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the secret special page

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Issue #41 (January/February 2007)

When Last We Left Our Heroes...

by Steven S. Long

Don't mind if I do....

One of our most eagerly-anticipated Ultimate books is about to hit the shelves – the Fifth Edition version of *The Ultimate Mentalist!* Mental powers are a common facet of many genres, settings, and campaigns – for example, think of Jean Grey, Deanna Troi, Luke Skywalker, the Deryni, or Telzey Amberdon – but they're often a little tricky to handle in game terms. In a book or movie, the author controls how the characters uses these vaguely-defined powers, making them as effective as they need to be for dramatic purposes but not letting them run roughshod over the storyline. In a game, psionics have to be precisely quantified, and in the hands of PCs can end up being mostly ineffective or grossly overpowered.

But whatever type of mentalist character you like to play, and however you want to define or use mental powers in your campaign, *The Ultimate Mentalist* has something to offer you. It deals with all facets of *HERO System* mental powers, from the "mechanical" aspects of creating them, to how to use them in your campaign without letting them ruin it, to structuring entire campaigns around them. It includes plenty of sample powers, psionic gadgets, and other elements you can drop right into your campaign.

Chapter One, *Mentalist Characters,* discusses the broad topic of creating characters with mental powers, and how those powers work. After reviewing mentalist archetypes and related topics, it has an extensive section on the Mental Powers (which lie at the heart of most mentalist character concepts) as well as related Powers. It also covers other *HERO System* elements such as Skills, Talents, and Power Modifiers as they apply to mentalism. That information and discussion gets applied in Chapter Two, *Mentalist Powers,* which has over 250 pre-built powers, abilities, and gadgets for just about any psionic character you can think of (and most of those powers have one or more options, resulting in thousands of possible powers for your mentalist characters). Some of these powers appear in *The UNTIL Superpowers Databases* or other *HERO System* products, but many are new, revised, or updated just for this book.

Chapter Three, *Mentalists Genre By Genre,* briefly reviews how mentalists and mental powers tend to function in various major genres, such as superheroes, Fantasy, and Science Fiction. It includes one or more sample character for each of the major genres; you can use these as sample PCs, NPCs to pit against your heroes, or just colorful encounters for the heroes.

Chapter Four, *Mental Combat,* takes a detailed look at how mentalists use their powers to fight. In addition to explaining how the standard *HERO System* Combat Maneuvers and related elements apply in Mental Combat, it has special rules for Mind-To-Mind Combat featuring new *Mental Maneuvers,* and rules for the *Mind Zone,* a "psychic realm" where mentalists fight each other at the speed of thought.

Chapter Five, *Campaigning With Mentalists,* provides advice and guidance for the GM who has one or more mentalist characters in his campaign. First it covers the nature of mental powers themselves — issues the GM should consider when defining how mentalism works in his campaign, such as where mental powers come from and how society views them. Then it discusses *psionics campaigns* (games in which all the PCs are mentalists, and mental powers are a central element in the setting and adventures), and problems that mentalists may create in the campaign and how the GM can solve them.

Prepare to have your mind expanded by *The Ultimate Mentalist!*

— Steven S. Long
HERO System Line Developer

HEROglyphs by Steven S. Long

I Can't Breathe!

DROWNING/SUFFOCATION AS ATTACKS

Esteemed Editor Dave says he'd like to see me discuss drowning/suffocation as an attack. Sounds like a good idea to me, so here we go. ;)

In game terms, here's how drowning and suffocation (see 5ER 424) work:

1. A character who can't breathe spends a minimum of 1 END per Phase. When the END runs out, he expends STUN as END (per 5ER 425). When the STUN runs out, he expends BODY, eventually dying.
2. A character can voluntarily lower his SPD to 2 to reduce the END/STUN/BODY loss. However, the minimum SPD for drowning/suffocation purposes is 2; even a SPD 1 character drowns at SPD 2 (2 END/STUN/BODY per Turn, in other words).
3. A character who can't breathe cannot make Recoveries, including the Post-Segment 12 Recovery.

So, how do we turn that into an attack?

SIMPLE DROWNING/SUFFOCATION

If you're not worried too much about "realism" and precisely modeling the drowning/suffocation rules, it's easy enough to create a drowning/suffocation attack. Here are two examples from *The UNTIL Superpowers Database:*

Suffocation (page 15): Most characters need air to breathe. Some air-controlling characters can "cut off" a target's supply of oxygen, removing the air from the target's lungs and preventing him from obtaining any more. This quickly causes the victim to pass out. (This power assumes the character just wants to quickly knock the victim out. To kill via suffocation, use the *Strangulation Bubble* power.)

> Energy Blast 4d6, No Normal Defense (defense is Life Support [Self-Contained Breathing]; +1), Continuous (+1). Total cost: 60 points.

Strangulation Bubble (page 99): The character can create a bubble of force around a person's head (or other breathing organs, as appropriate) that slowly but surely strangles the life out of him by preventing him from getting oxygen.

> RKA ½d6, NND (defense is Life Support [Self-Contained Breathing] or not needing to breathe; +1), Does BODY (+1), Continuous (+1). Total cost: 40 points.

While one is an Air/Wind power and the other a Force power, you can easily change the special effects to other appropriate ones while keeping the game mechanics the same.

COMPLEX DROWNING/SUFFOCATION

For an attack that works like the drowning/suffocation rules do, we need to use Drain with a few special modifiers. First, the Drain has to be able to affect one of three different Characteristics, one at a time (a common +¼ Advantage). Second, the Drain has to switch between those Characteristics when specific things happen, without the need for any control from the character who started the attack. That sounds like it should require an Advantage, but not a significant one; let's call it a +¼.

Third, the Drain has to remain in effect for long periods of time, and has to affect the victim on *the victim's* Phases, not the attacker's as usual. Since the victim is just as likely to be slower as his attacker than faster, and can voluntarily lower his SPD to reduce the attack's effectiveness, we'll call that a +0 Advantage, but the GM can adjust the value as he sees fit.

Fourth, the damage accrues at a specific rate – no slower, no faster. That's less effective than most attacks; it sounds vaguely like the *Gradual Effect* Limitation. So we'll use a tailored form of that as a Limitation on the power, and another Limitation so that the effect remains the same (-1 point of each Characteristic) despite the fact that they all have different per-point costs.

So, here's what we've got for the basic attack:

> Drain END, STUN, or BODY 8d6 (standard effect: up to 24 points of effect), one Characteristic at a time (+1/4), Continuous (+1), Affects Victim On Victim's Phases Not Attacker's (+0), Ranged (+1/2), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2) (260 Active Points); Gradual Effect (victim loses 1 point of designated Characteristic per each of his Phases; -1/4), Set Effect (victim only loses 1 point from each Characteristic, in the order specified in the text, regardless of per-point cost; -1/2). Total cost: 149 points.

Next, we have to cancel out the target's ability to take Recoveries. There's no precise mechanism in the game for stopping Recoveries in general, or Post-Segment 12 Recoveries specifically. But we can accomplish that goal by reducing his REC to zero:

> Drain REC 8d6, Continuous (+1), Ranged (+1/2), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1/2) (240 Active Points); Linked (-1/2). Total cost: 160 points.

Now, this might not suffice to reduce all characters' REC to 0, at least not in one attack, but by GM's fiat the Absolute Effect Rule can apply (see *Fantasy Hero*, pages 250-51) to always reduce a target to 0 REC.

So, there you have it: an attack that simulates drowning or suffocating someone as represented by the *HERO System* rules. It's pretty pricey, but as always the GM can reduce the cost if he thinks that's necessary to maintain game balance.

You Gotta Have Character by Jason Walters

> "Whoever after due and proper warning shall be heard to utter the abominable word 'Frisco,' which has no linguistic or other warrant, shall be deemed guilty of a High Misdemeanor, and shall pay into the Imperial Treasury as penalty the sum of twenty-five dollars." — Emperor Norton I

The '60s were a wild time in San Francisco. The 1860s, that is! For while the vitality of the Gold Rush Era produced both wealth and misery in equal measure, it also created one of the greatest excesses of raw madness in American history. For while all cities have a singular class of eccentric individuals generally known as "characters," foggy San Francisco has had historically far more than her fair share – and the years from 1860 to 1875 produced a bumper crop of these urban freaks. A small army of them paraded through the Financial District each day, up and down Montgomery and Kearny streets from Jackson to Sutter in a rapidly shifting kaleidoscope of oddity.

There was George Washington Coombes, known also as the "Great Matrimonial Candidate." There was also Old Rosy, the Money King, the Gutter Snipe, Old Crisis, and many others who have now passed beyond the veil into obscurity. Some were bankrupt, soiled, and tattered. Some were hopelessly miserable and wretched. Others were fantastic or charming. But only one maintained the gentility of his finer days, conducting himself with unvarying and obvious dignity to the very end.

His name was Norton I, Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mexico. And maybe, just maybe, he wasn't quite as mad as everyone thought.

Background/History: Joshua A. Norton was born in London, England in 1818 to Jewish parents. When he was two years old the family immigrated to South Africa so that his father could work for his mother's eccentric uncle Benjamin Norden, a successful merchant with a penchant for suing his own family members. While in his 20s Joshua served as a founding member of Cape Town's European Police Force, a mounted Calvary unit that later evolved into the famous Cape Mounted Rifles. But young Joshua didn't stick around to find glory upon the receiving end of a Zulu spear. His father's death in 1848 left him with a small fortune of $40,000, which he took with him when he immigrated to San Francisco in 1849. There he embarked upon a successful program of real estate speculation that, through a combination of shrewd judgment and a reputation for utter trustworthiness, propelled his small fortune into a much larger one. By the end of 1853 he had amassed a fortune of over a quarter million dollars.

It was in that year that the Chinese government, facing a severe famine, placed a ban on the exportation of rice. The price of rice in San Francisco skyrocketed from 4 cents a pound to 36 cents a pound overnight. Hoping to cash in on the sudden shortage, Norton and some partners purchased the entire contents of an incoming Peruvian rice ship – a staggering 100 tons of rice! Soon his partnership had control of the entire profitable Bay Area rice market. Unfortunately, two unscheduled shiploads of rice arrived shortly thereafter, driving the price of rice back down again. Norton was unperturbed, but several of his partners panicked and sold their rice shares. Extensive litigation followed. Although he did well in the lower courts, the California Supreme Court reversed Norton's good fortune. He was ruined, his reputation destroyed, and his extensive real estate holdings in the North Beach area were seized to satisfy his creditors.

For a period of several years, Joshua A. Norton simply vanished, both from the public eye as well as all records of the time. It is not known whether or not having the pressures of scarcity and failure suddenly thrust upon him, after so many years of wealth and success, drove him to madness. It may be that what others have mistaken for lunacy was the result of a carefully crafted response to the pressures of poverty. What is known is that the former speculator reappeared in San Francisco on September 17th, 1857 dressed in an outlandish military uniform to proclaim himself Emperor of the United States.

The local press reported this news with considerable enthusiasm, setting a precedent for media coverage of Emperor Norton's proclamations that would continue throughout his unparalleled and whimsical 21-year reign. Later, out of concern for the war torn nation of Mexico, he issued another edict proclaiming himself its protector – thus giving himself the complete title of Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mexico. The local press dutifully printed this announcement as well. In particular journalist Samuel Clemens, better known to millions as Mark Twain, was a champion of the Emperor's edicts. He worked next to Norton's boarding house, spoke to him almost every day, and swore to the very end that he wasn't nearly as mad as everyone thought.

artwork by

NORTON IMPERATOR

"No more through the crowded streets he goes,
With his shambling gait and shabby clothes,
And his furtive glance and whiskered nose –
Immersed in cares of state.
The serpent twisted upon his staff
Is not less careless of idle chaff,
The mocking speech or the scornful laugh,
Than be who bore it late.
His nerveless grasp has released the helm,
But ere the Lethean flood shall whelm
The last faint trace of his fancied realm,
Let us contrast his fate
With other rulers and other reigns,
Of royal birth or scheming brains,
And see if his crazy life contains
So much to deprecate.
No traitorous friends, or vigilant foes,
Rippled the stream of his calm repose;
No fear of exile before him 'rose,
Whose empire was his pate;
No soldiers died to uphold his fame;
He found no pleasure in woman's shame;
For wasted wealth no well-earned blame
Turned subjects' love to hate.
No long and weary struggle with pain;

One sudden throe in
his clouded brain
Closed forever his
bloodless reign,
With every man his
friend.
For Death alone did
be abdicate.
What Emperor, Prince
or potentate,
Can long avoid a
similar fate
Or win a better end!"
— Dr. George
Chismore, friend of
Emperor Norton

CURRENCY IN THE 1860S

It is easy to forget that, at one point in our nation's history, federal American money was neither terribly reliable nor particularly plentiful. As the United States' currency was based on the values of gold and silver, the very same Gold Rush that caused the blossoming of California in general and San Francisco in particular also caused wild fluctuations in its value. Furthermore, for the first 80 years of American history only coins were issued – and these were produced in limited quantities using fairly primitive methods. Individuals or businesses that wished to conduct transactions on a larger scale were forced to resort to promissory notes. These paper notes represented redeemable sums of precious metals held in a vault by a bank,

"At the peremptory request and desire of a large majority of the citizens of these United States, I, Joshua Norton, formerly of Algoa Bay, Cape of Good Hope, and now for the last 9 years and 10 months past of S. F., Cal., declare and proclaim myself Emperor of these U. S.; and in virtue of the authority thereby in me vested, do hereby order and direct the representatives of the different States of the Union to assemble in Musical Hall, of this city, on the 1st day of Feb. next, then and there to make such alterations in the existing laws of the Union as may ameliorate the evils under which the country is labouring, and thereby cause confidence to exist, both at home and abroad, in our stability and integrity."
— Norton I,
Emperor of the United States

Although how the citizens of San Francisco originally felt about their new monarch has been lost in the mists of time, they soon grew used to him. Norton was often seen walking the streets of the city dressed in his regal (although often threadbare) alternating blue-and-grey uniform, which showed support for his subjects in both the Union and Confederacy. He wore a beaver hat decorated with colored feathers, wore a saber at his side, and walked with a gnarled cane in one hand and an umbrella in the other. When his uniform became worn out, the Board of Supervisors presented him with another in an official ceremony, for which he sent them a note of thanks and a patent for nobility in perpetuity for each supervisor.

As Emperor, Norton felt is necessary to perform a number of regular tasks to help better the lot of his subjects. During his daily ministrations he would examine the condition of the sidewalks, cable cars, policeman's uniforms, and the state of repair of public property. He also felt is necessary to give lengthy philosophical expositions on a variety of topics to anyone within hearing. It was during one of his "Imperial inspections" that the Emperor performed one of his most famous acts. During an ugly anti-Chinese riot in the 1870s, he positioned himself between an angry torch-wielding mob and the gates of Chinatown. With a bowed head, he began to recite the Lord's Prayer repeatedly until the shamed rioters dispersed without incident. After this incident, Chinese citizens of San Francisco increasingly treated Emperor Norton as if he were indeed Emperor of the Americas and Protector of Mexico!

In addition to his duties as a royal inspector, Norton considered the issuance of edicts to be of paramount importance. These ranged from the whimsical to the mildly deranged to the downright prophetic and were printed in all of the local papers. On one end of the spectrum (I leave it to the reader to determine which end is which) he ordered the disbanding both the Democratic and Republican parties, ordered the military to depose congress, and forbade all strife between religions or their various sects. On a perhaps more capricious note, he banned the use of the slang term "Frisco" on pain of fine, ordered a coast guard blockade of the Sacramento Delta, and granted a preteen prostitute named Minnie Rae the title of Countess – an act which she later credited having saved her life. His most farsighted proclamations called for the creation of a suspension bridge between San Francisco and Oakland, the creation of a League of Nations, and the public funding of a heavier-than-air flying machine.

Yet not everything in Emperor Norton's kingdom of inspired imagination went as planned. A scandal occurred in 1867 when a young police officer named Armand Barbier arrested Norton for vagrancy. When another officer pointed out that the Emperor had both a place of residence as well as $4.75 lawful currency on his person, the overzealous deputy took him before the Commissioner of Lunacy for the purpose of committing him to treatment. Instead, the commissioner promptly discharged Emperor Norton with the comment that "He has shed no blood, robbed no one, and despoiled no country – which is more than can be said of his fellows in that line." Norton was even gracious enough to grant an "Imperial Pardon" to the young officer for his act of "treason." It is possibly as a result of this incident that all police officers in San Francisco thereafter saluted Norton as he passed in the street.

Many rumors about Emperor Norton circulated during his lifetime. A popular one was that he was actually Prince Eugene Napoleon, the tragically doomed son of French Emperor Napoleon III who died fighting in the Zulu War of 1879 (in a surprising act of diplomacy, Zulu leaders later expressed dismay at his killing and stated that, if they had known the prince's identity, they would have spared him). Another story was that he was planning to marry Queen Victoria. While it is of course untrue, amusingly he did actually correspond with the Queen on several occasions. A final rumor was that Norton was in fact supremely wealthy and only affected poverty as part of a great plan to avoid taxation on his fortunes.

While on his way to attend a lecture at the Academy of Sciences on the evening of January 8th 1880, Emperor Norton collapsed at the intersection of Grant and California Streets. Passersby's immediately rushed to his aid, but he died in a matter of moments before an ambulance carriage could arrive. In his pockets were found some telegrams, a coin purse containing about six dollars in gold and silver, a 1828 French Franc, and a few of his own bonds. When reporters visited his apartment the next day, they found that all of his worldly possessions amounted to a collection of walking sticks, news clippings of his pronouncements, actual correspondence with Queen Victoria and President Lincoln, a collection of modest portraits of famous emperors, and some $2.50 in loose change. Despite rumors to the contrary, he died in complete poverty.

The following day the San Francisco Chronicle published his obituary on its front page under the headline *Le Roi Est Mort* (The King is Dead). Not the be outdone, their competitor the Morning Call published a front-page headline that read "Norton the first, by the grace of God Emperor of these United States and Protector of Mexico, departed this life." His funeral was a solemn, mournful, and very large affair that was attended by some 30,000 people (the funeral cortege was two miles long). At the height of the ceremony, which was presided over by the Mayor, a total solar eclipse blackened the sky.

The first and only emperor the United States would ever have was gone.

Personality/Motivation: As a popular San Francisco wag of the 1960s once commented: "Everybody understands Mickey Mouse. Few understand Hermann Hesse. Hardly anybody understands Einstein. And nobody understands Emperor Norton." The enigma of Joshua Norton may be boiled down to a simple question: is he insane or is he running a clever scam? He certainly seems to be both quite mad as well as quite sincere. Perhaps, as the mystical Sufis of the medieval Islamic world taught, his madness has brought him closer to God, and thus provided him with His special protection (the reality is a bit more complicated; see below).

Temperamentally, Emperor Norton embodies everything that a subject could wish from his or her emperor. He's kindly, broadminded, well read, and keenly interested in the commercial activities of "subjects." He keeps himself informed of the scientific advances of the day by attending lectures and abreast of foreign events by reading the papers. Norton is abstemious in his personal behavior; he eats and drinks with considerable moderation. He has never been seen to exhibit lustful behavior or to pursue the fairer sex, as this would be "showing favorites" amongst his female "subjects." He is kind to animals and mindful of street children, watching out for strays of both varieties as best as he can within his limited means.

Quote: "At the preemptory request of a large majority of the citizens of these United States, I Joshua Norton, formerly of Algoa Bay, Cape of Good Hope, and now for the last nine years and ten months past of San Francisco, California, declare and proclaim myself the Emperor of These United States."

Powers/Tactics: One foggy, starless Bay Area night in 1858, the newly immigrated Greek goddess of misfortune Melpomene made a bet with her sister Thalia, goddess of good humor, as to the fate of a certain well-liked San Francisco businessman named Joshua Norton. As they walked arm-in-arm down Market Street the Muse, dressed in her tragic mask, knee high boots, and wielding her traditional bloody knife, wagered her sister – who was immodestly attired only in her traditional getup of comic mask, ivy wreath, and Sheppard's crook (not that anyone said anything) – that she could place such a tragic doom upon the brow of the witty, well-educated 40-year-old speculator that he would go mad and never recover. His curse was thus: this master of monetary science, this pecuniary potentate, would never again be able to amass more than a few dollars as long as he lived. Thalia accepted the gamble with the full confidence that the man's basic optimism, good cheer, and inventiveness would overcome any obstacle her gloomy sibling set before him, rending her curse impotent.

In a sense they were both right… and wrong. Joshua Norton became quite mad and was completely unable to continue his previous career as a masterful speculator. However, his innate integrity and resourcefulness enabled him to live a better and more satisfying life *without* money than many wealthy men manage with it. Thus Emperor Norton's powers (such as they are) come from a mixture of 3d6 Luck and 3d6 Unluck, either or both of which come into play depending upon what choices he makes in life. His Unluck tends to occur in the form of a test, putting him in the path of misfortune. For example, he might find himself confronted with an angry mob or unable to pay the rent on his residential hotel room. His Luck often plays a hand in helping him deal with these tests: he's able to disperse the mob by reciting the Lord's Prayer or mysterious benefactors pay his rent for him.

Emperor Norton is clearly both loved and revered by the citizens of San Francisco. Because of this, he enjoys over a half-dozen perks that, when taken individually, don't add up goldsmith, or simply a particularly trustworthy individual.

While it functioned, this system for conducting commerce left a lot to be desired, as it was particularly vulnerable to hoarding and panics. With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, government-issued coinage began vanishing from circulation. Citizens began hording gold, silver, and eventually copper coins, which made it extremely difficult for businesses to conduct transactions. In response to this shortage, numerous private banks, organizations, and individuals began issuing currency, usually the one or two cent coins that were needed for the average person to function on a daily basis. At one point there were an estimated 8,000 currencies being circulated in the Union alone!

Things were even worse on the West Coast, which didn't even have a mint until the opening of the San Francisco Mint in 1854. Even after that the supply never seemed to catch up with the demand; physical money was so scarce in San Francisco that many people got by using pinches of gold dust as currency! While

the Coinage Act of 1864 did help to alleviate the problems that lead to the minting of private pennies during the Civil War, many average people still relied on coins or promissory notes issued by goldsmiths to conduct their daily business. Americans of Emperor Norton's day simply didn't have the kind of confidence in federally issued monies that we enjoy today – nor were they particularly incredulous about accepting private, locally created legal tender. This may explain why so many San Franciscans were comfortable with accepting and circulating notes issued by Emperor Norton: with all of the competing currency that had been circulated in the city during the preceding twenty years, using money backed only by the delusions a well-liked local eccentric probably didn't seem particularly crazy at all!

to much, collectively give him powers unprecedented in the history of that city. A mysterious benefactor pays for the rent on his tiny room at 624 Commercial St. He is fed for free by some of the city's finest restaurants, which he has graciously allowed to put up signs that read "By Appointment to His Emperor, Joshua Norton I." Along with his two "followers," the dogs Bummer and Lazarus, he has a standing ticket at any play or concert in the city's theaters. San Francisco's Board of Supervisors have issued him a bicycle as a means of royal transportation, allow him to review the police and check that they perform their duties (most even salute him when he passes), and to march at the head of the annual Police parade. He even prints his own money, which is honored at most places in San Francisco, including a few banks!

Campaign Use: Emperor Norton is a – no, *the* – quintessential background character for a Victorian, Western, or Pulp Hero game that takes place in San Francisco (Pulp Hero is pushing it chronologically, but your PCs probably won't care). The infuriating deference that the city's citizens and officials show their "Emperor" will drive serious characters absolutely up the wall, while his whimsical yet wise pronouncements and predictions will add a bit of odd SF flavor to the game. Alternately, by giving him the Power *Life Support (Longevity: Immortal) Cost: 5 points*, an immortal Emperor Norton could still be kicking around in the 21st Century as an interesting 4-point Contact in a Champions or Dark Champions campaign involving San Francisco *(purchase as Contact (Significant Contacts, Useful Skills or Resources) 11-*).

An immortal Emperor Norton, perhaps cursed/gifted with that ability by Thalia and Melpomene, might survive long enough to become an instructor of history and good government at the Ravenswood Academy, the Teen Champions school for paranormal teenagers. Further down the timeline he might even emigrate off planet in a Star Hero campaign – perhaps even becoming the actual emperor of a distant planet! Finally, in a Fantasy Hero game the Joshua Norton character sheet could be used as the template for a Robinson Crusoe-type NPC who has stumbled across a mysterious civilization and (naturally) been made its king.

Appearance: Emperor Norton is a picturesque and striking figure. He is of medium height, heavy-set, with curly hair, a massive forehead, and clear, penetrating eyes. He wears his mustache and beard in a manner appropriate to an emperor (actually, very similar to that of Napoleon the Third). He wears a blue-and-grey uniform cut in a military style that is profusely adorned with brass buttons. Upon its shoulders are mounted massive gold gilded epaulettes (a gift from the Presidio Military Academy) that are often tarnished from exposure. He always wears a tall beaver hat adorned with feathers and other sorts of colorful decorations. He has a collection of walking sticks, but a subject in Oregon sent his favorite to him. It is fashioned out of an unusual specimen of grapevine and is shod with iron with a gold handle. In rainy weather he also carries a large umbrella.

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Emperor Norton I

EMPEROR NORTON PLOT SEEDS

Imperial Abduction: The Emperor has been kidnapped and held for ransom by a nefarious gang from Oakland (no San Francisco criminal would do such a terrible thing)! The Board of Supervisors asks its resident band of Victorian mystery men (the PCs) to travel to that unfriendly city to retrieve him.

Suddenly Wealthy Emperor: Norton inherited a large sum of money from his deceased uncle and used it to purchase Goat Island (now called Yerba Buena Island) in the middle of the Bay. He then hired wealthy occultist heiress Sarah L. Winchester, the mad constructor the Winchester Mystery House, to design him a palace suitable for America's Emperor. When the cycloptic, non-Euclidian palace was completed, Emperor Norton walked through the front door, never to be seen again. Now, over 100 years later, strange lights and noises can be heard from the old Norton place. The PCs are sent to investigate.

Sioux Indian Wars: Curious about the welfare of his Indian subjects, Emperor

Norton journeys east to the Dakota Territories, where he is captured by the Sioux. Intrigued by their captive, the Sioux decide to support his claim to Emperorship of the United States. Dozens of other Indian nations flock to his cause, sending history off in a very different direction….

LAZARUS AND BUMMER

No discussion of Emperor Norton's San Francisco would be complete without mentioning Lazarus and Bummer; the city's most famous strays. They didn't really belong to Norton or live with him, but were his friends and companions for over a decade. They dined together, went to shows and plays together, and followed him about on his inspections. Cartoons of the period show Emperor Norton walking with the two dogs. Tragedy struck, however, when, in October 1863, Lazarus was run over and killed by a fire truck. A public funeral was held which many prominent people attended. Later in 1865, when Bummer died, Mark Twain was sufficiently moved to publish an epitaph for the Imperial canine: "He died full of years, and honor, and disease, and fleas."

Emperor Norton I

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
10	DEX	0	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
10	CON	0	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
12	COM	1	11-	
4	PD	2		Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	1		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
2	SPD	0		Phases: 6, 12
4	REC	0		
25	END	3		
23	STUN	3		

Total Characteristic Cost: 20

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Leaping: 2"/4"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
10	*Luck Of The Goddess:* Luck 3d6; Only When He Pleases Thalia (-½)	0

Perks

6 Contact: San Francisco Police Department (Good Relationship, Organization) 8-
3 Contact: The Local Media (Good Relationship) 11-
8 Followers: Bummer and Lazarus (Dogs)
2 Fringe Benefit: Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mexico
1 Fringe Benefit: Member of Lyceum of Free Culture
1 Fringe Benefit: Member of the Occidental Lodge (The Masons)
4 Reputation: Well-Liked Eccentric 14- (in San Francisco), +2/+2d6

Skills

3 Acting 12-
2 Animal Handler (Canines) 12-
3 Conversation 12-
3 High Society 12-
2 CK: San Francisco 11-
3 KS: Economics 12-
3 KS: Politics 12-
3 KS: Philosophy 12-
3 Oratory 12-
3 Persuasion 12-
4 PS: Speculator 13-
3 Streetwise 12-
2 Survival (Urban) 12-

3 Linguist
0 1) Language: English (Idiomatic, Literate)
2 2) Language: French (Fluent, Literate)
1 3) Language: Hebrew (Basic, Literate)
1 4) Language: Latin (Basic, Literate)
1 5) Language: Mandarin (Basic)

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 80

Total Cost: 100

50+ Disadvantages

15 Distinctive Features: Dresses Like a Shabby Emperor (Not Concealable)
5 Money: Destitute (But Resourceful; Counts as Poor)
20 Psychological Limitation: Believes Himself to be Emperor of the Americas and Protector of Mexico (Common, Total)
10 *Bad Luck of the Goddess:* Unluck: 3d6; Only When He Displeases Melpomene (-½)

Total Disadvantage Points: 100

A Fistful of Talents by Curtis Gibson

A Fistful of Talents

New Talents targeted for your Fantasy Hero campaign.

Spell Manipulation Talents

These Talents are reflections of greater training with magic, and allow the character to modify details of the spells. Most are bought with Charges, to show the resistance of magic to modification. Many of these Talents have a high Active Point cost, so charges works very well in flavor, and to bring the cost down. Buying Extra Charges, or buying the Charges Limitation off completely can be done by the character, if he is willing to spend the points. These talents are bought as naked Advantages that can be applied to any spell the character has purchased. Limitations that are required on spells, such as Gestures or Incantations are also recommended for these talents, as they are just modifications to said magic.

CONSECRATE SPELL

This Talent is for those that have a close connection to the divine planes. The caster can add holy force to his spells. It doesn't add any direct specific damage, but is useful on creatures that take extra damage from holy attacks. END Cost: 2.

Consecrate Spell Cost: 10 Character Points (Variable Special Effects (+¼) on a Spell of up to 60 Active Points; Increased Endurance Cost (2x END, -½)

EASY SPELL

This Talent allows the caster of a spell to reach inside his connection to the flows of magic and cast a spell with no chance of spell failure; this is something that is strenuous enough that it can only be done once per day. The caster does not have to make a magic roll for one spell. If the amount the spell roll is made by is important, the skill roll is considered to have been made exactly. END Cost: 4.

Easyspell Cost: 5 Character Points ("buying off" the *Requires a Skill Roll* Limitation a Spell of up to 60 Active Points; 1 Charge (-2), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (2x END, -½))

ENLARGE SPELL

This Talent allows a caster to make a spell larger. The exact shape of the result is up to the GM, the player, and the spell. An attack spell will usually end up a Line (like a lightning bolt) or a Radius (which could be a fire ball). If the spell is already an area of effect spell, the area is quadrupled (2" Radius becomes 8" Radius). END Cost: 3.

Enlarge Spell Cost: 17 Character Points (Area Of Affect (+1) on a Spell of up to 60 Active Points; 1 Charge (-2), Costs Endurance (-½))

FAR SPELL

This Talent doubles the range of spells and makes distant targets easier to hit. END Cost: 4.

Far Spell Cost: 12 Character Points (No Range Modifiers (+½) and Extended Range (+¼) on a Spell of up to 60 Active Points; 1 Charge (-2), Costs Endurance (-½))

SCULPT SPELL

The caster is skilled enough at magic that he can alter the shape of any of his Area Of Effect spells, and make it Cone, Line, Radius or Any Area versions. If the spell has no Area Of Effect, then this Talent does not work. END Cost: 6.

Sculpt Spell Cost: 11 Character Points (+1 Variable Advantage (+2) on a Spell of up to 60 Active Points); 1 Charge (-2), Costs Endurance (-½), Only to Switch an Area Of Effect to Another Area Of Effect (-2))

SPELL PENETRATION

The caster's spells are much more effective for damage. The spell used with this Talent has the *Armor Piercing* Advantage. END Cost: 3.

Spell Penetration Cost: 7 Character Points (Armor Piercing on a Spell of up to 60 Active Points; 1 Charge (-2), Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (2x END, -½))

General Talents

ARMOR MASTERY

The character knows his armor so well that his gets better use out of it than someone not so fully versed in using it. The character must choose a specific type of armor (chain, plate or some specified combination), and only gets the bonus with that armor.

Armor Master Cost: 4 Character Points (+3 PD; Only When Wearing Specified Armor (-½) **plus** +3 ED; Only When Wearing Specified Armor (-½))

CH'I STRIKE

The character has trained his ch'i and inner strength so well, he can reach out an extra 6 feet to hit a target. END Cost: 1.

Ch'i Strike Cost: 3 Character Points (Stretching 1", Does Not Cross Intervening Space (+¼), Invisible Power Effects (Fully Invisible, +1); No Velocity Damage (-¼), No Noncombat Stretching (-¼), Only for Unarmed Attacks (-2))

COLD FURY

This is a Talent that adds to Berserk Fury (FH104). When going into Rage, the character starts emitting cold, becomes covered in frost, and becomes almost immune to cold attacks directed against him.

Cold Fury Cost: 12 Character Points (Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; Linked to Berserker Rage (-½), Only versus Cold Attacks (-1))

DEFENSIVE

The character is very adept at moving in such a way as to make ranged attack difficult, and also utilizes cover to a much greater advantage than others.

Defensive Cost: 4 points (+2 with DCV; Only if Character Has Cover or Has Moved 3" This Phase (-½), Only versus Ranged Attacks (-1))

DEFENSIVE CASTING

The character is very talented at casting spells in combat. Any time he successfully casts a spell, he gains +2 DCV for that phase.

Defensive Casting Cost: 6 Character Points (+2 with DCV; Instant (Lasts the Phase, -½), Only when Successfully Casting a Spell (-¼))

DEFLECT ARROWS

The character has the ability to deflect arrows and other projectiles sent his way. This talent is really three separate talents, one for deflecting with a weapon, one for shields, and one unarmed.

Deflect Arrows Cost: 7 Character points (Missile Deflection (Arrows); Restrainable (Weapon of Opportunity, Shield of Opportunity, or Must be Mobile, -½))

ENERGY RESILIENCE

The character is much more resistant to one type of energy (Fire, cold, electricity, etc.). He has 2 rED against it. The character chooses which type when he buys the Talent: fire, electricity, cold, etc. This Talent quite often implies some connection to a race, plane, or background that has resistance to this kind of energy.

Energy Resilience Cost: 1 Character Point (Armor (2 ED); Only versus One Specific Energy Type (-1))

FIERY FURY

This is an ability that adds to Berserk Fury (FH104). When going into Fury, the character starts emitting fire, sparks, and heat, and becomes almost immune to fire/heat attacks directed against him.

Fiery Fury Cost: 12 Character Points (Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; Linked to Berserker Rage (-½), Only versus Heat/Fire Attacks (-1))

FOCUSED SPEED

The character draws on inner reserves and acts faster for 1 turn. He cannot activate this, or any other "focused" ability 2 Turns in a row – there must be at least a Turn between. END Cost: 9.

Focused Speed Cost: 9 Character Points (Aid Speed 3d6+1 (Standard Effect: 10 points); Increased Endurance Cost (3x END, -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Self Only (-½), Increased Return Rate (10 per Turn) (-¼), Must Wait at Least One Turn Before Using Again (-¼))

FOCUSED STRENGTH

The character draws on inner reserves and supercharges his strength for 1 Turn. He cannot activate this, or any other "focused" ability 2 Turns in a row, there must be at least a Turn between. END Cost: 9.

Focused Strength Cost: 9 Character Points (Aid STR 3d6+1 (Standard Effect: 10 points); Increased Endurance Cost (3x END, -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Self Only (-½), Increased Return Rate (10 per Turn) (-¼), Must Wait at Least One Turn Before Using Again (-¼))

GUIDANCE

Having this Talent means that the character can tell if some action he is about to take is against his ethics, or would be considered wrong by his gods. A favorite of Paladins and Priests.

Guidance Cost: 5 Character Points (Detect (Sense) When You are about to Do Something Wrong/Go Against Your Ethical Code)

HANDFUL OF SAND

The character is very good at grabbing a handful of sand, dirt, or other loose material at hand, and throwing it in the eyes of the opponents. He can hit everyone within 6 feet of him. END Cost: 3.

Handful Of Sand Cost: 15 Character Points (Sight Group Flash 3d6, Area Of Effect (2" Radius, Selective (+1¼); OIF (Sand, Dirt, etc. of Opportunity) (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase, -½), Not versus Hard Eye Covering (-¼))

I LIKE BIG WEAPONS

The character has a knack for wielding weapons that are too large for him. Through skill and ,training he can wield a weapon one size category larger than himself as if it didn't have the +10 STR Min Requirement. (FH153).

I Like Big Weapons Cost: 6 Character Points (+10 STR, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Only for STR Min on "Large" Weapons (-1), No Figured Characteristics (-½))

IAJUTSU MASTER

The character is a master of drawing and attacking instantly. Anytime the character draws and attacks in one motion, he gains +2 OCV and +½d6 Killing with his attack. In order to get the bonus, the character must make his Fast Draw skill by 2.

Iajutsu Master Cost: 14 Character Points (+2 with OCV; Requires a Fast Draw Roll (-½), Only on Draw and Attack (-¼) **plus** HKA +½d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Requires a Fast Draw Roll (-½), Only on Draw and Attack (-¼))

LETHAL TURNING

The character's ability to turn undead is so strong that even if they are not destroyed or completely cowed by his Turn attack they take damage. END Cost: 6.

Lethal Turning Cost: 18 Character Points (RKA 1d6, Area Of Effect (5" Radius, +1), No Normal Defense (Not Affected at +20 Level on Turning, Not Being Undead, +1), Does BODY (+1); Linked to "Turning" (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase, -½), No Range (-½), No Knockback (-¼), Gestures (-1/4), No Push (-¼))

LIVING IN THE COLD

The character, due to training, background, or just being gifted, is strongly immune to extreme cold from weather and standard temperature. It has no effect on magical cold attacks, or cold fields.

Living In The Cold Cost: 1 Character Point (Life Support: Safe in Intense Cold; Environmental Effects Only (-1))

LIVING IN THE HEAT

The character, due to training, background, or just being gifted, is strongly immune to extreme heat from weather and standard temperature. It has no effect on magical heat attacks, or heat fields.

Living In The Heat Cost: 1 Character Point (Life Support: Safe in Intense Heat; Environmental Effects Only (-1))

LETHAL TURNING

Yes the Defense on this NND is questionable, but works very well for the effect

MAGICAL MOBILITY

The character is very mobile, and can move after casting a spell. He gains 4" of movement after an attack. His total movement in a Phase cannot be more than his full move. END Cost: 1.

Magical Mobility Cost: 5 Character Points (Running +4", Trigger (Zero Phase Action, Resets Automatically Immediately After It Activates, Triggers when He Casts a Spell; +¾); Only with Spell Attacks (-1), This Movement and Other Movement in the Phase Cannot Total More than the Character's Normal Movement (-¼))

MAGICAL TOUCH

The character can sense magic when he is touching or handling a magical object, or within any kind of magical field or spell effect. He also can tell if there is a spell active on a character by touch.

Magical Touch Cost: 4 Character Points (Detect Magic (Touch Group) Sense; Nonpersistent (-¼))

MOBILE ATTACK

The character is very mobile, and can move away after attacking someone. He gains 4" of movement after an attack. His total movement in a Phase cannot be more than his full move. END Cost: 1.

Mobile Attack Cost: 5 Character Points (Running +4", Trigger (Zero Phase Action, Resets Automatically Immediately After It Activates, Triggers When He Makes a Melee Attack +¾); Only with Melee Attacks (-1), This Movement and Other Movement in the Phase Cannot Total More than the Character's Normal Movement (-¼))

MOBILE SHOT

The character is very mobile in combat and can flit about the battlefield, shooting his arrows on the run. He gains 4" of movement after an attack. His total movement in a Phase cannot be more than his full move. END Cost: 1.

Mobile Shot Cost: 6 Character Points (Running +4", Trigger (Zero Phase Action, Resets Automatically Immediately after It Activates, Triggers When He Shoots His Bow, +¾); Only with Ranged Attacks (-1), This Movement and Other Movement in the Phase Cannot Total More than the Character's Normal Movement (-¼))

MUSCLE STRIKE

The character knows how to really damage an opponent, and anytime his main attack does body it results in a 1d6 STR Drain. This attack cuts or bruises muscles, tendons, or ligaments, and makes it well nigh impossible for the attacked creature to use his full STR. This attack costs no Endurance to use.

Muscle Strike Cost: 20 Character Points (Drain STR 1d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Delayed Return Rate (5 per Day, +1½), NND (Having Muscles, Tendons, etc.); Only with Multiple Power Attacks (-½), Only if Primary Attack Does BODY (-½))

OVERWHELMING STRIKE

The character can take an extra moment and deliver a devastating blow with a hand-to-hand attack – if he uses his full Phase to attack, he gets +2d6 Killing. END Cost: 6.

Overwhelming Strike Cost: 12 Character Points (HKA +2d6; Extra Time (Full Phase, -½), Increased Endurance Cost (2x END, -½), Restrainable (-½))

PHYSICAL WILLFORCE

The character's physical strength and resiliency can be used in place of his willpower. The character can buy his Ego up to the same level as his CON for a discount.

Physical Willforce Costs: 1 Character Point per +1 EGO (+1 EGO; Can Only be Purchased Up to Amount of His CON (-0), Only for Defending against Fear and Mental Effects (-1))

POWERPUNCH

The character's unarmed attacks are ch'i enhanced and can Stun a target easier, when this ability is used. The character adds 3d6 of damage that does no direct damage, but is added to the damage total for purposes of Stunning. END Cost: 6.

Powerpunch Cost: 7 Character Points (HA +3d6, No Normal Defense (Power Defense, +1); HA (-½), No Direct Damage – Only for Purposes of Stunning the Target (-1½), Unarmed Combat Only (-½))

SECOND WIND

This Talent allows a character, when almost beaten, to get a sudden burst of energy.

Second Wind Cost: 15 Character Points (Healing STUN 3d6+1 (Standard Effect: 10 points), Trigger (Takes No Time, Requires a Turn or More to Reset, Triggered when the Character is at 10 STUN or Less; +¼); 1 Recoverable Charge (-1¼), Self Only (-½))

SHIELD PIN

The character is experienced at making the opponent's shield useless. He takes a moment and pins the shield, or pulls the shield out of line before the attack. This talent is does not work against Wall Shields.

Shield Pin Cost: 7 Character Points (+3 with OCV; Extra Time (Half Phase, -¼), Only to Offset Shield DCV Bonus (-1))

SHIELD MASTERY

The character has trained with shields and can utilize them to his advantage to a much greater degree than others.

Shield Mastery Cost: 5 Character Points (+2 with DCV; OIF (Shield of Opportunity, -½), Restrainable (-½))

SKILLED STRIKE

A character with this talent is able to make truly deadly attacks with his weapon. When he makes a hit roll by more than half, he does an extra +1d6 Killing Damage. This is considered base damage, but can not be added to. The half in this case is rounded down, not in the character's favor, unlike most other rounding. This is an option for GMs that do not want to use the critical hit rules, but have players that want some sort of bonus on a really successful roll.

Skilled Strike Cost: 5 Character Points (HKA +1d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Only if Hit Roll is Made by Half (-2), Restrainable (-½), STR Does Not Add (-½))

SPECIAL COMBAT TRAINING

The user of this talent has great mastery of hand-to-hand combat and has the ability to shift a portion of his base CV around, as if it came from Combat Skill Levels. Each +1 to OCV is a -1 DCV; each +1 DCV is -1 to OCV; +2 OCV or DCV can reduce damage by 1 DC; +1 DC is a -2 to OCV or DCV, or -1 each.

Special Combat Training Cost: 8 Character Points (+4 with HTH Combat; Must Drop ½ DC, 1 DCV, or 1 OCV for Each Increase of ½ DC, 1 DCV, or 1 OCV (-1), Can Only Use on a Phase when the Character is Attacking (-½))

SPELL DODGE

The character with this talent is very adept at avoiding spells. He has to be concentrating on avoiding the incoming magic, and when he does he gains a +3 DCV versus Spells. This has no effect on any other ranged attack; just spells.

Spell Dodge Cost: 7 Character Points (+3 with DCV; Nonpersistent (-¼), versus Spells Only (-1))

SPRINTER

The character can run faster than normal. This character gets into a rhythm of running. Once stopped, he needs to rest before he can push himself into this state again. END Cost: 1.

Sprinter Cost: 3 Character Points (4x Noncombat on Running; Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (2x END, -½), Once Stopped Cannot Use this Talent for at Least a Minute (-¼))

WATCHING OUT FOR ME

The character is a strong follower of his god, and the god blesses him. Once per day, the character can add 3 to his OCV, DCV, or one Skill Roll.

Watching Out For Me Cost: 8 Character Points (+3 Overall; 1 Charge (-2), Only When Serving the God's Purposes (-½))

HUMAN STAR*GUARDS

Andre Almena as the only Human Star*Guard up through the 30th Century is not a vital and immutable fact – if the GM wants to run a campaign during the *Terran Empire* era (or any other period of the third millennium) featuring the Star*Guard, and one or more PCs happens to be Human, that's perfectly okay.

Star*Guard 2640 by Bob Greenwade

In *Digital Hero* #5, Darren Watts explored the Star*Guard, an interstellar organization dedicated to fighting evil everywhere, focusing on the late 20th and early 21st Centuries. The organization was briefly revisited in *Galactic Champions* (page 66), showing how a portion of it will look in the 31st Century.

In both time periods, the power of the Star Staff, the Star*Guard's main personal weapon, depends mainly on the magical energies that allow superpowers to exist. Likewise, their mental and physical disciplines rely largely on those same energies. Those energies are at an extraordinarily low flow from the years 2020 to 3000, but the organization lives on.

Though focused on the year 2640 (the pivotal year in the *Terran Empire* era), most of the Star*Guard information here is valid for nearly any time period of the third millennium, including the periods described in *Alien Wars* and *Galactic Federation.*

The Star*Guard

From *Galactic Champions*:

Approximately one million years ago, on the planet Odrugar deep in what is now Se'ecra territory, an extraordinary being named Gloran was born. Gloran had one of the most powerful minds the Galaxy had ever known, and from a young age he became aware of the insidious nature of evil and the responsibility the strong had to protect the weak. He built a massive computer he called CONTROL, more advanced than any that had ever existed, and with its assistance began to seek out and battle those who would endanger the innocent and cause suffering to other intelligent life forms.

Gloran fought his war on evil for untold centuries, gathering to his side many allies, until at last his body began to fail him. Refusing to give up his crusade, he had his own brain engrams uploaded directly into the circuits of CONTROL. That way he could continue to assist and advise his followers, who by this time had become an army of hundreds known across space as the Star*Guard.

The guard adopted as its uniform the battlesuit Gloran wore, and with the aid of CONTROL developed a magnificent weapon known as the Star-Staff, which was feared by evildoers across the Galaxy. The earliest members of the Guard formed a Council of Overseers to manage the group which by the mid-twentieth century (as Earth accounts Time) had thousands of members patrolling the spaceways. The Council began to assign Star*Guards to specific sectors of space, with support teams (called "Marshals"), and bases full of equipment and ships to carry out their missions. Earth's sector received its first Star*Guard, a Dendrian named Brin Rei Tarn, in 1968, and he served there until his death in 1990 at the hands of a traitorous former Guardsman named Mordace.

The first (and to this point only) Human Star*Guard – a Spaniard named Andre Almena – replaced Tarn. Almena was still active in 2009 when Mordace led a small army of the Guard's enemies in a direct assault on Odrugar. That attack decimated the Guard and the Council, and damaged the physical quantum matrix containing CONTROL's memory circuits.

Almena and the other survivors did their best to rebuild the organization, but the Star*Guard had barely regained its footing when the defeat of Tyrannon changed the fundamental nature of the Universe in 2020. The Guardsmen found that many of their devices, including many functions of the Star-Staffs, no longer worked. (The Guard had long been aware that a "primal force" underlay Reality and made certain powers possible, but kept this information a closely-guarded secret, unknown even to most Guardsmen, for various reasons.)

With their weapons weakened and CONTROL no more than a powerful computer, the Guard adopted new tactics of secrecy and subtlety. Teaching its members the subtle skills of infiltration and disguise, the Guard transformed itself over the next few decades into a secret underground society, eschewing frontal assaults and well-armed bases for quiet stealth ships, networks of contacts, and missions of subversion from within. They continued to recruit new agents, and were sometimes nearly as effective as before, even if almost no one knew of their existence. The public image of the organization faded into legend and mythology.

As of 2640, the Star*Guard organization is a small but efficient secret society with about a thousand Guards and three Overseers, still based on Odrugar. One of the Overseers, an Az'arc'a using the name 2-N Violet, joined the Council during the Xenovore War period, and claims to be many thousands of years old and able to see the future. Violet maintains that, despite the steady decline in the Guard's membership and influence over the past several centuries, it's very important to the future of the Galaxy that the Guard remain an active force.

As for Odrugar itself, when the Se'ecra started to inch closer to that world the Overseers transformed the society into a pastoral world of simple farmers at the transition between ATRI 3

artwork by Darren Bulmer

and ATRI 4. The Odrugarian farmers are aware of the Council's underground headquarters and other secrets, and actively help to hide them.

Other than the Odrugarians themselves and the Star*Guard, very few people are aware that Odrugarian society in fact predates all other active societies in the galaxy – even the Malvans and the legendary Elder Worm.

STAR*GUARD PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Perks
18	Contact: New Overseers 11- (Extremely Useful, Good Relationship, Organization)
4	Two Additional Contacts
4	Environmental Movement: Zero-G Training
	Skills
10	+2 with Star-Staff
31	Martial Arts: Odrugarian Staff-Fighting (All Maneuvers) **plus** Use Art with Staff
2	AK: Milky Way Galaxy 11-
3	Breakfall
3	Combat Piloting
3	Criminology
2	KS: Odrugarian Staff-Fighting 11-
2	KS: Sentient Species of the Milky Way Galaxy 12-
2	KS: Star*Guard History 11-
3	Systems Operation
3	WF: Odrugarian Advanced Small Arms, Staffs

Val	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Feature: Star*Guard Emblem (Easily Concealed)
15	Hunted: Enemies of the New Overseers 11- (As Pow)
20	Psychological Limitation: Honorable (Common, Total)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (The Star*Guard is a Secret Society) (Frequently, Major)
20	Social Limitation: Subject to Orders (Very Frequently, Major)

Package Cost: 15

Odrugarian Staff-Fighting

As old as the Star*Guard are as an organization, the art of Odrugarian Staff-Fighting is even older. Its true origin was unknown to any but CONTROL, and even that may have been lost in the 2009 conflict; while it may be recorded elsewhere, nobody connected with the Star*Guard knows where.

Staff-Fighting was selected as the Star*Guard's official manual combat technique not only because it uses staffs as a weapon – over a dozen Odrugarian styles qualify on that count – but also because it's a fast, straightforward, and effective technique designed to end a conflict quickly and with little risk of fatality (either the fighter's or his opponent's).

Currently only a handful of groups and individuals outside the Star*Guard organization are trained in the style. These are allies of the Star*Guard, willingly keeping its records and traditions so even if every Star*Guard is killed and Odrugar is destroyed the organization can resurrect itself. The most notable such groups are the Fassai House of Kovez on Kadrigar, and the keepers of the Yengtao Temple on Earth.

Despite its name, the primary method of learning the style is with bare hands. The philosophy behind this is that a weapon can be taken away, so a true fighter must learn to work with just his body; the weapon therefore becomes merely an extension of what the fighter can already do.

ODRUGARIAN STAFF-FIGHTING NOTES

Optional Rules: The Strike may be either a punch or a kick; the character can make this choice before each attack with the maneuver. If a punch, it takes a location roll of 2d6+1; if a kick, it takes a location roll of 2d6+7; if it is not specified, it takes a location roll of 3d6. The Nerve Strike takes a location roll of 2d6+1. The Choke Hold and Legsweep automatically target the head and legs respectively, without penalty or bonus. The Throw does generalized damage, and so does not take a hit location roll.

Special Abilities: Most experienced staff-fighters learn to hit much harder than their base strength would normally allow. This is represented with +2 Damage Classes.

TOO MANY DISADVANTAGES

The Star*Guard Package Deal has 80 points worth of Disadvantages – clearly too many for the usual Standard Heroic guidelines of 75 base points and 75 points in Disadvantages.

Even in this low-magic era, the Star*Guard are a high-powered, elite organization. Its members should be built at no less than the Powerful Hero level, with 100 base points and 100 points in Disadvantages. If the GM is running a Star*Guard based game, he may even want to consider the PCs "the best of the best of the best" and run them as Very Powerful Heroic characters, with 125 base points and 125 points in Disadvantages.

OTHER EQUIPMENT

Nearly anything from the personal equipment lists in *Terran Empire* (pages 136-153) or *Spacer's Toolkit* (pages 7-36) may be in the arsenal of any individual Star*Guard. The main exceptions are addictive drugs (or any with adverse Side Effects), full military combat armor, and Varanyi technology.

ODRUGARIAN STAFF-FIGHTING

Maneuver	Phase	Pts	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
Choke	½	4	-2	+0	Grab One Limb; 2d6 NND
Disarm	½	4	-1	+1	Disarm; +10 STR to Disarm
Legsweep	½	3	+2	-1	Strike +1d6; Target Falls
Nerve Strike	½	4	-1	+1	2d6 NND
Parry	½	4	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Strike	½	4	+0	+2	Strike +2d6
Throw	½	3	+0	+1	Strike +v/5, Target Falls
Weapon Bind	½	4	+1	+0	Bind, +10 STR

Skills
Breakfall
KS: Odrugarian Staff-Fighting
WF: Staff

Elements
Weapons +1 Use Art with Staff

Star*Guard Equipment

Even at their most powerful (that is, during the superheroic periods), the Star*Guard carry a minimum of equipment. The Overseers feel that the less the Guardsmen have to rely on external equipment, the less they can lose their effectiveness by losing that equipment. However, even during the low-magic period of the third millennium the Star*Guard have the following equipment available to them.

Though most of the rest of the galaxy is at ATRI 11, the Star*Guard have an arsenal well into ATRI 12, and entering ATRI 13 in some areas thanks to some Mandaarians who have served as Marshals since shortly before the Exodus. It guards its most advanced technology very closely for fear it will fall into the wrong hands.

STAR STAFF

Though not as powerful nor as sophisticated as the models produced during earlier millennia, the Star Staff is nonetheless a formidable weapon. Besides being perfectly balanced for use as a quarterstaff, it can also be used to generate high-frequency energy blasts or protective fields, or to manipulate local gravitons for personal flight. It's made from a light but nearly impervious metal alloy.

A Star Staff is specially bonded to its owner so that no one else can use it as anything but a quarterstaff (it's a Personal Focus for all other functions), and so that, thanks to a recent rediscovery by a Mandaarian Marshal of an old piece of Odrugarian technology, it can instantly teleport back to the user's hand if it's taken away from him, though this part of the bond unravels if the Staff is removed from the user for 12 seconds or more.

Cost	Star Staff	END
30	*Star Staff:* Multipower, 45-point Reserve; OIF (-½)	0
3u	1) *Starblast:* EB 6d6, Armor Piercing (+½); OIF (-½)	4
3u	2) *Energy Field:* Force Field (15 PD/15 ED), Protect Carried Items; OIF (-½)	4
2u	3) *Flight:* Flight 15", 4× Noncombat; OIF (-½)	3
1u	4) *Staff Strike:* HA +4d6; HA (-½), OIF (-½) **plus** Stretching 1", Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Only to Cause Damage (-½), OIF (-½), No Noncombat Stretching (-¼)	2
20	*Star Staff Energy Reserves:* Endurance Reserve (200 END, 15 REC); OIF (-½), Only in Direct Sunlight (-½)	0

BATTLE SUIT

Though there more powerful armor does now exist, most of it is quite bulky and obvious, whereas the Odrugarian-engineered materials used by the Star*Guard allows their battle armor to be inconspicuous and extremely lightweight.

Armor (10 PD/10 ED) (30 Active Points); OIF (-½), Real Armor (-¼). Total cost: 17 points.

TRANSLATOR MATRIX

Since a Star*Guard's duties frequently call for him to travel to worlds where his native language might not be spoken, this device is distributed to all Guardsmen. Its processes are much less than absolutely reliable, however, so all Guardsmen are encouraged to learn as many languages as they can from those spoken in their assigned sector of space.

Universal Translator (20 Active Points); IIF (TM Module behind ear, -¼). Total cost: 16 points.

Star*Guard Starships

Typically, Star*Guard are equipped with a variety of starships. Any small or medium-sized civilian ship in *Terran Empire*, *Spacer's Toolkit*, or any other source might be appropriate for a Star*Guard.

Several models of starship are built specifically for Star*Guard use. Some are built by corporations who also make them (or at least slightly watered-down versions of them) available to the general public; others are built exclusively for the Star*Guard. The two most common models are shown here.

Stellar Peace Class Personal Stealth Ship

Val	CHA	Cost	Notes
5	SIZE	25	3"×1½"; -5" KB; -3 DCV
60	STR	25	Lift 100 tons, 12d6 HTH [0]
20	DEX	30	OCV: 7/DCV: 4
22	BODY	7	
12	DEF	30	
4	SPD	10	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12

Total Characteristic Cost: 127

Movement: Flight: 40"/640"

Cost	Power Systems	END
200	*Small Zero Point Energy Generator:* Endurance Reserve (500 END, 500 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
100	*Backup Power Generator:* Endurance Reserve (250 END, 250 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
	Propulsion Systems	
95	*Odrugarian Type 9 Spacewarp Drive:* Multipower, 95-point Reserve	0
2u	1) *FTL Mode:* Faster-Than-Light Travel (2 Light Years/Minute); Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (3x END, -1)	15
5u	2) *STL Mode:* Flight 40", 16x Noncombat; Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (2x END, -½)	18
7	*Internal Compensation Field:* Force Field (22 PD); OIF Bulky (-1), Only to Protect Occupants against G Force Damage (-1)	2
-12	*Only Flies:* Ground Movement -6"	0
-2	*Only Flies:* Swimming -2"	0
	Tactical Systems	
183	*Mark XX Starship Laser:* Multipower, 412-point Reserve; OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	0
10	1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 10d6, Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	22
18u	2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 10d6, Armor Piercing (+½), MegaScale (1000 km, Can Be Scaled Down to 1km, +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	41
9u	3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 8d6, Autofire (3 Shots, +¼), Armor Piercing (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	21
16u	4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 8d6, Autofire (3 Shots, +¼), Armor Piercing (+½), MegaScale (1000 km, Can Be Scaled Down to 1km, +1¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	36
10u	5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 7d6, Increased Maximum Range (5250", +¼), Continuous (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	24
100	*Odrugarian Class 2 Displacer Cannon:* Multipower, 275-point Reserve; OAF Bulky (-1½), Real Weapon (-¼)	0
6u	1) *Near-Targeting Mode:* RKA 7d6-1, Increased Maximum Range (3750", +¼), Penetrating (+½); OAF Bulky (-1½), Real Weapon (-¼)	17
10u	2) *Far-Targeting Mode:* RKA 6½d6, Penetrating (+½), MegaScale (1000 km, Can Be Scaled Down to 1km, +1¼); OAF Bulky (-1½), Real Weapon (-¼)	27
30	*Odrugarian Force Field Generator:* Multipower, 120-point Reserve; Increased Endurance Cost (5x END; -2), OIF Bulky (-1)	0
3u	1) *Odrugarian Force Field:* Force Field (50 PD/50 ED/20 Mental Defense); Increased Endurance Cost (5x END; -2), OIF Bulky (-1)	60
1u	2) *Stealth Shield:* Invisibility to Sight, Radio and Mental Groups, No Fringe; Increased Endurance Cost (5x END; -2), OIF Bulky (-1), Only When Not Attacking (-½)	20
18	*Displacement Point Defense:* Multipower, 45-point Reserve; OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	0
2u	1) *Close-In Defense:* Missile Deflection (Any Ranged Attack), Full Range (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	4
2u	2) *Distant Defense:* Missile Deflection (Any Ranged Attack), MegaScale (1km, +¼), Full Range (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	4
76	*Self-Destruct System:* RKA 21d6 (Standard Effect: 63 BODY), Trigger (Spoken Authorization, +¼), Explosion (+½); 1 Charge That Never Recovers (-4), Extra Time (1 Minute, -1½), No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼)	[1nr]

THAT'S ONE *BIG* SELF-DESTRUCT SYSTEM!

The self-destruct systems on Star*Guard starships may seem, at least initially, far out of proportion – using the Standard Effect Rule, they do three times the BODY of the ship, whereas most self-destruct systems do only twice BODY.

This is to prevent any possible salvage of the ship's parts or contents, in accordance with the optional "Triple BODY Rule" from *The Ultimate Vehicle* (pages 11 and 188). As discussed earlier with the Star*Guard's personal equipment, many parts on their vessels use technology beyond what most of the rest of the galaxy has, and the Council wants to make sure it stays that way. Once the self-destruct system has activated, no part of the ship nor anything aboard can offer any substantial help to a would-be reverse engineer.

In the case of already-published civilian ships used by Star*Guard, the GM may (at his own discretion) increase the power of the self-destruct systems by half.

33 *Type C Tractor Beam:* Telekinesis (60 STR); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Affects Whole Object (-¼), Limited Arc Of Fire (180°, -¼) 9
30 *Targeting Computer:* Range Skill Levels: +10 vs. Range Modifier with All Attacks 0
24 *Targeting Computer:* Targeting Skill Levels: +8 vs. Hit Location modifiers with All Attacks 0
240 *Hull Plating:* +80 DEF, Hardened (+¼); Limited Coverage (Hull/Frame Only, -¼) 0
36 *Missile Tracking System:* +18 with Missile Deflection 0

Operations Systems
137 *Sensor Package:* Variable Power Pool, 120-point Reserve, Only for Senses and Communications (-1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½) var.
112 *Long-Range Sensors:* MegaScale (1 Lightyear, Can Be Scaled Down to 1km, +3¾) for up to 60 Active Points of any Sensor Pool Sense; OIF Bulky (-1) 22
18 *Long-Range Sensors:* +24 versus Range Modifier for Radio Group; OIF Bulky (-1) 0
140 *Electronic Warfare Systems:* Variable Power Pool, 120-point Reserve; Only for Electronic Warfare (-1), OIF Bulky (-1)
20 *Flight Package III:* +10 with Flight 0
20 *Navigation Computer III:* +10 with Navigation 0

Personnel Systems
12 *Life Support:* Life Support (Safe in Cold, Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum, Radiation; Self-Contained Breathing); Costs Endurance (-½) 2
3 *Food Supplies:* Life Support (No Need to Eat), 1 Fuel Charge Lasting 1 Year (+0) [1cc]
15 *Gravity Plating:* Telekinesis (20 STR), Selective (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Only to Pull Objects Straight Down to the Floor (-1) 4

Skills/Laboratories
19 Criminology 17-
19 Cryptography 17-
19 Disguise 17-
19 Electronics 17-
19 Mechanics 17-
19 Security Systems 17-
60 Additional Laboratories (defined by GM or player)

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 1903

Total Vehicle Cost: 2030

Total Cost: 2030/5 = 406

Stellar Peace Class Personal Stealth Ship

Description: A model of the Star*Guard's most advanced starship technology, the *Stellar Peace* stealth ship is also one of the Star*Guard's most closely-guarded secrets. Each Guardsman is assigned one, operated by either themselves or a piloting Marshal, even if he's normally assigned to a team of Star*Guard.

The cornerstone of the ship's secret technology is the advanced stealth shield, developed centuries ago by the Odrugarians. The shield can operate as either an extremely strong defensive force shield with properties that interfere even with incoming psychic abilities, or an invisibility cloak against visual, radio-based, or even mental scans. In invisibility mode the ship is effectively *incommunicado* (since both radio and mental communications are neutralized) and unable to fire its weapons (doing so instantly disrupts the field and renders the ship entirely visible), so while it's usually a good measure the operator needs to be cautious about it.

The ship's weapons are also particularly advanced. The laser, though powerful enough to be considered a Type XX laser, is the size of a type VII. The disruptor cannon, an old Odrugarian design (with a few minor Mandaarian refinements) is literally the ship's "secret weapon," to be used in extremely dire circumstances.

Similarly, the ship's computer systems are somewhat more advanced than those found on the galaxy's common starships. The independent targeting, missile tracking, sensor, electronic warfare, piloting, and navigation computers, though very basic from a Star*Guard standpoint, all represent what the rest of the galaxy would consider "cutting-edge" technology.

The warp drive is a solidly ATRI 13 model – meaning it does not suffer from most of the problems with gravity wells suffered by ATRI 12 warp drives (see *Terran Empire*, page 162), allowing the ship to operate at light speed within a star system. Such actions can damage the system's ecology, however, so this is usually limited to 1.5 times light speed, and almost never done with a ship much larger than a *Stellar Peace* ship.

About the size of a modern-day limousine, a *Stellar Peace* ship can comfortably accommodate two people (a Guardsman and his pilot or guest) for the days-long journeys common to a Star*Guard's duties.

Moonlight Cruiser Class Space Yacht

Val	CHA	Cost	Notes
11	SIZE	55	16”×5”, -11” KB; -6 DCV
90	STR	25	Lift 6.4 ktons; 18d6 [9]
15	DEX	15	OCV: 5/DCV: 0
30	BODY	9	
15	DEF	39	
3	SPD	5	Phases: 4, 8, 12

Total Characteristic Cost: 134

Movement: Flight: 40”/640”
Teleport: 10”/20”

Cost	Power Systems	END
100	*Advanced Small Antimatter Generator:* Endurance Reserve (250 END, 250 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
40	*Backup Power Generator:* Endurance Reserve (100 END, 100 REC); OIF Immobile (-1½), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼)	0
	Propulsion Systems	
95	*Odrugarian Type 9 Spacewarp Drive:* Multipower, 95-point Reserve	0
2u	1) *FTL Mode:* Faster-Than-Light Travel (2 Light Years/Minute); Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (3x END, -1)	15
5u	2) *STL Mode:* Flight 40”, 16x Noncombat; Costs Endurance (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (2x END, -½)	18
12	*Class Iota Hyperdrive:* Teleportation 10”, MegaScale (100 Lightyears, Can Be Scaled Down to 2000 km, +4¼); Extra Time (1 Week for a Full Journey, -4½), Increased Endurance Cost (5x END, -2), Costs Endurance (-½), Requires Gravitational Distortion-Free Zone to Activate (-½)	50
7	*Internal Compensation Field:* Force Field (22 PD); OIF Bulky (-1), Only to Protect Occupants against G Force Damage (-1)	2
	Tactical Systems	
80	*Mark VIII Starship Laser:* Multipower, 180-point Reserve, OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	0
5u	1) *Near-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 6d6, Increased Maximum Range (2250”, +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	11
8u	2) *Far-Targeting Beam Mode:* RKA 6d6, MegaScale (100 km, Can Be Scaled Down to 1km, +1); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	18
5u	3) *Near-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 5d6, Increased Maximum Range (2350”, +¼), Autofire (3 Shots, +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	11
7u	4) *Far-Targeting Pulse Mode:* RKA 5d6, Autofire (3 Shots, +¼), MegaScale (100 km, Can Be Scaled Down 1km, +1); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	17
6u	5) *Sustained Beam Mode:* RKA 4d6, Increased Maximum Range (3000”, +¼), Continuous (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	13
14	*Elite Point Defense System:* Multipower, 34-point Reserve, OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	0
1u	1) *Close-In Defense:* Missile Deflection (Bullets & Shrapnel), Ranged (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	3
1u	2) *Distant Defense:* Missile Deflection (Bullets & Shrapnel), MegaScale (1 km, +¼), Ranged (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	3
100	*Type 6 Plasma Cannon:* RKA 10d6, Increased Maximum Range (6550”, +¼), 30 Charges (+¼), Area Of Effect Accurate (One Hex, +½); OIF Bulky (-1), Limited Arc of Fire (60°, Only on Same Horizontal Level; -¾), Real Weapon (-¼)	[30]
33	*Type C Tractor Beam:* Telekinesis (60 STR); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), Affects Whole Object (-¼), Limited Arc of Fire (180°, -¼)	9
6	*Outer Force Field:* Force Field (20 PD/20 ED); Increased Endurance Cost (10x END, -4), OIF Bulky (-1), Ablative (BODY Only, -½)	40
4	*Hull Force Field:* Force Field (12 PD/12 ED); Increased Endurance Cost (10x END, -4), OIF Bulky (-1)	20
60	*Ablative Armor Plating:* +35 DEF; Ablative (BODY Only, -½), Limited Coverage (Hull/Frame Only, -¼)	0
54	*Hull Armor:* +18 DEF, Hardened (+¼); Limited Coverage (Hull/Frame Only, -¼)	0
16	*Missile Tracking System:* +8 with Missile Deflection	0
108	*Self-Destruct System:* RKA 30d6 (Standard Effect: 90 BODY), Trigger (Spoken Authorization, +¼), Explosion (+½); 1 Charge That Never Recovers (-4), Extra Time (1 Minute, -1½), No Range (-½), Real Weapon (-¼)	[1nr]
	Operations Systems	
114	*Sensor Package:* Variable Power Pool, 100-point Reserve, Only for Senses and Communications (-1); OIF Bulky (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	var.
93	*Long-Range Sensors:* MegaScale (1	

BASIC CONFIGURATION

The lower-powered public version of this vessel has a Small Antimatter Plant, no Spacewarp drive, Defense Package 2, a Basic Point Defense System, no self-destruct system, Sensor Package I, no Electronic Warfare, and no laboratories for Criminology, Cryptography, or Demolitions. See pages 158-169 of *Terran Empire* for descriptions and game mechanics for these systems.

STAR*GUARD IN *FANTASY HERO*

Though it may seem like an odd combination, it should be possible, at least theoretically, to use the Star*Guard in Hero Games' settings for *Fantasy Hero*. They've been active for about a million years, after all, so they'd be around during the Turakian Age, and even during the war between the Elder Worm and the Malvans.

Even a justification for the Star*Guard's presence is relatively easy. For example, with the rise in power of Kal-Turak, CONTROL (still operating with Gloran's engrams) could decide that Earth needs someone on the ground there to monitor the situation. After all, once the planet is conquered the lich could very easily turn his attention to the stars. This makes a Star*Guard PC or NPC, or even an entire party of Star*Guard PCs, quite possible.

The packages and equipment shown here would be just about right for a game set in the Turakian Age. All that remains is to allow the Star*Guard characters to use magic, and their equipment can be excused as magical in nature rather than technological (at least publicly; the truth of

	Lightyear, Can Be Scaled Down to 1km, +3¾) for up to 50 Active Points of any Sensor Pool Sense; OIF Bulky (-1)	19
15	*Long-Range Sensors:* +20 versus Range Modifier for Radio Group; OIF Bulky (-1)	0
117	*Electronic Warfare Systems:* Variable Power Pool, 100-point Reserve; Only for Electronic Warfare (-1), OIF Bulky (-1)	var.
12	*Flight Package III:* +6 with Flight	0
12	*Navigation Computer III:* +6 with Navigation	0
	Personnel Systems	
12	*Life Support:* Life Support (Safe in Cold, Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum, Radiation; Self-Contained Breathing); Costs Endurance (-½)	2
6	*Backup Life Support:* Life Support (Safe in Cold, Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum, Radiation; Self-Contained Breathing), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 1 Month (+0); Only within Affected Area (2½"x1¼" Chamber, -2)	[1cc]
5	*Backup Life Support:* 1 More Backup Life Support chamber	[1cc]
3	*Food Supplies:* Life Support (No Need to Eat), 1 Fuel Charge Lasting 1 Year (+0)	[1cc]
15	*Gravity Plating:* Telekinesis (20 STR), Selective (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Only to Pull Objects Straight Down to the Floor (-1)	4
	Skills/Laboratories	
19	*Medical Facility:* Paramedics 17-	
19	Computer Programming 17-	
19	Criminology 17-	
19	Cryptography 17-	
19	Demolitions 17-	
19	Electronics 17-	
19	Weaponsmith 17-	
60	Other laboratories (defined by GM or player)	

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 1366

Total Vehicle Cost: 1500

Total Cost: 1500/5 = 300

Moonlight Cruiser Class Space Yacht

Description: The *Moonlight Cruiser* is a common sight in the galaxy. A popular and well-known model of space yacht, its advertising calls it "the yacht for the common man" – and indeed, in its most basic configuration the model is a basic and relatively affordable vessel.

The Fukamura Corporation, which manufactures the *Moonlight Cruiser* yachts, actually produces two different versions: the public version with very basic amenities (see sidebar), and a considerably more advanced version it secretly makes for the Star*Guard. The latter is represented by the character sheet shown here – though the more advanced items are so cleverly disguised as lower-tech versions that only an expert engineer (or a Star*Guard) would be able to tell the difference.

Designed for convenient surface-to-surface travel, the vessel is long and sleek for an aerodynamic ride when in atmosphere. (The GM may apply +2" to the Turn Mode and +2 to Control Rolls to represent this; see "Fine-Tuning Vehicular Movement" on page 23 of *The Ultimate Vehicle* for details on this rule). Its accommodations include two comfortable suites and ten single cabins, the latter sharing two heads, with each cabin able to comfortably sleep two crew members or passengers.

Star*Guard Campaigns

The use of the Star*Guard in a superhero campaign should be evident from the *Digital Hero* #5 article (for 20th and 21st century games), and the write-up of the organization in *Galactic Champions* (for 30th century games). Here are some ideas for using the Star*Guard as a PC organization during the third millennium, listed in chronological order.

During this period, the Star*Guard work mostly as lone, independent operatives. Each of these campaign ideas assumes that the organization has gathered several Guardsmen into a team to handle some major galactic situation.

In each case the Star*Guard have one standing order: do what you can to save lives and preserve freedom, but keep your activities and your affiliations secret, even from those you protect. As difficult as this may sound, in reality it often proves to be nearly impossible.

2345: This is the year of the Xenovore Offensive, a pivotal moment in galactic history. With First Magistrate Joseph Krutch less concerned with saving humanity than with furthering his own political goals, the Star*Guard gather a team to slow down the Xenovores, undermine Krutch's leadership for wiser minds, and presently replace the dictator.

2377: As Operation Future Peace gets under way, the Council of Overseers puts a group of Guardsmen on a ship to ensure Earth's victory. They'll have information unavailable to the fleet as a whole, but while they can and must act on this information they'll be forbidden from revealing it (at least directly) to Earth leadership.

2397: Following the Xenovore War, the former Terran Union is in chaos – what historians would later call the Anarchic Period. With space pirates, remnants of the Xenovore Fleet, and hostile powers such as the Thorgons and the Ackálians around, the Star*Guard gather a team of troubleshooters to make sure Terran space forms a stable government.

2548: As the Galactic War breaks out, a team of Star*Guard are gathered to help the Terran Empire with its war effort. Posing as privateers, they are assigned to disrupt the Thorgon and Ackálian processes, cutting off their supply lines, disrupting their communications, and doing whatever damage they can to the dual invaders.

2598: Following the death of Emperor Kemal in late 2597, various factions struggle for control of the Empire, supporting his son Richard, his daughter Marissa (II), or his nephew Ivan; presently, after Richard's death, his son (Kemal's grandson) Antonio takes up the fight; Ivan's death gives rise to his sister, Elena; and some Senators supporting a Terran Republic also create a faction. This much fighting is sure to lead to innocent casualties, so a team of Star*Guard is dispatched to minimize the collateral damage, and if they can to give support to the most sympathetic faction.

2640: After the death of Mranang'na (the sample character following) at unknown hands, the Council of Overseers decides that the situation in that region of space is too much for just one Star*Guard to handle, and so assigns a small team to the sector. Their first assignment, of course, is to identify their predecessor's killers and bring them to justice

2684: With Emperor Sigusmund taking the throne over an increasingly despotic Terran Empire as its most vicious and sadistic leader ever – to the point of dissolving the Imperial Senate in this, the third year of his reign – the Council of Overseers takes to heart the efforts of rebel leader Allen Traynor. In Traynor's movement they find good cause to send as many operatives as they can spare to lend him support.

2703: Following the death of Sigusmund and no way to declare a successor, Terran space once again falls into chaos. Having learned valuable lessons from the Anarchic Period, the Star*Guard engage in a premeditated campaign of misinformation and misdirection against its enemies, and help the new Terran Republic to form.

2763: When the Varanyi forcibly annex several worlds of the Conjoined Civilizations Republic, the Galactic Federation responds, and the Varanyi-Federation war begins. The Council of Overseers decides that the Federation must prevail, so send a team out to guarantee success – with a minimum of suffering on either side.

2843: As the Nibu Gemani begin their invasion of the Milky Way Galaxy, the Star*Guard must organize and mobilize to do their part in protecting the galaxy's people. This includes the formation of several Star*Guard teams and bases, particularly in the Velarian sector, who must carry out missions of sabotage and subterfuge against the enemy while remaining in the shadows, hidden even from those they're protecting.

the matter is left up to the GM).

MRANANG'NA'S MARSHALS

As with any Star*Guard, Mranang'na has a talented team of Marshals to lend her support at her base on Zemnar. They are, in brief:

– Kevru Orz, a nomad Zurite who manages and operates the interface with CONTROL. She has a passion for finding and crushing despotism anywhere, and is partially responsible (though not intentionally so) for Mranang'na's overwhelming caseload.

– Darkel Rom'shun, a Mon'dabi who keeps and maintains Mranang'na's equipment. A former trader in used technology, Darkel is expert at repairing and refurbishing any damaged or worn-out devices.

– X!al, a Xenovore of the Flyer caste who acts as Mranang'na's personal pilot. He is a member of the controversial *Kak'n ze-Sâkl!s* ("Xenovore Non-Superiority") movement, and in fact finds anthropophagy (eating of sentient beings) disgusting.

– Zorma Regi, a Catavalan who serves as the base physician and surgeon. He has a

knack for working quickly at multiple tasks simultaneously, and for tending to Mranang'na's wounds so they heal more quickly than they might at the hands of a lesser medic.

MRANANG'NA PLOT SEEDS

Following a distress beacon, the PCs discover Mranang'na's *Moonlight Cruiser* drifting in hyperspace. She and all of her Marshals are unconscious, but with no physical or chemical signs as to why. Could this be the action of the much-rumored Psindicate?

A group of Qedustier insurgents (see *Terran Empire*, page 29) is preparing rise up to overthrow the planetary government and break all ties to the Mon'dabi Federation. Mranang'na learns of their plans and realizes immediately that this would open Qedusti to Ackálian invasion, severely hampering Terran-Mon'dabi trade relations. This is clearly *way* beyond her ability to handle. With no other Star*Guard close enough to come in time to help, she calls upon the PCs to help her either talk sense into the rebels or, failing that, disrupt their plans enough to let the Mon'dabi and

Mranang'na

Background/History: Mranang'na is one of the Star*Guard's most recent recruits. When she was initially contacted, she had just finished her fifth year as a local police officer in Sharlenth, one of Fexao's largest interplanetary trade centers. During those five years she had received more commendations than most officers earn in twice that time. Many of those were for her adept handling of potentially tense situations, drawing information, biological samples, and other important evidence from suspects without their being the wiser.

The Council of Overseers contacted Mranang'na and invited her to join their secret organization. Seeing an opportunity to do even more good in the galaxy than she was already, she readily accepted. After her training, she was sent to Zemnar, a world just inside Terran Space near the rimward end of the Ackalian Neutral Zone.

Personality/Motivation: Mranang'na feels overwhelmed by her responsibility, somewhat with the sense of being given basic swimming lessons and then told to swim a twenty-mile channel in record time. She has to handle the Empire-versus-rebel conflicts, Ackalian aggression, Xenovore remnants, space pirates, organized crime groups, and a myriad of other problems with no more support from the Council than the team of Marshals assigned to her.

Despite her trepidation about her assignment, she approaches it with a powerful sense of duty – she considers herself honor-bound to make every possible effort in protecting the people under her care. The Star*Guard sense of honor is something she was living out even before she was contacted by the Council, and she's determined to not disappoint them.

Quote: "The people I work for are very interested in seeing this operation shut down – but I'm going to need your help to do it."

Powers/Tactics: Though a relative newcomer to the infiltration and spying game, Mranang'na is catching on quickly. She usually recruits some help from a potentially friendly force, sometimes referring to "the people I work for" but never identifying herself directly as a Star*Guard (at least, not so far).

Her resources are highly limited, so she often has to content herself with notifying the conventional authorities about a situation, warning potential victims of impending attacks or other disasters, or even doing nothing if the matter is truly beyond her abilities. Often, even if she can't personally intervene to stop a situation, she'll go to the site of the matter to gather as much information as she can and pass it on to someone who can correct the problem.

In a fight, she prefers to use the least deadly available option. In a one-on-one fight, she'll generally use her hands rather than her staff, only drawing a weapon once it's clear she's either outnumbered or outclassed or if her opponent has a weapon. Even in the latter case she might not draw her weapon, instead relying on her Fex claws. In ranged combat she rarely fights to overcome her opponent, instead opting to escape and send someone else to do that job. She's acutely aware of her limitations, and won't try to handle a situation herself if she can get help or even turn the situation over entirely to another interested party.

Campaign Use: Mranang'na can be a hook to bring the PCs into an adventure. She's always on the lookout for someone who can help her deal with the region's problems, and once she encounters the PCs (assuming they're reasonably competent and trustworthy) they'll be on her list of contacts.

If the PCs are government agents, their initial contacts with her may be no more than receiving "anonymous tips" about matters on and around Zemnar. These would deal primarily with criminal matters, particularly piracy, slave trading, and other major organized crime operations. If they work for the rebellion, she may feed them occasional information about Imperial counterinsurgency and other potentially deadly activities.

She can also serve as justification for a "deus ex machina" rescue, monitoring the PCs' activities if she knows they're getting into more trouble than they can handle and either notifying allies if any are nearby, or coming to the rescue personally if she has to.

Naturally, if the PCs are pirates, criminals, or any other sort of "bad guy," she'll be operating against them – though if their criminal activities are a cover for a more law-abiding mission, the Council will give her that information.

Mranang'na does not Hunt individuals, though naturally she will work as an agent for the Star*Guard against anyone Hunted by the organization.

Appearance: Mranang'na is a statuesque female Fex, standing 5'11" in height and weighing between 140 and 145 pounds. She has a strong, athletic figure, and in light of her new job has been working out to enhance her physical abilities even more. Her wardrobe is as varied as possible so she can fit in (or at least appear to fit in) with nearly any crowd.

Mranang'na

local authorities keep the rebellion down. The PCs receive a desperate call for help – using one of their most secret codes and/or radio frequencies (if they have any). It's sent by Mranang'na, who has been captured by one of their recurring enemies. She has information that could seriously hamper the enemy's activities, but she can only give it to the PCs if they rescue her.

Mranang'na

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
13	CON	6	12-	
11	BODY	2	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
14	COM	2	12-	
3	PD	0		Total: 3 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
6	REC	0		
26	END	0		
26	STUN	0		

Total Characteristic Cost: 53

Movement: Running: 9"/18"
Leaping: 3"/6"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
12	*Claws:* HKA 1d6 (2d6 with STR); Reduced Penetration (-¼)	1
6	*Swift Runner:* Running +3" (9" total)	1
5	Nightvision	0

Perks

18 Contact: New Overseers (Extremely Useful Skills or Resources, Good Relationship, Organization) 11-
7 Contact: Chief of Security at Adamant Station (Major Institutions, Significant Contacts, Very Useful Skills or Resources, Good Relationship) 11-
4 Contact: Underground "Fixer" on Venwordien IV (Significant Contacts, Useful Skills or Resources) 11-

Talents

4 EM: Zero G
3 Lightsleep

Skills

Martial Arts: Odrugarian Staff-Fighting

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Choke	-2	+0	1 Limb, 2d6 NND
4	Disarm	-1	+1	25 STR Disarm
3	Legsweep	+2	-1	4d6 Strike, Target Falls
4	Nerve Strike	-1	+1	2d6 NND
4	Parry	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Strike	+0	+2	5d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0	+1	3d6 +v/5, Target Falls
4	Weapon Bind	+1	+0	25 STR Bind
1	Weapon Element: Staffs			

10 +2 with Star-Staff
2 AK: Milky Way Galaxy 11-
3 Breakfall 12-
7 Climbing 14-
3 Combat Piloting 12-
3 Concealment 12-
3 Conversation 12-
3 Criminology 12-
3 Cryptography 12-
2 KS: Odrugarian Staff-Fighting 11-
2 KS: Sentient Species of the Milky Way Galaxy 11-
2 KS: Star*Guard History 11-
3 Security Systems 12-
3 Sleight Of Hand 12-
3 Stealth 12-
2 Systems Operation (Environmental) 12-
3 WF: Odrugarian Advanced Small Arms, Staffs

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 147

Total Cost: 200

100+ Disadvantages

5 Distinctive Features: Star*Guard Emblem (Easily Concealed)
15 Hunted: Enemies of the New Overseers 11- (As Pow, Harshly Punish)
0 Normal Characteristic Maxima
15 Psychological Limitation: Bound by Duty (Common, Strong)
20 Psychological Limitation: Honorable (Common, Total)
10 Psychological Limitation: Unsure of Her Own Abilities (Common, Moderate)
15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Frequently, Major)
20 Social Limitation: Subject to Orders (Very Frequently, Major)

Total Disadvantage Points: 200

I Smell a Ratte by John R. Ivicek Jr.

One of the great staples of Golden Age comic books is the larger than life technological wonder running amok and causing all sorts of trouble. Well, fiction mirrors life, and in this case, the technological monstrosity was almost created.

At the height of World War II, Adolf Hitler was obsessed with the idea that bigger was flat out better. Unlike the Soviet ideal that quantity was its own sort of quality, he pushed on in the creation of massive war machines that stretched the limits of German technological and manufacturing capabilities, and in at least one case, exceeded them by a wide margin.

The Ratte was a design for a tank the likes of which the world had never seen. Actually, it was a design no one had even conceived of, outside of the comic books. A 1000 ton tank armed with heavy cruiser guns plowing across the battlefield and grinding lesser tanks beneath its astoundingly massive 4 meter wide triple treads. It would have stretched some 35 meters in length, 14 meters in width, and towered some 11 meters over the battlefield. Power for this behemoth was to come from either two 24 cylinder Submarine engines turning out 8500 hp a piece, or from eight 20 cylinder marine engines churning at 2000 hp each. The 16,000 hp available was supposed to propel this mobile fortress along at 20 km/h. The designed armor fit was staggering at 360mm in the front, 220mm on the sides of the vehicle, and 200 mm in the back. The turret was even more impressive at 360mm on the face, 250mm on the sides and back. For comparison purposes, the American Sherman tank had 76mm of armor on her turret and 51mm on her front.

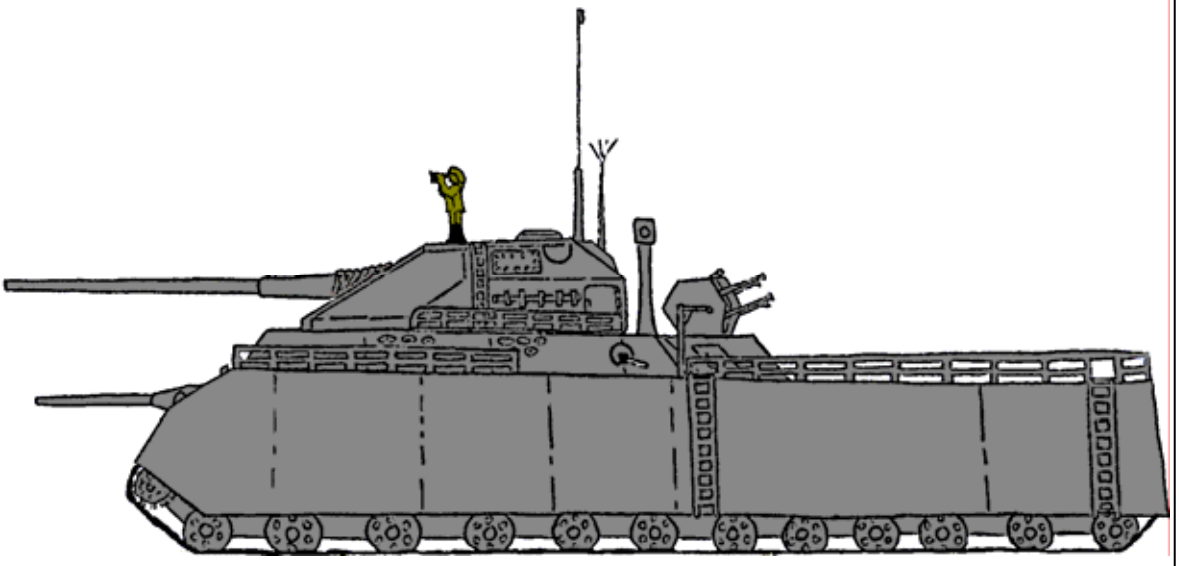
Now if you're going to go through all the trouble of making a mobile battlestation like this, you'd want to arm it appropriately. Again, the dream factory came to the rescue on the Ratte, envisioning twin 283mm cannons in the main turret, with a 128mm cannon mounted in a separate turret for "small targets." Peppering the top of this moving land mass were no less than eight 20mm anti-aircraft cannons in the form of 2 quad-mounted Flak 38 installations. As a last measure, they added two 15mm machine guns.

Originally designed in 1942 by the Krupp Corporation, and approved by Hitler, all work on the Ratte was stopped in 1943 at the direction of Albert Speer. During the construction, one turret assembly was actually completed and subsequently used as a shore battery in Norway.

What could this monstrosity have been used for? Well, not much really. Its ground based artillery is impressive, no doubt. But 2 flak mounts would not have prevented the Ratte from being bombed back into the Stone Age. The Germans found this out the hard way when they tried similar anti-aircraft installations on U-boats to little effect. It also would have been easy pickings for partisans and land mines as it would have been unable to use any modern roads in Europe, nigh impossible to maneuver, and generally just more trouble than it was worth.

But now let's step back a second and look at this through the rosy lens of gaming.

It's a 1000 ton tank for Pete's sake! If you can't have some fun with that, well… you don't know how to have fun! Some simple adventure hooks are presented to go along with this monstrosity, as well as some ideas on how to scale the adventures to varying power levels.



artwork by John R. Ivicek Jr.

PLOT HOOKS

Champions (Modern): There are two easy lead-ins on this one. The first has the heroes in Europe when word comes out that VIPER has managed to unearth the remnants of one of the last Nazi war machines and is currently driving to Berlin to earn a little 283mm respect! The other is that the tank is already in the United States, shipped here in pieces at the end of World War II and reassembled for examination by "Top Men." Hidden in a now neglected hanger, the Ratte is stolen by your villain group du jour to put a hurting on nearby Millennium City! You probably do not need to make any special allowances or changes to the Ratte at the 350-point power level.

Champions (Golden Age): Well this one is a no-brainer. The Nazis are going to stop D-Day by letting this monster run amok amid the invasion forces! Your heroes have to get there and put this thing out of commission! If your game is based on 250 points, you may have to make sure the PCs can find their way to a convenient hatch and crack it open so that they can get to the crew inside.

Pulp Hero: Same as the Golden Age setup, except it should be run like the movie "The Guns of Navarone." The heroes are para-dropped in before the invasion to the Ratte's staging area. Once there, they have to sneak into the heavily defended area and into the Ratte itself so that they can sabotage the monstrous war machine before the troops hit the beach. The stats on the Ratte should remain the same, as direct confrontation isn't the goal here. The mighty Ratte becomes more of a scenic locale for the adventure.

Fantasy Hero: Yes, it is possible to drop this into FH. You just need to change all things technological into Magic, and possibly give the new "Metal Beast" a weakness or two for the PCs to exploit. Suggested changes include removing the crew and replacing it with magical servitors or some form of magical intelligence. If you go the later route, in essence creating a massive Golem, it is highly advised that there should be an "easy" way to destroy/stop the Ratte; something akin to removing the plug from the foot of Talos the Bronze man and letting all the "magic" out.

Ratte

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
12	SIZE	60		16" x 8", 400 tons
70	STR	0	23-	14d6 HTH
10	DEX	0	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 0
3	SPD	10		Phases: 4, 8, 12
20	DEF	54		
22	BODY	0	13-	

Total Characteristics Cost: 124

Movement: Running: 8"/8"
Swimming: 0"/0"

Cost	Attributes	END
8	*Tracked Movement:* Running +8" (8" Total), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting 6 Hours (+0); No Noncombat Movement (-¼), Limited Maneuverability (Only 2 Turns per Phase at Combat Speed, only 1 Turn per Phase at Noncombat Speed, -¼), Only on Appropriate Terrain (-¼), Side Effects (Always Damages Surface It Rides Over, -¼)	[1]
-14	*Tracks Only:* Running -6" **plus** Swimming -2"	0
	Tactical Systems	
152	*Twin 283mm Cannons:* RKA 8d6, Indirect (can arc over intervening obstacles, +¼), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), Increased Maximum Range (13,500", +¼), Armor Piercing (+½), 64 Charges (+½), Explosion (-1 DC/2", +¾), Autofire (2 shots, +1¼); Extra Time (1 Minute, -1½), OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	[64]
115	*128mm Cannon:* RKA 7½d6, Indirect (+¼), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), 125 Charges (+¾); OIF Bulky (-1), Real Weapon (-¼)	[125]
78	*Flak 38 - Quad 20mm AA mount:* RKA 4d6, +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), Autofire (10 shots, +1), 500 Charges (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Crew-Served (2 people, -¼), Limited Arc of Fire (Cannot depress below 10 degrees at 11 meters elevation, -¼)	[500]
5	*Another Flak 38*	[500]
55	*Right Side 15mm MG Machine Gun:* RKA 3d6, +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), Autofire (5 shots, +½), 1000 Charges (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Limited Arc Of Fire (180°, Right Side, -¼)	[1000]
5	*Left Side 15mm MG*	[1000]
3	*Front Defense:* +2 DEF; Limited Coverage (Front 60°, -1)	
6	*Really, Really Heavy:* Knockback Resistance -3"	0
	Operations Systems	
4	*Radio:* Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group); OAF Bulky (-1½), Affected as Hearing Group and Radio (-¼)	0

Total Systems: 417

Total Cost: 541

496+	Disadvantages
25	Distinctive Features: Rolling Fortress of DEATH! (Not Concealable, Extreme Fear)
20	Physical Limitation: 35 Meters, 1000 Tons (All the Time, Greatly Impairing)

Total Disadvantages: 541

Total Vehicle Cost: 496 / 5 = 99 pts

How to Lead a Superhero Team by Ross Watson

> A leader is best when people barely know he exists, not so good when people obey and acclaim him, worse when they despise him. But of a good leader who talks little when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: We did it ourselves.
>
> — Lao-Tzu

One of the staples of comic book superhero teams is a leader – a decisive, inspiring force that drives the team on to succeed against the odds. Cyclops filled this role for the '80s-era X-Men, and Captain America has been in command of the Avengers for many years. Studying the successes and failures of leaders like these is a good method to prepare oneself for taking on the role of team leader for a superheroic Champions game.

However, study alone is often not enough (although any superhero team leader should strongly consider reading Aaron Allston's *Champions* – there's a wealth of material within). Here are some tips to help a leader guide his team to victory over even the toughest supervillain.

LEADERSHIP AND STYLE

It is highly recommended that the players involved in any superhero game get together at some point and discuss how the "team concept" is intended to function – working together, team maneuvers, and leadership itself are all concepts that only really come together when there's a clear understanding between the people involved (including the GM).

If the team is undecided about whether having a leader is a good idea or not, the GM can sometimes help things along either with a frank discussion or by demonstration – a friendly NPC superhero team that runs like clockwork, for instance, or a weaker on a point-for-point basis supervillain group that nonetheless is frighteningly efficient due to teamwork and leadership.

Lesson One: Analyze!

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

As the saying goes, to be forewarned is to be forearmed. As a team leader, one of the most important things to know is what your teammates can and cannot do. Learning the limits of your superteam's powers can be a long-term goal, but a great way to explore your team's capabilities is through training missions or "danger room"-style encounters.

One good way to begin is to make a list of what your team's powers are, how powerful those abilities can become at "full blast," and what (if any) known susceptibilities/ vulnerabilities your team may have.

During the Game: Powers, Vulnerabilities, and Limits all make great fodder for blue-booking between adventures. A couple of minutes at the beginning of each session wouldn't be out of line to briefly ask each team member what they've learned about their powers since last game.

RESOURCES

A good leader is aware of what resources his team can command. The leader should work with his teammates to discover what kinds of resources the team has available. Team resources include: vehicles, bases, computers, contacts, fringe benefits, perks, and so forth.

During the Game: Contacts are an excellent place to get information either during or in-between adventures. Money is always useful, of course, to get the team into places it couldn't normally go (like renting tuxes for a high-society party, for instance). Police Powers, naturally, add quite a bit of usefulness for investigations.

ENEMIES

Who are the team's main enemies? Hunteds and any "Huntings" belong in this category, as do any recurring villains for the campaign that the team knows about. A good idea for the team leader is to put together as much information as is available on these threats and have it handy for tactics discussions, training sessions, or any crisis-management that crops up during a game session.

CURRENT EVENTS

It may seem like common sense, but many superhero teams overlook the importance of staying on top of current events! Some teams are well-known for putting at least one member on "monitor duty" at all times to keep an eye on things. A superhero team leader will carefully consider how to keep the team on track – monitor duty is a good place for a character

COMMUNICATION

How does your team talk to each other? Some possibilities include:

Word Balloons: Basically, you just talk to each other out loud. This works best for new teams just starting out, but it's also very much in the comic-book style.

Radios: The hot new thing for superhero teams is instant communication. Usually, this is accomplished via earbug or headset radio gear, but some kind of wrist or bracelet-mounted videoscreen transceivers are also becoming common.

Mental: Mind-to-mind communication is also often seen in comic books, and superhero teams can use it to great effect. Normally impossible to listen in on, mental communication has a lot of advantages over radio-based systems, but can also make the team vulnerable to mental attacks.

Battle Codes: Some superteams use special "languages" of battle codes to call out directions in combat or "team plays" that indicate what will happen next in the phase. A battle code is usually secure (in that few enemies will know what is being said) and has the advantage of being

whose player can't show up to the game that night or to a dedicated NPC. Some superhero teams may even have dedicated staff that focuses entirely on monitoring the world for trouble.

A corollary to this concept is to follow up on rumors and do legwork. Most often, characters best suited to investigation would be the best choice for assignment to this task. Nighthawk of the Champions, for example, is the one Defender turns to most often to fulfill this role.

Lesson Two: Train!

The team leader is the go-to guy for putting his team through some good training and preparing them for encounters they may face in the future. The leader should, ideally, coordinate the schedule and nature of the training – the player who controls the team leader PC should try and work together with the GM to come up with appropriate training scenarios and concepts.

WORKING TOGETHER

A team that can't, won't, or doesn't know how to work together isn't much of a team at all. It's usually not a very good idea to try and figure it out during a life-or-death battle or while trying to save the world. Therefore, it makes sense to do some training with your team.

Heck, it's a tried-and-true superhero comics trope – the "danger room" session where every character gets a chance to shine, either with his powers, his skills, or his attitude. Training has several different purposes for a superhero team. As mentioned above, training is a great way to find out the limits and capabilities of your team's powers. Additionally, training provides an excellent method of learning how to *use* those powers and abilities for the greater good of the group. Best of all, training gives the leader a chance to test out his ability to coordinate the team in dangerous situations without too much risk or loss of life.

Training is where superhero teams come up with ways to combine powers, special effects, or anything else to dazzle the public and surprise the villains. Training is also the place to develop any "fastball special"-style maneuvers and team plays, not to mention any battle codes, hand signs, or battle cries (see below). *Champions* is, again, an excellent resource for team training ideas. The team leader should make an effort to be involved with the training as much as possible.

Training should, ideally, encompass both combat situations and rescue operations. The key is to keep things interesting for the players and provide means for the team to use their powers and get used to operating as a group rather than as individuals. For the team leader, training is essential to prepare him for being on top of things when the team goes out and handles situations in the real world.

During the Game: Training is another issue that is often best reserved for blue-booking between sessions, but many GMs will encourage it (especially "danger room"-style encounters) as long as the training sequence does not take up the entire session.

Lesson Three: Communicate!

Communication is more than just talking to each other (see sidebar). For any team, and particularly one composed of superheroes, good communication is critical. The team leader takes a central role for this issue.

MISSION

What is your superhero team's mission? Some superhero teams have nothing more specific than "to oppose supervillains," but it is always a good idea if the team members know *precisely* what the team stands for. A superhero team's mission statement can be as simple as a motto (i.e., "Let Justice Prevail!") or as complex as a multi-page document – the team leader should discuss with the other players to find out what is right for his particular team. *Champions* has an excellent section on "team charters" that covers this idea in greater depth.

THE NORMAL WORLD

How does your team communicate with the normal world? Is there a hotline from the Mayor's office? The team leader should consider how and when the superhero team interacts with the normal world – and how the superhero team is contacted in the first place (i.e., do you list your superhero team in the phone book?).

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Quite often, the leader of a superhero team is also the spokesman – he is the public face and voice for the superhero team. If the team has a bad reputation with the public, the leader needs to work around that – if the team has a good public reputation, the leader should be ready to use it if necessary (for instance, to assist with evacuating the city when the supervillain Watercress creates a massive tidal wave).

CONTACTS

A team leader would do well to develop and maintain contacts with other superhero teams and important organizations (for example, PRIMUS and UNTIL in the Champions Universe). The importance of contacts as a resource was mentioned above – every so often, a team leader should go down the checklist of contacts and do his best to maintain a good working relationship with them.

Lesson Four: Plan!

A good leader takes the time to lay out a plan of action. Planning, however, is best used as a group activity. Making plans all on your own can end up with no one but yourself understanding what to do when the time comes.

CONTINGENCIES

Thinking ahead is the hallmark of a good leader. What will you do if your base is attacked by VIPER? What happens when one of your teammates' DNPCs is kidnapped? Even if all you can think of is a few obvious steps, *any* plan is better than *no* plan.

COMBAT

Combat situations call for more specific plans – a good place to start is to come up with some simple plans for facing one singularly strong opponent and for a group of more numerous (and less individually powerful) enemies. This method ensures that your superhero team has a ready response whether they're facing a horde of agents or Mechanon himself. No one can guarantee the success of your plan, of course. If the team at least looks like it knows what its doing, that's a good thing!

During the Game: Make up a combat checklist of things for your team to do on Phase 12 – some really good choices for the checklist are any skill, power, or similar ability that tends to be easily forgotten. Here's an example checklist:

COMBAT CHECKLIST

- ☑ Make sure all teammates turn on defensive powers (force field, force wall, armor, etc.)
- ☑ Make sure teammates with Analyze Combat and Find Weakness make the appropriate rolls if possible.
- ☑ Spread out to limit the effectiveness of Area Of Effect attacks.

There are two more issues that often confront superhero teams during combat. The first is when members of the team are temporarily taken out of play by being stunned, flashed, or entangled. A good leader should try and compensate for these weaknesses so that he doesn't freeze up in the heat of a fight. Knowing when to fall back is the second issue – few heroes like to cut and run, but there is definitely a point in any fight where it is more advantageous to pull back and recover rather than fight to the last man. The team leader is responsible for recognizing that moment and calling for the retreat should it become necessary. An excellent resource for developing team maneuvers and tactics can be found in *Champions* under the "Superteams" chapter.

Lesson Five: Coordinate!

Another word for leader is "Coordinator." To coordinate means to keep in good order – *to harmonize*. This lesson is perhaps the most important of them all, for without any coordination, a team is just a ship without a rudder.

Trust is the first step in coordination – the team members *must* be able to trust that the leader knows what he's doing and that he's looking to keep the team's mission foremost in his mind (see above for the goal of the team and the mission statement). Trust requires integrity – the team leader must follow through on all promises and do what he says he is going to do as much as possible.

Trust also requires that the leader *lead*. A leader can always delegate, of course, but nothing builds trust like a leader who never shirks his own share of the responsibilities and pitches in alongside the other members of the team wherever possible. This lesson is not intended to make leaders into "mother hens," nor to encourage micromanagement – simply to emphasize that a good leader keeps himself involved rather than removed.

Always remember that other characters on the team have skills and abilities different than the leader's – there will be many times that the team members will be the experts on the scene. Thus, it is vital that a leader listen to his teammates and respect their opinions, even if he does not agree with them himself.

During the Game: Be ready with a replacement if you can't attend the session or if your character is unavailable for some reason. Nominate a second in command (or, if you wish, come up with an entire "chain of command"), so that the team has someone to take over for you.

> A useful thing to remember is a lesson taught by the US Army's *Leadership Handbook for Commissioned Officers*: "Never give an order you are certain will not be obeyed."

The leader's role on the team has an even more important aspect than making the team efficient – the leader must make sure that all the players are ***having fun***! Organizing a group of gamers can often be compared to "herding cats." It's difficult to put one's own agenda aside and take orders from another character – to give up the spotlight – even if it means that the group as a whole will be more successful. A good leader for a superhero game needs to be an expert at shining the spotlight on everyone and maneuvering the situation so that every player gets a turn at being the star for a scene or two every game.

very stylish (it "feels" more like a comic book when the team leader calls out "Okay Protectors, let's give 'em the Ham On Rye!", and every member of the team knows what that means.) Battle codes are best represented with a few points in a "Battle Codes" Language Skill possessed by all members of the team.

MAKING A PLAN

Some suggestions to help making a plan go more smoothly:

- Gather the team together to discuss the issue.
- Explain the situation at hand – make sure to clearly define the goal or desired result.
- If no one can think of anything, come up with a suggested plan of action and ask for opinions (remember that any plan is better than no plan).
- Keep the plan as simple and flexible as possible.
- Keep in mind that if the plan falls apart (and it usually will!), the leader must trust in his teammates to remember the goal and act according to their own initiative.

The Leader Character Sheet

Team leaders are not usually the most powerful member of the team – but they are usually among the most impressive. The following section discusses various ways to make a character sheet reflect a character's ability to lead his superhero team.

USEFUL CHARACTERISTICS

Leaders don't have to be photogenic, but it helps – so consider some points in Comeliness. Probably the most important Characteristic for a leader, however, is Presence – both to make Presence Attacks and to defend against them (no one respects a cowardly leader!). A decent Intelligence score is also a big bonus (especially for tactician characters).

USEFUL PERKS

Many perks can particularly useful to team leaders. Some examples include:

- Computer Link
- Contacts
- Favors
- Military Rank
- Reputation

USEFUL SKILLS

- KS: Superhero Teams
  This Knowledge Skill is useful to "keep up with the Joneses" and to get some insight on how other teams operate – not to mention up-to-date information on the team rosters.

- Oratory
  Team leaders are often (but not always) the team spokesman as well. In any case, Oratory is a good skill for leaders to have, as it also helps out with all Presence Attacks.

- Persuasion
  Another skill useful for the "team spokesman" role.

- PS: Team Leader
  This Professional Skill covers all the minutiae of running a team – making up duty rosters, organizing training schedules, and so forth. This skill is also useful for any incidental "team leader information" checks that may come up, especially regarding the team's NPC staff, base, etc.

- Tactics
  If your team leader is meant to be a good leader in combat situations, Tactics is definitely a necessary skill.

- Teamwork
  Another "must have" skill for team leaders, the ability to coordinate attacks with other team members is crucial, even if it's rarely used.

TEAM LEADER POWERS

The following are a selection of sample powers that build upon the team leader's ability to direct his teammates.

- Tactician
  This power represents a leader who can shout commands to his team (often by using battle codes, i.e., "Maneuver Black-Ten!") and improve their ability to fight in combat.

  Tactician: +2 Combat Skill Levels (All Combat), Ranged (+½), Useable Simultaneously (up to eight people at once, +1); Incantations (-¼), Requires a Tactics Roll (-½). Active Cost: 40. Real Cost: 23

- Inspirational Mein
  This power represents a hero who can motivate his team just by being there (i.e., "We can't let him down!"). Often, this power includes a *Requires a Reputation Roll* Limitation.

  Inspirational Mien: +10 PRE, Ranged (+½), Useable Simultaneously (up to eight people at once, +1); Only for Defense (-1) **plus** Succor CON 2d6, Useable Simultaneously (up to eight people at once, +1) **plus** Succor STUN 2d6, Useable Simultaneously (up to eight people at once, +1) Active Cost: 65. Real Cost: 45

- Battle Cry
  The team leader shouts something encouraging (usually the team's motto or a well-known rallying call, i.e., "Revengers Reassemble!"), and the team leaps into action with startling speed.

  Battle Cry: +6 Lighting Reflexes for All Actions, Ranged (+½), Useable Simultaneously (up to eight people at once, +1); Incantations (-¼), Requires a PRE Roll (-½). Active Cost: 22. Real Cost: 15

HOW *NOT* TO LEAD A SUPERHERO TEAM

There are several ways for a team leader Player Character to mess things up – and most of them are pretty easy – so here are some common pitfalls to try and avoid. (It should go without saying that any *real* superhero team leader will seek to never be identified with any of these examples!)

Be as Autocratic as Possible

In short, make all decisions on your own without consideration for anyone else's goals or desires. Yours is the only will that matters. This point is one that Dr. Destroyer often uses, but he's powerful enough to get away with it. And, y'know, evil.

Never Listen to Anyone

Who cares what anyone else has to say? As if what they think matters. Make sure to make this plain as publicly as you can that the opinions of your teammates have no impact on any decision you make. Consultation of any kind is simply a waste of time.

Hog the Spotlight

Hey, you're the leader, right? That means there's only one place for the spotlight! Whatever your lackeys – er, fellow teammates – are up to isn't that important anyway.

Arbitrarily Set Policy

A leader doesn't have to have a good reason for his decisions, right? Just make something up off the top of your head. Who are they to question your authority?

But, I Thought They Were Good Guys…?

by John R. Ivicek Jr.

One of the classic great comic book plots is the idea of the disguised villain. Since the Golden Age of comics, it's been a part of the genre to engage in misdirection. We can divide them into two main types for simplicity's sake:

1) The villains masquerade as their enemy. In this, the villains either have powers similar to the heroes, or they can fake it. They get dressed up like the heroes and go around committing crimes and saying things like "Hey Kid! Make sure you tell the cops that Defender stole your milk money!" Then it is up to the heroes to convince local law enforcement (and possibly other superhero teams as well) that they are, in fact, innocent so that they can track down the evil-doers and expose their nefarious plot. This was a mainstay of the Golden Age and you can still see it today in comic book arcs like the recent Crime Syndicate of America story in *Justice League of America*. It does, however, require that your villains are almost mirror images of the heroes, or maybe their evil duplicates from another dimension.

2) The villains masquerade as heroes. Not as any existing ones, but as a new group out to save the world. This one is more subtle and requires a lot of setup work on the GM's part. However, it has the potential for a lot more depth in terms of campaign complexity. Marvel Comics more or less defined this idea with their comic book *Thunderbolts*.

The first step in using this kind of plot is to figure out which villains you want to use (ideally preexisting, with some history with the PCs), and what they hope to achieve from this ploy (see the sidebar for more). Next, start figuring out what changes (if any) you need to make to the powers of the villains so that they can function as "good guys." Team selection is very important on several levels at this point. Not only do their powers factor into their ease of conversion, but so do their personalities, psychology, and goals. For example, the Crowns of Krim would scoff at the very idea of playing dress-up, and the aura of Dark Seraph alone makes it an unworkable concept. It's difficult to convince the world you're a good guy when you have a tangible aura of evil after all. The Ultimates can be a problem because Blackstar has grey skin and Radium is encased in a sealed suit. It's not unworkable, but you have to come up with genre-consistent ways to make any changes work.

The goal is misdirection. Yes, ultimately the PCs should figure out that the new super-team on the block is actually their old nemeses just in time to save the world, but if they figure it out too early, it's not really any fun for anyone. Conversely, if you make it too difficult (they had their minds swapped into completely different bodies with new brain patterns and powers and no way to tell at all…), well that's no fun either.

This is the sort of plot that should be introduced gradually and over time. Have the heroes meet the villains and (hopefully) defeat them early on in their careers. Perhaps they become a semi-recurring group that manages to get away more often than they get caught. Whatever relationship they have with the PCs, it should not be a case of, "Who are they again?" when the unmasking occurs. By the time you are ready to introduce the new "heroes," make sure that the PCs still remember the villains, but they haven't seen them for a while. They should be pretty far off the PCs' radar, but still memorable, when they appear in their new personas. Setting this up is the work of multiple game sessions and should not be rushed.

For our example, we're going to use the War Machine from *Conquerors, Killers and Crooks* pages 39-48. We have a five-member team of bad guys, all built on 350 points. We're going to give them all anywhere from 1-5 extra points, but they won't be in powers, it'll be in things like Acting and applicable Knowledge Skills needed to pull off the deception. Just to make sure the heroes don't latch on to the number of new "heroes," we're also going to take one Shadow Army Soldier and give him some gear to make the new team a little bigger. Try to keep the original mentality of a given villain firmly in mind when making any changes.

artwork by D.T. Butchino

SO WHAT DO THEY WANT?

Figuring out what your villains hope to gain from this turn as good guys is the first question you should really answer. It might be access to classified files, locations, or equipment. Maybe it's simply money (if they're the ones guarding the armored car, it's a lot easier to steal, after all). Maybe it's revenge; now that they are the good guys, perhaps they frame the heroes and then publicly lament about how sad it is when heroes fall and how they'll do their duty to bring in these former icons… with a heavy heart, of course.

The goals should be specific to the team in question. In our example team, the Tech Knights, one possible goal is to gain access to military level research and information through the links they hope to gain as "Official Good Guys." This serves the overall purpose of keeping their boss, the Warlord, ahead of the game and on target for his ultimate goal of world domination.

To illustrate how easy this can be to pull off, we're just going to use two books to remake the War Machine into the Tech Knights, your new superhero team. We have *Conquerors, Killers, and Crooks* for the base stats of The War Machine and *Gadgets and Gear* for their new toys. Following are the general guidelines used in the conversion. All page numbers after the initial CKC reference are the pages for the items in *Gadgets and Gear*.

Warbird (CKC39): Now called N-Forcer. Removed his wings, wrist rockets, and wing razors. His role is still as leader, but now he is a gadget-using martial artist detective. Added the following items from *Gadgets and Gear*: Strong Jet Pack (GG106), Energy Net (GG45), Strong Blaster Staff (GG23), Crime Scene Analyzer (GG115); and the Skills Acting and KS: Police Procedures.

Warcry (CKC41): Now called Decibel. Unchanged except for the addition of the Acting skill. His principal changes will be in his costume.

Warhead (CKC43): Now called Bulwark. Removed his Arty is Your Friend Multipower, and Palm Blasters. Added Power Armor Strength Augmentation (GG82), Weak Vari-Beam (GG83), Weak Power Armor Battery (GG78), some additional PD/ED bought through his new suit, and the skill Acting.

Warmonger (CKC45): Now called Lady Psi. Unchanged except for the addition of the Acting skill. Her principal changes will be in her costume.

Warpath (CKC47): Now called Artemis. She swaps out the Broadhead arrow slot for a 4 charge version of the Strong Boomerang Grabber arrow (GG38) and adds the Acting skill.

Shadow Soldier (CKC50): Now called Mad Jack. One of them is added to the team so that the numbers will not instantly be recognizable as the War Machine. All normal equipment removed. Gets the Acting Skill, Halloween Arsenal Multipower (GG53) and a Flight Platform (GG105).

So that's the basic idea behind the conversion, let's see what it gets us. Below are the sheets for our new team, the Tech Knights. It should be noted that each background is the one they have memorized until it is second nature to them now. They are presented more as "sketches" than as full backgrounds. Any details that could be verified such as first appearances, news clippings, back stories, etc, should be covered by the GM so that the ruse doesn't fall apart at the first sign of investigation. i.e.: If they say that their first appearance as a team was stopping GRAB in a crime, then that should really be their first appearance. However, it should also be the first tip that something might be off. In N-Forcer's case, perhaps one of his old Air Force "buddies" keeps getting the years they served together wrong, maybe his social worker refers to him by the wrong name and looks momentarily afraid….

SO WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Now that you have insinuated the villains into your campaign as the new heroes on the block, what next? The War Machine as presented below represents them at the beginning of their stint as heroes. It will take some time for them to achieve their goals (see the other sidebar), so they will be in these new personas for a while.

What happens if some of them start to like it? From the sketches below, Bulwark seems the most likely, though N-Forcer is also in the running. Maybe both of them bury the hatchet and decide to truly go legit. Then they need the heroes help to stop the rest of the group (possibly backed up by the Warlord himself) before they get away with all of the information they have been collecting. It's up to the GM, and this possibility should be based more on how they interact with the world and other heroes as opposed to a hard fast call in this article. Maybe Artemis is the one to go to the heroes. In the end, it's up to the GM.

N-Forcer

Background/History: Jack Knight is the child of parents wronged by the vile actions of VIPER. At age 5, the man who would one day don the gleaming armor of N-Forcer, was a ward of the state and bounced from one foster home to the next. It began to look as if he was headed for a dark path himself, but fate had other plans. As he began to hit the section of the list reserved for "children with issues," Jack got lucky. His new family was used to discipline cases, in fact his new "father" Tom was used to instilling discipline in the most unruly of our nations youth. He did it daily as a Drill Instructor for the United States Marine Corps.

At first, it was all resentment and anger on both sides, but one night Jack got saved from a truly horrific beating by the skills of this hard-bitten marine. Jack had wised off to the wrong gang, and Tom made sure he lived to tell about it. In another quirk of fate, the gang was a local VIPER recruiting front, the Steel Serpents. But it wasn't without a price. In the ensuing melee, Tom had his leg broken in no less than 4 places. This didn't stop him from mopping up the block with the remains of the gang, though.

Impressed and a little intimidated, Jack decided to see what Tom and his family really had to offer. He was hesitant and untrusting at first, but over time, both sides gave a little and Tom's proudest moment was watching Jack take his oath of service in the elite Air Force rescue branch. Jack would have contented himself with a hearty feeling of gratitude and a fond remembrance for this new life, but fate again stepped in to change his plans.

The gang that Tom had crushed had not forgotten. Licking its wounds and lying low for a while, it waited five years before eliminating Tom and his entire family in a grizzly murder spree. Contacted by his former social worker, Jack was devastated. He wanted to set things right. He also wanted revenge. All of his training and dedication were mere shadows to the dedication he poured into training himself for his new role as the protector of the nation's streets.

His debut was the dismantling of the gang, the local VIPER cell, and the single-handed apprehension of the Nest Leader of Cincinnati.

Personality/Motivation: N-Forcer is a gung-ho, forthright kind of guy. He is dedicated to keeping normal people safe from the predators that surround them on a daily basis. In some ways, he's pretty one-dimensional. Almost the archetypical leader, one would just as easily expect to see him save a baby and the Flag at the same time during a battle.

Quote: "Let's do this one by the numbers people; innocent lives hang in the balance!"

Powers/Tactics: N-Forcer is an armored martial artist and detective. He seems to lead as naturally as most people breathe, and his knowledge of tactics and teamwork is always apparent. He has a wide array of technical toys to work with. He'll usually try to take an opponent out of the fight quickly with his net gun. If nothing else, it usually serves as a momentary distraction so that one of the others can deliver a coup de grace. If forced into close quarters, he'll use his staff and more of his esoteric maneuvers such as the flying throw. He likes to foster the impression that he is a ground-bound martial artist, only to surprise an opponent with his flight pack.

Appearance: N-Forcer stands 5'10" in his armor. He is clad from head to toe in an armoplast battlesuit. The under-suit is grey with white plates covering the chest, groin, and forearms. N-Forcer is picked out in grey on the left breast. His helmet is the reverse of most of the suit, with a white shell and grey raised eye covers and a strengthening band down the center. He also wears white swashbuckler style boots. Holstered on his right hip is his golden net gun: a boxy, snub-nosed weapon with an integrated scope. Attached by magnetic clamps to his left bracer is his energy staff in collapsed form. Around his waist he wears a utility belt of leather with a large "N," grey on a white background, as the buckle. His crime scene analyzer is a series of innocuous looking utility belt "detecting gadgets" that look like monocle magnifiers, dusting kits, etc.

N-Forcer

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	12-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 HTH [2]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
20	CON	20	13-	
12	BODY	4	12-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll: 12-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
18	PRE	8	12-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
8	PD	4		Total: 20 PD (12 rPD)
8	ED	4		Total: 20 ED (12 rED)
5	SPD	20		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
8	REC	0		
40	END	0		
37	STUN	5		

Total Characteristics Cost: 114

Movement:		
	Running:	7”/14”
	Flight:	20”/40”
	Leaping:	4”/8”
	Swimming:	2”/4”

Cost	Powers	END
22	*Blaster Staff:* Multipower, 45-point Reserve; OAF (-1)	0
1u	1) *Staff:* HA 4d6 (8d6 with STR); OAF (-1), HA (-½) **plus** Stretching 1”, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); OAF (-1), Only to Cause Damage (-½), Always Direct (-¼), No Noncombat Stretching (-¼), No Velocity Damage (-¼)	2
2u	2) *Blaster:* EB 9d6; OAF (-1), 10 Charges (-¼)	[10]
17	*Energy Net:* Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, Area Of Effect (One Hex, +½); 1 Recoverable Charge (-1¼), OAF (-1), Range Based On Strength (-¼)	[1rc]
24	*Bulletproof Armor:* Armor (12 PD/12 ED); OIF (-½)	0
27	*Jet Pack:* Flight 20”, 1 Continuing Fuel Charge Lasting 2 Hours (Difficult to Obtain; Specially-Refined Jet Fuel, +0); OIF (-½)	[1cc]
2	*Fast Runner:* Running +1” (7” Total)	1
3	*Nightsight Helmet:* Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group); OIF (-½)	0
7	*Helmet Radio:* High Range Radio Perception (Radio Group); OIF (-½), Affected as Hearing and Radio (-¼)	0
17	*Crime Scene Analyzer:* Criminology 18-; IIF (-¼)	0

Perks

5 Membership: Commander of the War Machine

Skills

Martial Arts: Commando Training and Warbird Fighting

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Boxing Cross	+0	+2	6d6 Strike
4	Choke	-2	+0	Grab 1 Limb, 2d6 NND
4	Escape	+0	+0	35 STR Escape
4	Karate Chop	-2	+0	HKA 1d6+1
4	Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
5	Flying Dodge	—	+4	Dodge, Abort, FMove
5	Flying Grab	-2	-1	2 Limbs, 30 STR, FMove
5	Flying Throw	-1	-2	2 Limbs, 4d6 + v/5, Throw, FMove
5	Passing Disarm	-1	-1	30 STR Disarm, FMove
5	Passing Strike	+1	+0	4d6 + v/5, FMove
1	Use Art with Staff			

16 +2 with All Combat
8 +4 with Flight

3 Acting 13-
3 Combat Piloting 13-
2 AK: Africa 11-
2 KS: Military History 11-
2 KS: Police Procedures 11-
2 KS: Superheros 11-
2 KS: Supervillains 11-
2 KS: The Warlord & His Organization 11-
2 Navigation (Air) 12-
3 Paramedics 12-
3 Stealth 13-
7 Tactics 14-
3 Teamwork 13-
3 TF: Combat Aircraft, Helicopters, Large Planes, Small Planes
2 WF: Common Martial Arts Melee

Total Skills & Powers: 238

Total Cost: 352

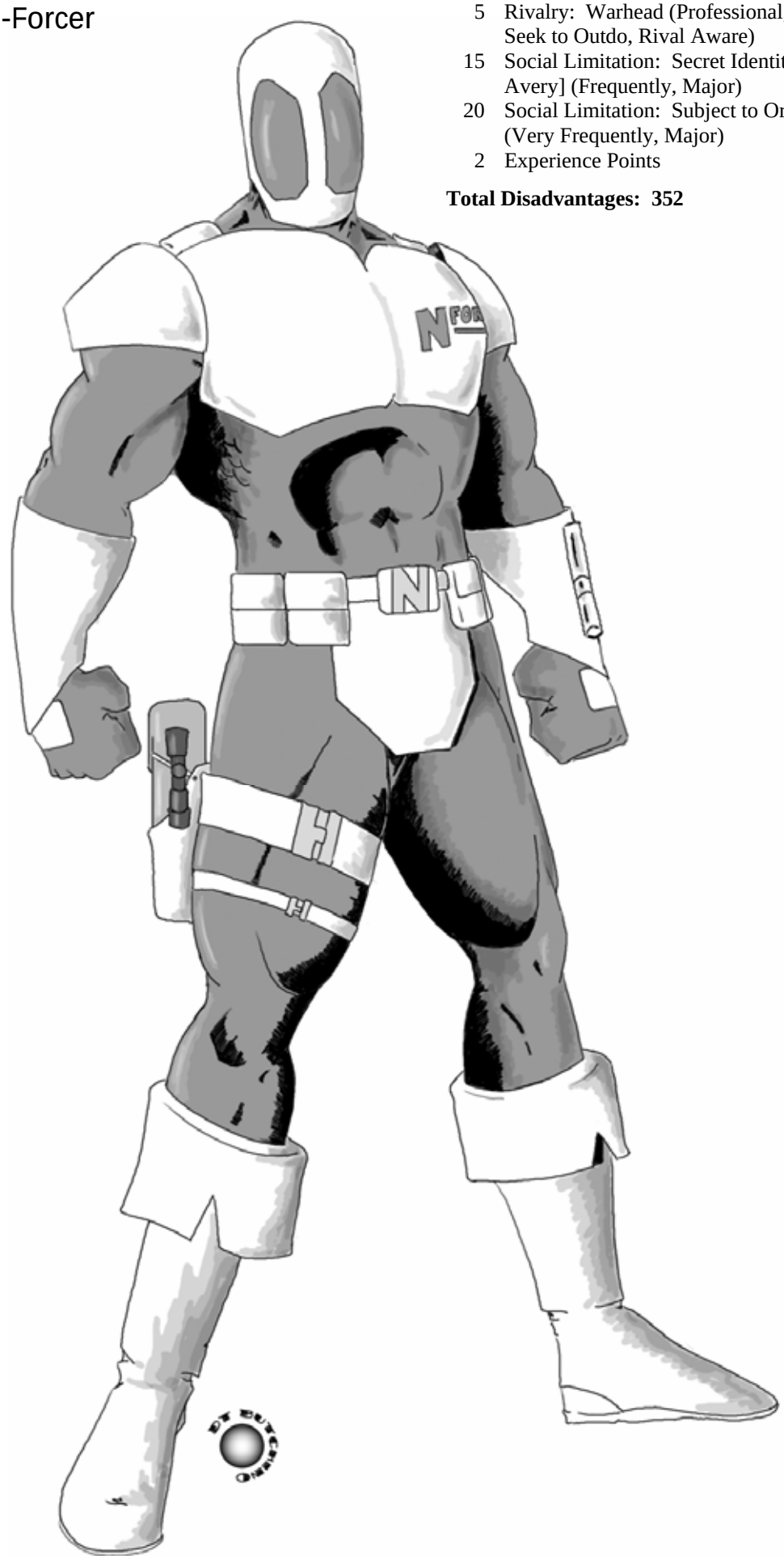
200+ Disadvantages

20 Hunted: The Champions 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
10 Hunted: The Warlord 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
20 Hunted: UNTIL 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
10 Psychological Limitation: Looks After His Men Before Himself (Common, Moderate)
15 Psychological Limitation: Loyal to the Warlord (Common, Strong)
20 Psychological Limitation: Revels in Violence and Combat (Very Common, Strong)
15 Reputation: Superpowered Lieutenant of the Warlord 11- (Extreme)

N-Forcer

5 Rivalry: Warhead (Professional, As Pow, Seek to Outdo, Rival Aware)
15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity [Paul Avery] (Frequently, Major)
20 Social Limitation: Subject to Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
2 Experience Points

Total Disadvantages: 352



Decibel

Background/History: Bob Sycamore grew up as the all-American kid. He did well in school, played football well enough to get some attention from recruiters, and sang in both his church choir and a local grunge band, the Demented. On top of all that, he was a good kid. When he was asked what his plans were for college, he announced that he wanted to join the service first. He said he felt that this country had done a lot of good by him, and he felt that he needed to even the score a bit.

His stint in the service was a repeat of everything that had come before. He worked hard, he listened to his superiors, and he excelled. Bob had just completed his third year and was starting to look forward to the new challenges ahead of him once he mustered out.

But Bob was sidetracked prematurely. Volunteering to help out with a special project to develop sonic weapons for the military as a non-lethal means of securing areas, Bob was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

As the explosion cleared, the medics were shocked to find Bob still alive, even if just barely. Out of 14 people on the project, he was the only one to make it. The project was quietly closed and Bob discovered that the explosion of the amplisonic cannon had made some major changes in him. First off, his singing voice was gone. He could only warble off key now (something that annoys Warcry no end as he is quite an accomplished singer) and his vocal chords seemed to harness the energy of the destroyed cannon.

With parts of his life now on hold, he just turned a new page and when he saw N-Forcer in trouble against some villains, he pitched in and the two started the nucleus of what would become the Tech-Knights.

Personality/Motivation: Decibel is a team player who always tries his best to take out the opposition with the minimum force required. In quieter moments, he laments the loss of his singing voice, but he puts on a brave face since there is still a job to be done and the villains don't care about his singing anyway.

Quote: "This'll sort of be like a lullaby. I'm going to sing, you're going to pass out."

Powers/Tactics: Decibel has been restricted to slots 1, 2, 3, and 5 from his multipower while playing the hero. If things look desperate or the group is going to be uncovered, all bets are off. His sonic powers are formidable and varied. His usual gambit is to use his shattering attack to remove guns or prominent foci. After that, he usually uses his focused blast until his opponent drops. If confronting a lot of agent types, the Vertigo attack is a given as long as he isn't going to disable his own team by doing it.

Appearance: Decibel stands 6'1" and is clad in a head to toe purple bodysock of armor-weave. He has a visible grillwork attachment over his mouth which screams out "Grab me, I'm a focus!" but which does absolutely nothing other than glint metallically. White gloves and low-heeled boots complete his rather Spartan attire.

Decibel

Decibel

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
18	CON	16	13-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
12	COM	1	11-	
6	PD	3		Total: 18 PD (12 rPD)
10	ED	6		Total: 22 ED (12 rED)
5	SPD	20		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
7	REC	0		
60	END	12		
35	STUN	5		

Total Characteristics Cost: 119

Movement: Running: 9”/18”
Leaping: 3”/6”
Swimming: 2”/4”

Cost	Powers	END
87	*Sonic Implants:* Multipower, 87-point Reserve	0
7u	1) *Sonic Boom:* EB 10d6, Explosion (-+½)	7
7u	2) *Focused Sonic Boom:* EB 12d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼)	3
4u	3) *Shattering Shout:* RKA 5d6; Only versus Rigid Non-Living Targets (-1)	7
7u	4) *Sonic Liquefication:* RKA 4d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼)	3
7u	5) *Vertigo Induction:* Drain DEX 3d6, Personal Immunity (+¼), Area Of Effect (8” Radius, +1¼)	7
24	*Bulletproof Costume:* Armor (12 PD/12 ED); OIF (-½)	0
8	*Sonic Tolerance:* Hearing Group Flash Defense (8 points)	0
6	*Fleet-Footed:* Running +3” (9” Total)	1
3	*Nightsight Mask Lenses:* Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group); OIF (-½)	0
6	*Mask Radio:* Radio Perception/ Transmission (Radio Group); OIF (-½), Affected as Hearing and Radio (-¼)	0

Perks

4 Membership: Member of the War Machine

Talents

3 Perfect Pitch

Skills

Martial Arts: Commando Training

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
3	Akido Throw	+0	+1	3d6 + v/5, Throw
4	Boxing Cross	+0	+2	5d6
4	Choke	-2	+0	Grab 1 Limb, 2d6 NND
4	Escape	+0	+0	30 STR Escape
4	Hold	-1	-1	Grab 3 Limbs, 25 STR
4	Judo Disarm	-1	+1	25 STR Disarm
4	Karate Chop	-2	+0	HKA 1d6+1
4	Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort

6 +2 with Sonic Implants Multipower

3 Acting 12-
1 AK: Europe 8-
2 KS: Military History 11-
2 KS: Superheroes 11-
2 KS: Supervillains 11-
3 Mimicry 12-
2 PS: Singing 11-
2 PS: Soldier 11-
3 Stealth 13-
3 Tactics 12-
3 Teamwork 13-
3 Ventriloquism 12

Total Skills & Powers: 234

Total Cost: 353

200+ Disadvantages

5 Distinctive Features: Unique Geiger Counter and Metal Detector Signature (Not Concealable, Unusual Senses)
20 Hunted: The Champions 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
10 Hunted: The Warlord 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
20 Hunted: UNTIL 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
15 Psychological Limitation: Loyal to the Warlord (Common, Strong)
20 Psychological Limitation: Showoff, Loves to Use His Powers (Very Common, Strong)
10 Psychological Limitation: Vengeful (Uncommon, Strong)
15 Reputation: Superpowered Soldier of the Warlord 11- (Extreme)
15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity [Franklin “Frank” Robinson] (Frequently, Major)
20 Social Limitation: Subject to Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
3 Experience Points

Total Disadvantages: 353

Bulwark

Background/History: John Kincaid was born a statistic. The child of a crack dependant mother, John was born "developmentally impaired." What this meant in reality was that his limbs were withered, his birth weight was exceedingly low, and it was feared that his intellect would never develop properly.

As he grew up, his life was one of struggle and adversity. He had been removed from his parents' care and lived with his grandmother. She had done her best to nurture the brain of the child in the shattered body, but it seemed that the doctor's fears had been confirmed and John was well below average. But not in everything. He was passionate about airplanes. He knew every major design firm by name and could rattle off call letters and aircraft names for hours without making a mistake. He told his grandma that someday, he'd be the one flying. His grandma would smile and agree saying, "Yes John, someday you'll show them all that you can really fly."

His life should have continued normally, but in his teens, John started getting chronic migraines. The kind that leave you curled up in a dark quiet room in a little whimpering ball praying that the pain will end or that you'll just pass out. In his more lucid moments, he'd explain that he thought the pain was an idea trying to get out of his head. Strangely enough, there seemed to be something to this as his grades in school improved vastly and not only did he catch up with his classmates, he passed them by jumping ahead a grade.

One morning the pain from his migraines was so great that he couldn't go to school. His grandma fretted as this continued over the next week and John just lay in bed whimpering and moaning. Nothing seemed to work. None of his expensive prescriptions or home remedies had any effect. The pain finally ended five days later. John spent the entire weekend in his room drawing.

The result was the Bulwark battlesuit, something he refined in college and as he began his graduate work. But battlesuits have a tendency to attract all sorts of attention, even when they only exist on paper. In this case, VIPER figured another backup to the Dragon program couldn't hurt.

Encountering a fully operational suit put a crimp in their plans. Over the years since that day, John has upgraded the suit to its current levels. Strangely, it's the only supertech thing he can design. In all other regards, he makes a decent airplane designer, but not even a great one. He's just proud that his one contribution has allowed him to live an entirely new life and to help others.

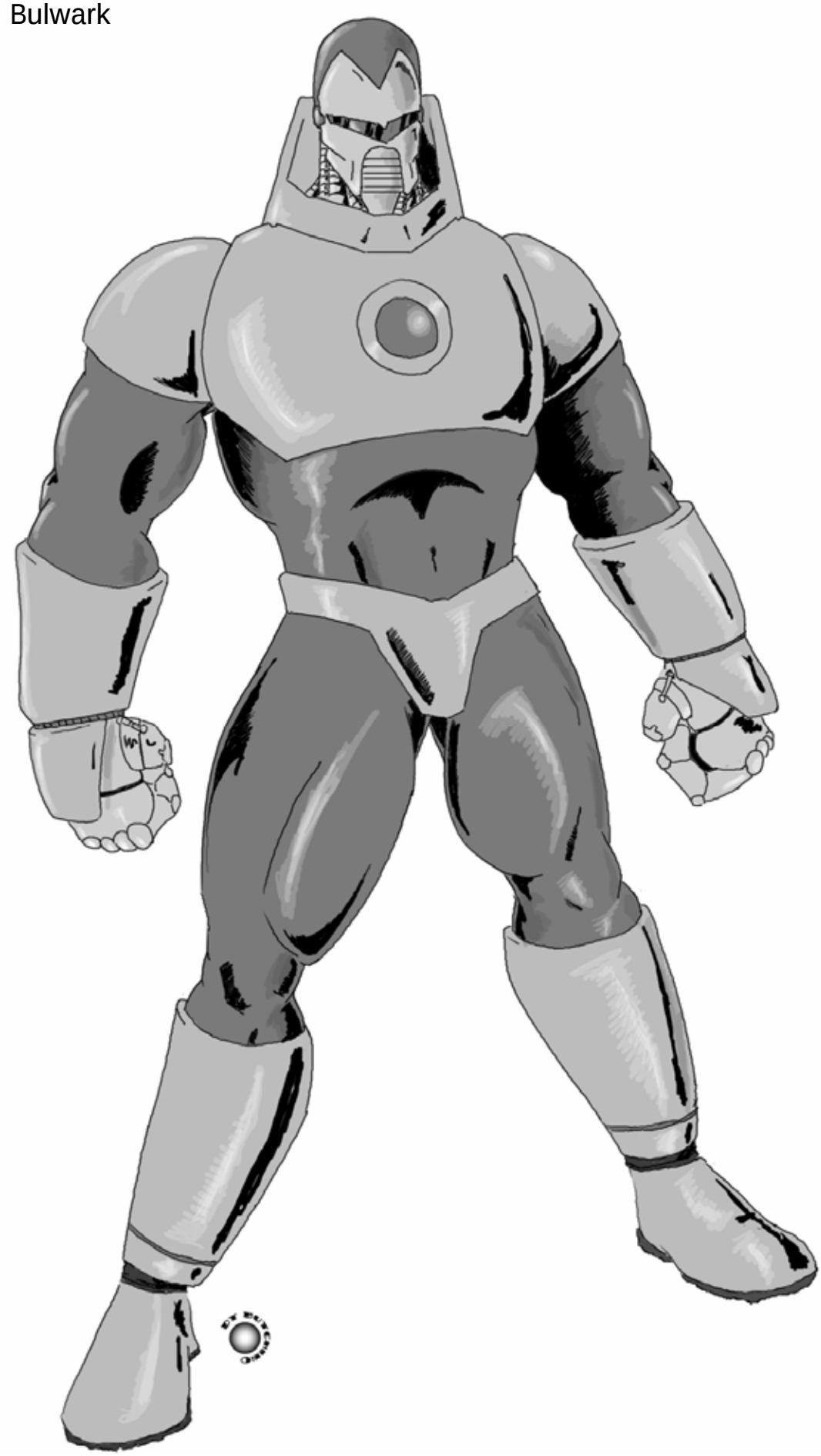
Personality/Motivation: Of all the Tech Knights, Bulwark is the most changed from his usual role in the War Machine. He has gone from being the support blaster to the front line brick. It's a role he loathed at first. He hated the bright armor, the giant size of it, and being subordinate to Warbird yet again. But a strange thing happened. As he got used to the suit and its capabilities, he's come to revel in his new power. He can lift 100 tons without breaking a sweat and his speed means he can go toe to toe with most other bricks and stand a good chance of knocking them off their game with a fast first strike. He also has a lot of versatility because of his martial arts and more than one opponent has been sure he had the upper hand only to be thrown to the ground and then knocked out with a coup de grace. Against other opponents, his strong melee skills usually mean a one shot knockout. In fact, Bulwark loves his new suit so much, he's become almost the perfect team player. Almost. He still interjects the odd comment or insult towards N-Forcer during non-combat situations. But he tries to keep it "in the family" when no one outside the team would hear it.

Quote: "Where do you want me to throw the crane boss?"

Powers/Tactics: Bulwark is amazingly agile and quick for a "typical brick." His speed and reflexes are even better than the team's martial artist. Combined with his own pugilistic skills, this makes him a wrecking machine on the battlefield. His defenses are solid, if not spectacular. Bulwark knows he can soak up normal energy beams all day long, but military grade weaponry like machine guns are a potential problem. Between his speed and flight though, he can usually get to the problem and eliminate it before it becomes an issue. He still retains some of his original role of support in the form of his vari-beam. If the team confronts an opponent with a known weakness, it's Bulwark's job to attune the beam and let fly early in the fight.

Appearance: Bulwark is 6'7" tall in his armor, though careful scrutiny will reveal that his head looks "wrong," like it's supposed to be on a guy a lot smaller. The armor itself is bright and flashy, designed to attract attention away from his teammates since it is also the best designed to soak up damage. A bright red undersuit is covered with Gold plates or armor and a matching helmet. The visor of the helmet and the iris of his chest mounted vari-beam both glow with an incandescent sapphire light.

Bulwark



Bulwark

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
20/60	STR	10	21-	100 tons, 12d6 HTH [2]
23	DEX	39	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
20	CON	20	12-	
15	BODY	10	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-/15-
10	EGO	0	12-	ECV: 3
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	12-	
10	PD	6		Total: 31 PD (12 rPD)
8	ED	4		Total: 29 ED (12 rED)
5	SPD	17		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
8	REC	0		
40	END	0		
35	STUN	0		

Total Characteristics Cost: 119

Movement:		
	Running:	9”/18”
	Flight:	15”/30”
	Leaping:	12”/24”
	Swimming:	2”/4”

Cost	Powers	END
20	*Powered Armor Strength Augmentation:* +40 STR; OIF (-½), No Figured Characteristics (-½)	4
40	*Powered Armor Vari-Beam Projector:* EB 8d6, Variable Special Effects (Any SFX, +½); OIF (-½)	6
24	*Bulletproof Costume:* Armor (12 PD/12 ED); OIF (-½)	0
12	*Reinforced Padding:* +9 PD; OIF (-½) **plus** +9 ED; OIF (-½)	0
25	*Jetpack:* Flight 15”, Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼); OIF (-½)	1
11	*Enhanced Flight Mode:* Flight +11”; 8 Charges (-½), OIF (-½)	[8]
3	*Nightsight Mask Lenses:* Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group); OIF (-½)	0
6	*Mask Radio:* Radio Perception/ Transmission (Radio Group); OIF (-½), Affected as Hearing and Radio (-¼)	0
13	*Powered Armor Battery:* Endurance Reserve (100 END, 10 REC); OIF (-½)	0
6	*Good Eyes:* +3 PER with Sight Group	0

Perks

4 Membership: Member of the War Machine

Skills

Martial Arts: Commando Training

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
3	Akido Throw	+0	+1	12d6 + v/5, Throw
4	Boxing Cross	+0	+2	14d6
4	Choke	-2	+0	Grab 1 Limb, 2d6 NND
4	Escape	+0	+0	75 STR Escape
4	Hold	-1	-1	Grab 3 Limbs, 70 STR
4	Judo Disarm	-1	+1	70 STR Disarm
4	Karate Chop	-2	+0	HKA 1d6+1
4	Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort

12 +4 with Arty Is Your Friend Multipower

3 Acting 13-
3 Combat Piloting 14-
2 KS: History of Aviation 11-
2 KS: Military History 11-
2 KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-
2 KS: Superheroes 11-
2 KS: Supervillains 11-
2 Navigation (Air) 12-
3 Stealth 14-
3 Tactics 12-
3 Teamwork 14-

Total Skills & Powers: 234

Total Cost: 353

200+ Disadvantages

20 Hunted: The Champions 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
10 Hunted: The Warlord 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
20 Hunted: UNTIL 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
10 Psychological Limitation: Arrogant Jerk (Common, Moderate)
15 Psychological Limitation: Loyal to the Warlord (Common, Strong)
15 Psychological Limitation: Womanizer (Common, Strong)
15 Reputation: Superpowered Soldier of the Warlord 11- (Extreme)
10 Rivalry: Warbird (Professional, Superior Position, Seek to Outdo, Rival Aware)
15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity [Arthur “Arty” Weist] (Frequently, Major)
20 Social Limitation: Subject to Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
3 Experience Points

Total Disadvantages: 353

Lady Psi

Background/History: Patricia Brown grew up as a normal, healthy, and completely average suburban kid. Of course, that all changed the day her mutant powers began to manifest at puberty. Suddenly she found she could release the power of someone's id to wrack them with doubt and pain freezing them into immobility or knocking them out cold if she pushed long enough. She could also take control of another's mind and get them to do as she wished. It was unnerving and, unfortunately, it was also noticed.

On the run from the law, Patricia might have ended up on the wrong side of the tracks for good, but a chance meeting with Decibel changed her life for the better. The Tech Knights took her in and gave her a Psi-Modulator tiara to keep her powers under control. Since then, she has been glad to do her part to help others who might be in need.

(This is as much as Sandra was willing to learn. Anything more complex she tries to hide behind a veneer of shyness. Unfortunately, she just doesn't care and thinks this whole idea is the height of idiocy. She's most likely to slip character, though when she is trying, she is very convincing as the neophyte/rescued heroine trying to do good.)

Personality/Motivation: Lady Psi is the least happy about this charade. She has to curtail the use of her main power and work at greatly reduced level of effectiveness. She also has to stick to more conventional commands when using her mind control and her coldhearted disdain for others is making this a potential problem. It is probably only a matter of time before she just lashes out at an opponent with her full powers. Almost more annoying to her is the need for "quips." She hates them and so far just uses the one she was assigned. Again and again and again….

Quote: "A mind is a terrible thing to waste… let me borrow yours."

Powers/Tactics: Lady Psi is the team's mentalist, and in that role she has had to curtail the use of her anger power to certain situations. In general, this has forced her to be more inventive with her Mind Control and use it at the reduced level for lesser effects. Her "Tortures of the Mind" has been renamed as "The Assault of the Id" and she relies on it as her main attack now. Her melee prowess has come as a surprise to more than one opponent who thought they would simply deck the mentalist and take her out of the fight only to find themselves in a complicated arm lock.

Appearance: Lady Psi stands 5'4". She is clad in a head to toe royal blue bodystocking with white gloves and high-heeled boots. Her eyes glow green from inside her fully concealing mask. A tiara with a faintly glowing gem in its center rests on her brow and like Decibel's grillwork, does absolutely nothing. Long brown hair (a wig) cascades from the top of her costume and falls to about the middle of her back.

Lady Psi

Lady Psi

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
18	CON	16	13-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll: 13-
23	EGO	26	14-	ECV: 8
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
14	COM	2	12-	
6	PD	3		Total: 18 PD (12 rPD)
8	ED	4		Total: 20 ED (12 rED)
5	SPD	22		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
7	REC	0		
36	END	0		
30	STUN	3		

Total Characteristics Cost: 120

Movement: Running: 6”/12”
Leaping: 3”/6”
Swimming: 2”/4”

Cost	Powers	END
50	*Mental Domination:* Mind Control 8d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼)	2
22	*Anger Management:* Mind Control +6d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Only to Control/Inflict Anger and the Desire to Do Violence (-1)	0
45	*The Assault of the Id:* Ego Attack 2d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼), Continuous (+1)	2
24	*Bulletproof Costume:* Armor (12 PD/12 ED); OIF (-½)	0
3	*Nightsight Mask Lenses:* Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group); OIF (-½)	0
6	*Mask Radio:* Radio Perception/ Transmission (Radio Group); OIF (-½), Affected as Hearing and Radio (-¼)	0

Talents

15 Combat Sense 13-
20 Danger Sense (Self Only, Out of Combat) 13-

Perks

4 Membership: Member of the War Machine

Skills

Martial Arts: Commando Training

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Boxing Cross	+0	+2	5d6 Strike
4	Choke	-2	+0	Grab 1 Limb, 2d6 NND
4	Escape	+0	+0	30 STR Escape
4	Hold	-1	-1	Grab 3 Limbs, 25 STR
4	Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort

3 Acting 12-
2 KS: Asian History & Culture 11-
3 KS: Military History 13-
3 KS: Superheroes 13-
3 KS: Supervillains 13-
1 PS: Soldier 8-
3 Stealth 13-
3 Tactics 13-
3 Teamwork 13-

Total Skills & Powers: 210

Total Cost: 353

200+ Disadvantages

10 Distinctive Features: Mutant (Not Concealable, Major, Unusual Senses)
20 Hunted: The Champions 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
10 Hunted: The Warlord 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
20 Hunted: UNTIL 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
10 Psychological Limitation: Coldhearted and Humorless (Common, Moderate)
15 Psychological Limitation: Disdain for Others (Common, Strong)
15 Psychological Limitation: Loyal to the Warlord (Common, Strong)
15 Reputation: Superpowered Soldier of the Warlord 11- (Extreme)
15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity [Sandra Chiang] (Frequently, Major)
20 Social Limitation: Subject to Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
3 Experience Points

Total Disadvantages: 353

Artemis

Background/History: Mary Cassidy was born competitive. She raced her twin and managed to be born first by minutes. That heralded her attitude for the rest of her life. Mary didn't crawl when she could walk, or walk when she could run. She was the first to speak, the first to walk, and as she reminds her sister Sally to this day, the first one potty-trained.

In high school she found her niche in one of the "weird sport" gym classes. The teacher handed out bows, and as in everything else, Mary had to be the best. At first, she was more like the worst, but as the days went on, she practiced at home until by the end of the two weeks, she was clearly the best shot in the school, never mind her class. She also discovered to her surprise that she loved it. It was all skill, all finesse.

Mary stuck with archery as a hobby all through her life and it was in her senior year of college that she added a new wrinkle. A mugger had been assaulting young women on her campus. It might have been just one of those things that happens to other people, but then her sister was attacked while visiting Mary one weekend. After Sally left, Mary decided that she was going to bring the guy in since the campus security didn't seem to be able to find the perpetrator.

It was a near thing, the mugger got too close and all her skill with a bow was pretty useless when he was right in her face, but a well placed knee gave her enough time to take him down and then to call security to find the trussed up mugger. Mary had discovered something she liked more than just shooting.

Her entry into the costumed world only occurred after several more years of training with her chosen weapon and some bare-knuckle work as well. When she first arrived, many thought she was an old archer in a new costume because she was so professional and methodical. But this came from her realizing that while she is a phenomenal shot with a bow, some of her adversaries throw tanks for fun. When the Tech Knights offered her membership, she jumped at the chance. It was good to have someone to watch your back, especially when they shared a similar attitude to the work.

Personality/Motivation: Artemis is the consummate professional. She is businesslike and efficient in combat to the point that she is almost a machine. There are new rules to this contest, but Artemis just sees it as a new challenge. It can be a lot harder to disable than to kill after all, and since as far as she's concerned, she's the best, then this is just another way for her to show her superiority.

Quote: "I just put an arrow down the barrel of that gun. You sure you still want to pull the trigger, big guy?"

Powers/Tactics: Artemis is almost inhumanly fast, and is used to getting the first shot in most combats. She'll usually try to get the most out of that first shot and hit the enemy group with an area-affecting attack before things get close. After that, she'll move around the combat like a true hunter, picking her targets and the appropriate arrow for the job. If she encounters someone who is giving the team a problem, she'll let her teammates keep them busy while she looks for weaknesses in their defense. If she can get it, she'll go for 2 Phases of Find Weakness to ensure that her shot is a finisher. She'll only use the chisel point arrows against inanimate objects or enemy foci.

Appearance: Artemis stands 5'11". She wears a hunter green armored body stocking with white low heeled boots, a white full head mask that has a golden targeting monocle over her left eye and allows a mane of blonde hair (a wig) to spill from a top knot to her shoulders. On her left arm is a white archery brace that runs all the way up to her shoulder. On her right hand is an archery glove that covers her thumb, index, and middle fingers and ends at her wrist. Her quiver is leather and secured to her waist by a white belt, and her weapon is a modern compound longbow.

Artemis

Artemis

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1]
25	DEX	45	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll: 12-/15-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
18	COM	4	12-	
10	PD	7		Total: 22 PD (12 rPD)
10	ED	7		Total: 22 ED (12 rED)
5	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
10	REC	8		
30	END	0		
45	STUN	19		

Total Characteristics Cost: 143

Movement: Running: 12”/24”
Leaping: 3”/6”
Swimming: 2”/4”

Cost	Powers	END
30	*Bow and Arrows:* Multipower, 60-point Reserve; OAF (-1)	0
1u	1) *Boomerang Grabber Arrow:* Telekinesis (30 STR); OAF (-1), 4 Charges (-1), Only Works on Objects Small Enough to be Grabbed by the Pincer on the Arrow (-½), Affects Whole Object (-¼)	[4]
1u	2) *Chisel-Point Arrow:* RKA 2d6, Armor Piercing (+½); 4 Charges (-1), OAF (-1)	[4]
2u	3) *Taser Arrow:* EB 12d6, STUN Only; 4 Charges (-1), OAF (-1)	[4]
2u	4) *Glue Arrow:* Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, Sticky (+½); 4 Charges (-1), OAF (-1)	[4]
2u	5) *Flare Arrow:* Sight and Hearing Groups Flash 11d6; 4 Charges (-1), OAF (-1)	[4]
2u	6) *Smoke Arrow:* Darkness to Sight Group 6” Radius; OAF (-1), 4 Continuing Charges (Removed by High Winds or Rain) Lasting 1 Turn (-½)	[4cc]
2u	7) *Explosion Arrow:* EB 8d6, Explosion (+¼); 4 Charges (-1), OAF (-1)	[4]
2u	8) *Knockout Gas Arrow:* EB 4d6, Area Of Effect (4” Radius, +1), No Normal Defense (Self-Contained Breathing, +1); 4 Charges (-1), OAF (-1)	[4]
30	*Uncanny Accuracy:* Find Weakness 13- with Bow and Arrows Multipower	0
24	*Bulletproof Costume:* Armor (12 PD/12 ED); OIF (-½)	0
12	*Fleet Footed:* Running +6” (12” Total)	1
3	*Nightsight Mask Lenses:* Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group); OIF (-½)	0
6	*Good Eyes:* +3 PER with Sight Group	0
6	*Mask Radio:* Radio Perception/ Transmission (Radio Group); OIF (-½), Affected as Hearing and Radio (-¼)	0

Perks

4 Membership: Member of the War Machine

Skills

Martial Arts: Commando Training

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
3	Akido Throw	+0	+1	3d6 + v/5, Throw
4	Boxing Cross	+0	+2	5d6
4	Choke	-2	+0	Grab 1 Limb, 2d6 NND
4	Escape	+0	+0	30 STR Escape
4	Hold	-1	-1	Grab 3 Limbs, 25 STR
4	Judo Disarm	-1	+1	25 STR Disarm
4	Karate Chop	-2	+0	HKA 1d6+1
4	Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort

15 +5 with Bow and Arrows Multipower

3 Acting 13-
2 KS: Amerind Myths & Legends 11-
3 KS: Competition Archery 12-
2 KS: Military History 11-
1 KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 8-
2 KS: Superheroes 11-
2 KS: Supervillains 11-
2 PS: Bowyer 11-
3 Stealth 14-
3 Tactics 12-
3 Teamwork 14-
3 Tracking 12-

Total Skills & Powers: 210

Total Cost: 353

200+ Disadvantages

10 Hunted: The Warlord 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
20 Hunted: The Champions 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
20 Hunted: UNTIL 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
20 Psychological Limitation: Must Be the Best, Won’t Settle For Second Place (Very Common, Strong)
15 Psychological Limitation: Loyal to the Warlord (Common, Strong)
15 Psychological Limitation: Overconfidence (Very Common, Moderate)
15 Reputation: Superpowered Soldier of the Warlord 11- (Extreme)
15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity [Danica Two Bears] (Frequently, Major)
20 Social Limitation: Subject to Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
3 Experience Points

Total Disadvantages: 353

Mad Jack

Background/History: Bobby Baker was always a wiseacre. In school he was the class clown, at family functions, he was the center of attention. It seemed that no matter the situation he had a quip, a prank, or a story that could lighten any mood. And it seemingly worked on anyone. You just couldn't be sad or angry when Bobby was around.

That ended the day Bobby innocently tried to cheer up a guy he saw in a restaurant talking heatedly with a few buddies. He figured a little laughter would defuse the situation, and went over doing one of his many bizarre, some might say silly, walks.

However it appeared that mobsters don't like a guy walking funny unless they're the cause of it. Bobby was beaten near to death and cut up with a straight razor that froze his face in a rictus grin. "Now you'll always keep smilin', Chuckles," one of the mobsters had said as he performed the grisly deed.

Bobby recuperated, and somewhere his mind snapped just a little. He realized that his error was that he hadn't been spectacular enough. He needed to go beyond the norm of comedy into…dare he even think it? SUPER-COMEDY! Somewhere that night, a lone bat smacked into a library window, but that doesn't concern us. Mad Jack was born, and he was ready to party!

After his first few solo jaunts, a small bit of sanity returned, and Mad Jack realized that he needed some backup or someone was going to just beat him silly again someday. So he camped out on the doorstep of the Tech Knights until they grudgingly decided to give him a trial run. It's been smooth sailing so far, as long as they can put up with the jokes.

Personality/Motivation: Mad Jack is in over his head, and he knows it. While he has a lot of options due to his bag of tricks, he is nowhere near as competent as the rest of the team. The Warlord foresaw this and as a cover for Mad Jack, he is the group's wisecracking member. Fortunately, the trooper selected was already known as the biggest prankster in the Shadow Army. He was in danger of being "asked to leave" which usually means a long walk off a short pier with cement shoes, but this opportunity has become his salvation. Now he just has to survive as a superhero….

Quote: "Um… hey, look, it's the Goodrich blimp!" *BLAMMO* "Idiot… everyone knows Goodrich doesn't have a blimp."

Powers/Tactics: Mad Jack is the ultimate team player. His role is to use his flight disk to move around the fight and pitch in where he'll do the most good. Because he is not as capable as the other members, he's been given a wide array of options, many of them area effect in nature to reduce the need for him to be perfectly precise. His usual opening move is to yell out "Wiley-Pete!" military slang for white phosphorous, and then lob his Area Of Effect Flash at the enemy. After that, he works to support the rest of the group to the best of his ability. His versatility has enabled him to be Johnny on the spot a couple of times already, and his confidence is growing.

Appearance: Mad Jack looks the role of the demented prankster. He stands about 5'9", dressed in a dark green armored jumpsuit with light green sleeves. There is brown piping where the sleeves meet the jumpsuit. Around his waist is a broad red leather belt with a large yellow stylized "M" as the belt buckle. A yellow wide-brimmed hat rests on his head and he wears a cartoonish mask of an extreme rictus grin. The mask however is flesh colored and moves mostly like his face, so at casual inspection, it looks as if this is his actual face. Yellow boots and gloves complete the ensemble. His bag of tricks is a large satchel that he wears slung across his chest with the bag resting against his right hip. It is a large brown bag; the strap has a yellow buckle that is usually resting at about mid-chest. The bag is also secured by Velcro-style stays at the hip to keep it from flopping all over the place. His flight disk is about two feet in diameter, maybe an inch thick and metallic grey in color.

Mad Jack

Val	CHA	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
14	CON	8	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll: 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
4	PD	1		Total: 16 PD (12 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 16 ED (12 rED)
3	SPD	5		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
28	END	0		
30	STUN	3		

Total Characteristics Cost: 47

Movement:		
	Running:	6”/12”
	Flight:	10”/20”
	Leaping:	3”/6”
	Swimming:	2”/4”

Cost	Powers	END
34	*Halloween Arsenal:* Multipower, 60-point Reserve; OIF (Multiple OAFs, -½), Range Based on Strength (-¼)	0
2u	1) *Jack O’ Lantern Grenades:* EB 8d6, Explosion (+½); OAF (-1), 8 Charges (-½), Range Based on Strength (-¼)	[8]
2u	2) *Skull Grenades:* RKA 2d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Explosion (+½); OAF (-1), 8 Charges (-½), Range Based on Strength (-¼)	[8]
3u	3) *Black Cat Bomb:* Darkness to Sight Group 6” Radius, 8 Continuing Charges Lasting 1 Turn Each (+0); OAF (-1), Range Based on Strength (-¼)	[8cc]
2u	4) *Devil’s Pitchfork Darts:* EB 6d6, No Normal Defense (rPD Covering the Entire Body, +1); OAF (-1), 8 Charges (-½), Range Based on Strength (-¼)	[8]
2u	5) *Jack O’ Lantern Bolos:* Entangle 5d6, 4 DEF, Entangle and Character Both Take Damage (+¼); OAF (-1), 8 Charges (-½), Cannot Form Barriers (-¼), Range Based on Strength (-¼)	[8]
1u	6) *Vesperang:* EB 8d6; 1 Recoverable Charge (-1¼), OAF (-1), Range Based on Strength (-¼)	[1rc]
2u	7) *Banshee Bomb:* EB 4d6, No Normal Defense (Hearing Group Flash Defense, +1), Area Of Effect (4” Radius, +1); OAF (-1), 8 Charges (-½), Range Based on Strength (-¼)	[8]
2u	8) *Witch’s Candle Grenade:* Sight and Hearing Groups Flash 5d6, Area Of Effect (3” Radius, +1); OAF (-1), 8 Charges (-½), Range Based on Strength (-¼)	[8]
2u	9) *Phantom Gas Grenade:* EB 4d6, No Normal Defense (Self-Contained Breathing, +1), Area Of Effect (4” Radius, +1); OAF (-1), 8 Charges (-½), Range Based on Strength (-¼)	[8]
25	*Flight Disk:* Flight 10”, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Usable as Attack (Does Not Work Against Targets Who Have Their Own Flight or Gravity Manipulation Powers, +1); OAF (-1)	0
24	*Bulletproof Armor:* Armor (12 PD/12 ED); OIF (-½)	0
4	*Radio Headset:* Radio Perception/ Transmission (Radio Group); OAF (-1), Affected as Hearing and Radio (-¼)	0

Perks

1 Membership: Private in the Shadow Army

Skills

Martial Arts: Commando Training

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Boxing Cross	+0	+2	5d6
4	Choke	-2	+0	Grab 1 Limb, 2d6 NND
4	Escape	+0	+0	30 STR Escape
4	Hold	-1	-1	Grab 3 Limbs, 25 STR
4	Kung Fu Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort

6 +2 with Firearms
3 +1 with Halloween Arsenal

3 Acting 12-
3 Combat Piloting 12-
1 KS: Military History 8-
2 KS: The Militar/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-
2 PS: Soldier 11-
3 Security Systems 11-
3 Stealth 12-
3 Streetwise 12-
3 Systems Operation 11-
3 Tactics 11-
8 WF: Blades, Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Small Arms, Boomerangs and Throwing Clubs, Thrown Chain & Rope Weapons

Total Skills & Powers: 170

Total Cost: 216

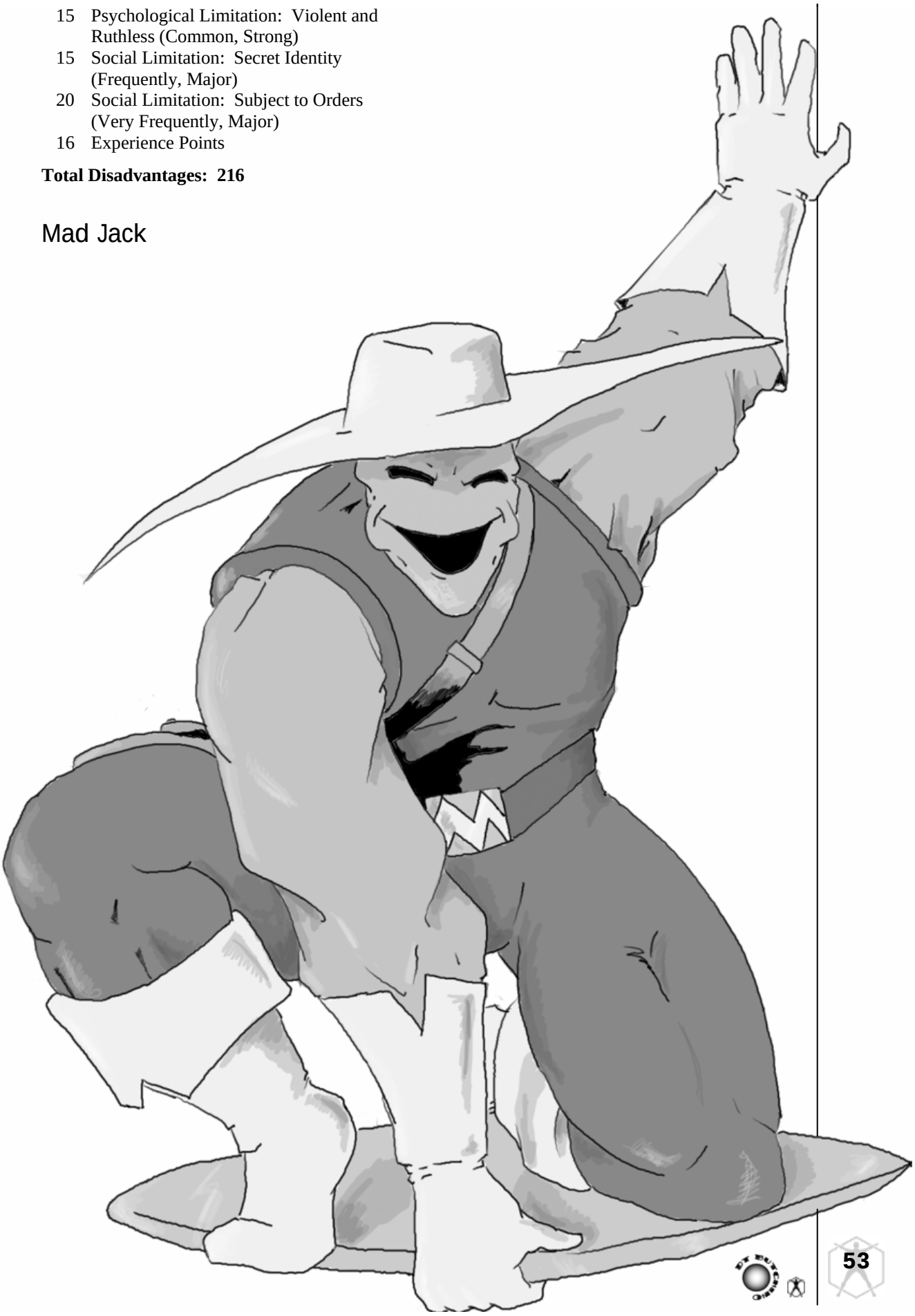
200+ Disadvantages

5 Distinctive Features: Mad Jack Uniform and Rictus Grin (Easily Concealed)
20 Hunted: UNTIL 8- (Mo Pow, NCI)
10 Hunted: The Warlord 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
0 Normal Characteristic Maxima
15 Psychological Limitation: Mischievous (Common, Strong)

15 Psychological Limitation: Violent and Ruthless (Common, Strong)
15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Frequently, Major)
20 Social Limitation: Subject to Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
16 Experience Points

Total Disadvantages: 216

Mad Jack



Cinematic Martial Arts by Michael Surbrook

Three Cinematic Martial Artists in Search of a Campaign

One doesn't have to be running a martial arts-based campaign to introduce a martial arts-based character (or even a character who simply practices a form of martial arts as a pastime). Often, it can be used to distinguish the character in some way, to mark them and allow them to stand out from the crowd. It can also be a useful bit of "color" and can be used as a springboard for the GM to launch a new adventure – one in which the character's knowledge of the martial arts can allow him to shine for a few gaming sessions.

This article presents three Cinematic Martial Artists, as defined on pages 7-8 of *Ninja Hero*. They are built on a 100- to 150-point base, and are all subject to the Normal Characteristic Maxima Limitation. The 100-point base character has not paid for any of his weapons and armor, while the 150-point base characters have.

The characters are, in order of point totals: Korosas (199 points), a lizardman chieftain designed to be used in Epic and High fantasy settings; The Blue Scorpion (250 points), a pulp- or Golden-Age masked avenger/super hero; and Danny 33, a cyberpunk street samurai from the author's own *Kazei 5* setting.

Korosas

artwork by Darren Bulmer

Korosas

Background/History: The Gray Marshes are known to be a damp and dreary place, inhabited by fell beasts of all sizes and description. The Marshes are also home to an ancient race of lizardmen, who live in small tribes scattered throughout the region. There, they make their villages, hunt for fish and other animals, and occasionally make war on either each other or some of the larger swamp inhabitants (such as behemoths and mud wyrms).

Korosas is the chief of one of these tribes. Originally just another warrior, he grew dissatisfied with the old chief's ways and challenged him for right to lead the tribe. After a long and brutal fight (the old chief may have been ill-fit to lead but he wasn't ill-fit to fight), Korosas stood over the chief's corpse. Since then he's been the largely undisputed leader of his tribe, directing them in both war and peace, and struggling to make them foremost among the tribes of the Gray Marshes.

Personality/Motivation: The average lizardman is thought of as little more than a savage, interested only in the violence of the hunt and battle. Korosas, on the other hand, possesses loftier goals. Long ago he decided the most important thing in life was the survival of the tribe, for without the tribe (as a whole) the might of an individual warrior meant nothing. Thus, virtually every decision he makes as chief is made after carefully weighing he benefits for the tribe. This also means he tends to talk before fighting, either to his people or to a potential enemy, in the hopes of staving off any unnecessary confrontations. This has led to Korosas as being thought of as a "weak" chief, both by his own warriors any by outsiders.

As Korosas feels the tribe comes first in all things, this means that as chief, his wants and needs come second to the tribe's needs. He tends to act to outside threats personally, whether it is a swamp monster or an invading tribe. More than once he has single-handedly attacked an intruder and is known to personally answer challenges from outside villages and chiefs.

Quote: "I will not send someone else to do anything I can see to myself. To do otherwise would show I am unworthy of leading my tribe."

Powers/Tactics: Korosas, like almost all the lizardmen of the Gray Marshes, practices a martial art known as Verrkess. It is a fairly simple and straightforward grappling style, used to settle one-on-one disputes and combats, and was never intended for open warfare. Korosas, as chief, uses Verrkess to keep his more rebellious subjects in line, inviting any who question his actions and decisions too aggressively to meet him in the village center.

Normally Korosas fights armed, starting with a flint-headed spear in one hand and his wicker and hide shield strapped to the other. He will use the spear to keep a foe at bay, usually jabbing at any openings or weak spots, before finally hurling the spear and drawing his axe. If going to war, Korosas will carry his long spear and several shorter javelins, throwing them at notable or prominent enemies. In close or single combat Korosas will use Elbow and Knee Strikes in an attempt to disable an enemy, following up with a Throw or Trip to get them to the ground and at his mercy. Armlocks and Chokes are used to restrain and/or defeat someone Korosas would rather not kill.

Campaign Use: Korosas is meant to be used in fantasy settings, specifically Epic Fantasy, High Fantasy, and Swords And Sorcery settings. He could be used as an alien gladiator in a *Star Hero* setting or as an unusual form of opponent in a *Ninja Hero* video game campaign. You can use him simply as a foe who must be defeated or as a potential ally for the PCs (who still must be met in personal combat before he will aid the players).

To make Korosas more powerful, increase his DEX to 18 or 20, his CON to 23, his BODY to 16, and his SPD to 4. Add a Damage Class or two to his martial arts and maybe a few new maneuvers. Give him some Damage Reduction and some extra Running. For a really powerful (*i.e.* video game) version of Korosas, add in things like Danger Sense, Damage Resistance (beyond what he has already), Defense Maneuver, and attacks with such Advantages as Autofire and Double Knockback.

As chief, Korosas cannot and will not personally Hunt the PCs. If a group of PCs manage to enrage him enough to make him come for them, then he will do so at the head of a troop of lizardman warriors, and will pursue them until they either leave the Gray Marshes or cross into another tribe's territory.

Appearance: Korosas is a humanoid lizard standing some seven feet in height with a well-muscled build. His scaled skin is pale white along the throat and chest, darkening to a deep greenish-black along his back and down his spine. He normally wears a jerkin of mud wyrm hide over his torso, with a belt at his waist for his axe. Around his neck are the teeth of numerous swamp predators strung on a thin strip of leather.

Korosas

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
28	STR	26	15-	1200 kg; 5½d6 HTH [3]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
20	CON	20	13-	
14	BODY	8	12-	
11	INT	2	11-	PER Roll 11-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 2 ½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
9	PD	3		Total: 9 PD (1 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 6 ED (1 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
10	REC	0		
40	END	0		
38	STUN	0		

Total Characteristics Cost: 93

Movement: Running: 6”/12”
Leaping: 5½”/11”
Swimming: 4”/8”

Cost	Powers	END
8	*Claws:* HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR); Reduced Penetration (-¼)	1
10	*Teeth:* HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR)	1
5	*Fearless:* +10 PRE; Only to Protect Against Presence Attacks (-1)	0
1	*Scaled Hide:* Damage Resistance (1 PD/1 ED)	0
2	*Seven Feet Tall:* Knockback Resistance -1”	0
2	*Brother to Alligators:* Swimming +2” (4” total)	1
5	*Tail:* Extra Limb, Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)	0

Perks

3 Fringe Benefit: Chief of His Tribe

Skills

Martial Arts: Verrkess

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
3	Armlock	+0	+1	One Limb, 38 STR
4	Choke	-2	+0	One Limb; 2d6 NND (2)
3	Elbow/Knee Strike	+1	+0	7½d6 Strike
3	Escape	+0	+0	43 STR Escape
3	Throw	+0	+1	5½d6 +v/5, Target Falls
3	Trip	+2	-1	6½d6 Strike, Target Falls

10 +2 with Hand-To-Hand Combat
6 +2 with Verrkess

5 *The Voice of Experience:* +1 with Intellect Skills
2 AK: Swamp 11-
5 Breakfall 13-
3 *Swamp Craft:* Concealment 13-; Self Only (-½), Only In Home Environment (-1)
2 KS: Local Tribes 11-
2 KS: Swamp Wildlife 11-
3 Oratory 13-
3 *Swamp Craft:* Stealth 14-; Only in Home Environment (-1)
1 Survival (Marsh) 11-
3 Tactics 11-
2 Weaponsmith (Spears and Polearms) 11-
4 WF: Axe, Club, Shield, Spear, Thrown Spear

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 106

Total Cost: 199

100+ Disadvantages

10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable, Detectable By Large Group)
15 Hunted: The Tribe and Fellow Warriors 14- (As Pow, NCI, Watching)
5 Psychological Limitation: Code of Honor (Common, Strong)
20 Psychological Limitation: Puts the Tribe Before Himself (Very Common, Strong)
10 Reputation: Chief Who Would Rather Talk Than Fight, 11-
15 Social Limitation: Subject to the Tenets of Chiefdom (Frequently, Major)
24 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 199

EQUIPMENT CARRIED

Weapons

Name	OCV	Damage	STUNx	Notes
Bronze Axe	0	2d6	0	M, 1½H
Flint Spear	0	1½d6	0	L, 1½H, Set, Can Be Thrown

Armor

Name of Armor	DEF	Location
Hide Jerkin	3	9-14

Shield

Type of Shield	DCV	HA	BODY	DEF
Wicker and Hide	+2	N/A	4	2

The Blue Scorpion

Background/History: Growing up in San Francisco, Kyle Whelan had only one goal in life – to be a police officer like his father. He worked hard both in school and at home, training his mind and his body, and eventually graduated the police academy with top honors.

Once on the streets, Kyle proved himself to be a model officer. He made sure to know everyone who lived on his beat, and applied the law equally and fairly to the citizens under his protection, regardless of their race. Although this didn't exactly endear him to some of his fellow officers, he did manage to win some friends in the normally insular society of Chinatown.

Kyle's attempts to bring the law to Chinatown didn't exactly go over very well with the local Triads. They quickly found that the usual methods of dealing with nosy police officers – bribes, opium, and prostitutes, didn't work with Kyle, who simply arrested the Triad's agents. Seeing their profit margin slip, and not wanting Kyle's presence and influence to create any unwanted ideas among the populace of Chinatown, a few Triad leaders decided the time had come for extreme measures – Kyle had to disappear.

Luring Kyle into an ambush was easy, requiring little more than an exchange of cash with some of San Francisco's less-than-honest men in blue. Actually doing Kyle in was another matter. He was an excellent shot, and could back up his marksmanship with well-honed boxing skills, which proved to be a match for the gangsters' kung fu training. Although the Triad's agents eventually overpowered Kyle (a sword stroke cutting off his left arm at the elbow in the process) they lost several men to both bullets and punches.

With their target down, the Triad tossed Kyle's body into the Bay, figuring he'd sink and never be found. If not, then the sharks would get him, and if he did wash ashore somewhere, well, he'd serve as a grim reminder of the power and influence of Chinatown's Triads.

But Kyle did none of these things. Instead, his body was recovered by an aged Chinese man by the name of Shing Peng, who bandaged the young officer's wounds and slowly nursed him back to health. Once Kyle was well enough, Shing explained what had happened.

When Kyle finally recovered his senses it was to find his life in virtual ruin. Not only had the Triads taken his left arm, they had also effectively taken his old life. Everyone – his family, his friends, fellow officers on the force, thought him to be dead. After much thought and long talks with Shing, Kyle decided this was for the best. He would remain "dead" to both the Triads and the world at large. Instead, he would work with Shing to repair his body and once his training was completed, he'd rise again, to join the ranks of the masked adventurers and avengers, and continue his former crusade to cleanup San Francisco and the Chinatown district.

After over a year of working with Shing Peng, learning *T'an T'ui* kung fu to supplement his boxing skills, finding ways to compensate for his missing arm, and developing weapons to assist him in his war on crime, Kyle returned to Chinatown as "The Blue Scorpion" doing unto the Triads as they had done unto him.

Personality/Motivation: As a police officer, Kyle tried to give everyone the benefit of the doubt and treated everyone equally. He didn't make automatic assumptions due to factors of race or nationality, and often these tactics paid off. It won him friends among the people of Chinatown, as well as other minorities, and earned the ire of those with less enlightened views. As the Blue Scorpion, Kyle has become more aware of the darker side of man, and now realizes that a pleasant façade can hide a brutal interior. This had made him less trusting of strangers, and less likely to take any claims at face value. He will try to find the facts behind any story before deciding on a course of action. However, once he does act, he won't hold back, seeking to eliminate any foes as quickly as possible.

Quote: "In the back-alleys of Chinatown there's no justice. There's just me."

Powers/Tactics: A gifted athlete before the Triad ambush, Kyle now trains constantly to bring himself up to his original form. In fact, although he doesn't realize it, in many ways he's passed his old self, and is now stronger and faster than ever before. His training with Shing Peng, who himself is a master of *T'an T'ui* kung fu, has been a prime factor in his recovery as well as his continued improvement.

Aside from his fighting skills, Kyle has also uses several pieces of equipment to help him in his war on crime. The first of these is the chain whip he's dubbed "The Scorpion's Sting." Not only does it allow him to strike foes at range, but he can spin it overhead, striking a group of opponents quickly. Along with the Sting, Kyle also carries his old service pistol. As he has only one arm, he keeps the pistol secured to his belt by a length of line, thus virtually eliminating any change of his dropping and losing it. In addition, Kyle also keeps both flash and smoke bombs in his utility belt, using them to distract and confuse foes and pursuers.

Along with his body, Kyle has trained his mind, using his cover as a private detective to learn more about criminal investigation. Right

The Blue Scorpion

The Blue Scorpion

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
16	CON	12	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
16	EGO	12	12-	ECV: 5
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
14	COM	2	12-	
8	PD	5		Total: 11 PD (3 rPD)
7	ED	4		Total: 10 ED (3 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
6	REC	0		
32	END	0		
30	STUN	2		

Total Characteristics Cost: 98

Movement: Running: 8”/16”
Leaping: 6”/12”
Swimming: 2”/4”

Cost	Powers	END
13	*Utility Belt:* Multipower; 20-point Reserve, OIF (-½)	
1u	1) *Colt Police Positive:* RKA 1d6+1; 6 Charges (-¾), OAF (-1), Beam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼)	[6]
1u	2) *Flash Grenade:* Sight Group Flash 2d6, Area Of Effect, Nonselective (1” Radius, +¾); 4 Charges (-1), OAF (-1)	[4]
1u	3) *Smoke Grenade:* Darkness to Sight Group, 1” Radius; 4 Charges (-1), OAF (-1), Limited Effect (Normal Sight Only, -¼)	[4]
17	*The Scorpion’s Sting:* HA +4d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); OAF (-1), HA (-½) **plus** Stretching +2”, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); OAF (-1), Always Direct (-¼), No Noncombat Stretching (-¼), Only to Cause Damage (-½), No Velocity Damage (-¼)	0
13	*Spinning Chain-Whip:* HA +4d6, Area Of Effect, Nonselective (2” Radius, +¾), Personal Immunity (+¼): Extra Time (Full Phase; -½) OAF (-1), HA (-½)	4
4	*Leather Body Armor:* Armor (3 PD/3 ED); Activation Roll or Locations 9-13 (-1), OIF (-½)	0
4	*Fleet Of Foot:* Running +2” (8” Total)	2
2	*Acrobatic Movement:* Leaping +3” (6” Total); Requires an Acrobatics Roll (-½)	1
-1	*Poor Swimmer:* Swimming -1”	1

Perks

3 Contact: Old Friend on the Force 11- (Useful, Limited to Normal Identity)
2 Fringe Benefit: Private Investigator's License

Talents

3 Resistance

Skills

Martial Arts: Boxing and T'an T'ui Kung Fu

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Arm Sweep Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Cross/Front Kick	+0	+2	6d6 Strike
4	Disarm	-1	+1	30 STR Disarm
3	Footsweep	+2	-1	5d6 Strike, Target Falls
5	Hook/Side Kick	-2	+1	8d6 Strike
3	Jab	+2	+1	4d6 Strike

4 +1 Damage Class (already added in)
1 Use Art with Chain-Whip

10 +2 with Hand-to-Hand Combat
4 +2 OCV with Colt Police Pistol
3 +1 with Acrobatics, Breakfall, and Climbing

3 Acrobatics 13-
3 Breakfall 13-
1 Bureaucratics 8-
2 CK: San Francisco 11-
2 CK: San Francisco’s Chinatown 11-
3 Climbing 13-
1 Conversation 8-
5 Deduction 14-
1 KS: Boxing 8-
2 KS: Criminal Law 11-
1 KS: T’an T’ui Kung Fu 8-
2 KS: San Francisco Underworld 11-
1 Language: Cantonese (basic conversation, English native)
1 Mechanics 8-
1 PS: Ex-Police Officer 8-
2 PS: Private Investigator 11-
3 Shadowing 13-
3 Stealth 13-
3 Streetwise 12-
3 WF: Chain-Whip, Nightstick, Pistol

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 152

Total Cost: 250

150+ Disadvantages

10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable, Detectable By Large Group)
10 DNPC: Shing Peng 11- (Less Pow)
20 Hunted: San Francisco Triads (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Area, Kill) 11-

15 Physical Limitation: One Arm (Frequently, Greatly)
20 Psychological Limitation: Justice, Not Law (Very Common, Strong)
10 Reputation: Vigilante Who Pulls No Punches (Among San Francisco Triads) 14-
15 Social Limitation: Secret ID [Kyle Whelan] (Frequently, Major)

Total Disadvantage Points: 250

now he still has a "brute force" approach to his crimefighting, but in time he can be expected to add such skills as Lockpicking and Criminology to his repertoire.

In a fight Kyle will often draw his gun first, trusting his marksmanship more than his martial skills. However, in tight quarters, he will holster his pistol and engage his foes in hand-to-hand combat. If attacked with hand-to-hand weapons, he will use the Scorpion's sting to disarm or disable foes, spinning it over his head to try and gain some breathing room if surrounded and outnumbered.

Campaign Use: The Blue Scorpion is meant to be a mixture of two classic martial arts archetypes – the maimed fighter and the "American from the Orient." In addition, he's also an archetypal pulp-era styled crimefighter who wears a mask to hide identity and carries a gun (and who has no qualms about using it). He is meant to be used in a high-powered *Justice Inc.* game or very early era *Dark Champions* settings. If you replace his revolver with something non-lethal, like a small grappling gun, then he easily fits right into the average Golden Age setting.

If you need to make Blue Scorpion more powerful, bump his STR and DEX up to 20, increase his CON to 18, add another Damage Class or two, and give him better defenses – either Combat Luck or Damage Reduction. If you need to downpower the Blue Scorpion, drop his CON and EGO to 15, remove his Spinning Chain-Whip power, his extra Damage Class, his Resistance, and his +1 with select Agility Skills.

The Blue Scorpion will readily Hunt any criminal who attracts his attention, which means he could quite easily end up Hunting a PC – either as result of a criminal frame up, or due to a good-old case of comic book mistaken identity.

Appearance: The Blue Scorpion stands 5'10" in height, with a lean and muscular build. He has blue eyes and dirty blond hair he keeps cropped short. His costume consists of brown boots, dark blue trousers, a dark blue shirt, a brown glove on his remaining hand, thick brown leather armor covering his torso, and a blue domino mask. The utility belt is a standard policeman's belt in black, with a holster for his pistol and loops for the Scorpion's Sting.

Danny 33

Background/History: There aren't a lot of options for those growing up in 2030s Neo York. You can join the military (and be sent overseas to serve in what is left of Africa or war-torn China), take a menial service job (and between the domestic cyberdroids and the synthetic humans, there are precious few of *those*), become just another corporate wageslave, or simply opt out and run across the Willamsburg Bridge to Brooklyn, Queens and the Neo York Zero Law Enforcement Zone (where you have no power, no heat, no running water, and no future). Or, you try staying where you are and work *around* the system.

Born Daniel Torres, Danny 33 took just such an option. Early on in life, he decided he wanted to be his own man and control his own destiny. He'd seen what being another corporate cog had done to both his father and mother, turning them into virtually numb drones whose only thought was how to better serve the company (and thus avoid being terminated in favor of a more willing worker), and he wanted none of it. So, taking his name from the street on which he lived, Danny made a new life for himself as a solo operative, a.k.a. a "street samurai."

Now Danny 33 lives and works in the shadows of the major multinational corporations he so despises. He's used the money he's made so far to buy himself a better body, and even has a new cyberarm to replace the one lost to a high-caliber bullet. It may not be the best choice of lifestyles, but at least he's in charge of it.

Personality/Motivation: Although he desires to "be his own man," Danny 33 recognizes the need to be a dependable and honorable street samurai, which requires he submit to the will of others from time to time. But he also knows that as a samurai he is only selling his services, not himself, and while corporate clients may hire his skills they are not buying him outright. Thus, he asks only those questions that pertain to the mission at hand and doesn't ponder the "what ifs" about the missions he is sent on or the people who send him. His personal code also means he stays loyal for the duration of the job, dedicating himself wholly to the mission until the mission is over (or the mission is obviously a failure – Danny doesn't do suicide missions).

Even if he doesn't care much for the multinationals that virtually run Neo York, Danny 33 still loves his hometown. On the other hand, the Neo York Zero Law Enforcement Zone (a.k.a. "The Zone") is a place he'd rather not have to deal with. He likes Neo York's clean chrome and bright neon, and finds the Zone to be too chaotic, too confused, and too primitive for his tastes. But, even so, he has nothing against people living in the Zone. As he figures it, it's their choice, and if someone hires him to get them into the Zone, he'll work just as hard to do so as if he was hired to get them out.

If Danny can be said to have a goal in life, it is to be someone. Not just another cog in the machine, but to be a bigger and better cog, or even someone who runs the machine. Naturally, it's not an easy task, especially for a street-runner like himself, but it's something to shoot for. Thus, Danny has begun to try and make more contact with the local business scene in an effort to get his name around, making it so people will come to him with jobs, instead of his having to go to the local fixer for work.

Quote: "My price? I'm not for sale. But my combat skills are. Two thousand UNA dollars."

Powers/Tactics: As with virtually all street samurai, Danny 33 has trained for both armed and unarmed combat. He backs up these skills with assorted cybernetic implants, such as razor-sharp blades implanted in his forearms, polarized filters for his eyes, a fully-cybernetic right arm (used to hold his Mac-10 steady when firing it full auto), and an Adrenal Pump. When activated, this latter item flood's Danny's bloodstream with synthetic adrenaline and other stimulants, boosting his strength, reaction time, and overall stamina. However, use of the Pump does take a toll on the body, and fatigue poisons can leave Danny feeling faint and/or virtually unconscious once the Pump's effects wear off.

When it comes to ranged combat, Danny uses an Ingram Mac-10, and old, but still reliable submachine gun. He also carries a Colt M1911A1, an even older style of automatic pistol, but one known for its reliability and stopping power. The fact both the Ingram and the Colt share the same ammunition doesn't hurt either. Normally he'll carry the Ingram and keep the Colt as a backup, but if outnumbered or outgunned, he will use both at once, to maximize his firepower.

For hand-to-hand combat, Danny practices an eclectic style known generally as "Streetfighting." It is a mix of various popular martial arts forms, specifically judo, karate, kung fu, and tae kwon do, borrowing select techniques from each, and discarding the rest. The style concentrates primarily on direct combat applications and effective, proven techniques, stripping everything down to its bare bones. Obviously influenced by the tenets of Jeet Kune Do, it is a popular style among many American street samurai. Danny's version of Streetfighting attempts to be complete as possible, without being redundant or focusing on techniques of limited use. Designed to end a fight as soon as possible, Danny uses the style to do just that, Blocking initial attacks until he can close and use Elbow/Knee Smashes and Punches to put his

Danny 33

Danny 33

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1]
16	DEX	18	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll: 12-
11	EGO	2	11-	ECV: 4
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
14	COM	2	12-	
7	PD	4		Total: 16 PD (9 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total: 15 ED (9 rED)
4	SPD	14		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
7	REC	2		
30	END	0		
30	STUN	2		

Total Characteristics Cost: 75

Movement: Running: 6”/12”
Leaping: 3”/6”
Swimming: 2”/4”

Cost	Powers	END
12	*Cyberarm:* +10 STR, Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); No Figured Characteristics (-½), Only When Using Right Arm (-¼), Restrainable (-¼) **plus** Armor (6 PD/6 ED); Activation Roll 10- or Locations 6-9 (-1¼), Armor Only Protects Right Arm (-1)	0
7	*Flare Filters:* Sight Group Flash Defense (7 points)	0
4	*Cyber Eyes:* IR Perception (Sight Group); Restrainable (-¼)	0
11	*Adrenal Pump:* Aid STR, DEX, END, STUN 2d6, Standard Effect (-0), Variable Effect (+1); 4 Boostable Charges (-¾), Restrainable (-¼), Self Only (-½), Side Effects (4d6 STUN Drain once Aid wears off, -1)	[4]
	Equipment	
7	*Razors:* HKA 1d6; No Knockback (-¼), Reduced Penetration (-¼), No STR Bonus (-½), Real Weapon (-¼)	1
8	*Throwing Knives:* HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum 4 (-¼) **plus** Ranged (+½) for HKA ½d6; OAF (-1), 4 Recoverable Charges (-½), Range Based On STR (-¼)	0
21	*Ingram MAC-10:* RKA 2d6-1, Autofire (5 shots, +½), Increased STUN Modifier (+¼), 4 Clips of 32 Charges (+½); OAF (-1), Beam (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum 12 (-½) **plus** +1 OCV; OAF (-1)	[32]
12	*M1911A1:* RKA 2d6-1, Increased STUN Modifier (+¼); 4 Clips of 7 Charges (-0), Beam (-¼), OAF (-1), Real Weapon (-¼), STR Minimum 9 (-½) **plus** +1 OCV; OAF (-1)	[7]
10	*Armored Vest:* Armor (9 PD/9 ED); Activation Roll 10- or Locations 10-13 (-1¼), OIF (-½)	0
	Perks	
4	Contact: Fixer (Useful) 11-	

Skills

Martial Arts: “Streetfighting”

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Disarm	-1	+1	25 STR Disarm
4	Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Abort
4	Elbow/Knee Smash	+2	+0	5d6 Strike
4	Escape	+0	+0	30 STR Escape
3	Legsweep	+2	+1	4d6 Strike, Target Falls
4	Punch/Snap Kick	+0	+2	5d6 Strike
5	Side Kick Roundhouse	-2	+1	7d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0	+1	3d6 + v/5, Target Falls

3 Use Art with Clubs, Knives, Razors

16 +2 with Combat
5 +1 with Agility Skills

3 Acrobatics 12-
5 Breakfall 13-
2 CK: Neo York 11-
3 Climbing 12-
1 KS: Assorted Martial Arts 8-
2 KS: Cybertechnology 11-
2 KS: Neo York Underworld 11-
3 Paramedic 12-
2 PS: Street Samurai 11-
3 Shadowing 12-
3 Stealth 12-
5 Streetwise 13-
10 Two-Weapon Fighting (Ranged)
5 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Small Arms, Thrown Knife

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 200

Total Cost: 275

150+ Disadvantages

5 Distinctive Features: Chromed (Easily Concealable)
5 Distinctive Features: Extensive Tattoos on His Upper Body (Easily Concealable)
5 Hunted: Neo York Police Department, Inc. 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Area, Watching)
20 Normal Characteristic Maxima

10 Psychological Limitation: Dislike for the Multinational Corporations (Common, Moderate)
15 Psychological Limitation: Professional Code (Common, Strong)
15 Psychological Limitation: Wants to "Be His Own Man" (Common, Strong)
5 Rivalry: Other Street Samurai for a Larger Share of the "Pie" (Professional)
45 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 275

opponent down. Danny won't hesitate to use a weapon if he can, especially if his foe is so armed, and will usually try to Block and Disarm before closing.

Campaign Use: Danny 33 sits on the border between such low-end cyberpunk settings as William Gibson's *Neuromancer* and the much more high-powered world of Masamune Shirow's *Ghost in the Shell*. Naturally, he's meant to be used in high-end *Cyber Hero* campaigns, and is packed with quite a bit of cybernetics, although he has nowhere near the sort of systems seen in some cyberpunk characters, such as the cyborgs in the *Nemesis* series of films.

To make Danny more powerful raise his STR and DEX to 18 or 20, his CON to 18, and add a few points to INT, EGO, and PRE. Give him a second Ingram MAC-10 (or a second Colt 1911A1), and possibly some Armor defined as implanted subdermal plates. To downpower Danny, remove his Two-Weapon Fighting, Adrenal Pump, Throwing Knives, and Razors.

As Danny tends to work as security for those who hire him, he's not likely to Hunt a PC, although he may cross their path while on a mission, which might just bring him and a group of PCs at cross ends.

Appearance: Danny is of mixed parentage, with skin a light tan color and dark brown eyes, He stands about 5'9", with a very fit build, and trains constantly. He shaves his head, exposing the multiple tattoos of various geometric patterns that cover his scalp and upper body. He normally wears combat boots, fatigue pants, an equipment belt, and his armored vest, leaving his chest and upper body otherwise bare. Danny's cyberarm is of brushed steel, while his eyes are covered with reflective silver flare filters.