only sparse notes to attempt to rebuild from. Thanks to this setback, Soviet Union easily caught up with America in the ensuing decade. By the mid 1980s, the Eastern and Western bloc are roughly equal in terms of battlesuit technology. The Iron Ghost stealth armor and the massive Shturmovik BT-7 battle mecha are the pride of the Warsaw Pact while the New American Hoplite armor and the Canadian designed Avro Arrow battlesuits are vying to become the standard armor for the NATO Alliance.

PSYCHIC ABILITY ENHANCEMENT

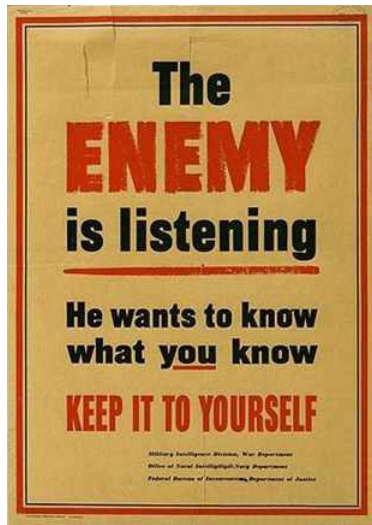
While an early director of the CIA, Allen Dulles, considered psychic research to be a hugely expensive fool's errand and preferred that super-soldier funds be spent on Project:Icarus or on battlesuit technology, the GRU and KGB spent billions in researching technology that would enhance telepathy and other psychic powers. The work was done at Koltsovo, a closed Soviet science city where most classified projects dealing with bio-weapons and psychic technology were assigned. Due to this massive investment, for a period from the 1950s through the mid 1980s, the Soviets had a profound advantage in psychic power enhancing technology.

The Soviets created legions of psychics with artificially enhanced telepathy and mind-reading powers at Koltsovo. This gave the

Eastern Bloc an undeniable edge in espionage and contributed hugely to the effort to identify and recruit suitable double agents within the American intelligence community. Additionally, a handful of the Soviet's enhanced psychics developed a much higher range to their powers and that made them suitable operatives on the People's Revolution super-team.

The Soviet dominance in psychic enhancement ended when a Russian psychologist brought the complete schematics for the Soviets' latest psychic enhancement devices with him when he defected to the UK in 1984.

INTELLIGENCE AND ESPIONAGE



The Western Bloc had great difficulties inserting agents into the closed society of Soviet culture and so tended to rely more on super-human and satellite surveillance for information gathering. The legions of defectors who fled from East to West over the years made up somewhat for this lack of human intelligence resources. However the Soviets had several double-agents masquerading as defectors in the mix to thoroughly confuse and distort the picture that the Western intelligence agencies had of the Warsaw Pact. Combined with the Soviets advantage in psychic enhancement technology and their ability (especially in the late Cold War) to turn several high ranking CIA

and FBI operatives into double agents, the USSR effectively defeated the US intelligence agencies analytical capability to the point where they missed very fundamental events (such as the movement of thousands of Red Army troops into Afghanistan) and were even completely blind-sided by the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet intelligence community had its own weaknesses - chiefly paranoia and a tendency to think in terms of over-arching conspiracies. During the later years of the Cold War, the KGB (under Yuri Andropov) was convinced that the Reagan administration was planning a preemptive nuclear first strike against the Soviet Union. The deployment of Pershing mobile missile launchers to West Germany, President Reagan's strident anti-Russian rhetoric and the announcement of the Strategic Defense Initiative (aka the Star Wars missile defense system) in particular convinced Andropov that such a plan was in place. The amount of resources and operatives (both mundane and super powered) dedicated to discovering and neutralizing this non-existent plan distracted the Soviets from the actual plans of the Western Bloc and prevented them from ever gaining meaningful insight into the leadership of the US and its allies.

RECOMMENDED READING/VIEWING LIST FOR WARGAMES

Wargames is going for a very specific feel: heroic, larger than life adventure with the background of international intrigue or conflict such as the Cold War. Here are a few comics and movies that capture a similar tone.

Comics: *Checkmate* Vol 2. (i.e. the Greg Rucka run), *Ultimates 2*, DC's Elseworlds *Red Son* series and Ed Brubaker's work on the fifth relaunch of *Captain America*

Movies: *Red Dawn*, *Iron Eagle II*, *Rocky IV*, *Red Heat*, *Red Scorpion*, *Thunderball*, *the Spy Who Loved Me*, *Octopussy* and *For Your Eyes Only*

META-HUMAN TIMELINE OF THE 20TH CENTURY

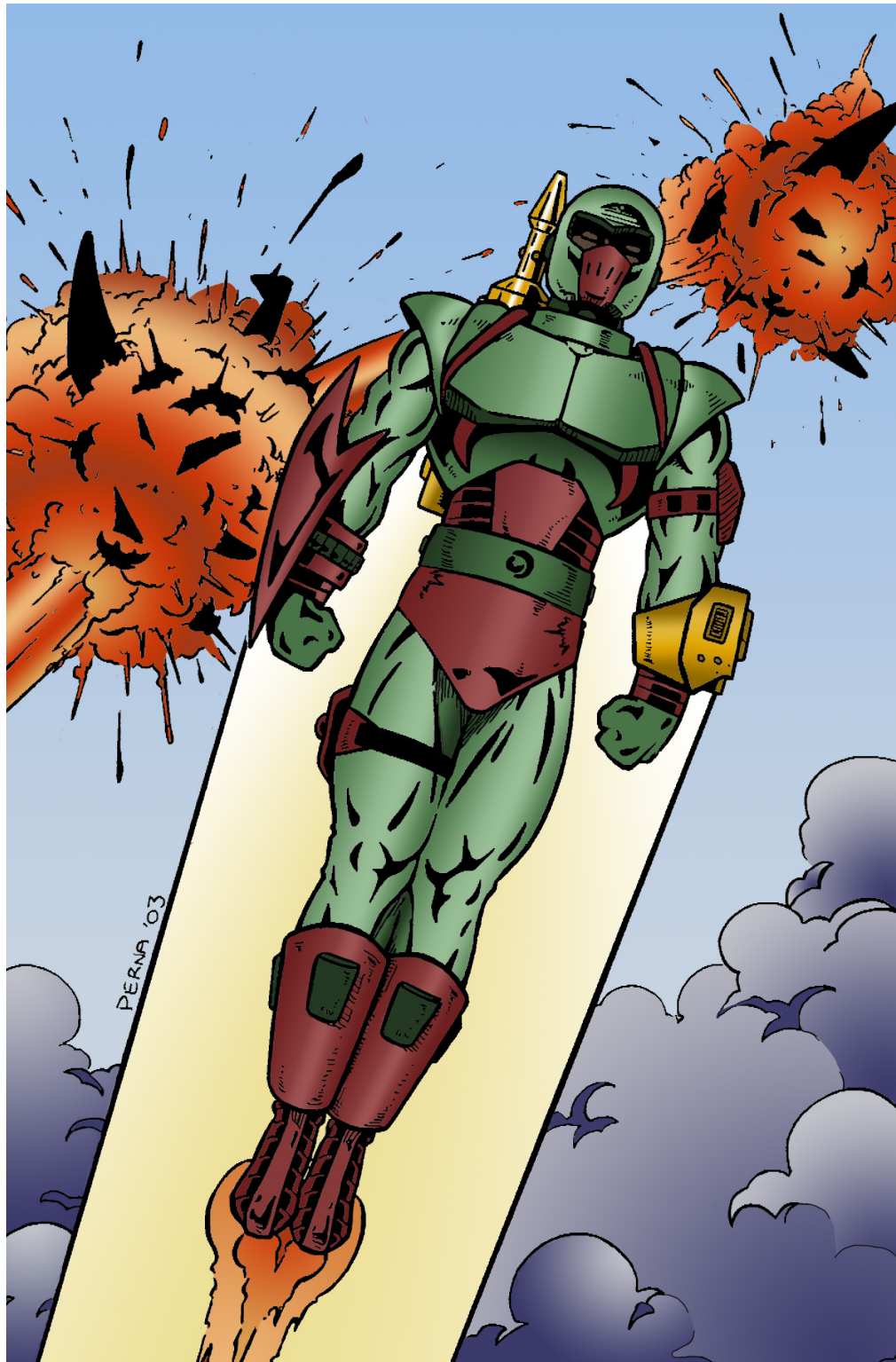
This timeline is intended to provide context, inspiration and possible adventure hooks. It draws from the history of the 20th Century (with an emphasis on the Cold War), but is by no means intended as a thorough, scholarly or even vaguely realistic history.

1937

Concerned about a rising tide of organized crime in the US and looming threats abroad, genius inventor Jack Washington creates the Steel Commando suit of power armor and becomes the first battle-suit wearing hero of the modern age.

1938

The Bio-Blitz program is started by the Nazis to find ways to unlock hidden mutations and create more super-soldiers. The Thule Society of has a sub-program under this called the Übermensch process that involves a synergy of biology and sorcery to create super-soldiers.



1939

Germany and the Soviet Union sign a non-aggression pact.

Germany Invades Poland. In response, France and the British Commonwealth declare war on Germany.

1940

In an effort to get an advantage over the Nazi intelligence apparatus, the British and US intelligence communities hand picked the most ambitious, cunning, and ruthless agents from their various agencies to create Project:



Omni - an autonomous agency with a large, privately financed budget and extensive ties to the criminal underground in Europe and North America.

In an early victory, Project Omni agents kidnap one of the scientists involved in the Bio-Blitz program and bring him back to England for interrogation. The Nazi only gives them partial descriptions of the Bio-Blitz and Übermensch procedures before he commits suicide in his cell. Both the US and Britain begin feverish super-soldier research programs based on these incomplete notes.

German tanks and infantry push through the Ardennes and into France. German Bio-Blitz forces (including the famed Eugenics Brigade) see heavy use in this action.

After being defeated by German forces, hundreds of thousands of British and French troops are evacuated from the beaches of Dunkirk.

France surrenders.

1941

Britain consolidates the various super-soldiers under the control of differing agencies and branches of the military into one unified group dubbed the Crown Guard under the direct administration of Winston Churchill. John Bull - the ironically code-named British RAF pilot who was mutated into a super-human minotaur during an MI6 experiment with the Übermensch serum - becomes the team's field leader.

Stalin becomes aware of the presence of a super-powered alien in the Soviet Union. After covert attempts to assassinate him are unsuccessful, he recruits him into the service of the Red Army and dubs him Battle Czar. The People's Revolution, a team for Soviet super-

humans, is founded shortly thereafter.

Germany invades the Soviet Union.

Japan bombs Pearl Harbor. The US declares war on the Axis Powers.

1942

Red Army troops capture a Thule Society cultist in a German HQ during the Battle of Stalingrad. They force him to perform the Übermensch process on a Russian volunteer who becomes the super-soldier Red Hammer. The cultist commits suicide immediately after the ceremony. Red Hammer eventually becomes the leader of the People's Revolution.

At the order of President Roosevelt, the US government founds its own superhuman fighting force and dubs it Vigilance Force.

After reading reports of the Steel Commando in action, Stalin orders the founding of the Shturmovik Agency to research and develop similar battle suit technology.

1945

Russian and American forces race to capture Nazi scientists involved in the Bio-Blitz and Übermensch programs. The notes from the Übermensch program are scattered and often illegible. It will take the Allies decades to realize that there was a magical component in the Übermensch equation. Research into the Bio-blitz process (by Project: Icarus in the US and Project: Hammer in the USSR) is more successful creating several low and mid-level meta-humans throughout the Cold War - although the process is more often than not deadly to the test subject and even non-lethal results are highly variable.



Berlin falls. Hitler is found dead by suicide in his bunker. Berlin is partitioned in American, Soviet, English and French districts while Germany is effectively partitioned into American and Soviet zones of control.

The US drops atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

Japan surrenders. World War 2 ends

1946

Philanthropic Harmony Association for National Treaties, Order, and Militarism (or simply P.H.A.N.T.O.M.). P.H.A.N.T.O.M. is created from Project Omni as the agency's leaders involved realize what sort of power they wield. P.H.A.N.T.O.M. is devoted to preventing future

wars by instilling a one-world government with itself at the head.

1947

Truman begins to shape Cold War American policies in earnest. He authors the “Truman Doctrine”, setting the US policy of “containment”. This Doctrine first set forth the “Domino Theory”, and argues that the free nations of the world must do everything in their power to contain the Communist Bloc to its current borders.

Truman authors the National Defense Act, creating the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency.

1948

In one of the first overtly hostile acts of the Cold War, the Soviets cut off the road and railway access that the Western Allies use to supply their sectors of Berlin. The ‘Berlin Blockade’ (as it was dubbed) is designed to get the Allies to withdraw their forces from West Berlin, giving the Soviets complete control of the city. The western Allies begin a massive airlift operation to keep the city supplied. The Soviets respect the agreed upon air corridors out of fear of sparking WW3. The Vigilance Force and Crown Guard are stationed in Berlin throughout the blockade and often escort air transports or covertly smuggle supplies through the blockade.





1950

War erupts along the 38th parallel between North and South Korea. As North Korean forces push deep into South Korea, President Truman sends the Vigilance Force in to hold the line until American Troops can arrive on the scene.

Joint UN-South Korean counteroffensive begins quickly driving North Korean forces back across the 38th parallel. Believing the victory was close at hand, Truman deployed the Vigilance Force main team to help quell the Jayuya Uprising in Puerto Rico which is led by group of Puerto Rican mutants called the Sons of Bolívar (los Hijos de Bolívar).

The People's Republic of China invades Tibet, which it claims as a historical part of China.

1949

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, is founded. The Commander of NATO is granted authority to call on the Vigilance Force; the only person other than the US President and the Prime Minister of England ever given this authority.

As the Berlin Blockade nears its conclusion, Vigilance Force and Crown Guard members engage in a series of covert operations - spirited scientists and dissidents out of East Berlin and East Germany.

A second contingent of the Vigilance Force is established for the purpose of providing a permanent super-soldier presence in West Berlin.

The Soviet Union successfully detonates its first atomic device in Kazakhstan.

1951

North Korea counter-attacks Allied forces with Chinese assistance and a brigade of massive combat robots supplied (covertly) by the Shturmovik agency of the Soviet Union. Over the next month, the front line is pushed back to the 38th parallel.

The Vigilance Force primary team is redeployed to Korea with the mission of knocking out the giant battle robots that have given North Korea a seemingly insurmountable advantage.

Mohammed Mussadegh becomes Prime Minister of Iran. Backed by the Arab Nationalist Front, he seizes and nationalizes Iran's Oil Industry.

1952

General Dwight D Eisenhower elected President of the United States.

1953

The Korean War ends. In a treaty that pleases no one, the 38th Parallel is made the permanent border between North and South Korea.

In retaliation for his purges, Battle Czar assassinates Joseph Stalin. (The true cause of his death is highly classified although rumors have leaked out that hint at the truth.) The removal of Stalin precipitates a major power struggle within the Soviet Union.

Mohammed Mussadegh, leader of Iran, is overthrown in a CIA-sponsored coup. The Shah is restored to power, and Western interests once again control Iran's oil industry. The Shah begins to attempt to modernize Iranian society, a move that enrages conservative Arab elements in his society.

A Central European nation, Ruritania avoids becoming a satellite of the Soviet Union when it is conquered overnight by P.H.A.N.T.O.M. A super-powered task force led by the first Steel Commando tasked with liberating the nation ends in failure and death of most of the operatives. The son of the Steel Commando, Jack Washington Jr. vows to follow in his father's footsteps.

1955

The Soviet Union organizes the Warsaw Pact as a response to Europe's NATO. The People's Revolution establishes an East Berlin Auxiliary so that there can be a permanent communist super-soldier presence in the German capital.

1956

Soviet infantry and tanks (with the backing of the People's Revolution super-team) put down a rebellion in Hungary. During the fighting in



Budapest, a Soviet super-soldier (Revolutionary Fire) is killed by an unidentified Hungarian meta-human.

The Vigilance Force primary squad stands ready in Italy, awaiting orders to reinforce the Hungarian dissidents. Eisenhower, fearing global war, never gives them clearance to go in.

The CIA sponsored revolt against Chinese occupation forces begins in Tibet. Eisenhower refuses to authorize use of super-soldiers in the Tibet conflict.

1957

The Soviet Union launches Sputnik, the first man-made object to orbit the earth. This is a massive propaganda victory for the USSR sets off a panic in the US government. The result is a massive increase in government spending defense and scientific research. Both NASA and Advanced Research Projects Agency (later renamed the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) are founded in response to Sputnik and government spending on science and education is greatly increased.



1958

The power struggle over who will succeed Stalin is resolved. The conflict, which, at its height, saw two elements of the People's Revolution actually fighting each other in the streets of Moscow, had taken a heavy toll on morale at all levels in the Soviet Union. Battle Czar (who had sat out the power struggle because of his desire not to be seen as a kingmaker) finally is pressured by the Supreme Commissar (the leader of the Soviet super-soldier program) into ending the conflict by choosing to back a successor. With the support of Battle Czar, Nikita Khrushchev becomes the new leader of the Soviet Union.

Communist China begins shelling the Quemoy islands in the Taiwan Strait in an effort to capture them from the Republic of China. President Eisenhower orders US Naval forces in the area to protect Taiwanese shipping lanes and

secretly supplies the Taiwanese air force with advanced munitions. Members of the Vigilance Force were deployed to a US Navy battle group in the Taiwan Strait. The Vigilance Force fights a skirmish against Communist Chinese forces equipped with Soviet Shturmovik battle armor that were attempting to sabotage several US warships - however this battle is kept highly classified for decades to avoid escalating the conflict.

1959

The first signs of Sino-Soviet split develop when Khrushchev and Dwight Eisenhower attend a summit aimed at decreasing Cold War tensions and ushering in an age of détente. China is alarmed by what Mao Zedong sees as the Soviet Union softening towards the West and retreating from a revolutionary, confrontational position.

Khrushchev refuses to help Communist China develop nuclear weapons and suspends assistance to the Chinese super-soldier program - renegeing on a previous agreement.

China deploys its first super soldiers, the Red Guardsmen, to Tibet. The CIA supported resistance in Tibet collapses. The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government flee to India to escape capture by Chinese forces.

1960

An American U-2 spy plane is shot down over the Soviet Union. This crisis preempts a planned conference in Paris between Eisenhower and Khrushchev to discuss resolving tensions over Berlin. After this incident, the US relies exclusively on super-humans or satellite imaging for reconnaissance of the Soviet Union.

At an international Communist conference in Romania, the Sino-Soviet rift becomes more pronounced when the Chinese delegation

denounces Khrushchev as a tyrant and a capitalist and Khrushchev responds by calling Mao a fascist.

John Kennedy defeats Eisenhower's Vice-President Richard Nixon to become President.

Jack Washington Jr. (son of the original Steel Commando) becomes the second Steel Commando when his power armor outperforms every other design being considered. Washington is assigned to the Vigilance Force and fought for his country with a patriotic fervor that actually dwarfed his father's own.

1961

The "Bay of Pigs Invasion" - a CIA plot to overthrow the government of Cuba, fails disastrously. Kennedy is rebuked for refusing to send in the Vigilance Force to support the operation.

Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first (non-powered) human in space when he orbited the Earth in the Vostok 3KA-2 space capsule.

Khrushchev demands that Western powers leave Berlin immediately.

Rapid construction efforts begin on the Berlin Wall after Khrushchev's ultimatum fails to intimidate the Western Allies into leaving the city. Tensions mount. At one point, American and Soviet tanks were engaged in a stand-off at Checkpoint Charlie in before diplomatic efforts defused the conflict.

Ruritania reveals that it has nuclear weapons - ratcheting up the intensity of the arms race on the European continent

In a move intended to distract and sap China's resources, the Soviet Union's super-soldier

agency, the Red Directorate, begins providing covert and unauthorized support to the Tibetan separatist movement. This includes equipping them with advanced weapons and the use of Project: Hammer technology to create mid-level meta-humans.

1962

In response to Castro's fears about an impending American invasion, Khrushchev orders the installation of Soviet nuclear missiles to Cuba as well as the creation of a new contingent of the People's Revolution super-team that will be based permanently in Havana. After the CIA uncovered evidence of secret construction of missile bases and the deployment of super-soldiers to the island nation, Kennedy imposed an embargo against Cuba and a tense stand-off between the 2 super-powers ensued. In the end, the Soviets agreed to remove the missiles and the super-soldiers in return for a promise from the US to not to invade Cuba and to remove missiles from Turkey.



During the Cuban Missile Crisis, a skirmish occurs between members of the Vigilance Force and members of the People's Revolution just outside of the Guantanamo Bay Naval Station. It ends in the humiliating defeat of Battle Czar. The battle is kept classified until the 1970s.

P.H.A.N.T.O.M.'s activities move the UN to create a countering force: the multi-national global defense initiative known as the Foundation for World Harmony. It is an organization with broad powers to fight against planetary threats, it is one of the most well funded and powerful groups in the planet. Simultaneously, it is an organization dogged with corruption and scandal. Worse, it fights a never-ending battle against politicians attempting to blunt its effectiveness.

The Soviet Union backs India during a brief war with the Communist China. The Indian meta-human Kali kills several members of the Chinese super-team, the Glorious Workers' Righteous Force, during a notable border conflict.

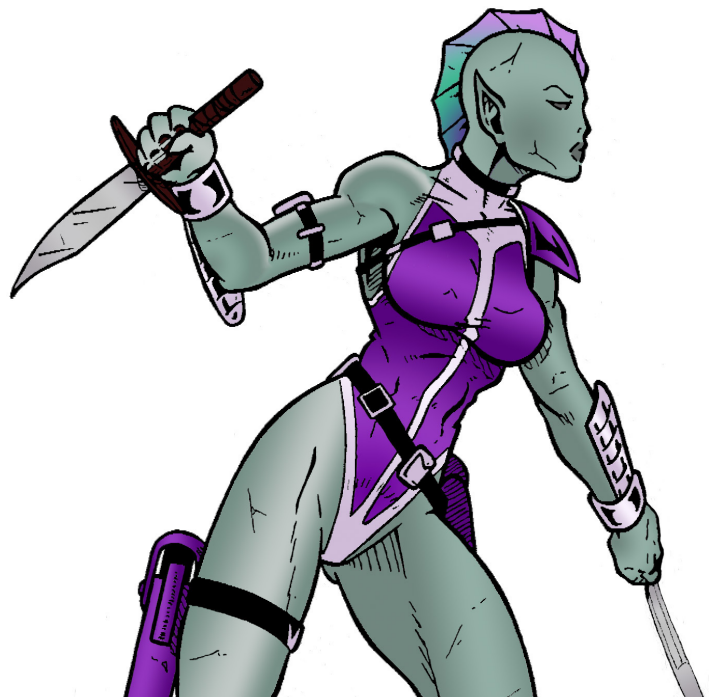
1963

Shortly after the completion of the Berlin Wall, John Kennedy gives a speech designed to underscore the support of the US for West Berlin. From the balcony of the Rathaus Schöneberg (the makeshift city hall of West Berlin), Kennedy said: *Two thousand years ago the proudest boast was civis Romanus sum [I am a Roman citizen]. Today, in the world of freedom, the proudest boast is 'Ich bin ein Berliner'... All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and, therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words 'Ich bin ein Berliner!'*

John F Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Lyndon B Johnson sworn in as President. Rumors of Russian superhuman involvement

persist for decades.

The USS Thresher sinks off the coast of Cape Cod. Investigation reveals this as the first strike by the Deep Dwellers - a rogue Atlantean radical group - in their terrorist war on the surface world. After a Soviet sub is sunk, a combined task force of the People's Revolution and the Vigilance Force undertakes a joint counter-strike against the Deep Dwellers main enclave in the Rockall Trough in the North Atlantic. This is the first example of official cooperation between the usually hostile super-teams.



1964

After an attack on several destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin, Congress passes the "Tonkin Resolution", which gives President Johnson authority to take "all necessary measures" to protect American interests in the region.

China detonates its first nuclear device in Lop Nor.

Chairman Mao Zedong asserts publicly that there has been a counter-revolution in the Soviet Union and the nation is now effectively a capitalist/fascist state. From this point on, there are two competing (and often clashing) factions in the international communism movement. Maoist factions (supported by China) openly clash with Marxist/Leninist factions throughout Africa, Asia and in Palestine. Several battles between the People's Revolution and the Glorious Workers' Righteous Fury (the Chinese super-team) occur throughout the 60s, 70s and 80s.

Tibetan separatist groups deploy a squad of meta-humans called the Snow Lions to destroy several government buildings in Lhasa. Communist China responds with a harsh crackdown on the civilian population. The Tibetan government-in-exile condemns the acts of violence by both sides.

1965

Fearful of setting off a global conflict, the Soviet Union does not officially deploy the People's Revolution in the Vietnam conflict - but does support North Vietnam by secretly supplying them with advanced power armor from the Shturmovik agency and war supplies. Still enraged over his defeat during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1963, Battle Czar mounts several unauthorized missions, clashing with members of the Vigilance Force on numerous occasions.

A rash of Soviet and US nuclear submarines disappear in the Pacific. Independent investigations by the People's Revolution and the Vigilance Force uncover an undersea base that has been hijacking the submarines, stealing their missiles and holding the crews hostage. The bases are run by Imperial Phoenix, a Japanese organization (with covert assistance from rogue elements in the Japanese Defense



Force) that was building its hijacked stockpile of nuclear arms with an aim to launch a nuclear strike on the US in revenge for Japan's defeat during WW2. A joint effort by the two super-teams ends Imperial Phoenix's plans and rescues the captured sailors and missiles.

Mao Zedong, leader of China, launches the Cultural Revolution with the ostensible goal of preventing a counter-revolution. (Many historians see this as a move by Mao to marginalize political rivals and shore up his own grip on power.) The Cultural Revolution lasted through the 1970s, led to waves of purges and caused significant social and economic upheaval in China. Some military historians believe that purges greatly weakened the Chinese super soldier program for decades.

1966

As a counter to the Viet Cong's use of advanced power armor (covertly supplied to them by the Shturmovik agency), President Johnson devotes the entire Vigilance Force main team to the Vietnam War. The super-team is effective at negating the advantage the power armor gives the VC on the battlefield and successfully interdicts several shipments of advanced weapons on the Ho Chi Min Trail. Agent Liberator, the Steel Commando and their team bristle under what they feel are restrictive rules of engagement that were put in place at the insistence of Johnson because of concerns about escalating the conflict into a war with China or the USSR. The Vigilance Force feels

they're not being allowed to be fully effective. As a team, they lodge a formal complaint with the chain of command but make no public protest.

1967

Anti-War protests in the US become more common and more violent. The peace movement grows exponentially.

During the height of the Cultural Revolution, a Chinese student group known as the Red Guards surrounded the Soviet Union's embassy in Beijing to protest issues regarding the Chinese/Soviet border and "the counter-revolutionary and capitalist nature of Soviet communist thought". The People's Revolution was called in to safely evacuate all unnecessary diplomatic staff and a battle broke out when the Chinese super-team (the Glorious Workers' Righteous Fury) attempted to stop them from entering the embassy. A prolonged battle was fought between the teams with the People's Revolution ultimately winning.

In the Six-Day War Israel defeats the armies of Egypt, Jordan and Syria and gains territory in the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. Arab leaders ascribe Israel's rapid victory to the covert involvement of American and British meta-humans. In fact, the Vigilance Force and Crown Guard super-teams were stationed in Vietnam and Northern Ireland respectively at the time - but the belief that these super-soldiers secretly aided the Israelis is widely accepted in the Arab world.

1968

In order to force South Vietnam to take part in peace negotiations, President Johnson halts bombing operations in North Vietnam and



recalls the Vigilance Force. Agent Liberator, leader of the team, files another formal letter or protest with his chain of command. Privately, Agent Liberator says that he feels the US is betraying South Vietnam.

In response to a loosening of governmental control, democratization and an expansion of personal rights in Czechoslovakia (an called the 'Prague Spring'), the Soviet Union sent thousands of Warsaw Pact troops, tanks and the People's Revolution to occupy the country. As during Hungary in 1956, the Vigilance Force team was on standby but was never committed. (Czechoslovakia remained occupied by Soviet forces until 1990)

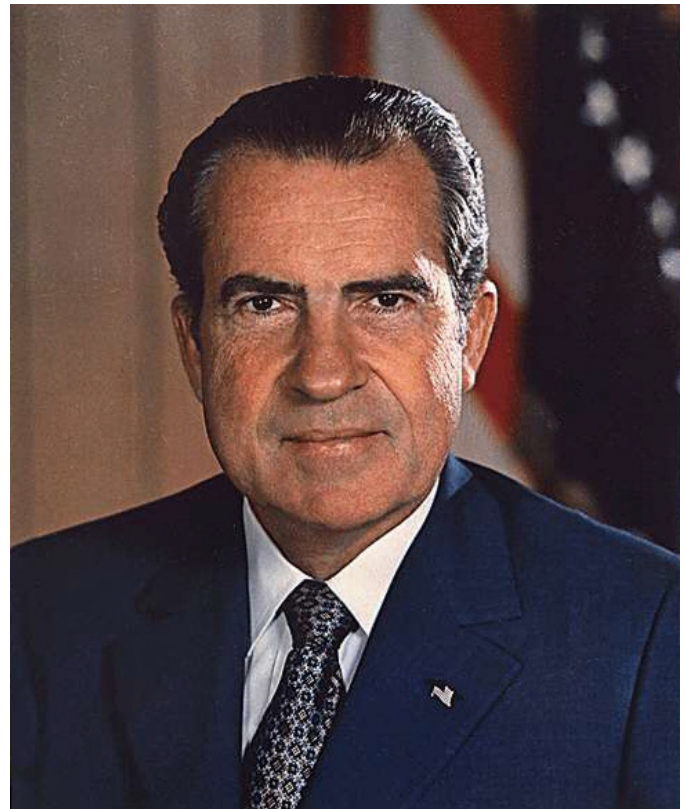
Leonid Brezhnev articulates the Brezhnev Doctrine (which was conceived as a rationalization for Soviet actions in response to the Prague Spring and went on to become the de facto foreign policy of the Soviet Union throughout much of the later Cold War period). In a speech at the Fifth Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party, Brezhnev said: *"When forces that are hostile to socialism try to turn the development of some socialist country towards capitalism, it becomes not only a problem of the country concerned, but a common problem and concern of all socialist countries."*

Tensions heated up regarding the placement of the Chinese/Soviet border as Communist China sought to reopen old grievances from the Czarist era treaties that defined it. The Soviet Union massively increased their troop deployments along the Chinese border.

The Globalist holds a press conference in Switzerland and announces himself to the world as: *"the superhero that will end nationalist strife and unite the world in peace and brotherhood."* He challenges both Battle Czar and the Steel Commando to public one on

one combat to draw attention to his cause. He is defeated in both matches.

The Tibetan separatist super-team, the Snow Leopards destroys several landmarks around Beijing. The Chinese super-soldier force, the Glorious Workers' Righteous Fury, is deployed to Tibet with the mission of eliminating the resistance movement and its meta-human defenders.



1969

Richard Nixon is inaugurated as the 37th President of the US.

Skirmishes break out between the armed forces of the USSR and Communist China along the Ussuri River on the Chinese/Soviet border. The People's Revolution and the Glorious Workers' Righteous Fury are both deployed to

the area and fight several inconclusive battles. Preparations are made on both sides for full nuclear confrontation between China and the USSR.

The Tibetan Resistance Movement, and their super-team the Snow Leopards, destroy several military outposts and drive Chinese Army forces (along with ethnic Han Chinese civilians) from the area around Shigatse. They declare this area the Free Liberated Republic of Tibet. (The Glorious Workers' Righteous Fury super-soldier team has been redeployed to the conflict along the Soviet border and could not be deployed to Tibet for several months.)

Neil Armstrong becomes the first (non-super-powered) man to walk on the moon.

The Soviet Union and China step back from the brink of nuclear war and secret low-level talks commence regarding their disagreements. A modicum of diplomacy resumes between the nations but their overall attitude remains mutually hostile.



1970

Previously considered something of a laughingstock, the anti-nationalist meta-human Globalist and his UNITY organization earn fear and respect on the world stage when they launch several coordinated terrorist attacks - wiping out a covert American military base in Columbia and sinking a Russian submarine in the North Atlantic during the same day.

After observing the Communist superteams in action during the conflict between China and the USSR, CIA analysts write a classified report declaring that the US super-soldier forces are under-powered by comparison. The United States ramps up its meta-human develop program (Project Icarus) and begins massive human testing of genetic research derived from the surviving notes on the Nazis Bio-Blitz process. Many civilian trials are conducted without the patient's knowledge. In response, the Soviets similarly increase their funding to Project Hammer.

At Kent State in Ohio, 4 college students are killed and 9 wounded when National Guard troops open fire on a group of protesters (and bystanders) at a demonstration against the US invasion of Cambodia. Murder charges against the soldiers who opened fire on the unarmed crowd were dismissed.

Mao Zedong, leader of Communist China, quietly seeks to warm relations with America.

Chinese super-soldier forces defeat the Tibetan rebels who have occupied the city of Shigatse. Roughly half of the Tibetan meta-humans are killed in this conflict.

1971

The Glorious Workers' Righteous Fury is fractured during the power struggle between Mao Zedong and Mao's hand-picked successor, Ling Biao. When Biao's attempted coup is defeated, the members of the Chinese superteam who had sided with him were arrested and executed.

While attempting to escape to the Soviet Union following his failed coup attempt in China, Ling Biao's plane goes down under mysterious circumstances in Mongolia. His death and attempted coup is kept a secret in China for over a year. Two Chinese super-soldiers who were accompanying Biao survive the crash and are taken into custody by the Soviet Union.

During a stalemate of secret negotiations with North Vietnam, Nixon ordered the Vigilance Force to be deployed again to Vietnam to increase pressure on the North Vietnamese to return to the negotiating table. Agent Liberator and several members of the Vigilance Force (still angry at not being able to "fight to win" during their previous deployments) resent being used as political bargaining chips and refuse to go. The second Steel Commando leads the rest of the team in their second Vietnam deployment while Agent Liberator and the other hardliners face court martial.

1972

Richard Nixon becomes the first US President to visit Communist China.

Agent Liberator and several other members of the Vigilance Force are found guilty of treason and disobeying a direct order to deploy to Vietnam and are sentenced to Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary.

Five members of President Nixon's staff are arrested breaking into Democratic National Committee offices at the Watergate hotel and office complex in Washington D.C. The ensuing investigation uncovers evidence corruption and abuse of power at the highest levels of the Nixon Administration.



1973

The Paris Peace Accords of 1973, intended to establish peace in Vietnam and an end to the Vietnam Conflict, ended direct U.S. military involvement. The US makes promise to South Vietnam to provide financial and material support to their military as well as guaranteeing air support in the event of North Vietnamese aggression. America starts the process of withdrawing its troops from Vietnam.

The second Steel Commando leads the Vigilance Force to victory over the ancient vampire Dracula. The vampire had masterminded a conspiracy to set off a nuclear war by manipulating politicians and generals on both sides of the Cold War. The endgame was that the Vampire Nation would survive the nuclear winter and then could openly rule over the

ashes. During the battle, the King of the Vampires is buried under a massive landslide in the Carpathians and remains entombed there for over 10 years.

The US Senate Watergate Committee begins hearings regarding allegations of criminal misconduct in the Nixon Administration.

The Globalist and a UNITY terrorist squad stage a daylight assault on the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. The goal is to kidnap the assembled delegates and hold them for ransom. He is defeated by the Vigilance Force but escapes.



1974

Deeply concerned about the infiltration of P.H.A.N.T.O.M. operatives into the US, the Steel Commando founds the House of Serpents organization as a “covert citizen’s militia” to combat P.H.A.N.T.O.M. infiltration in the US.

The Steel Commando goes public with evidence he gathered during his own investigation that exposes Richard Nixon as a deep-cover agent of P.H.A.N.T.O.M. on a mission to demoralize and destabilize the US from within.

Nixon commits suicide before he can face trial.

Given the revelations regarding Nixon, Gerald Ford pardons Agent Liberator and the other members of the Vigilance Force who were convicted of treason and reinstates them to their previous rank.

1975

Under intense public pressure, Congress fails to appropriate the funds to support South Vietnam’s military. In April, Saigon falls to North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces

Announcing that he considers the US government too corrupt to reform, the disgruntled Steel Commando assumes the identity of General Venom and declares his intention to use the House of Serpents to overthrow the United States government so that a new regime that more closely adheres to the Constitution can be instated. He announces his plans in letters sent to several major newspapers and then goes underground.

Dr. Johann Deisenhofer, one of the key scientists behind the 3rd Reich’s Bio-Blitz super-human program is found dead when Israeli Nazi-

hunters raid his office in Caracas, Venezuela. Deisenhofer has been dead for weeks by the time the Mossad agents find him and his office has been ransacked of any useful information on the Bio-Blitz process. Suspicion falls on his assistant Hamid Taheri, an Afghani medical student at the university in Caracas who left the country suddenly several weeks earlier for Libya.

human with the codename of 'the Fennian' when he launches an attack on 10 Downing Street in an attempt to assassinate Prime Minister James Callaghan. MI5 agents sifting through the Fennian's apartment later find documents indicating that he had recently undergone a variation on the Bio-Blitz process administered by an Afghani doctor named Hamid Taheri at a terrorist training camp in Libya.



1976

Jimmy Carter is inaugurated 39th President of the US.

The British hero John Bull defeats an IRA meta-

On the Bicentennial of the US, General Venom attempts a coup. He leads an amphibious force of House of Serpents troopers out of the Potomac River into Washington D.C. where they are reinforced by rogue elements of the US military loyal to him. Before he can reach the White House, Venom and his force are defeated by Agent Liberator and a division of loyal troops.

The Great Tangshan Earthquake (measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale) completely flattens the city of Tangshan in the Hebei province in Northern China. It is the deadliest earthquake of the 20th Century with an official government death toll of approximately 240,000 and a more realistic unofficial death toll about three times that figure. China refuses all offers of foreign aid (including offers to deploy the American and Soviet super-teams to help with the aftermath.) The Glorious Workers' Righteous Fury is deployed to Tangshan to assist the People's Liberation Army with the recovery efforts and spends several months there.

Mao Zedong dies. Hua Guofeng succeeds him as leader of Communist China. With Mao gone, the Cultural Revolution is considered over and forces that were opposed to its harsh policies come to power.

1976

In the spirit of détente, President Carter proposes that the UN establish the United

Nations Meta-Human Security Force; a UN sanctioned super-team made of a rotating roster of meta-humans from the permanent members of the Security Council. The proposal is accepted and the UNMSF is established with members serving 6 to 12 month stints on the unified super-team.

The 10-Day War is fought between Israel and Palestine. In the largest meta-human action since WW2, a brigade of Palestinian meta-humans launch a series of coordinated attacks on Israel. The Israeli Defense Force responds by deploying a previously secret force of soldiers wearing power-armor that appears to be closely modeled on the battle suit of former American super-hero Steel Commando. At the end of the conflict the borders of Israel had been pushed back to their pre-1964 locations. Palestine publicly states that they have the capability to create more super-soldiers (or super-martyrs as they are termed by the media) at any time. (Based on observing Palestinian super-soldiers in the field, analysts suspect that Palestine has acquired Dr. Taheri's flawed Bio-Blitz technology.) Relations between Palestine and Israel remain in a tense state of détente for decades.

Following the 10-Day War, a joint investigation by the NSA and CIA reveals that Israel has formed an alliance with the House of Serpents and this is how they obtained the blueprints for the Steel Commando armor. A major diplomatic rift develops and the US breaks off diplomatic ties with Israel. Relations are not normalized for over a decade.

In a major propaganda victory for the West, a long-standing member of the People's Revolution super-team, Sovi-Ape, defects during a covert mission in Western Europe and later settles in the United States.



1978

A dispute flares up between Communist China and Japan over the territoriality of the Senkaku Islands (also called the Diaoyu Islands), a cluster of barren islets north of Taiwan and south of the Ryukyu Islands. The conflict escalates into a battle between the Chinese meta-human the People's Elementalist and the Japanese Defense Force's super-powered operative, Kusanagi.

After accusations by the UK and Israel and investigation by the UN (and covert investigations by the US, China and the USSR), Libya denies any involvement in covert meta-human creation programs and denies any knowledge of the whereabouts of Hamid Taheri.

After having been underground for several years rebuilding (with covert help from the Soviet Union's Red Directorate) the Tibetan Resistance Movement (the TRM) deploys a team of super-soldiers called The Liberation Squad. The group announces their existence to the world by carrying out several coordinated acts of meta-human terrorism against Chinese military and civilian targets in China and Tibet with a 24 hour period. In response, China deploys additional troops and its super-team to Tibet.



1979

The Ayatollah Khomeini seizes power in Iran. The Shah flees to the United States. In the aftermath, the United States Embassy is seized and over 60 hostages are taken. The Vigilance Force is deployed and the hostages are rescued overnight. President Carter enjoys enormous popularity as a result.

The Nuclear Power Plant at Three Mile Island suffers a near-catastrophic accident. House of Serpents involvement is suspected but never proved.

The Sino-Vietnamese War erupts when Vietnam invades Chinese ally Cambodia and China invades Vietnam in retaliation. Although both sides claim victory, the Chinese forces (weakened by the purges of the Cultural Revolution) are unable to stop Vietnam from achieving their goal of overthrowing the Khmer Rouge and installing a puppet government in Cambodia. The Soviet super-team is deployed in support of Vietnam. They fight several inconclusive battles with the Glorious Workers' Righteous Fury - but they effectively keep the Chinese super-team from impacting the outcome of the war.

The Communist Democratic Republic of Afghanistan asks the Soviet Union to help suppress resistance to its rule. This begins the 9 year Soviet-Afghan War which is very unpopular internationally. In a concession to Soviet allies in the Middle East, the People's Revolution is never publicly deployed to Afghanistan but the Soviet super-soldiers do conduct extensive covert missions throughout the war.

In an effort to destroy Lenin's Tomb (in protest for the involvement of Red Army troops in Afghanistan) the Globalist and UNITY forces make a surprise helicopter assault on Red Square in Moscow. They are defeated by

the Soviet super-soldiers Battle Czar and Red Hammer and the Globalist barely escapes with his life.

As several WW2-era heroes retire, the British super-team is folded into the NATO Vigilance Force team.

1980

After defeating the very popular Jimmy Carter in a very close election (with accusations of electoral misconduct leveled against both parties in several battleground states), Ronald Reagan is inaugurated as the 40th President of the US. Reagan takes a much more aggressive stance against the Eastern Bloc and his election effectively signals the end of the age of détente.

Canada, China, Japan, the Philippines, the US and West Germany boycott the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow to protest the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan.

Covert US support of Afghan mujahedeen rebels in Afghanistan begins.

1981

In an effort to enhance their public perception with the West German public, NATO recruits a West German soldier, Karl Unterhoeffer, into the Vigilance Force contingent in West Berlin. He's given a specially designed battlesuit and the super-soldier codename of the Steel Eagle (*der Stahladler*). In response, the People's Revolution team in East Berlin recruits an East German soldier, Gustav Hansen. He is given a battle-suit that is at the bleeding edge of Soviet technology and given the codename Warbird (*der Kriegsvogel*.)



Pope John Paul II and Ronald Reagan both survive assassination attempts.

Deng Xiaoping forces Hua Guofeng to retire and replaces him as the de facto leader of Communist China

Connor O'Sullivan, the grandson of the WW2 British hero Repulse, manifests the same magnetic control powers as his grandfather. He too is given the codename Repulse and quickly recruited into the Vigilance Force main team.

Martial Law is instituted by the Polish Government in response to the Solidarity labor movement demonstrations and other acts of opposition against the Communist regime. Thousands of people were arrested without charge and as many as 100 were killed.

The KGB begins Operation RYAN (Raketno-Yadernoe Napadenie (“Nuclear Missile Attack”). It is the largest Soviet intelligence operation during the Cold War. The purpose of the operation was to collect intelligence on the presumed, but non-existent, plans of the Reagan administration to launch a preemptive nuclear first strike against the Soviet Union.

Two Libyan Sukhoi Su-22 Fitter attack aircraft were shot down by two US F-14 Tomcats off of the Libyan coast in the Gulf of Sidra.

The People’s Revolution and Vigilance Force are both covertly deployed to Afghanistan after over a dozen Afghani meta-human mujahedeen wipe-out a Red Army base in the Nangarhar province. Both the CIA and KGB believe that Hamid Taheri is creating super-humans using a flawed version of the Bio-Blitz process. Both teams are under orders to capture Taheri for interrogation or, failing that, to kill him so his knowledge can’t be used by other nations. The teams encounter each other and clash at a mujahedeen camp near the Tora Bora cave complex. The fate of Taheri remains unclear. There are conflicting reports that he was either killed in the battle or kidnapped by a team of Chinese or Indian super-humans during the fight.

1982

The former head of the KGB, Yuri Andropov, becomes premier of the Soviet Union. His conviction that Reagan is planning a preemptive nuclear strike became even more cemented in official policy.

The Pershing II missile is deployed to West Germany. These missiles were designed to be launched from road-mobile vehicles, making the launch sites very hard to find. The flight

time from West Germany to European Russia was only four to six minutes, giving the Soviets little to no warning.

The West German super-soldier Steel Eagle causes an international incident when he rescues a would-be escapee who had been shot by East Berlin guards while trying to cross the Berlin Wall.

An explosion at secret NSA research facility in Tennessee destroys America’s most promising research into duplicating the Übermensch process. One research, Jennifer Kucera, survives the explosion - gaining superpowers in the process. She goes on to become the hero Memphis Belle and joins the Vigilance Force’s primary team. Suspicions of Soviet meta-human involvement in the disaster linger for years.

The US Department of Defense conducts a



wargame simulation to test EmergCon - an experimental artificial intelligence computer designed to take control of the American missile fleet in case senior military leadership is killed during a nuclear war. The simulation becomes a near disaster when EmergCon takes control of several Minuteman missile silos in South Dakota and initiated an *actual* launch sequence (that was luckily shut down by a quick thinking technician who disabled the AI before the missiles launched.)

Dispirited after a brief mission in Afghanistan, Battle Czar announces to the Red Directorate

program introduces a new armored hero with the code name of New American. His battlesuit (dubbed the Hoplite battle armor) was devised by top Department of Defense engineers working from the second Steel Commando's design notes. Captain William Mauger from the US Army is chosen to the battlesuit's pilot.

American trained Argentinean commandos overwhelm a garrison of British marines and capture the Falkland Islands. Britain responds by sending a military task force to retake the Falklands. The discovery that Argentina has its own super-soldier force led by a mutant with powerful light-manipulation abilities named Illuminados prompts Margaret Thatcher to demand that British super-soldiers John Bull and Repulse take leave from the Vigilance Force team and support the military offensive.

The largest meta-human engagement of the Falklands War occurs when Repulse and John Bull clash with Illuminados and the entire Argentinean super-soldier squad while accompanying a SAS force on a successful assault on Exocet anti-ship missile batteries at Río Grande, Tierra del Fuego. After several hard fought battles, the British forces win the war after 60 days.

A CIA source leaks documents that reveal that many of the Argentinean super-soldiers the British fought in the Falklands Islands War had been given Project: Icarus treatments in the US to give them meta-human abilities (or to enhance existing abilities, in some cases.) This disclosure causes a distinct cooling in relations in the "special relationship" between the US and Great Britain and results in the UK pulling its supersoldiers from the Vigilance Force teams for six months.



that he will disobey any orders to serve in that country. "Lenin would not have approved of your operations there," was Czar's final word on the subject. His disobedience is kept highly classified until after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Still reeling from the betrayal of the second Steel Commando, the American super-soldier



1983

Ronald Reagan publicly announces development of the SDI program (aka Star Wars missile defense). Soviet leadership is convinced that the goal of SDI technology was to make the US invulnerable to Soviet missile attack and saw this as proof that an American nuclear preemptive attack was planned. Soviet leadership greatly increased funding for Operation: RYAN

President Reagan began issuing warnings about the threat posed to the United States by the “Soviet-Cuban militarization” of Grenada (a small Caribbean island) and claimed the communist powers were building an airbase on the island.

Operation Urgent Fury, an invasion of Grenada, begins on October 25, 1983 and quickly defeats Grenadian and Cuban resistance and overthrows the military government of Hudson Austin. The invasion was highly criticized by the United Kingdom, Canada and the United Nations General Assembly, which condemned it as “a flagrant violation of international law.” It enjoyed broad public support in the United States.

Korean Air Lines Flight 007, a Korean Air Lines civilian airliner, was shot down by Soviet jet

interceptors over the Sea of Japan.

The Soviet Union’s early warning satellites, on September 26, 1983, reported that an intercontinental ballistic missile salvo was heading toward the Soviet Union from the US. Soviet Air Defense Lieutenant Colonel Stanislav Petrov declared this a false alarm instead of notifying his superiors. His career in the Soviet military was ruined by this decision - but according to many experts - his decision may have been the major factor in avoiding accidental nuclear war. The Soviet Union’s early warning satellites were later found to have faulty optical sensors that registered certain kinds of high altitude clouds as missile launches.

The UNMSF - the unified UN super-team - uncovers a plot by the Nazi hold-out supervillain Nachtjaeger to goad the US and USSR into a nuclear war. Nazi collaborators are uncovered in the militaries of both the NATO Alliance and the Warsaw Pact. Both sides begin intense screenings and purges of suspicious personnel.

The Canadian hero Ymir is granted permission by NATO to join the Vigilance Force contingent in West Berlin. The Soviet Union and East Germany protest his assignment saying that it is a “clear escalation of the super-human arms race.” In response the Warsaw Pact deploys a squad of the Shturmovik Agency’s BT-7 battlemechs to East Berlin.

1984

Konstantin Chernenko succeeds Andropov as leader of the Soviet Union.

General Venom leads a House of Serpents task force that is defeated by the Berlin contingent of the Vigilance Force while trying

to seize several mobile Pershing nuclear missile launchers in West Germany. Venom escapes after a fierce battle in the Black Forest.

The People's Revolution launches a preemptive covert strike against US ally Haiti after the KGB confirmed reports that Jean-Claude Duvalier's government had found a method of reliably creating highly powerful super-humans. A tense stand-off with the Vigilance Force in Port-au-Prince ended when it was discovered that the Haitian leader was in league with extra-dimensional forces that were planning to invade Earth. A combined effort by both teams shut down the portal that the extra-dimensional invaders were using and defeated their vanguard force.

The British hero Repulse disobeys official orders and intervenes in a clash between police and picketing miners at the British Steel coking plant in Orgreave, South Yorkshire. Repulse used his powers to drive back a mounted police charge against the miners and brought the conflict to a close with a minimum of casualties. The widely printed image of an English super-soldier (and the grandson of a revered Nazi-fighter) protecting working class Britons from the heavily armored police forces provided a pivotal moment in the mining strike that drew national attention to the grievances of the strikers and helped sway public opinion to their side. The Thatcher administration considers disciplining Repulse for his disobedience but decides against taking public action given the hero's surging popularity.

Fourteen Eastern Bloc countries boycott the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles to protest "anti-Soviet hysteria" being propagated by the US. The boycott is widely seen as retaliation for the 1980 boycott of the Summer Olympics in Moscow.

Famine in Ethiopia kills 1 million people in



1984. There is widespread criticism of the world powers for not doing more to prevent and alleviate this crisis.

Ronald Reagan defeats Walter Mondale to win a second term as US president.

Several rogue Soviet BT-7 battlemechs rampage through West Berlin. Open war between NATO and the Warsaw pact is barely averted when the battlemechs are contained by the Vigilance Force (with last minute assistance from elements of the East Berlin contingent of the People's Revolution.) Although conventional forces on both sides of the Iron Curtain were on high alert, conflict was avoided. An Investigation reveals that it was a plot by rogue elements of the KGB working alongside the Worker's Army Faction, a West German leftist

terrorist group, attempting to set off a ground war in Germany.

Three members of the Tibetan Resistance Movement's Liberation Squad launch an attack on Beijing. They destroy the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong before they are defeated by the Glorious Workers' Righteous Fury super-team. Two of the Tibetan meta-humans are killed but one managed to escape.

1985

In Moscow, the recently revived Dracula leads a small army of vampires in a military-style assault aimed at deposing the communist government and installing themselves as the new ruling class. The Undead Revolt is put down by a strike force of People's Revolution supers, Shturmovik agents with assistance from the UK's Stonehenge Agency.

Mikhail Gorbachev becomes Premier of the Soviet Union and institutes a policy of "glasnost", or openness, in an attempt to reform the Government and eliminate corruption.

Superhumans worldwide band together to fight an invasion from the Tsavong - a hostile, shapechanging alien race. Agent Liberator, leader of the Vigilance Force since WW2, defeats the Tsavong's Warrior Supreme (the super-powered champion of the alien assault forces) but is mortally wounded in the process. His funeral is attended by super-humans from around the world. Even Battle Czar makes an appearance to lay a wreath on the grave of his old rival.

1986

The American space shuttle Challenger explodes 73 seconds after launching.

The Chernobyl nuclear power plant explodes in the Ukraine. Eight thousand are killed in the short term. Hordes of mutated monstrosities ravage the countryside for weeks before being contained by Red Army troops with assistance from the People's Revolution.

The Texan hero Lone Star defects from the Vigilance Force main squad to join the House of Serpents.

The first FIM-92 Stinger ground-to-air missiles



(supplied to Afghan rebels by the US, Saudi Arabia and other governments) were used successfully in August. For nearly a year insurgents using these weapons would deny the Soviets and the Kabul government effective use of air power.

Believing that the grounding of America's shuttle fleet makes this the ideal time to strike, General Venom launches an orbital weapons platform and uses its laser turrets to destroy the Pyramid Arena in Nashville, Tennessee. Venom demands that the US government cede immediate control to him or he will destroy more landmarks. With assistance from the Canadian armored super-team - the Arrow Squadron, and use of the *Raven*, the Canadian

Air Force's highly classified space plane, the Vigilance Force destroys the satellite.

The Globalist employs a salvaged Tsavong battleship to hold Berlin hostage. He demands that the superpowers turn Germany over to him so that he can rule it as a *“unified peaceful utopia that will transcend nationalist sentiment and serve as an example to the world.”* He threatens to destroy Berlin and several other European capitals if his demands are not met. He is defeated by a joint task force of the Vigilance Force and People's Revolution.



1987

While touring Europe, Ronald Reagan gives a landmark speech in West Berlin. Standing in front of the Brandenburg Gate, Reagan said: *“There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace. General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization, come here to this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!”*

A previously unknown supervillain, the Technospectre, launches an assault on Taiwan using legions of combat robots. The attack is repulsed by the Vigilance Force with assistance from Japanese meta-humans and the Lightning Squad, Taiwan's own super-soldier unit. After the bulk of the robotic assault forces are defeated, the Technospectre surrenders, reveals that he's actually an agent of Communist China and asks to defect. The People's Republic of China denies any involvement.

1988

George Bush, former Vice-President to Ronald Reagan, is elected 41st President of the United States.

Battle Czar resigns his post on the People's Revolution and attempts to immigrate to Communist China. He is forcibly turned back at the border by the Chinese super-team.

Denied entrance to China, Battle Czar decides to do what he can to restore “true communism” to his adopted homeland. He founds a private army, the Red Spider organization, with the intent of “reviving and restoring the true Communist Revolution” in the Soviet Union. He remains very popular in the Eastern Bloc and Soviet officials tolerate his activities as long as he is not actively opposing them. Additionally, his organization is thoroughly infiltrated by Soviet double-agents and the Kremlin believes that they can effectively monitor and control Battle Czar through them.

1989

After a decision to allow departures from East Berlin without visas sparks a wave of immigration to West Berlin, the Berlin Wall is dismantled.

Nicolae Ceucescu, cruel and brutal leader of Romania since 1967, is overthrown and subsequently executed.

A successful coup in Czechoslovakia installs a civilian government, Vaclav Havel, longtime leader of the Czech resistance movement against Soviet control, is elected interim President.

Unable to shut down the mujahedeen's mobile super-martyr creation labs (and denied air superiority due to the extensive use of Stinger missiles by the rebels) Soviet military forces finally pull out of Afghanistan.

In a public statement on American television, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze said that the Soviet Union recognized the freedom of choice of all countries, specifically including the other Warsaw Pact states, to determine their own form of government and direction. This represented a repeal and repudiation of the Brezhnev Doctrine.

Chinese students outraged by the lack of official respect to mark the death of Hu Yaobang, a reform-minded government official, gather in Tiananmen Square to protest. Their protest becomes a rallying point for frustration with Communist Party hardliners and the desire for democratization and a less authoritarian government. Tens of thousands of Chinese congregate and protest in Tiananmen Square between April and June. They are eventually dispersed by violent action from elements of the Chinese Army and the Glorious Worker's Righteous Fury loyal to the hardliners. The photograph of an unknown man standing defiantly in front of a squadron of massive Ultra-Commando Chinese super-soldiers becomes an iconic image of the Tiananmen Square Massacre.

Deng Xiaoping retires as the leader of Communist

China. Although he is succeeded by Jiang Zemin in many of his official posts, he is still regarded by many as being the 'paramount leader' of Communist China and is seen as wielding considerable power through back channels.



1990

Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm is launched after Iraq seizes control of Kuwait. Despite American media speculation about Iraq's super-soldiers (allegedly manufactured using Palestinian Bio-Blitz technology), US forces encounter no meta-human opposition.

Germany becomes a single country for the first time since WWII.

Lech Walesa, longtime labor leader - and a popular voice of Polish resistance to Soviet rule - is elected President of Poland.

Regional legislatures in both Russia and Ukraine declare that their national laws supersede any Soviet legislation. The Soviet Union refuses to acknowledge these actions. Secessionist sentiment grows within the Soviet satellite states.

1991

After Slovenia and Croatia attempt to break away from Yugoslavia, the country erupts into a Civil War. Bosnia Herzegovina and Macedonia soon follow suit. The entire country becomes a war zone of skirmishes and guerilla fighting.

Disturbed by Gorbachev's free market reforms and loosening of control over satellite states, a group of Kremlin hard-liners (calling themselves the State Emergency Committee) attempt to remove Gorbachev from power. Gorbachev is held hostage at his dacha in Crimea for 3 days but the coup eventually fails due to the defiance of Russian president Boris Yeltsin (and the refusal of both Soviet Special Forces (Spetsnaz) and the People's Revolution superteam) to storm the Russian legislature building and assassinate Yeltsin.

The Soviet Union officially comes to an end. Boris Yeltsin becomes the leader of Russia.

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