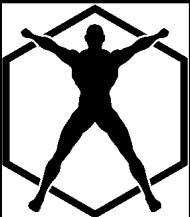
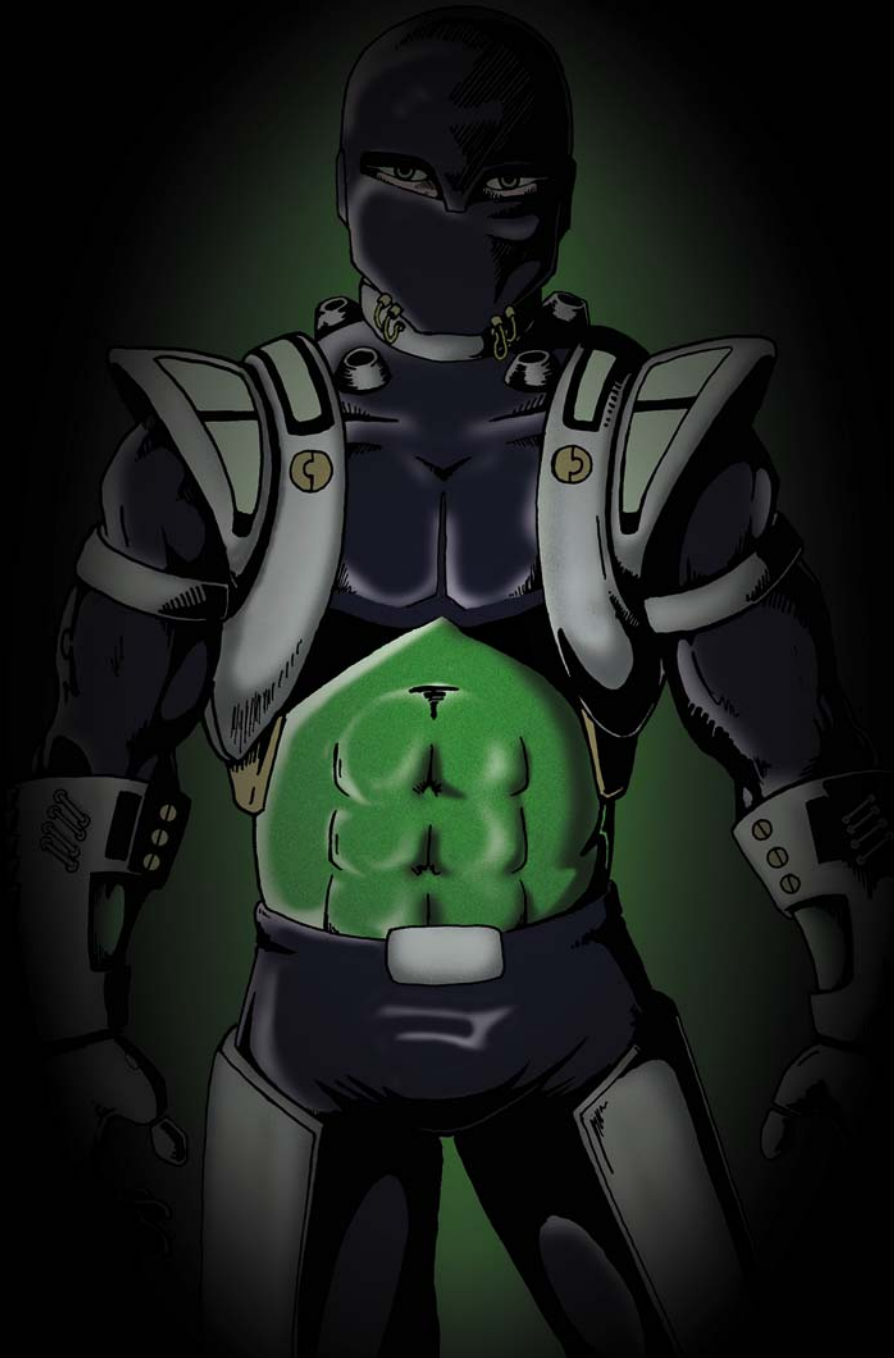


DIGITAL HERO

#25
Nov 2004



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• Helmets
• Handicaps



• Bombers
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• Artists
• Balloons
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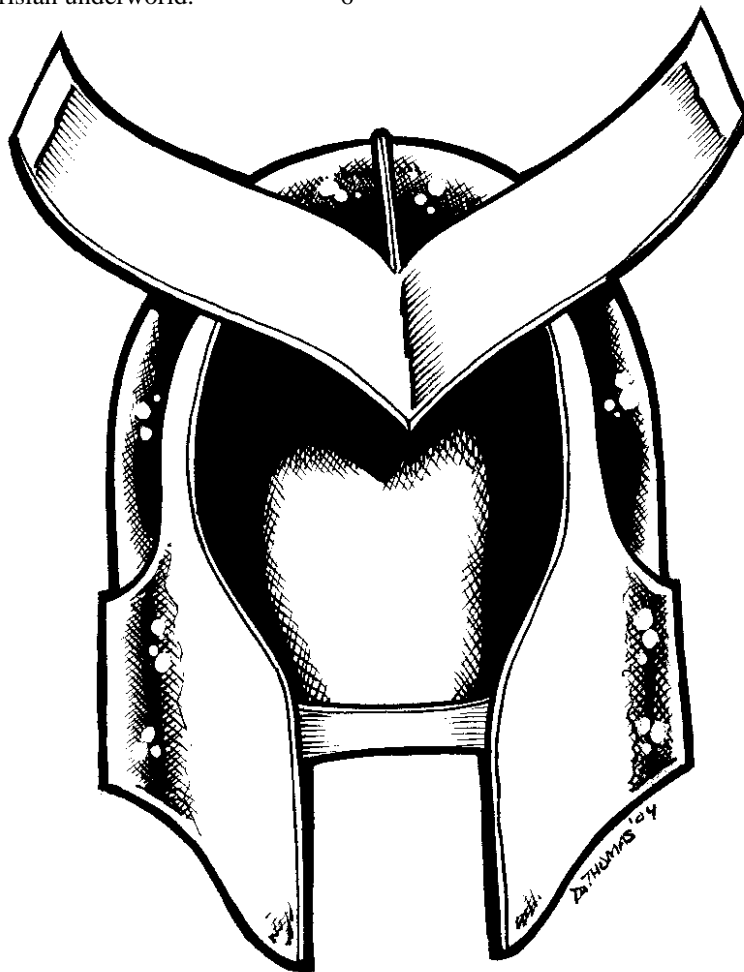
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DIGITAL HERO

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Issue #25 (November 2004)



When Last We Left Our Heroes...

by Steven S. Long

Last month I covered two of this year's several mystic-themed books. This month I'll wrap up the "Year of the Mystic" with two more, *Vibora Bay* and *The Ultimate Mystic*.

Vibora Bay

Vibora Bay is the third of Hero Games's setting books detailing the amazing world of the Champions Universe. Unlike Millennium City, which embodies many of the latest technological advances and does its best to live up to its nickname of "the City of the Future," Vibora Bay is a place that partakes as much of days gone by as the days to come. It's a City of Shadows, where more than a few old traditions still hold sway, and strange beings may lurk in the alleys and swamps, on the lookout for unwary prey....

Chapter One, *The Queen City*, discusses the history of Vibora Bay and the surrounding region. Beginning with prehistoric times and advancing all the way into the twenty-first century, it describes how the tides of time have washed over Vibora Bay – sometimes changing it, sometimes breaking on the rocks of custom and tradition.

Chapter Two, *The Lay Of The Land*, describes the geography and climate of Vibora Bay. It also discusses the layout of the city itself – its neighborhoods, districts, and streets – as well as the city government. If you want to know what's going on in the Tangles, or how Easton differs from Weston, this chapter will tell you.

Chapter Three, *A Day In The Life*, reviews what things are like day-to-day in Vibora Bay: the daily grind; major annual events; media and cultural attractions; the city's subcultures (including the notorious High Apostolic Church). It also describes three of the city's best-known superheroes – Black Mask X, Dr. Ka, and Redsnake.

Chapter Four, *Cops And Robbers*, describes what law enforcement and crime are like in Vibora Bay. The VBPD is a force of dedicated peace officers trying to hold the line against not only regular criminals, but some decidedly stranger threats to public safety. They have the help of federal agencies (such as the FBI), as well as some organizations and superheroes they're not entirely aware of. The rest of the chapter covers their opposite number: the denizens of the Vibora Bay underworld, such as the Sweetland family, the Big Picture, VIPER, and more. At the end of this chapter you'll find character sheets for a few more heroes – Amphibian, Sister Rain and Brother Thunder, and Juryrig.

Chapter Five, *Hot Spots For Cool Heroes*, presents eight significant Queen City locations that are likely to appear in your Vibora Bay adventures: the Mahogany Club; Sterling Manor; Gabriel's Alley; the Sixth Chakra; the Crabtree Building; the White Hare Hotel; Sweetland's Restaurant; and Marty's Place. Some of them are elegant and upscale, others dark and dangerous – but they're all interesting.



The concluding chapter of the book is for the GM's eyes only. In addition to the secret history of the area, and general advice about GMing games set in Vibora Bay, it contains the GM's Vault – the truth about what's going on in Vibora Bay that only the GM should know. In addition to many plot seeds, the GM can also find character sheets for several villains in this chapter, including Valerian Scarlet, the Cirque Sinister, Deadman Walkin', and the infamous Skunk Ape.

The Ultimate Mystic

The second of this year's *Ultimate* series books, *The Ultimate Mystic* is written by Dean Shomshak, author of *The Mystic World* and *Arcane Adversaries*. It looks at magic and mysticism for all genres and settings (though it skims over Fantasy, since *Fantasy Hero* has an entire 50,000-word chapter devoted to the subject of magic in Fantasy games).

The Ultimate Mystic differs a bit from other *Ultimate* books, because a *HERO System* mystic isn't defined by any particular Characteristic, Skill, or Powers – he's defined by the *reason* for his powers. His magic connects him to aspects of reality most people never see. He meets gods and spirits face to face. He knows the world doesn't work the way most people think – and visits other worlds, too. He doesn't just use magic, he knows why it works. And that connection, that knowledge, sets him apart from other people. Even if a mystic flaunts his powers, most people cannot really understand him because they lack his knowledge and experiences. Thus, this *Ultimate* book is a bit more rules-light than most other *Ultimates*... but it's full of fascinating information and guidelines nevertheless.

Chapter One, *Paths Of Power*, covers all the aspects of creating a mystical character. In addition to looking at Powers, Skills, and other game mechanics, it discusses various types of mystical characters. Although it concentrates on true mystics – characters who cast spells – it also discusses gods, spirits, vampires, occult investigators, wielders of magical items, and other supernatural creatures as characters. They aren't spellcasters (at least, not usually, and not by the standard definition of “spellcaster”), but mystics interact with them a lot, and they fall within the “mystic” category as most gamers conceive of it.

Mystics often move between the material, human world and supernatural Otherworlds. Chapter Two, *Realms Beyond*, describes the sorts of planes mystics may visit, and tells how to create a “Multiverse” of mystic dimensions. It even includes a sample Multiverse based on Hermetic magic, called *Ptolemy Resurgent*.

Chapter Three, *The Arts Arcane*, is about magic – different types and styles of magic from around the world, throughout history, and from legend and fiction. It describes each of the major and minor styles, offering sample spells and suggested game mechanics for each. Its coverage includes Hermetic Theurgy, Alchemy, Necromancy, Voodoo, Kabbalism, Taoist Theurgy, Rune Magic, and plenty of other, more obscure, styles that will give you all sorts of ideas for new characters and adventures.

Chapter Four, *Magic, Genre By Genre*, shows how to use mystical characters in various gaming genres. Not every sort of mystic fits comfortably in every genre, and some genres include mystical character types all their own, and this chapter tells you all about that.

Chapter Five, *Mist And Shadows*, rounds out the book with a guide to the special subculture of mystics and supernatural creatures. Denizens of this Mystic World range from powerless charlatans to omnipotent gods. While this chapter concentrates on the Mystical World as a secret, magical side to the modern world, much of the chapter also applies to settings where the supernatural is an open, familiar part of life.

So get ready... there's another double dose of mysticism headin' your way before it's time to walk the dark and dangerous streets of Hudson City, or brave the perils of the Valdorian Age!

— Steven S. Long
HERO System Line Developer





HEROglyphs by Steven S. Long

One of the areas of the *HERO System* that I think needs a little expansion is the *Physical Limitation Disadvantage*. As it stands, it offers relatively few “pigeonholes” into which gamers can place the enormous variety of physical and mental disabilities characters can suffer from. Just for fun, let’s see what an expanded version of Physical Limitation might look like.

PHYSICAL LIMITATION (EXPANDED)

Val Limitation Occurs

- 5 *Infrequently*: The Physical Limitation affects the character at least once every five or so game sessions
- 10 *Frequently*: The Physical Limitation affects the character at least once every three or four game sessions
- 15 *Very Frequently*: The Physical Limitation affects the character at least once every other game session
- 20 *All the Time*: The Physical Limitation affects the character every single game session

Val Limitation Impairs

- +0 *Barely*: Even when it affects the character during game play, the Physical Limitation rarely has a significant impact on his ability to function effectively
- +5 *Slightly*: The Physical Limitation tends to impair the character’s ability to function effectively by 25-50% when it affects him
- +10 *Greatly*: The Physical Limitation tends to impair the character’s ability to function effectively by 51-75% when it affects him
- +15 *Fully*: The Physical Limitation tends to impair the character’s ability to function effectively by 76-100% when it affects him

The GM may, in his discretion, adjust the value of a Physical Limitation up or down to reflect campaign circumstances or the true degree of a character’s impairment.

FREQUENCY

With this version of Physical Limitation, as with the standard version, the most important issue is the Disadvantage’s “frequency” – that is, how often it tends to become a factor in game play. A Physical Limitation “affects” a character when it has a measurable effect on his ability to function during the game. Obviously many physical conditions, such as lameness or lack of a particular sense, affect a character “all the time.” The issue for game purposes is how often the handicap arises in gameplay as something that hinders the character. The mere fact that the condition exists doesn’t entitle the character to any Disadvantage points – he gets the points because his condition restricts his ability to act and function *in important game situations*.

DEGREE OF IMPAIRMENT

The second consideration when valuing a Physical Limitation is how greatly it impairs the character’s ability to function when it becomes a factor in the game. Some Physical Limitations barely hinder the character at all, while others cripple him to the point of utter ineffectiveness. The GM should be wary of Physical Limitations that have both a high frequency and a high degree of impairment – given how they can hinder a character and interfere with gameplay, allowing them into the game may not be worthwhile.

Examples

Using the Expanded Physical Limitation table, here’s how I’d build some of the example Physical Limitations provided in various *HERO System* books:

MISCELLANEOUS PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS

Here are a few miscellaneous Physical Limitations.

Val Description

- 35 *No Hands* (All The Time, Fully Impairing)
- 25 *No Knowledge Of Earth Culture* (Very Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
- 25 *Unable to Walk*: character must also sell back his Running 6” (Very Frequently, Greatly Impairing)

SENSORY PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS

Lack of, or a reduced degree of, a Sense or Sense Group is a common Physical Limitation in many genres.

Val Description

- 35 *Blindness*: character has no Sight Group Senses (All the Time, Fully Impairing)
- 25 *Deafness*: character has no Hearing Group Senses (Very Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
- 10 *No Chemoreception*: character has no Smell/Taste Group Senses (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 5 *Numbness I*: character has no Touch Group Senses (no defined game effect) (Infrequently, Barely Impairing)
- 25 *Numbness II*: character has no Touch Group Senses (suffers a -3 or greater penalty on Skill and Characteristic Rolls that involve handling or grasping physical objects, including many Attack rolls) (Very Frequently, Greatly Impairing)

Other Sensory Restrictions

- 10 *Heavy Sleeper*: character suffers additional -3 penalty to Hearing PER Rolls to perceive intruders and wake up (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 20 *Missing One Eye*: character lacks depth perception (he is 1/2 OCV with all Ranged Attacks) and has no peripheral vision on one side (Frequently, Greatly Limiting)
- 5 *No Mental Awareness*: character has Mental Powers but no Mental Awareness (Infrequently, Slightly Limiting [restricted to 5 Character Points because that's all it costs to buy Mental Awareness])

SIZE/WEIGHT PHYSICAL LIMITATION

In many genres, it's possible that characters could be permanently larger or smaller than human normal, which can cause problems.

Val Description

- 30 *Insectile*: character is down to 1/64 human size and/or mass (.032m, or .016") or smaller, and suffers +18" Knockback from attacks (All The Time, Greatly Impairing)
- 25 *Minute*: character is down to 1/32 human size and/or mass (.064m, or .032"), and suffers +15" Knockback from attacks (All The Time, Slightly Impairing)

- 20 *Minuscule*: character is down to 1/16 human size and/or mass (.125m, or .064"), and suffers +12" Knockback from attacks (Very Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 15 *Tiny*: character is down to 1/8 human size and/or mass (.25m, or .125"), and suffers +6" Knockback from attacks (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 10 *Diminutive*: character is down to one-quarter human size and/or mass (.5m, or 1/4"), and suffers +6" Knockback from attacks (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 5 *Small*: character is down to half human size and/or mass (1m, or 1/2"), and suffers +3" Knockback from attacks (Infrequently, Barely Impairing)
- 0 Human size and/or mass (no Limitation)
- 10 *Large*: character is up to twice human size and/or mass (4m, or 2"), and is -2 DCV and +2 to PER Rolls to perceive him (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 15 *Enormous*: character is up to four times human size and/or mass (8m, or 2.1-4"), and is -4 DCV and +4 to PER Rolls to perceive him (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 20 *Huge*: character is up to eight times human size and/or mass (16m, or 4.1-8"), and is -6 DCV and +6 to PER Rolls to perceive him (Very Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 20 *Gigantic*: character is up to 16 times human size and/or mass (32m, or 8.1-16"), and is -8 DCV and +8 to PER Rolls to perceive him (Very Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 25 *Gargantuan*: character is up to 32 times human size and/or mass (64m, or 16.1-32"), and is -10 DCV and +10 to PER Rolls to perceive him (All The Time, Slightly Impairing)
- 30 *Colossal*: character is up to 64 times human size and/or mass (128 m, or 32.1-64") or larger, and is -12 DCV and +12 to PER Rolls to perceive him (All The Time, Greatly Impairing)



FUN FACTS ABOUT ABSINTHE

Noteworthy for having driven more Parisian artists and writers mad than any other substance known to man, absinthe is a strong-herbal liqueur distilled with wormwood and anise. It typically contains other aromatic herbs such as fennel, licorice, hyssop, veronica, lemon balm, angelica root, dittany, coriander, juniper, and nutmeg. Its predominate flavor is licorice. Traditionally, absinthe is prepared by slowly pouring iced water over a cube of sugar resting on a slotted spoon. The cold water dissolves the sugar and this solution trickles into the glass, diluting the green absinthe and turning it a richer, lighter color. This process is typically known as the “French Method.”

In short, absinthe is a very strong alcoholic beverage that also has hallucinogenic properties (wormwood and anise are mild poisons) that have an effect that has been described as a clear, full-body high. Chemist and absinthe expert T.A. Breaux describes it as a push-me, pull-you effect of the various herbs, some have a heightening effect while others have a lowering effect. All



You Gotta Have Character

by Jason Walters

“Life is lived forwards, but understood backwards.” — Kierkegaard

The club was absolutely jumping that night. Well, to be honest, it always is. The Moulin Rouge (The Red Mill) — all sleazy with bright lights like an aging hooker painted up to cover her wrinkled skin. Theater, concert hall, dance hall, and near-brothel all packed into a single reeking piece of real estate. A place where the respectable can go to jostle elbows with the despicable and disreputable. People come to The Moulin Rouge from all over Paris to dance, to watch others dance, or to watch each other watch others dance. More importantly to me, Lautrec was there, seated at the same table he occupied every night like some grotesque little gargoyle perched on the ledge of a crumbling gothic church. He’d stay there all evening too, drinking and sketching everything that caught his fancy, particularly the dancers and the hookers.

I made my way toward the little artist’s table by pushing through the crowd of small Parisians like an arctic explorer’s ship breaking through packed ice. Suddenly a flamboyantly dressed man to my right struck an angular young woman with the flat of his palm. A pimp beating a whore. She fell to the ground with a groan, raising her thin arms up to protect her face from the second blow that she knew would quickly follow... but it never came. I had the man’s wrist in my mitt, and when I get hold of somebody he doesn’t get free until I feel like letting him go. And I didn’t feel like letting this particular scoundrel go.

The flashy little pimp pivoted angrily around, reaching into a jacket pocket for something: most likely a revolver or switchblade. I discouraged him by shaking his entire body like a terrier brandishing a rat. Then I looked right into his eyes, two little pools of cold watery grey jelly like you’d find on a dead fish. Mine are cold blue and, so they tell me, look like they are made out of hard broken glass. They are not friendly eyes, but then again I am not a friendly man.

It was then I think that the little hustler recognized me. The sneer dropped from his rat face like a curtain falling across a stage. He raised his free hand, palm open, into the air parallel to the one I was holding.

“*Je pars!*” he squeaked out in alarm, “*Il n’y a aucun besoin de combattre!*”

I’m leaving, he says. There’s no need to fight. I couldn’t have agreed less but I let the little cretin go all the same. In his haste to get away from me he backed into a waiter, spilling cheap champagne all over the dance floor. Then vanished into the crowd screeching “*Le Bâtard! Le Bâtard!*” That’s what they call me in Paris: Le Bâtard. The Bastard. Lautrec’s comedian friend Bruant hung that little moniker around my thick neck one night at Les Ambassadeurs. Most Parisians thought that it was because of my infamous reputation as the city’s only American cop: a barbarian, in other words. But Bruant, being something of a *Bâtard* himself, had made a private joke for our little circle of friends. He knew that it was literally true: my mother had been a prostitute.

I helped the young woman to her feet. She was obviously a recently turned out trollop brought to Moulin Rouge to work the crowd. Recognizing me she silently mouthed out my name, then bent up and kissed me on the cheek before she too vanished into the crowd. I probably would have smiled if I did such things. Much like Lautrec I was well loved by the district’s *demimonde*. Most thought that it was because I turned a blind eye to their crimes, but the prostitutes themselves had other reasons for trusting me.

At last I made my way to the little nobleman’s table. As I took a seat he turned his portfolio around with a crooked smile to show me a crude sketch of a large, blocky figure holding a much smaller one in the air with one hand. An obviously female figure with large breasts looked on admiringly from the far side of the drawing.

I lit a cigarette. Unfortunately it was a *Gaulois*, so it tasted like dirt.

“Henri, I should arrest you for impersonating an artist,” I commented dryly as he beamed up at me. “If you’re going to use me as a model why not get into fairy tale art like your friend Aubrey Beardsley? You could use me as a model for an ogre and yourself as a model for a goblin or pixie of some sort. Then you could use your friend Bruant to model the king’s fool.”

Lautrec chuckled darkly at my witticisms. He had a surprisingly deep voice for such a small man, complex and full of bitterness. He gestured at me with his charcoal pencil.

“You are a funny man for a cowboy. Do they have some sort of cabaret circuit out on the wild frontier you could work if your law enforcement career doesn’t pan out?”

“My dear Baron I’m from Chicago, a modest burg roughly the size and population of London. I wouldn’t know a cow from a coyote in broad daylight.”

The little artist waved his hand in a dismissive gesture that indicated I was letting reality get in the way of a good jest. I shrugged; comedy wasn’t really my strong point. Catching the city’s gutter-scum predators was.

“Henri, let’s get serious for a moment,” I murmured leaning across the table toward him. It creaked under my weight. “There was a murder last night. In an alleyway three blocks from here.”

“Msgr. Bâtard this is Montmartre. People die here all the time. We of this district are to vice what the men of Far Cathay are to silk: producers and exporters as well as consumers.”

“That’s all very droll Msgr. Lautrec. Comments like that must pass as wit at the sort of bohemian soirees you frequent.” I glared harshly down at him to emphasize my point. “The victim was a streetwalker named Marie Avril; a friend of yours, if I am not mistaken.”

Lautrec looked at me like I had just punched him in the stomach, which is to day like he was going to die. Then he shook visibly for several moments: first with impotent rage then, after a moment had passed, with genuine sorrow. Finally with trembling hands he poured himself a tall glass of emerald green absinth from a bottle in the center of the table. Sipping it caused him to shake considerably less.

“How did it happen?” he asked in a tiny voice.

“I don’t think you want to know the details.”

He stared down into his glass.

“*La Goule de Paris?* In Montmartre?”

I nodded. Yes. The Ghoul of Paris.

“Did you think there was a special protective spell around your home?” I asked not unkindly. “The Ghoul has struck in Clichy and Le Villette within the last month, so why not here as well? He probably thinks that the authorities will not bother to investigate his... activities outside of the city’s limits. Well, if so he is wrong.”

“What can I do to help, Robert?” he asked. The diminutive painter seldom used my first name, but he was rallying after the initial shock. Just as I hoped he would.

“Henri, you know more about what goes on in this hellhole than any man alive. You know every gang boss, every gambler, every whore, and every pickpocket. They owe you favors and they trust you. Me they understand, hell some of them even *like* me ’cause I treat every man the same, but they don’t *trust* me. Somewhere out there in Montmartre somebody knows something about The Ghoul, or they know somebody who does. I want to know what they know Henri, I want to know it badly and I want to know it now. Because when I gets his hands on this blackguard...”

I slammed one of my large fists on the table, causing all of the glasses to jump into the air. He knew what I would do. The souls of a dozen women screamed out to me for vengeance every night in my dreams, demanding that I do what they could not. Who would I be to refuse them? When Le Bâtard at last laid his hands on The Ghoul of Paris there would be no mercy.

“I will help you catch and punish this monster, Robert, or I will die trying.” The small painter spoke with real conviction in his voice, “I’m your man. From here on out I will have my ear to the ground in every nightclub, tavern, brothel, and gutter in this district until he is brought to justice. So swears Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.”

the same, it basically killed Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (ok, Henri killed Henri, but you know what I mean), encouraged Van Gough to cut his ear off, and helped drive Oscar Wilde to a life of... er, being Oscar Wilde.

QUOTATIONS

“These people annoy me. They want me to finish things. But I see them in such a way and paint them accordingly. Look, it is so easy to finish things. I can easily paint you a Bastien-Lepage.... Nothing is simpler than to complete pictures in a superficial sense. Never does one lie so cleverly as then.”

“In our time there are many artists who do something because it is new; they see their value and their justification in this newness. They are deceiving themselves; novelty is seldom the essential. This has to do with one thing only; making a subject better from its intrinsic nature.”

“You only find God when you are drunk, laying in a whore’s bed.”

“I paint the dance girls because they are the ingenuous soul of Paris.”

“Love is when the desire to be desired takes you so badly that you feel you could die of it.”

**DARK
CHAMPIONS
TOULOUSE-
LAUTREC PLOT
SEEDS**

A mysterious masked murderer has been stalking the city's prostitutes, killing them in various sinister ways. With the police are stumped due to the lack of solid evidence several of the female PCs agree to disguise themselves as streetwalkers in an attempt to draw the killer out. Henri agrees to help by introducing the undercover PCs to the City's *demimonde*.

Things have turned violent between three rival factions of drug dealers, resulting in a street war. Several innocent bystanders have already been killed in the crossfire. The PCs approach Toulouse-Lautrec for assistance in the hopes that the feuding gangs can be brought together for a "peace conference" at a neutral location. Unbeknownst to Henri, several of the PCs feel that this will be an excellent opportunity to "take care" of the City's drug problem once and for all.

Unfortunately, the Russian Mafia has also gotten wind of the meeting as well as the renegade PCs' plans. The end result: a five way shoot out a la *True Romance*.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec



DIGITAL HERO #25

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [2]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
8	CON	-4	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
14	PRE	4	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
9	COM	0	11-	
2	PD	0		Total: 2 PD (0 rPD)
2	ED	0		Total: 2 ED (0 rED)
2	SPD	0		Phases: 6, 12
4	REC	0		
16	END	0		
19	STUN	0		

Total Characteristic Cost: 16

Movement: Running: 4"/8"
Leaping: 1"/2"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost Perks

- 6 Contact: Powerful Underworld Figure 12- (Significant Contacts of His Own, Useful Skills or Resources, Good Relationship)
- 1 Favor: Beautiful Prostitute
- 1 Favor: Chief of Police
- 1 Favor: Crime Boss
- 1 Favor: Mysterious Vigilante
- 1 Favor: Nefarious Smuggler
- 1 Favor: Nightclub Owner
- 1 Favor: Popular Musician
- 1 Favor: Wealthy Nobleman
- 6 Fringe Benefit: Son of the Count Alphonse-Charles de Toulouse
- 10 Money: Wealthy
- 3 Reputation: Popular Parisian Artist and Illustrator (small to medium sized group) 11-, +3/+3d6

Skills

- 3 AK: Montmartre Section of Paris 13-
- 3 Bribery 12-
- 3 Conversation 12-
- 8 Gambling (Card Games, Dice Games, Dog Racing, Horse Racing, Roulette) 13-
- 3 High Society 12-
- 4 KS: Painting and Illustrating 14-
- 4 KS: Art History 14-
- 3 KS: The Paris Underworld 13-
- 6 PS: Artist and Illustrator 15-
- 3 Sleight Of Hand 12-
- 9 Streetwise 15-
- 2 Survival (Urban) 13-

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 85

Total Cost: 100

50+ Disadvantages

- 5 Dependence: Alcohol (1d6 Damage per Hour, Very Common)
- 15 Distinctive Features: Normal Sized Man with Abnormally Short Legs (Not Concealable)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Short, Crippled Legs (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Insecure about His Height (Very Common, Moderate)

Total Disadvantage Points: 100

Many important painters lived in Paris at the close of the 19th Century. Gauguin, Van Gogh, and Renoir all made the City of Lights their home, as did countless authors, poets, playwrights, actors, philosophers, and adventurers of all sorts. Yet it was a small crippled aristocrat named Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec who best captured the *zeitgeist* of the Parisian nightlife of the period through his vivid Japanese-inspired illustrations. Today we remember him as the quintessential bohemian artist of the *belle époque* (or "beautiful era") in Paris at the close of the Victorian Age. At the time, however, he was a controversial figure, a fallen malformed nobleman more at home in the nightclubs and brothels of the Montmartre District than the drawing rooms of France's upper class.

Yet Henri Toulouse-Lautrec captured the spirit of his era in his posters, portraits, and sketches. A dabbler in numerous techniques, he was influenced at one time or another by Japanese woodblock art, Pointillism, the Impressionists, and the Italian masters. This is reflected in the prodigious amount of work he produced in just 16 years of effort. In all, Toulouse-Lautrec produced over 730 oil paintings, 275 lithography prints, and 5,000 sketches in his short lifetime.

Someone has kidnapped Henri, breaking the unwritten law of the City's criminal class that he is to be left alone. With the help of several powerful NPC gangsters, the PCs must find and rescue the little artist from his tormenters... before it is too late.

Background/History: Henri Marie Raymond de Toulouse-Lautrec-Monfa was born into an aristocratic and rich family in the south of France. The family had existed in the Languedoc region for nearly a thousand years. His father, the incredibly eccentric Comte Alphonse-Charles de Toulouse, was a direct descendent of the counts of Toulouse. His mother, Countess Adele Tapie de Celeyran, came from the Aude region of France. As a young boy Henri enjoyed the privileged life of a French nobleman's son. He lived surrounded by uncles, aunts, and cousins as well as a small army of servants who attended to his every need. A curious, vigorous, and often boisterous child he divided his time between hunting and horseback riding. He also received painting and drawing lessons from a skilled artist named Rene Princeteau.

At the age of 8, Henri became seriously ill. Afflicted with fevers and severe headaches, he was bedridden for a lengthy period of time. When he at last recovered from this illness he suffered from a permanent condition that prevented his bones from healing properly. Tragically, at age twelve, he broke his left leg. The next year he broke his right one. Thereafter both legs ceased to grow while the rest of his body continued to grow normally. He reached maturity with a body trunk of normal size but with abnormally short legs, standing only 4½ feet tall.

Deprived of the physical life that a normal body would have permitted, Toulouse-Lautrec began to live completely for his art. His father introduced him to the deaf mute painter Rene Priceteau, who was so impressed with Henri's ability that he quickly enrolled him in the studio of the well-known French Impressionist master Bonnat. At the age of 17, Henri left home to live with Bonnat. Unfortunately the irascible painter developed an intense (and completely mutual) dislike for the young aristocrat. At odds with his teacher, Toulouse-Lautrec left to enroll with a competing master painter named Ferdinand Cormon, the man who would later become Vincent Van Gogh's mentor. Henri thrived under his new instructor. He visited dozens of galleries to study the techniques of other painters, especially impressionists and Japanese woodblock artists. Meanwhile Cormon made sure that Henri acquired a solid foundation in traditional painting.

By the time he was 20, the young nobleman was beginning to look for his own artistic direction. Looking for inspiration, Henri moved to the infamous Montmartre district of Paris in 1887. The bohemian center of the City of Light's nightclub scene, Montmartre was also home to large numbers of manual laborers, tradesmen,

hoodlums, pimps, prostitutes, and quirky artists of various sorts. It was also where the city's brothels, cabarets, dance halls, and racetracks were located. Popular locations such as the Le Chat Noir (The Black Cat), Le Lapin Angile (The Nimble Rabbit), and the notorious Le Moulin Rouge (The Red Mill) buzzed with life as the most reputable of Parisians debauched themselves alongside of the city's shadiest denizens. From his studio behind the Rue Ganneron cemetery, Toulouse-Lautrec began to extensively document the swirling, desperate life around him. He prowled the streets, alleyways, bars, and brothels of the district in search of new subjects for his art. Very much an active participant in the nightlife around him, Henri spent his evenings at crowded nightclub tables drinking and laughing while at the same time making quick sketches of what went on around him. The following morning back in his studio he transformed these rough sketches into lithographs or brightly colored paintings.

As he worked, Toulouse-Lautrec was developing his own distinctive artistic style, one that was uniquely suited to the emerging Parisian *belle époque* (or "beautiful era") culture of the late 19th Century. Like many Impressionists, Henri collected Japanese art, especially examples from the Ukiyo-e school of woodblock prints. Indeed, he lived in almost the same environment in which these great works of art were created: the world of pleasure districts, restaurants, actresses, theaters, and brothels. Both were to have a very pervasive influence on his style. For Henri, movement and forms within his art were very important, as was the desire to produce eye-catching figures. In his work, asymmetric composition and the use of large, flat areas of color are undoubtedly inspired by Japanese prints, while other aspects of his art were dictated by its commercial nature. For, much like the Ukiyo-e artist from the other side of the globe, Henri's work was paid for by commissions: prints and posters created as advertisements for plays, eating establishments, and taverns. In doing so he propelled into art history his various friends, such as Le Moulin Rouge dancers Louise Weber (also known as La Goulue) and the combative singer, businessman, and poet Aristide Bruant.

Yet in the end Henri's constitution was simply too frail to sustain his lifestyle. Fast women, rich food, and constant alcohol abuse (especially consumption of the hallucinogenic liquor absinth) all took their toll on his health. By 1897 he was spending far more time in Montmartre's bars than he was in his studio, resulting in a (largely physical) nervous breakdown in 1899. Persuaded by his family to seek treatment for his alcoholism, Toulouse-Lautrec tried to recover his strength at a seaside

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resort in Normandy but it was no use – his health was completely ruined. After suffering a stroke that resulted in partial paralysis of his body, Henri was taken to his mother’s castle on August 20th where he died in her arms a few days later. He last words were, “You, mother, none other but you.”

Personality/Motivation: Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec is a man caught in the grips of physical, emotional, and spiritual torment. Possessed of a larger-than-life personality with massive appetites for liqueur, women, companionship, music, and art he is trapped in the sickly, malformed body of a semi-dwarf. His is still haunted by the memories of his robust and athletic youth, recollections that he drowns in massive amounts of alcohol, especially the green narcotic liquor known as absinth. Henri is likely to be intoxicated at any time the PCs may encounter him, even early in the morning.

That said, Henri isn’t outwardly a particularly melancholy person. A skilled conversationalist, he can make polite, flattering small talk for hours if needs be. He has no particular desire to inflict his problems on others or to spread his misery around. He also works very hard at his chosen vocation as the painter-documenter of his beloved city’s bohemian nightlife, sketching all night as he carouses with his friends then waking up in the morning to flesh them out with paint. For all his desperate whore mongering, art and alcohol are Toulouse-Lautrec’s only real mistresses. They are the lovers to whom he devotes nearly all of his time and energy.

To be truly devoted to the subjects of his art Henri feels that he must really *know* them, not just observe them from a distance. Thus he has developed a bizarre symbiotic relationship with Paris’ underworld, with its prostitutes, crime lords, poverty stricken writers, political radicals, pickpockets, musicians, and nightclub devotees. Because of his artistic talent and unassuming nature they accept him as a normal part of their world, giving him pass to travel freely among them like a cloud’s shadow passing over a spring field. It is this access to the Parisian *demimonde* with is most likely to draw the PCs to make contact with him.

Quote: “I had placed my stick on the table, as I do every evening. It had been specially made to suit my height, to enable me to walk without too much difficulty. As I was standing up, a customer called to me, ‘Monsieur, don’t forget your pencil.’ It was very unkind, but most funny.”

Powers/Tactics: Henri obviously has no combat value; indeed, he is more or less helpless in the face of violence. His only defense against physical aggression is the loyalty of his numerous friends, many of whom are dangerous, well-connected, well-armed, or otherwise capable characters in their own right. Henri is well thought of by nearly everyone in the Montmartre section of Paris, including its many less-than-totally-respectable citizens. Though he is known to be the son of a Count, the district’s muggers, pickpockets, and kidnappers all either avoid him or are acquaintances of his, as Henri paints the portraits of wealthy crime lords, lowly hoodlums, policemen, disreputable musicians, and prostitutes with equal skill and enthusiasm.

As an accepted member (indeed chronicler) of the Montmartre bohemian *demimonde*, Henri is something of an expert on the Paris underworld. He can and does move through criminal circles with relative ease, protected by mob bosses and powerful madams who have come to accept the little crippled artist as an important part of their social scene. It’s also worth mentioning that Henri is no saint. Besides his artistic abilities he has considerable skills in the areas of bribery, gambling, urban survival, petty theft, and the black market.... when he chooses to use them. He also has a healthy appetite for prostitutes, alcohol, and drugs that he indulges at every possible opportunity.

With all that, it is easy to forget that Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, with his low tastes and bohemian ways, was originally a child of privilege raised to be a high-ranking nobleman. It’s not as though he has forgotten how to interact with French high society if he has to. Henri is classically educated, eloquent, and can be quite charming in a dry, urbane sort of way when he chooses to be. He is also quite affluent, although it would be hard to guess it from his appearance. It’s also fairly safe to say that Henri rather have his legs broken all over again than be a part of the world that so thoroughly scorned him.

Campaign Use: Forget Victorian Paris for the moment. Many powerful and infamous people in your campaign’s primary city owe Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec useful favors, ones that he would probably be willing to sacrifice for a good cause such as saving a kidnapped woman or preventing harm from coming to his city. He also possesses a great deal of information about the city’s criminal element that he would probably be willing to share with the PCs for, again, extraordinarily good reasons. Telling him that they want to “stop the drug dealers” or “put an

end to prostitution” won’t particularly impress him because he’s a libertine who approves of such activities. Telling him that Black Paladin plans to destroy Greenwich Village is an entirely different matter, however, and Henri will willingly act as a spy or agent for the PCs under those circumstances (as will a lot of underworld types, actually).

Although he is considered by most art historians to be one of the quintessential turn-of-the-century post-Impressionist French bohemian artists, Toulouse-Lautrec best serves a GM as a helpful background character for a grim, urban *Dark Champions* campaign set in any era. No real changes to his write-up are required to move him forward in time from the brothels and nightclubs Victorian France to the hip restaurants and goth clubs of modern San Francisco or New York. Simply change his name, tweak his background story a little bit, and he will serve exactly the same function in a modern age campaign as he would one in the past. Henri can be bought as a *Contact: Toulouse-Lautrec (Significant Contacts of His Own, Useful Skills or Resources, Good Relationship)* 12- for 6 points.

Appearance: The victim of several crippling childhood accidents, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec is an extraordinarily short man. Standing at just a little over four and a half feet tall, he walks with a cane in his left hand to help compensate for the fact that one of his legs is even shorter than the other. Henri wears expensive, specially tailored “high pocket” suits to help conceal this odd physique. This attire, when combined with his “Amish” style artist’s beard, thick intellectual’s glasses, and overall drunken seediness, publicly mark Toulouse-Lautrec as a Parisian of the most eccentric type.

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The Helmet of Dr. Destroyer

by Bob Greenwade

Of all of the supervillains of the Champions Universe, few are more feared than Dr. Destroyer. In his perennial quest for a terror-filled world conquest, he has utilized technology so powerful that, on one occasion, the entire city of Detroit was demolished.

By the time of the Terran Empire, however, Dr. Destroyer is considered as much a mythical figure as all other superheroes of the 20th and early 21st Centuries.

As described in *Terran Empire* (page 6) and *Alien Wars* (page 5), most people of the 24th through 30th Centuries regard superheroes as purely fictional myths, mostly created by popular media such as television and comic books. Even if they did exist back then, the vast majority of people don't care – it doesn't affect their lives today one way or the other, so why should they?

Still, it takes all kinds to make a universe. Just as some people in our own society pursue their own theories of various assassinations and mysterious deaths of the 1960s, so there are people in the 27th Century whose interest lies in proving the truth about the existence of superhumans in the 20th. And, just as assassination theorists are considered lunatic fringe today, so “superhuman theorists” are considered so in the Terran Empire.

This adventure is meant for a group of PCs in the Terran Empire setting. The exact number of PCs, their point totals, and their experience level are not extremely important, since most of the scenario is resolved through roleplaying and (hopefully) clever tactics.

To properly run this scenario, the GM will need only *Terran Empire* (and, of course, the *HERO System 5th Edition*). Ownership of certain other books – *Spacer's Toolkit*, *Alien Wars*, *Star Hero*, *The Ultimate Martial Artist*, and/or *Conquerors, Killers, and Crooks* – would be helpful, but are not required.

“And So, It Begins...”

The bulk of this scenario takes place on Henamak IV, a world just inside the Mon'dabi Federation. Technically also within the Vorşan Expanse, it's a hot, arid desert world with rudimentary carbon-based life (plants and small animals).

Getting the PCs involved should be little, if any trouble. If they're independent contractors, they can be hired by the Fanboys to accompany them to Henamak IV. The trio could be expecting more trouble than they're used to (such as if Bertrand Devereaux is involved, as discussed later), or their own ship may be broken down or simply not fast enough to make the trip with the speed they'd like to make.

If the PCs work for the Imperial government (nearly any branch will do), they may be assigned to accompany the Fanboys to Henamak IV. Diplomatically speaking, this would be an *extremely* sensitive matter; the Imperial government's main claim to the helmet is that it's an Earth artifact and therefore rightfully belongs to Earth. However, the Xenovores and Mon'dabi both have different rules regarding such things and may make a claim.

Government-employed PCs with undercover identities – particularly with the Imperial Security Police – may have both of the above apply to them.

Since the rebellion would have little interest in an ancient Terran artifact, getting rebel PCs involved in this adventure will be more difficult. The lure of possible technology beyond the Empire's current level, proof of a centuries-long government cover-up, or some other potential edge against Imperial forces might make a difference, though.

However it works out, roleplay the initial involvement and the journey to Henamak IV to whatever extent works in the campaign. This could take only a few minutes, or an entire session, depending on the GM's preferred level of detail.

THE STORY TO DATE

The Fanboys, a semi-notorious trio of the conspiracy-fringe element, claim to have tracked down a significant artifact of the early 21st Century: the helmet of Dr. Destroyer. They claim that this would represent proof that superhumans really did exist in the 20th and early 21st Centuries, and lend credibility to their claim that the Imperial government – as well as the governments of the Perseid Empire, the Conjoined Civilizations Republic, and other regions of the galaxy – have been hiding the truth from the people for roughly three centuries. (The reason for this cover-up is a wildly debated question even among the Fanboys themselves, but they do agree that if it's important enough to cover up it's probably important enough to know.)

The helmet's history (as shown later) is rather convoluted, but in the end it can be tracked to a certain Xenovore captain whose ship disappeared several years ago in the Henamak system, just inside the Mon'dabi Federation. The Fanboys are ready to go there and complete their quest, but they expect some resistance.

That's where the PCs come in.

Henamak IV

At first, the Fanboys don't know exactly which planet in the system to look for the Xenovore wreckage on, but it shouldn't be hard to figure out. Only one world is habitable, making it the first logical place to look – and it's the correct one.

PLANETARY SURVEY

If the PCs use ship's sensors to scan Henamak IV, they should be able to learn most of the basic information given about the planet. They will not, however, detect any certain signs of sentient life. If they're particularly skilled or decide to specifically look for sentient life, they may find suggestive or indicative signs (such as evidence of lower life-forms, or certain characteristics in some of the tunnels), but nothing conclusive.

The wreckage of the Xenovore ship is a few miles south of a mountain range stretching across the northern coast of the larger of the planet's two northern continents. The region is a mostly flat plain, with sandy ground, sparse desert grasses, and a few dozen minor species of insect and arachnid. The wreckage itself is strewn over an area nearly thirty kilometers long; even after all these years, the east-to-west orientation of the crash is clearly evident.

THE WRECKAGE

The sandy cover is thin enough (about a meter), the ground beneath firm enough, and the vegetation sparse enough for nearly any surface-capable ship to land wherever its pilot wants. Setting down near the wreckage will not be a problem.

The search through the debris will reveal some interesting features. Essentially, what began as a simple artifact retrieval will become a deepening mystery.

Almost nothing useful remains. The armories are empty, except for a few energy weapons damaged beyond use in the crash. The food stores are empty even of containers. The number of corpses, both Xenovore and "slave-food," are what would be expected, but there is no clothing – not even the captain's robes. A few minor electronic items lying about could be made to work with replaced power packs and other fixes, but that's the most useful thing here.

Naturally, the helmet of Dr. Destroyer is nowhere to be found.

Most interesting, for those with the proper skills, is the way the wreckage is twisted. To a layman it's all the same, but anyone with a relevant skill should be able to see (in most cases without even needing to make a Skill Roll) how only a little over ninety percent of the damage done was from the crash. Several doors and

containers look like they were either pried open with some sort of tool or forced by hand. It's very clear that someone was here before the Fanboys and the PCs – and it looks like it happened not long after the crash itself.

If the PCs don't draw the obvious conclusion, the Fanboys will: whoever ransacked the wreckage probably has the helmet.

SURROUNDED!

At about this moment (with hopefully at least a couple of hours of real time having passed), the PCs and Fanboys are suddenly surrounded by Henamakite warriors, at a ratio of at least three warriors per visitor. They do not attack immediately, but hold their spears at the ready, expecting an immediate surrender.

The Fanboys do surrender, and the PCs *should* follow suit.

One warrior, clearly the leader of the group, gestures to the visitors to follow, and his warriors emphasize the point – with the points on the tips of their spears. If the PCs have the necessary translation technology (or telepathic ability) to communicate with the leader, he simply emphasizes his point in *very* clear terms ("Come with us now, or die a slow and painful death where you stand").

Just in case the PCs don't go along with the plan, the GM should have character sheets and combat records ready for a fight. The warriors' fighting will be as deadly as they can make it – something you should warn them about, demonstrate by killing a minor NPC, or at least suggest given their appearance, expressions, and weaponry. However, they'll stop once the PCs finally do surrender, or until the PCs have a clear upper hand.

Prisoners of the Henamakites

This part of the adventure assumes that the PCs were taken prisoner in the previous encounter. If they weren't taken prisoner but instead routed the warriors, chances are they'll figure out that the locals are probably the ones who ransacked the wreckage and therefore have the helmet (if the PCs don't the Fanboys will). The logical response will be to follow the escaping Henamakites to their home.

THE HOLDING CELLS

As soon as the local warriors have the upper hand, they take anything away from the PCs that even *might* be a weapon, communications device, or anything else that could shift the balance of power.

The nearest entrance to the Henamakite cave complex is in the mountains to the north, and this entrance is where the warriors herd the visitors. Once the party is inside, the captors take visitors through winding tunnels until they get to what

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appears to be a jail of some sort. Each cave-cell is a three-quarter-circle ten feet in diameter, with the front covered by a mesh of bars made of what looks like bamboo (though the core is metal – call it 7 DEF, 3 BODY for purposes of trying to break through). The warriors put the Fanboys and PCs into the cave-cells here, three to a room; obvious females are separated from others, but otherwise the distribution is subject to the GM's judgment.

The PCs and Fanboys are left there for a little under a half hour. During this time, they may converse, strategize, or otherwise talk all they want to; let real time correspond to game time unless it seems inappropriate or awkward. Most ruses to gain freedom will fail; the Henamakites are pretty smart and not easily fooled. However, if one of the PCs is a Puppeteer (*Digital Hero* #8 page 21) play through the escape attempt according to the rules, letting it succeed or fail on its own merits.

All the time the visitors are held captive, whether in these cells or being herded from one place to another, most of the warriors speak to them as little as possible. They don't ignore the prisoners; they simply treat them as being too worthless to speak to. When they speak of the visitors, whether amongst each other or addressing them directly, they call them the "star-fallen" – the Henamakites believe that the visitors are rejects from the Gods, sent from the stars to suffer punishment.

The one exception is a particularly arrogant guard, who tells them – laughing at the very idea – that the only way for them to get out of this alive is for one of them to claim the Right of Combat and defeat their Prime Warrior in single combat to the death. This should be an easy piece of information to share if one of the PCs acts particularly arrogant, but the guard will volunteer it even without provocation.

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER

At the end of the waiting period, several warriors come to take the visitors away. They are bound together by fine but tough metal chains tying their wrists together and keeping them in groups of three or four (treat as a 6 DEF, 3 BODY Entangle) while leaving their legs and feet free.

The scene the Fanboys and PCs are treated to looks like something straight out of a bad mid-20th Century adventure movie. The cavern is a huge one, with most of the local population on hand. A high platform has been carved out of the stone, and the leadership – the Warlord and his family (five wives and nearly two score children), the Prime Warrior and his family (two wives and a half-dozen children), and probably three or four shamans – stand over the crowd. Behind the leaders, a fire burns in a large, long,

rectangular pit of charcoal, and a steel rotisserie, at the moment unadorned by any meat, has been suspended over. At the platform's front center is a large table whose purpose is clear: the ritual sacrifice of sentients. (Feldman comments, "This might actually be funny if it wasn't us on the menu." He gets slapped for his cheekiness.)

Perhaps most prominent of all is the helmet of Dr. Destroyer. A walkway runs behind the fire-pit, and a stairway goes up to a veritable shrine with the helmet as centerpiece.

As the visitors are led onto the platform, the murmur of the crowd reaches a long, pitched, angry cry of, "Aaaaahhh!" (This is their version of a cheer, with the attitude of a war cry.) The Warlord raises his arms for silence, and gets it. He then addresses his people.

"People of the North Mountains," he shouts. "The Gods have favored us over all others, and have seen to our needs – and our victory!" Another cheer rises up; the Warlord lets it go on for about ten seconds.

"Chen'tora the Leader has sent us another group of star-fallen to strengthen us. Through them, Chel-Ka the Armorer provides new, powerful weapons. Helakta the Agrarian brings us new fruit for our bellies. And Zerstop the Destroyer will give our souls the courage and power of these star-fallen!" With this last remark he gestures to the rotisserie, and the crowd cheers again. The Warlord lets the cheer go on; it dies out on its own after about a minute (or until the PCs can finish whatever brief discussion they may want to start at this point, whichever is longer).

When the crowd is quiet again, a servant hands the Warlord a very vicious-looking blade, about a half-meter long with a heavily serrated edge. He carries it over to the visitors, stands in front of the largest of the group, holds the blade over his head with a flourish, and proclaims, "Now we dine!"

GETTING OUT OF THIS MESS

If the PCs do nothing at this point, they'll be killed and eaten. There are several possible ways out of the situation, however.

Donning the Helmet

The helmet is clearly the wrong shape and size to fit the head of any Henamakite, but the right shape and size to fit a human head. This fact has escaped the notice of the Henamakites, but it doesn't have to escape the PCs' notice.

Any PC may use force, guile, persuasion, or any other means to get to the helmet and slide it onto his head. Any attempt other than persuasion (or, perhaps, telekinesis) will be met with as much violent resistance as the Henamakites can muster – an outsider so much as setting foot on the shrine is a heresy punishable by death, and

the means of execution is being thrown into the pit (the fire is generated by a nearby lava flow).

The PCs should be careful in their choice of wearer. If the head is too large, one might as well not even try. The Henamakites won't notice if it's a little too small, though.

If this succeeds, the PC with the helmet will be identified as Zerstop the Destroyer, the Avatar of the Gods' Wrath. Every Henamakite will run in terror, and give the visitors a wide berth for the rest of their stay.

Psionic Powers

A psionic PC could save the day with his powers. How easy this is depends on the exact nature of the powers.

The clearest path to salvation is with telepathy. A puppeteer, if powerful enough, could simply take over the Warlord's mind and force him to let the group free – though this would be rather anticlimactic. (On the other hand, it's unlikely that a puppeteer this powerful would let the situation get to this point in the first place; most, with a weaker grasp of situational tactics, will try to take over much earlier, be recognized for what they are, and soon find themselves beaten senseless and blindfolded.)

Besides puppeteering, a telepath might also be able to communicate with the Warlord, the Prime Warrior, or Chief Shaman, and convince them through persuasive arguments to let the visitors go with what they came for. The argument would be a hard sell, but not an impossible one.

Use of ESP powers could be part of a “demonstration” of the PCs' standing of authority from the Gods. Predicting the immediate future (foresight) or knowing one's history (psychic diagnosis) are two clear signs of such authority in the Henamakite culture.

Telekinesis would require quite a bit of creativity on the PC's part. It might be possible to use it as a demonstration of authority as above, though in this case the PC (or, if all else fails, Hei Wong) might have to outmaneuver a telekinetic Shaman. The PC could also grab the helmet using his Telekinesis, and put it on himself (if *every* other attempt by the PCs fails and they just run out of options, Hei Wong will do this – though he'll recognize immediately that his own head is too big for it, and give it to a properly-sized PC).

For details on psionic powers in the Terran Empire setting, see pages 18-21 of *Digital Hero* #8 as well as pages 129-131 of *Terran Empire*.

Rescue

The GM should only have rescuers show up if the PCs made prior arrangements of some sort, or if it would happen naturally (such as if they're part of a much larger starship crew). In the former case, they'll be rewarded for their

preparedness; in the latter, they may still have some problems to face (see **Complicating the Adventure** a little later on).

A rescue could also be an “out of the frying pan” sort of thing – someone comes along to bail them out of this situation, but the rescuers are Hunters of the PCs, here to capture them. The rescuers could also be another “interested party” whose real goal is the obtaining the helmet for themselves (as discussed later), keeping the PCs alive but putting their mission in jeopardy.

Right of Combat

As hinted at earlier, the PCs can still have the opportunity to fight their way out – more precisely, one of them can fight the Prime Warrior. This should not be easy; the Prime Warrior got his position for a reason, and has several years of combat experience. On the other hand, the representative PC will likely be able to draw on multiple worlds' traditions of combat history, and a greater breadth of tactics and techniques.

If the Right of Combat is taken, the platform will be cleared, except for the Warlord and shamans at one end, the Fanboys and other PCs at the other, and the two combatants in the middle. Servants will bring several long tables, on which are placed a variety of weapons: Henamakite spears and throwing knives, blades like the one the Warlord carried earlier, additional weapons of equally deadly appearance and function (choose some exotic-looking weapons from *The Ultimate Martial Artist*, if available), and anything the PCs brought along that looks like a melee weapon – no lasers, blasters, or similar weapons.

There are no forbidden tactics. Any of the weapons laid out on the table are fair game to use at any time. If the PCs has cybernetics, psychic powers, a ranged weapon the Henamakites missed, or anything else he wants to bring to bear, he should absolutely be allowed to do so. The only thing that will be stopped will be help from outside.

The fight is to the death only in the nominal sense. If the First Warrior wins, he certainly will kill the PC – but that doesn't mean the PC *has* to kill the First Warrior. Once the PC has the First Warrior in a helpless situation and clearly *could* kill him, he's considered to have won. The First Warrior would have to be *completely* helpless – unconscious, pinned down, or otherwise unable to fight back – but even if the PC spares him he's still the victor.

Whether the PC kills or spares the First Warrior, the visitors are no longer “star-fallen,” but “star-arrivals” – they did not “fall” from the stars, but came full of power to show the authority of the Gods. The Chief Shaman sees them as a lesson from the Gods to avoid

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arrogance, and a merciful lesson since they could just as easily have let the tribe's arrogance lead to their destruction but instead sent these messengers. The Henamakites now revere the visitors, and will do whatever they say, including turning over the helmet of Dr. Destroyer.

On another level, killing or sparing the First Warrior will have different effects on the local culture. The PC's action will be considered leadership by example; the Henamakite shamans will consider killing the First Prime a validation of the deadliness of their ways, while sparing him will be looked upon as a divine mandate for mercy.

AFTERMATH

For many groups, this may be a satisfactory conclusion; they can just give the helmet to the Fanboys, and go on their way.

Other groups will want a bit more.

Complicating the Adventure can provide some useful ideas. These can also be used as ideas for further adventures involving the Henamakites.

In any event, the Henamakites – at least the North Mountain Tribe – will become friends of the PCs, and look to them (at least for now) as the New Gods. Their placement in space will make them a Mon'dabi protectorate, but they'll feel more beholden to Humans (as well as Denebians and any other species represented by the visitors).

Complicating the Adventure

If this adventure seems too easy or straightforward for your group, there are several ways to complicate matters for them.

OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

One possibility is to bring in some other interested party, competing against the PCs for possession of the helmet. Without *Scourges of the Galaxy* or any other good source of NPCs, this will be difficult, but there are some resources to draw upon.

Antiquities dealer and amateur archaeologist Bertrand Devereaux (see *Star Hero*, page 308) is one obvious possibility for this. To keep things interesting, he could back himself up with mercenaries and other muscle-for-hire such as Dargen (*Star Hero*, page 310), Ghenak Vaa'resh (*Star Hero*, page 311), and Dashana (*The Ultimate Brick*, page 136). He will arrive openly, making a great pretense about doing things openly and honestly – a claim obviously *not* supported by his choice of company, nor by his underhanded tactics later on.

Marko Redd (*Digital Hero #11*) could also be present. The secret cabal of high-ranking Imperial officials for whom he works could decide that the Helmet of Dr. Destroyer, if it is indeed as powerful as legends say it is, could

help strengthen not only their position in the government but also the Empire's standing on the galactic political scene. He'll probably be hiding in the shadows, having arrived in some small starship (such as a *Eureka*-class explorer; see *Spacer's Toolkit*, page 90), manipulating events until he can seize the helmet and get offworld. On the other hand, he might have taken an alias and signed on with Devereaux' group, making for a doubly interesting triple-cross.



The GM can create additional NPC parties as he sees fit. Perhaps a Xenovore captain comes seeking the wreckage of Sa!r 'eqhof!men's ship, and claims the helmet as part of the salvage. A team from Federated Intelligence (*Terran Empire*, page 80) could arrive, claiming that the helmet belongs to the Mon'dabi Federation since it's in Federation territory. Members of the Star*Guard could come (see page 66 of *Galactic Champions* for a description of their status

during this millennium) to take the helmet away and hide it for safekeeping.

Any of these parties could rescue the PCs (and the Fanboys) from the trouble they get into on Henamak, while creating a whole new challenge for obtaining the helmet. This could result in a chase through the desert, a battle in orbit, a boarding action, or a variety of other events, depending on how the GM and PCs want to handle things.

The more NPC parties you include in the scenario, the more bookkeeping you'll have to do, and the more confusing the story will be. However, if the various elements are unveiled like peeling away the layers of an onion, the conclusion can be very satisfying, whether presented as a continuing string of dramatic plot twists or a series of humorous events.

WAR IS BREWING

During the basic part of the adventure, the North Mountain Tribe make several mentions of the enemies surrounding them – the East Mountain, West Mountain, and Tundra Plains Tribes, with their concern being in that order. The equipment found among the Xenovore wreckage increased the North Mountain confidence against their enemies, and this raised the level of hostilities; taking the PCs' weapons and other equipment increased their confidence even more.

Even if the PCs get through to the North Mountain Tribe, their worst enemy – the East Mountain Tribe – could launch an attack with the PCs still there. (This could also be an alternate way of rescuing them from their unwilling sacrifice!) The North Mountain Tribe has a few superior weapons and possibly better skills, but the East Mountain Tribe has superior numbers and could quickly overcome the North Mountains. If the PCs have assumed leadership (whether intending to do so or not), the Warlord and Shamans will look to them for guidance, hoping their superior tactics will turn the tide.

COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS

By the time of the Terran Empire, translation technology makes language differences no longer a major obstacle (see *Terran Empire*, page 124).

As a complication for this adventure, the GM may decide that the language of the Henamakites is sufficiently strange that the PCs' devices cannot readily translate it. This would probably be limited to ATRI 11 translators, though; advancements at ATRI 12 should be enough so that the Henamakites can communicate with other species, even if their language has to be hard-wired in.

For a similar change, the GM could simply break the PCs' translators. This removes the complication of needing to explain *why* the Henamakites' language is singled out – but if the PCs come from different cultures, they may be suddenly unable to communicate with each other.

SKILLED WARRIORS

While the question may be moot in any event, since this scenario is not combat-heavy, the GM could try improving, or at least changing, the combat skills of the Henamakite warriors.

Instead of simply using a handful of Weapons Combat maneuvers (as described later), the GM could take advantage of resources in *The Ultimate Martial Artist* to make the Henamakite warriors more challenging as combatants. For starters, he could give them a truly sophisticated martial style, complete with ranged maneuvers for the shurikens and throwing knives.

The warriors' choice of weapons could also reach out to more exotic (and deadly) weapons. The descriptions on pages 174-185 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist* are full of ideas, though the GM should gravitate toward weapons that can be thrown.

Certain odd martial arts "tricks" from *The Ultimate Martial Artist* can also be appropriate for Henamakite warriors. The character sheet for the Prime Warrior has a few such tricks as examples, but anything with a non-supernatural Special Effect may be appropriate.

REAL MAGIC

To *really* throw your players for a loop, arm the Henamakite shamans with actual, functioning magic, using Shamanism (or, possibly, some other form of ritual magic) from the *Fantasy Hero Grimoire*. For those aware of the passage of magic in the Hero Universe, it could be explained by the constant use of ritual magic by the shamans – the same kind that brought about the Superheroic Age on Earth (see pages 22 and 30 of *Champions Universe*). This would surely excite the Fanboys, as they'd claim it as further evidence of the truth of the stories about superhumans on Earth.

Even if you stick with psychic powers as the basis for Henamakite "magic," the shamans may become jealous of the PCs as the visitors assume nominal leadership of the tribe, and attempt an assassination.

The Henamakites

This adventure introduces a previously-undiscovered species, the Henamakites, to the galactic landscape. They are very good at hiding, and once the PCs have met them they may wish they'd kept right on hiding.

HENAMAKITE BIOLOGY

Henamakites are short, stout humanoids with short fur covering their bodies. In appearance they resemble a cross between an opossum, a warthog, and a wingless vampire bat, with a floor-length tail, slightly curved horns protruding from the forehead, foot-long tusks, and razor-sharp teeth.

As on many planets with nigh-uninhabitable desert surfaces, most of the native life developed in the much cooler, moister underground complexes. The Henamakites are adapted to just such an environment. They can see, breathe, and move equally well in both the dark caves and the bright daytime desert.

HENAMAK IV, THE HENAMAKITE HOMEWORLD

Much of the information PCs would need to know about Henamak IV is contained elsewhere in this adventure. This is but a summary, with a few additional details to help the GM to understand this people's experiences.

About the size of Earth, Henamak IV is a world of mostly desert, with no oceans and relatively small icecaps – at least, on the surface. Massive cave and tunnel complexes intersect with a maze of underground springs, rivers, and lakes, with a diverse and thriving ecosystem.

The cavern complexes are, for the most part, connected by long river-tunnels. Where a tunnel has been needed but not present, the Henamakites themselves have excavated what they need. Artificial tunnels only make up about two percent of the total, and they are well-crafted enough that only a true expert can distinguish them from natural tunnels.

Most underground areas are lit by a variety of bioluminescent fungi – there are over a hundred specific species planetwide, including both edible and poisonous varieties. These fungi provide light not only for visual navigation for the Henamakites and other animal life, but also to allow conventional plants to grow.

These fungi are a large part of what's prevented the discovery of the sentient Henamakites before now; the bio-energy they give off interfere with biosensors, rendering most underground life invisible to scans.

HENAMAKITE CULTURE AND SOCIETY

At the time of this adventure, the Henamakites are late ATRI 2 – and they've been stuck there for quite a long time. Their iron-strong religious establishment halted any scientific development centuries ago. They have made some developments, particularly in the areas of metalworking and survival equipment, that might be considered as high as ATRI 7 or 8 – including some quite innovative ideas occurring to few if any others – but these are borne of the necessity of survival.

While survival of the species, or even just a particular community, is held in high regard, the survival of an individual is not. The firstborn male of each mother is ritually sacrificed to the gods on his second birthday. All males are required by religious law to serve militarily for ten years from the age of fourteen (which they consider adulthood), and the frequent intertribal wars take about half their number. Once that period is over, a male may take as many wives as he can support financially, and may kill a wife for unfaithfulness or public disrespect. The Warlords and Shamans may sentence anyone to death as they see fit – and heretics are the prime candidates.

The only exceptions to military service are those born with psionic powers. These are seen by the Henamakites as divine gifts, and such individuals are put into the priesthood – the males as Shamans, and the females as their wives and advisors.

While the Henamakites are naturally as fertile and long-lived as Humans, these laws have kept the planetwide population down to only a few hundred million. Their powerful pantheistic oligarchy has bred a proud but violent and xenophobic people.

The Henamakites have encountered offworld life before – first Qedustier explorers, then Mon'dabi, and most recently the crashed Xenovores. In all cases they've either remained hidden, slaughtered the visitors, or just not been in the area. The Mon'dabi Federation has classified the planet as habitable with survival gear, but with too few resources to justify colonization.

The discovery of the Xenovore ship, including the helmet of Doctor Destroyer, has had a notable effect on the society of the local tribe, but not nearly as much as one might expect. The weapons, for example, provided some local dominance for a while, until they started to run out of power; the tribe still uses them for perimeter defense to keep other hostile tribes at bay.

The helmet itself is too narrow to fit on any adult Henamakite head, but it is used in ritual fashion – a symbol of the rulership of the Gods, and to declare the successor of the sitting warlord.

HENAMAKITE PERSONALITIES

For the purposes of this adventure, most typical Henamakites can be built by simply applying the Racial Package Deal to the appropriate template on pages 223-224 of the *HERO System 5th Edition*.

Most Henamakite warriors would be Competent Normals, with Weapon Familiarities in Henamakite Common Melee Weapons and Henamakite Common Missile Weapons. The GM may add the Weapons Combat martial art (at least the All-Out, Charge, and Defend maneuvers; see page 60 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist*) at his discretion.

Their weapons consist of a spear, ten shuriken, and two throwing knives, as described on pages 329-330 of the *HERO System 5th Edition* but with the *Armor Piercing Advantage* (they don't call them by those names, of course, and the design is decidedly native, but for game purposes that's what they are). They armor they wear is lightweight leather with metal plating, providing 9 DEF of protection over Hit Locations 3-4 and 9-13 (the head and torso).

On the infrequent occasions when Henamakites are encountered aboveground – such as when first encountered by the PCs in this scenario – they carry their own equivalent of anti-glare goggles (Sight Flash Defense [8 points], OAF), breathing filters (Life Support [Expanded Breathing: Can Breathe in Sandy or Dirty Air], OAF), and desert suits (Life Support [Safe Environment: Intense Heat], OIF).



HENAMAKITE PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Ability
3	+3 STR
4	+2 CON
-2	-1 BODY
12	<i>Horns/Tusks</i> : HKA ½d6 (Up to 1d6+1 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); Reduced Penetration (-¼)
4	<i>Tail</i> : Extra Limb, Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-½)
5	Nightvision
Pts	Disadvantages
-10	Vulnerability: 1½× Effect from Light-Based Flashes (Uncommon)

Total Cost Of Package: 16 points

CULTURAL OPTIONS

Cost	Ability
6	+2 with Concealment, Sleight Of Hand, and Stealth
3	Climbing
3	Concealment
3	Sleight Of Hand
3	Stealth
3	Survival (Desert, Underground)
Pts	Disadvantages
20	Psychological Limitation: Dedicated to the Gods (Common, Total)
10	Psychological Limitation: Xenophobic (Uncommon, Strong)

Total Package Cost: -10 points

Henamakite Prime Warrior

Background/History: The Prime Warrior – his actual name translates to “Victory to the Humiliation of All Enemies,” but he is rarely called anything but Prime Warrior – has held his post for twelve years, longer than any other Prime Warrior anyone has even heard tales about. He has killed many foes from the Western and Eastern Mountains and the Tundra Plains. A career warrior, he’d rather die than give up his post.

Personality/Motivation: For many years the Prime Warrior has used force and aggression to get what he wants, and he sees no reason to change. He’s not exactly opposed to change; he just doesn’t see why he should

Indeed, he could very easily learn other ways, and he’d be quite willing to if they could be demonstrated to him as being in some way better. The concept of mercy in battle is novel and foreign to him, but not distasteful.

Quote: “Your death shall be yet one more asset to the power of my soul.”

Powers/Tactics: The Prime Warrior is virtually fearless in battle. He opens his fights aggressively, with an All-Out attack – though he’s skilled enough and smart enough to be ready for a Defend maneuver should that fail to put his enemy down immediately. He’s certainly not above using any sort of “dirty trick” to win a fight, from throwing sand in his enemy’s face to knocking over a structure into his enemy’s head. If the enemy has a momentary upper hand, he can “play possum” to trick his opponent into dropping his guard. He’s shameless in his subterfuge, trickery, and deceit in battle.

Campaign Use: Should the Prime Warrior survive this scenario, he will develop a sort of grudging respect for the PCs, and will seriously evaluate anything they say. They may find in him a surprising ally should they need to make a case for something, or a friendly critic should they start down the wrong path.

(Note that the Plot Seeds in the sidebar assume that the PCs do not kill the Prime Warrior in the course of this adventure – all take place *after* this scenario.)

Appearance: The Prime Warrior is one of the largest of the North Mountain Tribe, and the most muscular. His battle scars make him among the most feared of the North Mountain Warriors.

PRIME WARRIOR PLOT SEEDS

Fascinated by the superior tactical sense and/or martial arts techniques shown by the PCs, the Prime Warrior seeks them out, hoping to learn more. He becomes a powerful sidekick for the team, but surprisingly (to all parties) inept as he attacks against overwhelming odds, fails to recognize the power of (to him) innocuous-looking weapons, struggles to grasp the usage of lasers and other advanced small arms, and so forth.

After an offworld journey (possibly connected with the previous seed), the Prime Warrior returns to learn that his family has been kidnapped by Xenovore pirates. With the PCs’ help he learns that they were taken to Malva, and the only way to win them back is in the Arena. He also becomes injured during the fight with the Xenovores – meaning one of the PCs must take his place.

The North Mountain Tribe has successfully spread the news about the galaxy as the PCs revealed it to them, and united their planet under a single unified – if shaky – government. The Prime Warrior is sent

out as the world's first ambassador to the outside. The problem is that while Henamak is located firmly within Mon'dabi space, they want to join the Terran Empire – a situation full of diplomatic complications with the Terrans' closest ally.

Henamakite Prime Warrior



DIGITAL HERO #25

Henamakite Prime Warrior

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 [2]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
18	CON	16	13-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
8	EGO	-4	11-	ECV: 3
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
6	COM	-2	10-	
4	PD	0		Total: 10 PD (10 rPD)
4	ED	0		Total: 10 ED (10 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	0		
36	END	0		
29	STUN	0		

Total Characteristic Cost: 67

Movement:

Running:	9"/18"
Swimming:	2"/4"
Gliding:	5"/10"
Tunneling:	1"/2"

Cost	Powers	END
12	<i>Horns/Tusks:</i> HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Reduced Penetration (-¼)	0
4	<i>Tail:</i> Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-½)	0
6	<i>Swift Runner:</i> Running +3" (9" Total)	2
7	<i>Sand-Digging:</i> Tunneling 1" through 1 DEF material, Fill In; Limited Medium (Sand, -1)	1
4	<i>Sand-Gliding:</i> Gliding 5"; Ground Gliding (-¼)	0
2	<i>Stone Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (4 PD/4 ED); Only Works against Attacks Character is Aware Of (-½), Costs END (-½)	1
5	Nightvision	0

Martial Arts: Henamakite Weapons

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
5 All-Out	+1	-2	Weapon +4 DC
4 Attack	+0	+2	Weapon +2 DC
4 Charge	+0	-2	Weapon +2 DC +v/5, FMove
4 Defend	+2	+2	Block, Abort
2 Weapon Element:			Empty Hand, Off Hand

Perks

- 10 Fringe Benefit: License to Kill
- 6 Fringe Benefit: Prime Warrior
- 4 Reputation: Fearless, Deadly Warrior (Large Group) 11-, +2/+2d6

Talents

- 12 Combat Luck (6 PD/6 ED)
- 5 Resistance (5 points)

Skills

- 32 +4 with All Combat
- 6 +2 with Concealment, Sleight of Hand, Stealth
- 3 Acting 13-
- 3 Breakfall 13-
- 3 Climbing 13-
- 3 Concealment 12-
- 5 Defense Maneuver II
- 3 Fast Draw 13-
- 3 Interrogation 13-
- 5 Rapid Attack (Hand-to-Hand)
- 3 Sleight Of Hand 13-
- 3 Stealth 13-
- 6 Survival (Desert, Mountain, Underground) 12-
- 3 Tracking 12-
- 10 Two-Weapon Fighting (Hand-to-Hand)
- 4 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 191

Total Cost: 258

75+ Disadvantages

- 25 DNPC: Family 8- (8× DNPCs)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Arrogant (Common, Strong)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Dedicated to the Gods (Common, Total)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Xenophobic (Uncommon, Strong)
- 5 Vulnerability: 1½× Effect Light-Based Flashes (Uncommon)
- 108 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 258

The Helmet

At the center of this story is an artifact of the 21st Century, the Helmet of Dr. Destroyer. Whether its cause of interest is as an ancient artifact, evidence of superhuman life, or a power device, its properties should be a known quantity.

HISTORY

After a lifetime of public grandstanding, Dr. Destroyer's death in 2021 was an appropriately public affair. In perhaps the grandest irony of the time, his demise was not caused by a blow from a vigilante or superhero – there were plenty present, but their powers were fading even more quickly than his own – nor from any military weapon, nor from a traitorous act of a subordinate, nor even from a self-inflicted injury. Instead, his death came from natural causes: just as he thought he held the upper hand in battle, a massive stroke crippled his brain and, seconds later, ended his life.

Initially, the United States government took possession of Destroyer's armor, and assigned scientists affiliated with the Paranormal Research and Investigation Mission of the United States (PRIMUS) to study it. While the research did yield some fruit leading to advances in cybernetics, medicine, and (to a surprisingly small extent) weaponry, they were unable to decipher the secrets of *Destreum*, and the work was closed down after twelve years.

Eventually the helmet was put on display at the Hall of Heroes, a struggling museum in Millennium City. The transfer led to a temporary improvement in attendance, but as those who remembered the Age of Superheroes aged and either died out or just lost interest it closed up shop and sent its entire collection, including Destroyer's armor, to the National Archives and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington (later part of the megalopolis of Boswash).

There the armor remained until the bombardment of Earth in 2340. High-yield bombs destroyed (along with much else) the buildings of the National Archives and Smithsonian Institute, not only eliminating all of the most reliable records of Earth's superhumans in the 20th and early 21st Centuries but also destroying nearly all of the artifacts.

Naturally, among the surviving artifacts was Dr. Destroyer's armor. Along with a handful of other highly-resistant items, it lay in the rubble of the Smithsonian for many years, until a Hzeel salvager named Slavan He'kari scavenged through the area in 2404.

Like most people of the time, Slavan figured the armor for an old movie costume, and billed it as such to his would-be customers. It took several years for him to unload it, but eventually he did sell it – to a Hlaboth antiquities dealer, who subsequently sold it to a Varanyi research metallurgist. The metallurgist, interested in the armor's makeup, destroyed much of it in his research while keeping the helmet intact.

The helmet's existence over the past three centuries, to many, would be a more interesting tale than its life in the Age of Superheroes. Its changing of hands has occurred through sales, theft, gifting, loss-and-finding, and nearly every other possible means. Among those possessing it at one time or another have been a Se-Lag merchant, a Mandaarian private investigator, a Donburil archaeologist, two different heads of Fassai Houses, a cousin of the *Ingaladi* (Emperor) of the Kalishari, a Denebian historian, a Human filmmaker, and most recently a Xenovore pirate captain.

The Xenovore captain, Sa'r 'eqhof!men, had the helmet when attempting to escape from Mon'dabi authorities. Her ship was badly damaged in the battle, and most of her crew was lost. Piloting the badly-damaged ship herself, she managed her way to the fourth planet in the Henamak System just inside Federation territory, and tried to land safely – but failed. Her ship was destroyed, and all surviving hands lost. But the helmet of Dr. Destroyer was only slightly damaged, and it remains on Henamak IV to this day.

ABILITIES

Constructed some time in the late 20th Century, the helmet of Dr. Destroyer is indeed quite valuable, if only as a historical artifact (rather like Excalibur might be if it were to be discovered today). It does, however, have a few outstanding properties even in the lower-powered era of the third millennium.

The helmet, like all of Destroyer's armor, is made of *Destreum*, a super-strong alloy of his own invention. *Destreum*'s strength is not as great during the third millennium as during the second (the *Champions* era) and fourth (the *Galactic Champions* era), since superpower-enabling magic isn't present in the universe during this time, but it is impressive nonetheless.

Most of the other protective and sensory-enhancing technology still works – at least, mostly. Some parts, like the mind shield, are simply so old that they're starting to fail; others rely on Destroyer's super-science and are unreliable without it.

THE HELMET OF DOCTOR DESTROYER

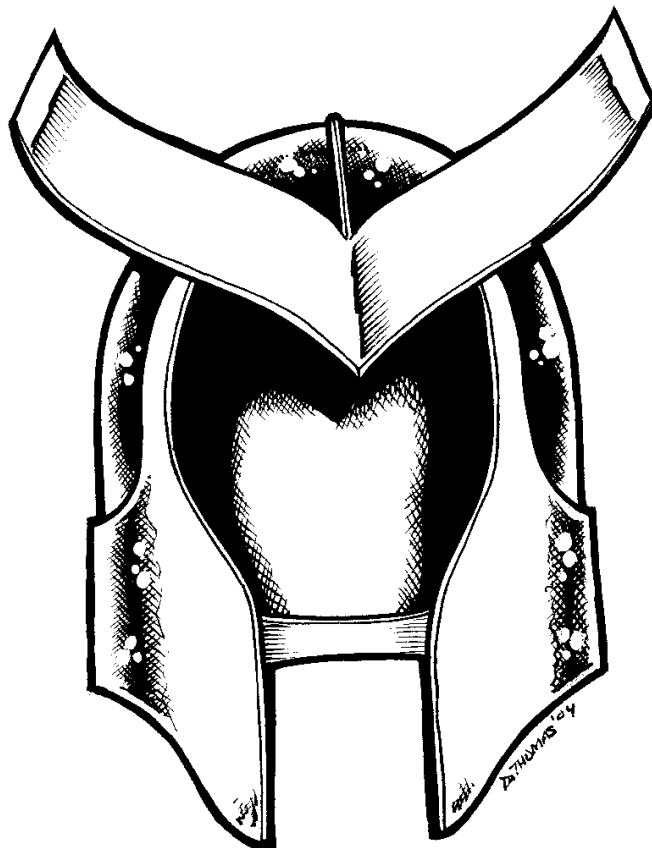
Cost	Power	END
14	<i>Destreum Armor Protection:</i> Armor (20 PD/20 ED), Hardened (+1/4); Activation Roll 5- (-4), OIF (-1/2)	0
6	<i>Extended Armor Protection:</i> Armor (+10 PD/+10 ED), Hardened (+1/4); Ablative (-1), Activation Roll 5- (-4), OIF (-1/2)	0
5	<i>Destreum Armor Protection:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25%; Activation Roll 5- (-4), OIF (-1/2)	0
25	<i>Sensory Protection:</i> Sight and Hearing Group Flash Defense (15 points Each), Hardened (+1/4); OIF (-1/2)	0
8	<i>Destreum Helmet:</i> Mental Defense (16 points), Hardened (+1/4); Activation Roll 11- (-1), OIF (-1/2)	0
3	<i>Destreum Armor:</i> Lack Of Weakness (-15) for Normal Defenses; Activation Roll 5- (-4), OIF (-1/2)	0
9	<i>Life Support Systems:</i> Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing, Diminished Sleep: No Need to Sleep); OIF (-1/2)	0
2	<i>Visual Sensor Systems:</i> Infrared Perception (Sight Group); Activation Roll 14- (-1/2), OIF (-1/2)	0
2	<i>Visual Sensor Systems:</i> Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group); Activation Roll 14- (-1/2), OIF (-1/2)	0
7	<i>Sonar System:</i> Active Sonar (Hearing Group); Activation Roll 14- (-1/2), OIF (-1/2)	0
1	<i>Audio Sensor Systems:</i> Ultrasonic Perception (Hearing Group); Activation Roll 14- (-1/2), OIF (-1/2)	0
6	<i>Communications Suite:</i> HRRP (Radio Group); Affected as Sight and Hearing Groups as Well as Radio Group (-1/2), OIF (-1/2)	0
10	<i>Radar System:</i> Radar (Radio Group), Increased Arc of Perception (360°); Activation Roll 14- (-1/2), OIF (-1/2)	0
7	<i>Sensory Enhancement Systems:</i> +10 versus Range Modifier for Sight Group; Activation Roll 14- (-1/2), OIF (-1/2)	0
4	<i>Sensory Enhancement Systems:</i> Increased Arc of Perception (360°) for Sight Group; Activation Roll 11- (-1), OIF (-1/2)	0
109	Total Cost	

EXTENDED LIMITATION: ACTIVATION ROLL

The *Activation Roll* Limitation, as it exists currently, only goes to a minimum roll of 8-. Because a typical helmet only covers (at most) Hit Locations 3-5, an extension of the Activation Roll Table seems appropriate.

On the current table, every -3 to the Activation Roll produces a doubling of the Limitation value. Thus, the bonus for the basic Limitation would be as follows:

Roll	Bonus
7-	-2½
6-	-3
5-	-4
4-	-5
3 only	-6



DOCTOR DESTROYER 3000

Officially, there is no “Doctor Destroyer 3000,” and never will be. However, should the GM wish to use the helmet in a *Galactic Champions* campaign, it can be used as an origin point for such a character.

As mentioned in *Galactic Champions* (page 25), Albert Zerstoiten (the original Dr. Destroyer) dies in the summer of 2021 as the magic supporting his life-extending super-science finally fails. However, the donning of this helmet at any time after the Kolvel Event in 3000 and the resulting resurgence of magic can create a new Dr. Destroyer.

Despite Zerstoiten’s disdain for magic in any form, not only did that magic make that technology work, it also had a more direct hand in extending his life and fueling his motivations and personality. His contempt for humanity, megalomania, arrogance, and self-aggrandizement were so great that they not only fed themselves, but created such a psychic resonance in the helmet he wore that anyone wearing it would be affected. (For owners of *The Mystic World*, Destroyer essentially created a megalomaniacal atavism and bound it to the helmet; see page 15 of that book.)

During the third millennium, the effect of this psychic resonance is relatively minor. The wearer is subjected to the following as a Side Effect of wearing the helmet:

Mind Control 4d6, Continuous (+1), Cumulative (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Persistent (+½), Invisible Power Effects (Fully Invisible, +1) (90 Active Points); Gradual Effect (6 hours, 1d6 per 1½ hours, -1½), Inflict Single Emotion (Arrogance, -1), OIF (-½), No Range (-½). Total cost: 20 points.

The “victim” could then be shaken out of the effect by getting the helmet off (usually by tricking or otherwise convincing him to remove it himself) and then shaking off the Mind Control – though sometimes the Mind Control can be shaken while the helmet is on, for long enough that the character can remove it willingly.

At any time after the Kolvel Event, the effect would instead be:

Major Transform 4d6 (Human into Dr. Destroyer), Based on ECV (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½), Persistent (+½), Invisible Power Effects (Fully Invisible, +1), Partial Transform (+½), Works against EGO, Not BODY (+¼) (285 Active Points); Gradual Effect (20 Minutes, 1d6 per 5 Minutes, -1), OIF (-½), No Range (-½). Total cost: 95 points.

The basic effect of the Transform is to give the character the Psychological Limitations of the original Dr. Destroyer (*Utterly Convinced Of His Own Superiority And Destiny To Rule The World* for 25 points, and *Casual Killer* for 20 points), initially using those points to add 15 each to his INT and EGO. From there the character, still under the helmet’s influence, can quickly learn the Skills (such as Electronics, Inventor, and Weaponsmith) and Sciences needed to rebuild the rest of Dr. Destroyer’s armor and other goodies.

Freeing a character from the helmet’s influence is much more difficult than under the Mind Control option above. Once the helmet is removed, his EGO starts to recover just as BODY would (at the rate of the character’s REC per month) – but *all* of the Transform affecting the character must heal. If the character has been Dr. Destroyer for a long time this could be more than a lifetime can do, short of some kind of super-healing powers or device.

Note that this Transform would affect a well-meaning PC just as much as it would an NPC – the GM should warn any players of the danger before they attempt this.

The Fanboys

Membership: Myron Feldman, Hei Wong, Roka'i "Rocky" Yalas

Background/History: The three men who now use the byname of The Fanboys initially met during a transportation technology conference on Earth. Hei Wong, in his capacity as a Chief Inspector for the Imperial Office of Transportation Regulation, was trying to stop a suspicious-looking exchange between pilot-for-hire Myron Feldman and equipment broker Roka'i Yalas, when all three were witness to a shooting. When the local police dismissed their eyewitness accounts and ruled the death a suicide, the three agreed to do a little investigating of their own.

Their work (to make a long story short) soon led to evidence of a mysterious archive known in espionage parlance as "The Foxbat File." This archive, the theft of which was the apparent motive for the murder, was essentially a repository of old government documents, media recordings, and other materials otherwise lost to Humanity, potentially serving as proof positive (or the next best thing) of the historical existence of superpowered humans. When the trio learned that the dead man was Victor Freeman, a legal advisor to the Imperial Senate and a family friend of ISP Director Franz von Zach, and that the killer was a Perseid with apparent connections to the upper echelons of Terran government, they smelled a conspiracy.

From that day forward, Feldman, Wong, and Yalas have dedicated themselves to exposing the inter-power government conspiracy to hide the historical existence of superpowers. Taking the moniker of The Fanboys (after the traditional nickname for anyone who seemed to know everything there was to know about superheroes), they set themselves to find whatever evidence they could to root out government corruption, beginning with the superhero cover-up.

Group Relations: The Fanboys get along like family – they bicker a lot and get on each other's nerves, but when things get tough they'll support each other to the death. Mostly Myron and Rocky do the bickering while Hei tries to act as peacemaker, but disagreements of philosophy and tactics abound among the trio unless there's real danger at hand.

While Hei Wong is the group's *de facto* spokesperson, this is mostly because of his better interpersonal skills. The trio run their little group as a partnership, with each of the three having an equal say in matters, sharing equally in any income and expenses.

Though relative unknowns to the general public, to most people who follow figures in the "fringe element" they're known as conspiracy-theory nut-cases. In fact, most people, to use a 20th Century expression, believe that the Fanboys just need to get a life. This reputation makes it hard for them to be taken seriously in many situations.

The Imperial Security Police are keeping their eye on them, however. The trio has gotten a little too close to a few Imperial secrets – not all of them having to do with the historical reality of superpowers – and while they haven't strictly broken any laws, ISP analysts think it's only a matter of time.

Should they ever change their reputation and start to be taken seriously, their files may be transferred to the Terran Security Service.

Tactics: The Fanboys try to avoid combat whenever they can, in large part because they lack significant combat skills. They're happy to help when they need to, mostly as backup for more experienced fighters, but if they're in the front they're more likely to surrender or run – not out of cowardice, but out of an honest recognition of their own weakness.

Campaign Use: With their colorful personalities, the Fanboys are comic heroes – but they're still heroes through and through. Even with their relatively meager combat abilities, they place themselves in harm's way in the name of truth and liberty.

The Fanboys do not generally Hunt individuals, and never do so except as a group. They don't care about revenge, but might pursue someone if they suspect that individual of having or knowing something helpful to their cause, or try to expose someone who's been getting away with illegal activity with little or no interference from the authorities. For most individuals, they can be considered either Less Powerful or As Powerful, and do not have Non-Combat Influence.

PLOT SEEDS

A beautiful con artist, recognizing Myron's weakness for attractive women, plays the "damsel in distress" to solicit the Fanboys' help in her latest scheme. Hei and Rocky, suspicious of her motives, ask the PCs to keep an eye on the situation and step in should things get out of hand.

To help raise money for the Fanboys' private projects and possibly gain them a little good publicity, Myron enters the *Solo Flight* in a race. The PCs might be there as competitors, security detail, or just to cheer Myron on, but in any event they'll have to deal with whoever is sabotaging the best pilots' ships.

Myron contracts an illness that, until now, has only stricken Perseids. A genetic scan reveals that he does indeed have Perseid lineage dating back to the early 21st Century – over two hundred years before Humans and Perseids had their historical first contact. Discovering the identity of the 21st Century Earth-bound Perseid in his lineage would not only go a long way toward supporting the Fanboys' beliefs, but could also save Myron's life.



Myron Feldman

Background/History: Myron Feldman had it all. A tall, incredibly handsome devil of a man, he was one of the best independent pilots in the Empire. He dashed about from port to port in one of the sleekest ships around, earning top dollar for his talents, with two incredibly beautiful girlfriends on every world...

...and then he woke up.

He was indeed one of the best independent pilots in the Empire, but the rest was all wishful thinking. His ship, the *Solo Flight*, had been one of the first IYS *Shamrock*-class ships out of the shipyard, and his income hadn't really been enough to keep it up the way he'd like. As for the girlfriends... he hadn't even had one of those in his teen years, and now he was into his 60s.

Early on, he was fairly successful. He was rich enough to make a down payment on his own ship, and successful enough to keep up the regular loan payments. The economic downslide during Emperor Feodor's rule kept him from going much further than that, though. He was fortunate enough to make the final payment before the economy really started to stink up.

Myron had more or less drifted for over a quarter-century when he met the other two Fanboys... and the rest, as they say, is history (see the group's origin).

Personality/Motivation: Like his buddies, Myron is convinced that the Terran government is concealing the one-time existence of superhumans from the public, for reasons of its own. His own theory is that they're planning on building a superhuman "uberpolice" that will make the Mind Police seem like wussies by comparison.

Unlike his buddies, Myron is easily distracted by a pretty face (or legs, or rear end, or just about any good-looking mammalian female body part). On meeting a beautiful woman for the first time, his initial conversation will be liberally peppered with – or, if the other two Fanboys can carry the rest of the conversation, consist entirely of – comments about her good looks, testaments of his undying love, and similar remarks. He may even take unnecessary risks, usually by "hot-dogging" in the pilot's seat, to impress her.

For all that, he's a fair-minded and compassionate man. He doesn't like to see people get hurt, and will jump to protect anyone who seems to need it (though a woman strong enough to protect him instead really will earn his undying love). His lechery is, at heart, an expression of his basic loneliness as a man – as is his steadfast loyalty to anyone he calls friend.

Quote: "Okay, it's a short run so I'll do it for fifty thousand credits – forty thousand if the redhead sleeps in *my* cabin."

Powers/Tactics: Myron is very good at what he does, and knows it. His skill at piloting has pulled the Fanboys out of trouble on dozens of occasions, and not just aboard the *Solo Flight* – he can operate a wide array of vehicles, navigate under a variety of circumstances, and even keep himself and his buddies alive in many wilderness settings.

He knows that in a fistfight or firefight he's practically useless. He's been trying to learn to fire an energy weapon, and he's starting to get the hang of it but hasn't quite yet. Under such a circumstance he tends to either try to get aboard a vehicle, or just take cover and hide. This leads many observers to assume he's a coward – but if he thinks he can get a good lick in, he will.

Campaign Use: As the group's pilot, Myron is a vital part of the Fanboys. The other two really can't kick him out, no matter how many women he alienates with his lascivious behavior – he's just too good at his job.

When initially encountered, Myron should seem like just a comic relief character serving a necessary function. The heroic heart within that goofy shell only comes out later, when the PCs have gotten to know him.

Appearance: Myron is a small but stocky man, standing 1.6 meters (5'3") tall and weighing only 65 kg (143 pounds). He's in his early sixties, with a bald pate and long sideburns that he only thinks make him look cool – and they might have once, before his hair turned from black to mostly grey. His everyday wardrobe is mostly a combination of worn-down leather and torn, faded denim.



Myron Feldman

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
9	STR	-1	11-	Lift 90 kg; 1½d6 [2]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
10	CON	0	11-	
9	BODY	-2	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
2	PD	0		Total: 2 PD (0 rPD)
2	ED	0		Total: 2 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	7		Phases: 4, 8, 12
4	REC	0		
20	END	0		
20	STUN	1		

Total Characteristic Cost: 30

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
 Leaping: 1½"/3"
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
5	<i>Small Person:</i> +1 with DCV	0
2	<i>Fast Runner:</i> Running +1" (7" Total)	1

Perks

- 1 Fringe Benefit: Starship License

Talents

- 3 Bump of Direction
- 24 Hotshot Pilot
- 4 *Zero-G Movement:* Environmental Movement (No Penalties in Zero Gravity)

Skills

- 9 +3 with Combat Piloting, Navigation, Systems Operation
- 3 Acting 12-
- 4 AK: Known Galaxy 13-
- 3 Analyze Technology 13-
- 3 Combat Piloting 12-
- 2 Computer Programming (Mainframes and Supercomputers) 13-
- 3 KS: Emergency Damage Control 13-
- 3 KS: Starship Salvage Operations 13-
- 3 Mechanics 13-
- 6 Navigation (Air, Hyperspace, Land, Marine, Space) 13-
- 3 PS: Starship Pilot 12-
- 12 Survival (Marine, Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical, Desert, Mountain, Urban) 13-
- 8 Systems Operation (Communications Systems, Environmental Systems, FTL Sensors, Radar, Sensor Jamming Equipment, Sonar) 13-
- 3 Tactics 13-
- 3 Tracking 13-
- 3 Trading 12-
- 3 Weaponsmith (Energy Weapons, Missiles & Rockets) 13-

- 6 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Science Fiction & Space Vehicles, Combat Aircraft, Large Planes, Small Planes
- 1 WF: Vehicle Weapons

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 120

Total Cost: 150

75+ Disadvantages

- 10 Age: 60+
- 5 Distinctive Features: Run-Down Wardrobe (Easily Concealed)
- 5 Hunted: Imperial Security Police 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Area, Watching)
- 0 Normal Characteristic Maxima
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Lascivious (Common, Moderate)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Obsessed with Proving One-Time Existence of Superhumans (Very Common, Strong)
- 5 Reputation: Lunatic Fringe Theorist, 11- (Small Group)
- 10 Rivalry: Professional (Other Superhuman Theorists, Rival is More Powerful, Seek to Outdo Rival, Rival Aware)
- 10 Unluck: 2d6

Total Disadvantage Points: 150

Hei Wong

Background/History: Though well-spoken, Hei Wong has always been a shy individual, happy to serve his function as a Chief Inspector in the Imperial Office of Transportation Regulation. He didn't have much chance for any further promotion – his superiors didn't approve of his tendency to “give away ground” by cooperating with Exploration and Treasury agents – but that was fine by him.

To be honest, Hei had always been more of a rule-follower than a rule-breaker. If he felt a rule needed to be changed, he did what he could to work within the system. He'd be perfectly willing to bend the letter of a rule to follow the spirit, but breaking the rules outright is a bit much for him.

When he co-founded the Fanboys, Hei gave up most of the life he'd known. His government pension was frozen (he can start collecting half pension after fifteen more years have passed), and his Security Clearance was revoked. He could no longer afford to live the sedentary life he'd once known; now he'd have to become a man of action.

Well, he'd do his best, anyway.

Personality/Motivation: Hei believes that a government is reflected by its society – a smoothly-running government creates a smoothly-running society, and an honest government creates an honest society. This is his central motivation for pursuing the truth about superhumans, since a government cover-up on this scale sets a bad example for the people.

He also believes that, where possible, existing systems within the government should be followed. He doesn't see the Imperial government as being so corrupted that every activity has to involve breaking the law. He's occasionally a bit naïve in that regard, but so far he's gotten by.

A gentle soul, Hei also believes that no matter what form government takes, it must always serve first the principle of justice – and he isn't afraid to make that point, either.

Quote: “Easy, fellows. Let's go along with them for now. I'm sure the Lieutenant here is a reasonable woman.”

Powers/Tactics: Prior to the Fanboys' founding, Hei's professional background consisted almost entirely of fifteen years as a bureaucrat. While he's improved his physical health somewhat since that sedentary life, he's still not a skilled combatant.

He is, however, quite inventive with applying his telekinetic abilities. Though fairly minor compared to what someone could do with a blaster or some other weapon, he's used it on several occasions to create distractions, allowing himself and his friends to sneak past guards, escape standoffs, and get through other difficult situations.

Campaign Use: Hei Wong is the “Boy Scout” of the Fanboys. He keeps things on the proverbial straight and narrow (as much as he can with Myron and Rocky around, anyway), and insists of pursuing matters in the most straightforward possible manner to start with.

Though now bereft of his once-numerous government contacts, Hei is still an expert at weaving through the bureaucratic maze of just about any government in the galaxy. He's even managed to get expedited service on Cataval (no mean feat). Should the PCs need help with a similar situation, having him as a friend can be a very good thing.

Appearance: A handsome man of Chinese descent, Hei Wong stands 1.8 meters (5'11”) tall and weighs a smooth 79 kg (175 pounds). He keeps his black hair neatly cut in a short businessman's trim, with an equally neat Van Dyke-style beard. He almost always wears a well-pressed, if ill-fitting, business suit.

PLOT SEEDS

An old colleague of Hei's from the Office of Transportation Regulation comes to the Fanboys, claiming that a group of super-powered TSS agents are after him. The high-powered psi and extra-strong Heavy are easy enough to explain, but what about the guy shooting lightning bolts from his eyes? Hei and Rocky are skeptical – the guy may be the victim of an elaborate hoax, a misunderstanding, or even a hallucination – but Myron is worried enough to ask the PCs for protection from this mystery group.

Another telekinetic steals Hei's IPF identification, and starts using it to commit crimes. The crimes are relatively petty, but they could cost Hei his license, and his freedom! If the PCs aren't called in to investigate the crimes in an official capacity, Hei may ask them to clear his name. And things could take a particularly ugly turn when his imposter is found murdered. . . .

Hei stands apart from his fellow Fanboys as not only being handsome, but actually having some social skills. This makes him the most likely (of the three) as a romantic interest for a female PC or DNPC. Such a

romance can become a major complication should the Fanboys' agenda conflict with the PCs' at any time.

Hei Wong



DIGITAL HERO #25

Hei Wong

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2½d6 [1]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
11	CON	2	11-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
18	COM	4	13-	
3	PD	0		Total: 3 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	1		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	7		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	0		
24	END	1		
25	STUN	0		

Total Characteristic Cost: 54

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
Leaping: 2½"/5"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
22	<i>Standard Telekinesis – Delta:</i> Telekinesis (6 STR), Fine Manipulation, Invisible to Sight Group (+½); Limited Range (18", -¼)	3
8	<i>Telekinetic Wall – Delta:</i> Force Wall (6 PD), Invisible to Sight Group (+½); Increased Endurance Cost (3× END; -1), Extra Time (Full Phase to Activate, Character May Take No Other Actions, -½), Limited Range (18", -¼)	6
2	<i>Fast Runner:</i> Running +1" (7" Total)	1

Perks

- 1 Fringe Benefit: Licensed Psionic
- 5 Money: Well Off

Talents

- 3 Absolute Time Sense

Skills

- 10 +2 with Interaction Skills
- 3 Acting 12-
- 3 Analyze Psi Powers 13-
- 3 Bribery 12-
- 3 Bureaucracies 12-
- 3 Concealment 13-
- 3 Conversation 12-
- 3 Deduction 13-
- 3 High Society 12-
- 2 KS: The Psionic World 11-
- 3 Paramedics 13-
- 3 Persuasion 12-
- 3 Seduction 12-
- 2 Systems Operation (Communications Systems) 13-
- 3 Trading 12-
- 3 Power: Psionics 13-
- 2 WF: Human Small Arms

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 96

Total Cost: 150

75+ Disadvantages

- 5 Hunted: Imperial Security Police 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Area, Watching)
- 10 Hunted: IPF 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 10 Hunted: Mind Police 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 0 Normal Characteristic Maxima
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Obsessed with Proving One-Time Existence of Superhumans (Very Common, Strong)
- 5 Reputation: Lunatic Fringe Theorist, 11- (Small Group)
- 10 Rivalry: Professional (Other Superhuman Theorists, Rival is More Powerful, Seek to Outdo Rival, Rival Aware)
- 15 Social Limitation: Minority (Very Frequently, Minor)

Total Disadvantage Points: 150

PLOT SEEDS

The PCs answer a distress call from the *Solo Flight*, and discover it in deep space with only Myron and Hei operating it. Rocky has fallen asleep, and they can't seem to wake him. Medical scans show that it's legitimate sleep and not a coma or some other malady, but these two aren't skilled enough with the medical equipment to tell what really is happening (his body's built up a resistance to the anti-sleep drugs). Rocky also happens to be the only one present with the knowledge and skill to repair the *Solo Flight* – even the PCs' technical expert (if there is one) is missing at least one vital piece of knowledge.

A civil war has been brewing on New Canaan (see page 71 of *Terran Empire*), and Rocky has been trying in vain to prevent it. He's convinced that someone is manipulating events to start a religious war. Knowing from his own people's history how destructive that can be, he sends a message to the PCs, asking them to intervene.

Through an elaborate ruse, Rocky is captured by the Thorgon Secret

Roka'i "Rocky" Yalas

Background/History: The youngest of four children, Roka'i Yalas grew up on Bethnar, the most antispinward of all Denebian colony worlds. His parents had won a planetwide lottery just before his oldest brother had been born, so he always knew comfort.

This comfort, combined with Roka'i's natural brilliance, led to a generally lazy outlook. He breezed through school without really working up much of a sweat, even earning his degree a year early and going straight on to his Master's.

For work, he decided to go into business for himself – there was no sense in having a "job" where he'd have some boss looking over his shoulder eight hours a day making sure he was on-task. He became a builder and broker of all sorts of electronic gear. To match the interests of his clientele, he tended toward security and surveillance devices, but he could work with nearly anything.

Ironically, his self-managed schedule led him to push himself a little too far – he started taking anti-sleep medications to put in the extra hours he needed to finish all his orders. His tendency to put things off until the last minute didn't help, either; more than once he had to put in two or three all-night sessions in a row to meet deadlines. Before he knew what had happened, he was addicted to the pills – a situation that remains to this day.

Personality/Motivation: Rocky considers himself one of the best technical specialists in the known galaxy. He's so good, in fact, that he doesn't think he has to work hard to succeed – and, on the whole, he'd rather not. He's not exactly opposed to hard work, but if he can avoid it he will. Only his determination to uncover the truth about superpowers can get him motivated to do anything but take shortcuts.

His main interest in bringing out the truth about historical superpowered humans comes from his own world's history: they've learned to accept and grow beyond their differences not by setting them aside, but by recognizing what has happened in the past and separating the bad from the good. His actions, then, are for Humanity's own good; only a complete and accurate knowledge of its history can stop Humans from making some of the same mistakes as before, should superpowers appear once again – and the ever-increasing occurrence of psychic powers seems to be a step in that direction.

Quote: "You *can't* be thinking something as simple as this would be beyond *my* top-notch talents."

Powers/Tactics: Rocky is a master technician, able to operate and repair nearly every type of equipment available. He's even taken some survival training to learn about the equipment used in such situations, and this has come in handy on more than one occasion.

In a difficult situation, Rocky can build just about anything needed using spare parts, as long as the spare parts are right for the job. His understanding of how things work gives him quite an edge in this regard. He doesn't quite understand the verb "MacGyver" some Humans use to describe what he does, but he gathers it's a good thing.

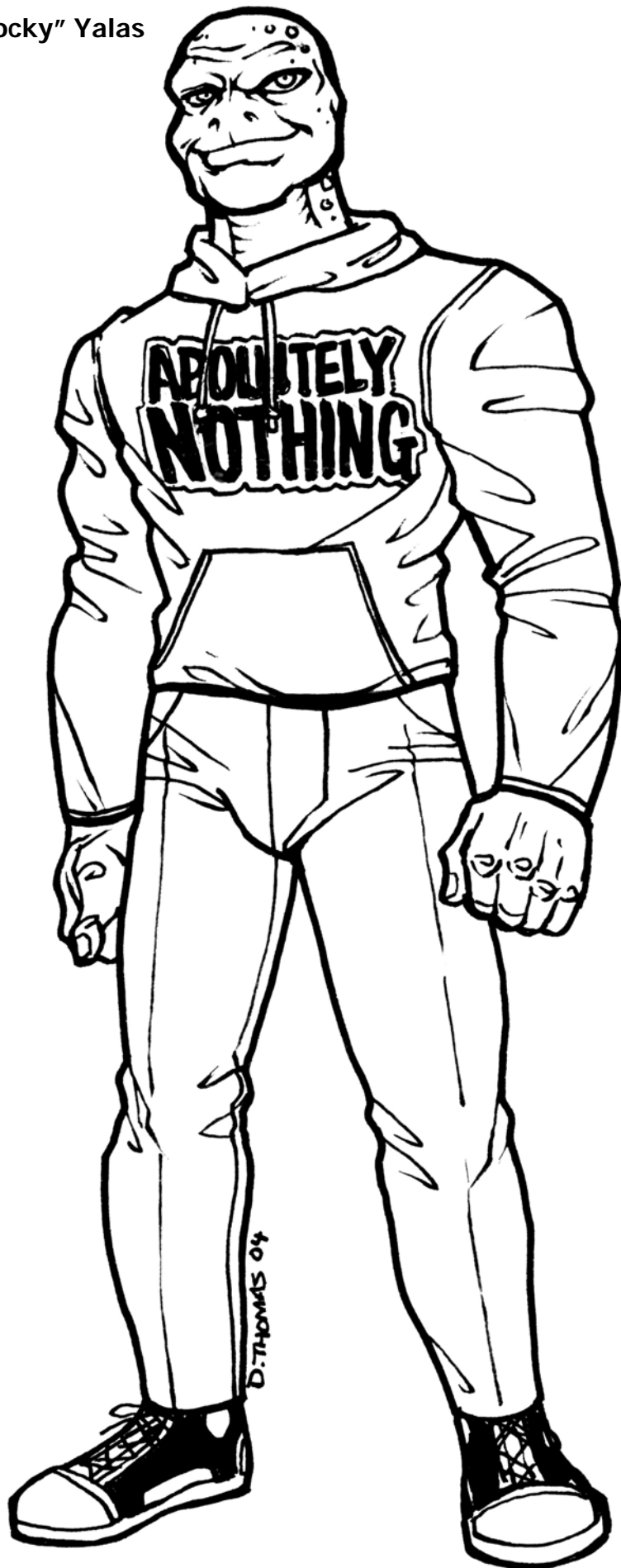
Rocky is also quite the sneak, and has distinguished himself with his colleagues with his ability to quietly hide, discover, and remove surveillance devices.

His main weakness is his addiction to anti-sleep medications. He needs to take a dose every morning, or he spends that day groggy (he takes a -1 penalty to all Skill Rolls and related Rolls). If he misses more than that, he simply becomes groggier (-2 after a week, -3 after a month, and so on).

Campaign Use: For all his genius, Rocky is basically a slacker. He can get the job done on time, but he tends to time his work down to the last minute so it's done *exactly* on time and not much sooner. He can rush if there's a bona fide emergency going on, but that's about it. If there's a bona fide emergency and he's not aware of it, the group could be in trouble.

Appearance: Roka'i Yalas is a normal-looking Denebian male, standing 185 cm (6'1") tall and weighing a burly 95 kg (210 pounds). He eschews the usual Denebian lack of clothing (a feature their society never developed) for casual Earth-style clothing, though his usual aim is comfort over style. Other than wearing clothes in the first place, the closest thing he gives to concession on appearance is the mildly anti-Establishment slogans on the T-shirts he favors: "Question authority (but raise your hand first)," "The TSS hasn't caught me yet, and I wouldn't tell you if they had," "WARNING – Do Not Read This T-shirt," and so forth.

Roka'i "Rocky" Yalas



Police, who put him to work applying his prodigious talents to build a super-battlesuit beyond even the capabilities of the Dracon Imperial Marine Battlesuit (*Terran Empire*, page 147). Hei and Myron go to the PCs to stage a rescue.

Roka'i "Rocky" Yalas

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2½d6 [1]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
15	CON	10	12-	
11	BODY	2	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
10	COM	0	11-	
3	PD	0		Total: 4/6 PD (1/3 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 4/6 ED (1/3 rED)
3	SPD	7		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
26	STUN	0		

Total Characteristic Cost: 48

Movement: Running: 9"/18"
 Leaping: 2½"/5"
 Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
3	<i>Denebian Skin:</i> Armor (1 PD/1 ED)	0
3	<i>Denebian Backplate:</i> Armor (2 PD/2 ED); Activation Roll 11- (Only Protects the Back, -1)	0
6	Running +3" (9" Total)	1

Talents

3 Lightning Calculator

Skills

- 3 Acting 12-
- 3 Analyze Technology 13-
- 3 Breakfall 12-
- 3 Bugging 13-
- 3 Combat Driving 12-
- 12 Computer Programming (Computer Networks, Hacking and Computer Security, Personal Computers, Artificial Intelligence, Mainframes and Supercomputers, Military Computers) 13-
- 3 Concealment 13-
- 3 Criminology 13-
- 3 Cryptography 13-
- 3 Deduction 13-
- 3 Electronics 13-
- 6 Gambling (Card Games, Sports Betting, Roulette) 13-
- 3 Inventor 13-
- 3 Mechanics 13-
- 3 Security Systems 13-
- 3 Sleight Of Hand 12-
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 3 Streetwise 12-
- 8 Survival (Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical, Underground, Urban) 13-

- 9 Systems Operation (Communications Systems, Environmental Systems, FTL Sensors, Metal Detectors, Radar, Sensor Jamming Equipment, Sonar) 13-
- 3 Trading 12-

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 101

Total Cost: 149

75+ Disadvantages

- 15 Dependence: Denebian Anti-Sleep Medications (Incompetence, Very Common, Addiction)
- 5 Hunted: Imperial Security Police 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Area, Watching)
- 0 Normal Characteristic Maxima
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Lazy (Common, Moderate)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Obsessed with Proving One-Time Existence of Superhumans (Very Common, Strong)
- 5 Reputation: Lunatic Fringe Theorist, 11- (Small Group)
- 10 Rivalry: Professional (Other Superhuman Theorists, Rival is More Powerful, Seek to Outdo Rival, Rival Aware)
- 10 Unluck: 2d6

Total Disadvantage Points: 150



Look! Up in the Sky!

 by Michael Surbrook

Fantastic Flying Machines from Fact, Folklore, and Conjecture

“When once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been, and there you will always long to return.”

— Leonardo da Vinci

Ever since man watched a bird fly overhead he has dreamed of taking to the air. His early attempts included kites, bird- (and bat-) winged gliders, rocket-propelled chairs, and balloons. Most of these failed, often with disastrously fatal results. True flight wasn't achieved until 1783, when Joseph and Jacques Montgolfier succeeded in building, testing, and flying a hot-air balloon. Powered flight had to wait until 1852, when steam-powered engines were added to an airship, while man's first controlled, heavier-than-air, powered, *and* manned flight had to wait until 1903 in the form of Wilbur and Orville Wright's *Wright Flyer*.

Since the invention of the airplane, man has gone on to create an almost bewildering variety of aircraft. As aeronautical technology improved, so did the aircraft. They became bigger, faster, stronger, and more maneuverable. In some cases, the sheer size of some aircraft can be staggering (The Boeing 747, for example, has a wingspan greater than the Wright Brothers' first flight.), while the speed of others can be beyond belief (The SR-71 "Blackbird" can reach speeds in excess of Mach 3.2, over 2,200 miles per hour.).

This article will present a number of air vehicles suited for use in different role-playing campaigns, all drawn from a variety of sources. Some are totally mythical, existing only in our imagination and folklore; others were planned but never escaped the drawing board, or if they did, never went beyond the prototype stage. Others are quite real, albeit strange and unusual. Each entry will include historical information, a write-up, description, and suggestions for how it can be used in a variety of campaigns and genres.

This article is respectfully dedicated to all those, of any nation and any era, in both war and peace, who lost their lives in aerospace-related accidents and incidents.

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HEAD IN THE CLOUDS

This article is certainly proof that truth is stranger than fiction. I mean, who would have ever thought up the idea of a jet-powered water-based fighter plane? Or of a tiny jet fighter carried inside an immense bomber? Okay... outside of comic books and similar fare. Not me, that's for sure. I was amazed at the some of the technology I came across while researching this article and hope to present a sequel concentrating on German aircraft of World War II.

The Airship of 1897

History: The end of the 19th Century saw the first modern UFO “flap.” Thought to be mostly hoaxes and tall-tales created by bored telegraph operators and newspaper reporters, the vehicle(s) in question weren’t flying saucers, but instead large, fast-moving airships. For the most part these aircraft were sighted in the American Midwest and the newspapers of the time ran a number of articles describing large cigar-shaped vehicles outfitted with red and green running lights making their way across the sky. Witnesses also reported seeing men inside the vehicles, and occasionally were visited by the craft’s crew. For the most part, these men seemed to be human, although a few reports described them as looking like nothing ever seen on Earth. At least one airship crashed, while another was accused of hauling off a cow via a noose on the end of a long rope.

Airships were seen in Europe as well. 1892 saw reports of airships along the border of Germany and Poland. This promptly spawned fears the Germans had developed lighter-than-air craft capable of moving against the wind – and were spying on Russia (and the rest of Europe) with them.

Along with mysterious airships, mysterious inventors kept appearing. San Francisco attorney George Collins claimed to represent a man named E.H. Benjamin, a dentist, who was the airship’s creator. When reporters turned up no such creation, William H. H. Hart stepped forward, stating he was the inventor’s legal representative. He claimed there was not one, but two airships, and they were to be used to bomb the Spanish fort in Havana, Cuba. As with Collins, Hart ended up retracting most of his statements when no physical proof of his claims came forth.

The airship sightings petered out towards the end of May, 1897, but never stopped entirely. The new century would see more reports of unknown airships, and a second major wave occurred in 1909, with sightings in the United States and Great Britain, and as far away as Australia and New Zealand. Once again the Germans were suspected. A third wave occurred in late 1912 and sporadic reports of large cigar-shaped or blimp-like air vehicles continue to this day.

Description: The Airship of 1897 consists of a cigar-shaped cloth gasbag with a wooden carriage slung underneath. Short wings are mounted at the front and rear of the craft, as are four propeller-driven engines. Red and green lights are mounted along the carriage with one (or more) bright searchlights.

The Airship as written can travel at around 40 miles per hour, although you can easily make it go faster. The gasbag is cloth (hence the 3 DEF), although a more rigid frame might have 4 DEF. The Airship also uses helium gas (common in the United States), although one made in Germany would use hydrogen (and get the optional Physical Limitation).

Depending on its intended use, you could add the following options to the Airship of 1897: bombs (in the 25 to 50 lbs range), rockets (either for signaling or as weapons), an anchor (to allow the vehicle to stop without requiring a mooring mast), a (primitive) radio, and a winch. See *The Ultimate Vehicle* for information on these systems.

One final option is to give the Airship the Invisible to Hearing Group Advantage for its Flight. With the engines off the Airship will make no sound and can easily drift up on its target with no one the wiser.

Campaign Use: There is almost no end to the possible uses you can find for the 1897 airship in your campaign. For starters, if you wish to run a campaign along the line of Alan Moore’s *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, you now have the perfect vehicle with which the heroes can get from place to place. Or, conversely, the perfect vehicle for a campaign villain to get away in. Along the same lines, the Airship could be something for the PCs to investigate in an 1897 version of *The X-Files* (And there’s even a railman named Joseph E. “Truthful” Scully to get involved with the action!). The Airship could be the creation of German spies – or even Asian ones (both claims were made following sightings). The vehicle could even be alien, or extradimensional, hailing from either some alternate Earth, magical fairyland, or a lost land/continent.

The Airship of 1897

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
12	SIZE	60	16" x 8", -12" KB, -8 DCV
70	STR	0	Lift 400 tons; 14d6 HTH
10	DEX	0	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
22	BODY	0	
3	DEF	3	
2	SPD	0	Phases: 6, 12

Total Characteristics Cost: 63

Movement: Ground: 0"/0"
Swimming: 0"/0"
Flight: 7"/56"

Abilities and Equipment

Cost	Powers	END
12	<i>Motorized Lighter-Than-Air Vehicle:</i> Flight 7", 8x Noncombat, 4x Propellers; 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (Easily Obtained Fuel, 1 Day, -0), Side Effects (KA 1d6 to Anyone who Comes in Contact with a Propeller, Automatically Occurs when Flight is in Use, Only Affects Environment Near Propellers, -¼), Cannot Move Backwards (-¼), Limited Maneuverability (-½) [1cc]	

-12	<i>Can Only Fly:</i> Ground Movement -6" (0" Total)	0
-2	<i>Can Only Fly:</i> Swimming -2" (0" Total)	0
1	<i>Carriage:</i> +1 DEF; Partial Coverage (Carriage Only, -2)	0
11	<i>Search Lights:</i> Sight Group Images, +4 to PER Rolls, Increased Radius (2" Radius, +¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); OAF (Bulky, -1½), Only to Create Light (-1)	0

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 10

Total Vehicle Cost: 73

Value Disadvantages

None

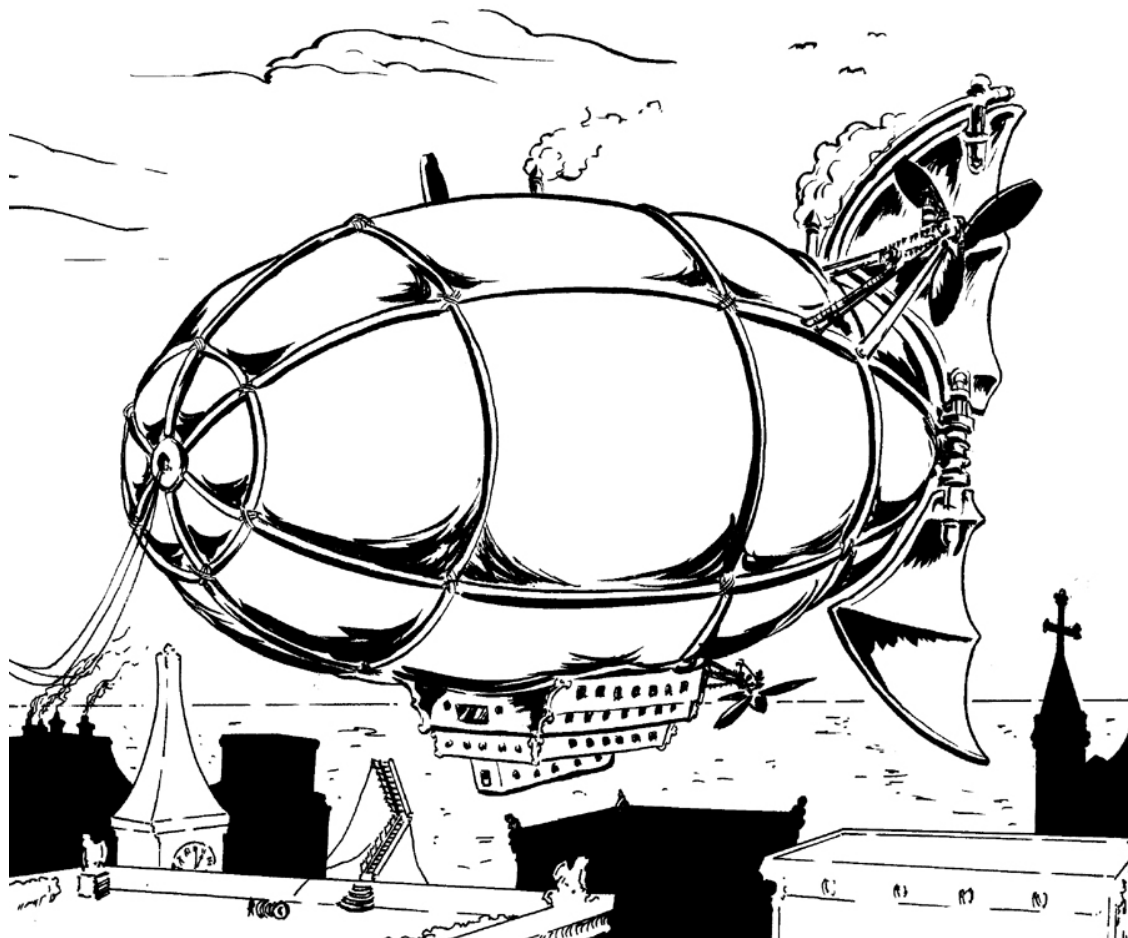
Total Disadvantage Points: 0

Total Cost: 73/5 = 15

OPTIONAL DISADVANTAGES

Value Disadvantages

- 20 Distinctive Features: Utterly Unique
Air Vehicle (Not Concealable, Always)
- 15 Physical Limitation: if Gasbag Catches
Fire, the Whole Vehicle is Destroyed
(Infrequently, Fully)



Grumman F5F "Skyrocket"

History: The F5F was initially proposed to the United States Navy in 1938 as a design for a twin-engined carrier-based fighter. The Navy ordered a single prototype (the XF5F-1) and flight tests commenced on April 1, 1940. While exhibiting an excellent rate of climb and a top speed of over 380 miles per hour, the Navy declined to order any more planes. A second version of the F5F, known as XP-50, was presented to the US Army Air Corps. They didn't want the plane either. However, all this time and effort by Grumman didn't totally go to waste, as the design data gleaned from the F5F eventually was used to produce the F7F Tigercat twin-engined fighter for the Marine Corps. As for the F5F, it was used for research and development until the end of 1944.

Description: The F5F has a highly distinctive appearance, mainly because the fuselage is set back from the leading edge of the wing, while the tail has two vertical stabilizers. Weighing in at 4,600 kg, the F5F has a wingspan of 13 meters and is 9 meters in length. The twin engines are mounted in the wings and have counter-rotating propellers (designed to counteract torque). Paired 23mm Madsen cannons are mounted in the nose. The F5F has only one crew – the pilot.

Campaign Use: What's so special about an experimental fighter that only had two prototypes? Why it's only the original fighter craft for DC Comics' *Blackhawks!* You have to admit, it doesn't get any cooler than that!

The F5F is perfect for those who want to run a campaign centered on a small group of heroes who engage in all sorts of adventures in the air and on land. It's unusual looking (the reason it was chosen as the *Blackhawks'* plane), rather fast, was said to handle well, and has a range of 1,200 miles – more than enough to get to where the action is and back. So if the Flying Tigers can have their P-40 Warhawks, then your PCs should be allowed the F5F Skyrocket. Now you can have a small team of heroes flying a unique fighter as part of an aerial "special missions" unit – the stuff Golden Ages adventures are made of!

Grumman F5F "Skyrocket"

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
6	SIZE	30	4" x 2", -6" KB, -4 DCV
40	STR	0	Lift 6.4 tons; 8d6 HTH
16	DEX	18	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
17	BODY	2	
4	DEF	3	
3	SPD	4	Phases: 4, 8, 12

Total Characteristics Cost: 57

Movement: Ground: 6"/12"
Swimming: 0"/0"
Flight: 42"/336"

Abilities and Equipment

Cost Powers **END**

Propulsion Systems

- 38 *Propeller-Driven Fighter:* Flight 42", 8x Noncombat, 2x Propellers; 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (Easily Obtained Fuel, 6 Hours, -0), Side Effects (KA 1d6 to Anyone who Comes in Contact with a Propeller, Automatically Occurs when Flight is in Use, Only Affects Environment in Front of Vehicle, -1/4), Stall Velocity (21", -1/4), Takeoff/ Landing (-1) [1cc]
- 2 *Can Only Fly:* Swimming -2" (0" Total) 0

Tactical Systems

- 59 *Twin Madsen 23mm Cannon (Nose-Mounted):* RKA 4d6, Autofire (10 Shots, +1), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+1/4), 100 Charges (+3/4); OIF (Bulky, -1), Limited Arc of Fire (0° Forward, Same Horizontal Level, -1), Real Weapon (-1/4) **plus** +2 OCV; OIF (Bulky, -1) **plus** +2 RMod; OIF (Bulky, -1) [50]

Operations Systems

- 4 *Communications System:* Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as Hearing Group as Well as Radio Group (-1/4) 0

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 99

Total Vehicle Cost: 156

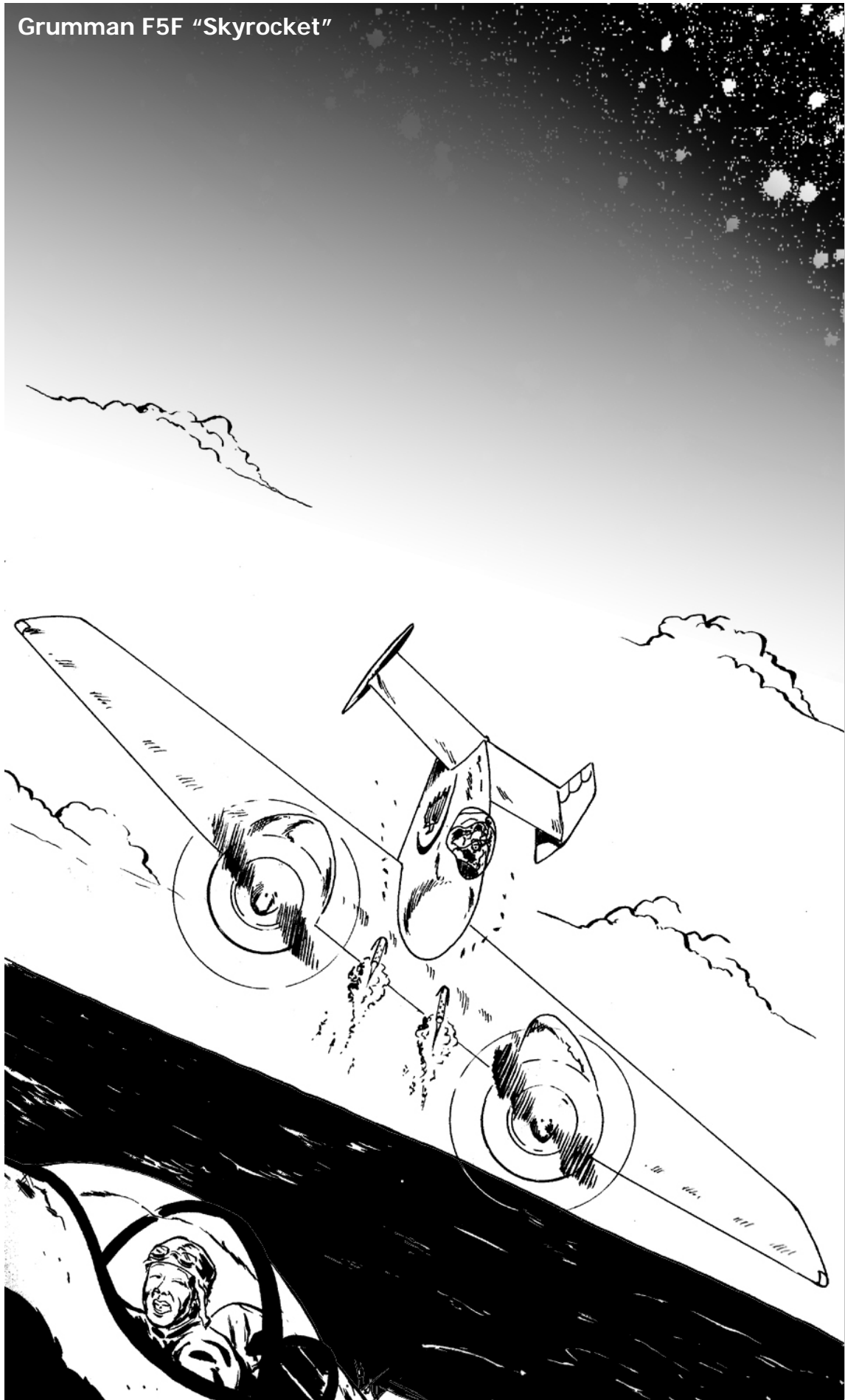
Value Disadvantages

- 25 *Distinctive Features:* Warplane (Not Concealable, Causes Extreme Reaction [Fear])

Total Disadvantage Points: 25

Total Cost: 131/5 = 26

Grumman F5F "Skyrocket"



BUILDING PAIRED WEAPONS SYSTEMS

Many of the aircraft in this article mounted paired weapons – usually paired machine guns or cannon in turrets. Because they move and fire simultaneously, the guns are built as a single power. The paired aspect of the weapon system is represented by increasing the Autofire Advantage (usually from five shots to ten), as well as the number of Charges. For turrets mounting more than two weapons, the base damage was increased and the Reduced Penetration Limitation was added. If this proves to be too lethal for your campaign, simply halve the base damage and remove the Reduced Penetration Limitation.

Northrop P-61 “Black Widow”

History: The Battle of Britain hammered home the need for an aircraft with the ability to operate at night. Fighters attempting to counter night-flying German bombers were forced to operate by moonlight, ground-based searchlights, and (rarely) ground-based radar, with minimal effectiveness. The United States Air Corps requested an aircraft capable of finding the enemy at night and John Northrop responded with the XP-61, the first American military aircraft designed from the wheels up to be a night fighter.

The XP-61 first flew in May of 1942 with the final version, the P-61, arriving on the front lines in late 1943. The P-61 scored its first kill in July of 1944, and in December of 1944 Major Carroll C. Smith shot down a record four Japanese aircraft in a single night, becoming the top P-61 ace with a total of seven kill to his credit. As the P-61 arrived late in the war, it didn't see much in the way of air combat, and often was used as a bomber and a ground-attack craft, with one variant, the F-15 Reporter, used for photo reconnaissance. After the war, the P-61 saw service in reconnaissance, weather research, and aeronautical testing (the first ejection seats were installed in a P-61).

Description: The P-61 is a big airplane, and the heaviest aircraft to ever bear the “P” (pursuit) designation. Weighing in at well over 12,500 kg, the P-61 has two engines mounted in long booms with the fuselage set in between, and is fairly fast for its size, with a top speed of around 370 miles per hour. It measures 15 meters in length with a 20 meter wingspan, and the cockpit has space for three crew: the pilot, radar operator, and the gunner.

For destroying enemy aircraft, the P-61 packs four 20mm cannon in the belly. The guns point straight ahead and are operated by the pilot. On the top of the fuselage is a remotely-controlled turret with four .50 caliber machine guns in it. However, this turret was known to cause performance problems if rotated while the plane was in flight (defined as -3 to Combat Piloting rolls) and was left off of many P-61s (giving the gunner nothing to do). Later versions of the P-61 corrected the problem, while some P-61s in the field were modified so the turret was locked straight ahead and linked to the 20mm cannons. For an added punch some versions of the P-61 carry four 1,600 lbs bombs on wing pylons (see page 123 of *The Ultimate Vehicle*).



DIGITAL HERO #25

Northrop P-61 "Black Widow"

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
9	SIZE	45	8" x 4", -9" KB, -6 DCV
45	STR	-10	Lift 12.5 tons; 9d6 HTH
15	DEX	15	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
19	BODY	0	
6	DEF	12	
3	SPD	5	Phases: 4, 8, 12

Total Characteristics Cost: 67

Movement: Ground: 6"/12"
Swimming: 0"/0"
Flight: 40"/320"

Abilities and Equipment

Cost Powers **END**

Propulsion Systems

- 33 *Propeller-Driven Fighter:* Flight 40", 8x Noncombat; 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (Easily Obtained Fuel, 6 Hours, -0), Side Effects (KA 1½d6 to Anyone who Comes in Contact with the Propeller, Automatically Occurs when Flight is in Use, Only Affects Environment in Front of Vehicle, -½), Stall Velocity (20", -¼), Takeoff/Landing (-1) [1cc]
- 2 *Can Only Fly:* Swimming -2" (0" Total) 0

Tactical Systems

- 59 *20mm M2 Cannon (Forward-Mounted):* RKA 4d6, Autofire (5 Shots, +½), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), 200 Charges (+1); OIF (Bulky, -1), Limited Arc of Fire (0° Forward, Same Horizontal Level, -1), Real Weapon (-¼) **plus** +2 OCV; OIF (Bulky, -1) **plus** +2 RMod; OIF (Bulky, -1) [200]
- 10 *20mm M2 Cannons:* 3 more Forward-Mounted Cannons (Total of 4) [200]
- 134 *Quad Mounted .50 Browning M2HB Machine Guns (Turret-Mounted):* RKA 6d6, Autofire (20 Shots, +1½), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), 1120 Charges (+1); OIF (Bulky, -1), Limited Arc of Fire (Top Side, -¼), Reduced Penetration (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼) **plus** +2 OCV; OIF (Bulky, -1) **plus** +4 RMod; OIF (Bulky, -1) [1120]
- 22 *Glossy Black Paint:* Sight Group Images, -4 to PER Rolls, Increased Size (8" Radius, +¾); Set Effect (Only to Make Plane Hard to See, -1), Only at Night (-¼)

Operations Systems

- 12 *SCR-720C A/I Radar:* Radar (Radio Group), Increased Arc of Perception (360°), Telescopic +6; OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as Sight Group as Well as Radio Group (-½) 0
- 4 *Communications System:* Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as Hearing Group as Well as Radio Group (-¼) 0

Personnel Systems

- 14 *Sealed Environment:* LS (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe in Intense Cold, Low Pressure/Vacuum) 0

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 286

Total Vehicle Cost: 353

Value Disadvantages

- 25 *Distinctive Features:* Warplane (Not Concealable, Causes Extreme Reaction [Fear])
- 10 *Physical Limitation:* Subject to Severe Aerodynamic Buffeting if Turret is Rotated out of Centerline (Infrequently, Greatly)

Total Disadvantage Points: 35

Total Cost: 318/5 = 64

Campaign Use: Want to run a World War II campaign with a small group of people? Have them play the crew of a P-61. If you ignore the buffeting problems (or presume a later model aircraft), you have ready-made positions for three PCs and a wide variety of missions to choose from (interception, patrol, escort duty, ground attack, tactical bombing runs, and so on). Or, combine the craft with the F5F Skyrocket to make it a single-seat radar-guided nightfighter! Now you can give each PC one and not have to worry about anyone not having anything to do in the next adventure.

The Arado AR. E.555-1

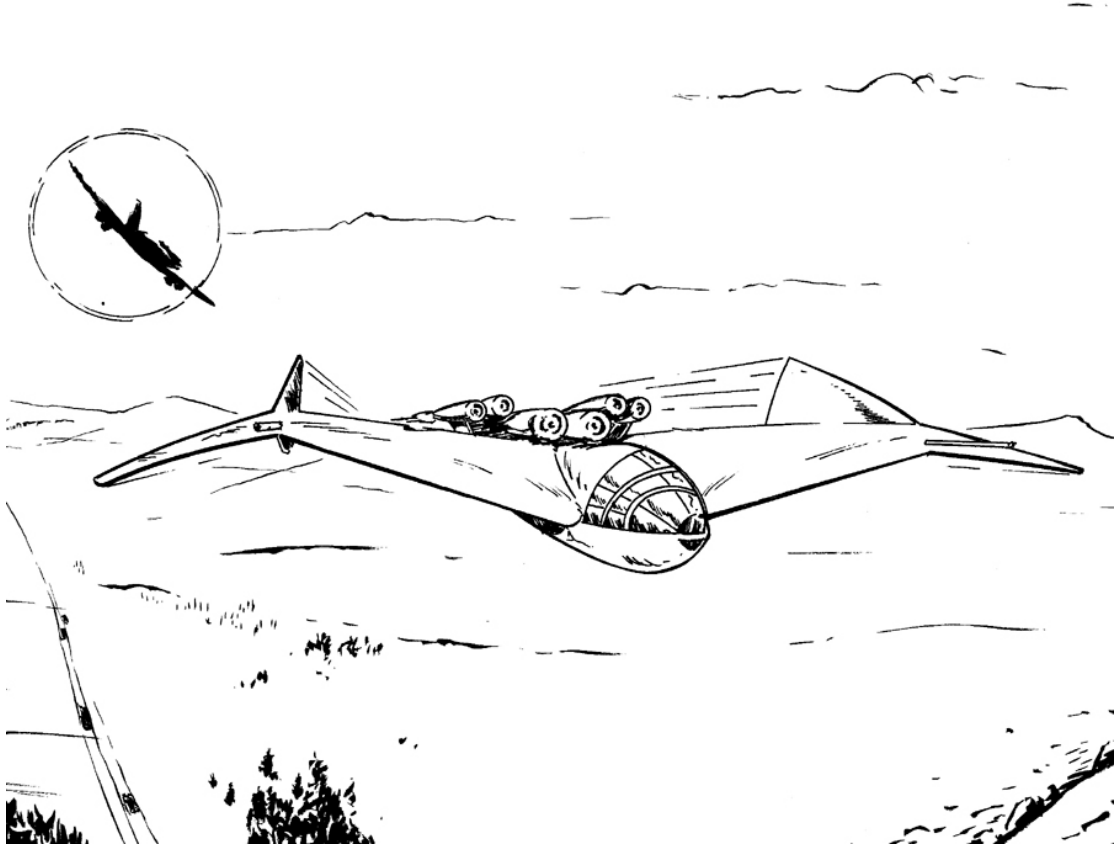
History: August 24, 1939 saw the first successful test flight of a tiny plane known as the Heinkel He-178. What made it most remarkable was its engine – it was the first operational turbojet aircraft. Capable of speeds of over 400 miles per hour, the He-178 could have changed the course of World War II – if the German military had expressed more than a passing interest in it. As it was, the Germans did end up building the world's first fully operational jet fighter, the Messerschmitt 262, but never in sufficient numbers to really alter the course of the war.

Following the success of the Me-262, Germany began to expand their plans for jet aircraft. In December of 1943 a program was put together with the intent of building a long-range jet-powered bomber. Program requirements included such parameters as high speed, a bomb load of over 8,000 lbs, and a range of more than 3,100 miles. The Arado company was put in charge of the project and ended up coming up with fifteen different designs, ranging from the requested long-range bombers to jet fighter craft.

The Arado Ar. E.555 series was canceled about a year after development began, in December of 1944. Although Germany would eventually field a few jet powered bombers (the Arado Ar-234 and the Arado Ar-234C Blitz, for example), they were short range vehicles with small bomb loads, capable of only pinprick assaults on the Allies.

Description: The Arado Ar. E.555-1 is a huge flying wing. It is roughly 18 meters long with a 21 meter wingspan (giving it 125 square meters of wing surface), and has a small egg-shaped fuselage containing a pressurized cockpit with seats for the pilot, copilot, and the gunner. The six engines are mounted together as one large pod on the top of the wing and all the way in the back. It is designed to reach speeds of 534 miles per hour, has a maximum ceiling of over 49,000 feet, and when equipped with an additional fuel tank has a range of nearly 3,000 miles.

The Ar. E.555-1 can carry up 8,800 lbs in bombs (the write-up presumes 16 500 lbs bombs). It mounts two 30mm cannon in the wing roots, two 20mm cannon in a remote-controlled turret set behind the cockpit, and two more 20mm cannon turreted in the tail.



DIGITAL HERO #25

The Arado AR. E.555-1

Val Char Cost Notes

10	SIZE	50	10" x 5", -10" KB, -6 DCV
50	STR	-10	Lift 25 tons; 10d6 HTH
15	DEX	15	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
20	BODY	0	
5	DEF	6	
3	SPD	5	Phases: 4, 8, 12

Total Characteristics Cost: 56

Movement:	Ground:	6"/12"
	Swimming:	0"/0"
	Flight:	15"/480"

Abilities and Equipment

Cost Powers END

Propulsion Systems

- 14 *Jet Bomber:* Flight 15", 32x Noncombat, 6x Engines; 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (Very Difficult to Obtain Fuel, 6 Hours, -1/2), Side Effects (KA 1d6, 4" Line Behind Engines, Automatically Occurs when Flight is in Use, Only Effects Environment Around Vehicle, -3/4), Stall Velocity (5", -1/4), Takeoff/ Landing (-1) [1cc]
- 2 *Can Only Fly:* Swimming -2" (0" Total) 0

Tactical Systems

- 59 *MK 103 30mm Cannon (Wing-Mounted):* RKA 4 1/2d6, Autofire (5 Shots, +1/2), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+1/4), 250 Charges (+1); OIF (Bulky, -1), Limited Arc of Fire (0° Forward, Same Horizontal Level, -1), Real Weapon (-1/4) [250]
- 5 *Another Cannon:* Another MK 103 30mm Wing-Mounted Cannon (Total of 2) [250]
- 81 *Twin MG15 1/2 20mm Cannons (Turret-Mounted):* RKA 4d6, Autofire (10 Shots, +1), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+1/4), 500 Charges (+1); OIF (Bulky, -1), Limited Arc of Fire (Top Side, -1/4), Real Weapon (-1/4) **plus** +2 RMod; OIF (Bulky, -1) [500]
- 74 *Twin MG15 1/2 20mm Cannons (Tail-Mounted):* RKA 4d6, Autofire (10 shots, +1), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+1/4), 500 Charges (+1); OIF (Bulky, -1), Limited Arc of Fire (60° to the Rear, -1/2), Real Weapon (-1/4) **plus** +2 RMod; OIF (Bulky, -1) [500]

- 37 *Internal Weapons Carriage:* RKA 3d6, Explosion (+1/2), Autofire (5 Shots, +1/2), Increased Maximum Range (2250", +1/4); OIF (Bulky, Bomb Launcher, -1), 16 Charges (-0), Dropped (-1/2), Real Weapon (-1/4) [16]

Operations Systems

- 4 *Communications System:* Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as Hearing Group as Well as Radio Group (-1/4) 0

Personnel Systems

- 14 *Sealed Environment:* LS (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe in Intense Cold, Low Pressure/Vacuum) 0

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 286

Total Vehicle Cost: 342

Value Disadvantages

- 25 *Distinctive Features:* Nazi Germany Jet Bomber (Not Concealable, Causes Extreme Reaction [Fear])

Total Disadvantage Points: 25

Total Cost: 317/5 = 63

Campaign Use: A secret Nazi project to build a jet bomber capable of traveling from Berlin to New York City? If you can't see campaign possibilities in something like that, I don't know what else to say. Seriously, the Arado E.555-1 just begs to be used in a World War II scenario where the PCs must either stop a flight of jet bombers from taking off, or intercept them while on the way to strike New York (or some other East Coast city). The PCs could be superheroes, trying to infiltrate the enemy airbase, or heroic Normals flying some sort of "super fighter" (see the Grumman F5F Skyrocket and the P-61 Black Widow for more on that idea). For those who enjoy a touch of espionage in their games, the PCs could be trying to steal an E.555-1 in order to fly it back to Allied lines. Of course, once the heroes are in the air, you should then introduce the *new* jet fighter (the Me-282?) the Germans have developed and are now sending out with orders to shoot down the PCs!

The Northrop XB-35 Flying Wing

History: The biggest barrier to aircraft performance is one of drag. Drag reduces an aircraft's speed, increases fuel consumption, and adversely affects performance and handling. Ever since the first airplanes, designers have looked at ways to reduce drag. Extra wings were eliminated, then external struts and wires, followed by retractable landing gear. The ultimate form of aerodynamic streamlining, however is to eliminate the fuselage and tail assembly altogether, leaving just the wing and making the entire vehicle one large lifting surface (hence the term, "flying wing").

John Northrop, after spending some time with the Loughhead Brothers building flying boats, formed Lockheed Aircraft in 1927 and decided to perfect a flying wing airplane. His first design flew in 1928 and was tested extensively all through the 1930s. In 1939, Northrop designed the first true American flying wing, the N1M "Jeep." A single person, twin-engined aircraft, it was 38 feet wide, 17 feet long, and lacked a tail. After a number of highly satisfactory performance tests (with a grand total of 12 different flying wing designs), Northrop decided to scale up his designs by producing the XB-35, a large flying wing bomber.

The XB-35, produced under an Army contract, would have a wingspan of 172 feet, 4,000 square feet of wing area, and a maximum weight of roughly 94,800 kg. Its low drag shape meant it would be faster and capable of farther flights than any conventional aircraft. It would also be cheaper (and faster) to build. Having weight distributed throughout the wing (and thus the aircraft) meant it was structurally sounder, with fewer weak points. This also meant that cargo access would be both easier and faster, as all parts of the wing were available. Military wise, it was a smaller target when in the air, and also faster than aircraft of matching weight and horsepower.

Given the initial go-ahead in November of 1941, Northrop began production of an XB-35 prototype in earnest in early 1942, with the first XB-35 taking flight on June of 1946. However, the end of the war reduced the need for a new bomber, and when coupled with numerous problems with the drivetrain and gearboxes, the XB-35 ended up scrapped in 1949. Nevertheless, the newly formed Air Force asked for several XB-35s to have jet engines mounted in them (this version is known as the YB-49), and tested the vehicles for some time, before finally scrapping the whole flying wing program in 1953, a victim of funding (the existence of the massive B-36 bomber didn't help matters either).

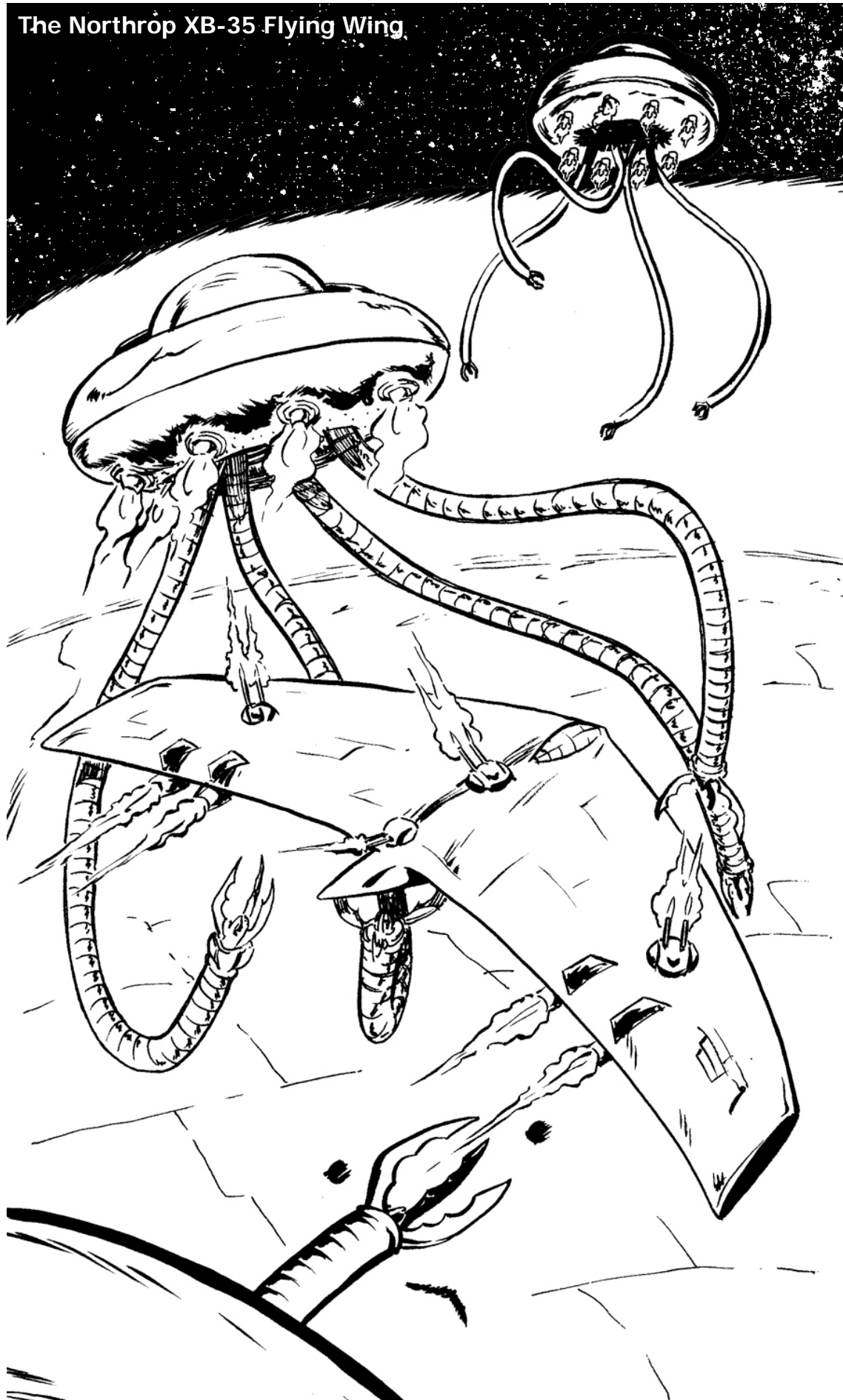
Today, the Northrop Flying Wing lives on in the form of the Boeing B-2 Spirit, better known as the "stealth" bomber. With a wingspan of 172 feet and a length of 36 feet, the B-2 is almost the exact same size as the XB-35.

Description: The term "flying wing" describes both the XB-35 and YB-49 perfectly, as both airplanes lack any form of true fuselage or tail. The Flying Wing has a wingspan of 52 meters and is a mere 16 meters in length. The XB-35 had a maximum take-off weight of 95,000 kg, while the YB-49's was 88,000 kg. The XB-35 could reach a top speed of 390 miles per hour (and cruised at 240 miles per hour), using four pusher-prop engines, while the YB-49's top speed was 492 miles per hour, with a cruising speed of 409 miles per hour, courtesy of eight jet engines. The maximum altitude for both planes is around 40,500 feet. A XB-35 carries a six-man crew (with space for three more if needed), while the YB-49 has only a crew of three.

The XB-35 may be the most heavily-armed aircraft ever conceived, and certainly outdoes the 13 machine guns of the B-17G by mounting a grand total of 20! Eight machine guns are mounted in twin turrets – two ventral, two dorsal – along the centerline of the aircraft. Another eight machine guns are mounted in twin turrets – again, two ventral, two dorsal, out on the wings, while the last four are in a "tail" turret. As with the B-29 and the B-36D, all of these turrets are controlled remotely from a central gunner's station. The YB-49 removes all of these weapons but the tail guns.

Campaign Use: One of the perfect symbols of the early postwar era, the Flying Wing was such an advanced and futuristic design that it was used in the 1953 film *War of the Worlds*. There it delivers an atomic bomb in an attempt to stop the Martian invasion. Naturally, the attack failed, much like the Flying Wing project itself. Of course, in your campaign, the problems with the Wing might have been corrected, leading to a wide variety of military and commercial Flying Wings taking to the air in an alternate 1950s setting. If you really want to have fun, push back the appearance of the Flying Wing a few years, and have them appear during World War II. After all, the Americans weren't the only people developing the design (as the Arado Ar. E.555-1 proves).

The Northrop XB-35 Flying Wing



The Northrop XB-35 Flying Wing

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
13	SIZE	65	20" x 10", -13" KB, -8 DCV
60	STR	-15	Lift 100 tons; 12d6 HTH
13	DEX	9	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
25	BODY	4	
6	DEF	12	
3	SPD	7	Phases: 4, 8, 12

Total Characteristics Cost: 82

Movement: Ground: 6"/12"
Swimming: 0"/0"
Flight: 43"/344"

Abilities and Equipment

Cost Powers **END**

Propulsion Systems

- 38 *Propeller-Driven Bomber:* Flight 43", 8x Noncombat, 4x Propellers; 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (Easily Obtained Fuel, 15 hours, -0), Side Effects (KA 1d6 to Anyone who Comes in Contact with the Propeller, Automatically Occurs when Flight is in Use, Only Affects Environment Near Propellers, -¼), Stall Velocity (21", -¼), Takeoff/Landing (-1) [1cc]
- 2 *Can Only Fly:* Swimming -2" (0" Total) 0

Tactical Systems

- 79 *Twin .50 Browning M2HB Machine Guns (Dorsal/Ventral Turret-Mounted):* RKA 3d6, Autofire (20 shots, +1½), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), 1700 Charges (+1); OIF (Bulky, -1), Limited Arc of Fire (Top/Bottom Side, -¼), Real Weapon (-¼) **plus** +2 OCV; OIF (Bulky, -1) [1700] **plus** +4 RMod; OIF (Bulky, -1) [1700]
- 10 *Twin .50 Browning M2HB Machine Guns:* 3 More Dorsal/Ventral Twin Machine Guns (Total of 4) [1700]
- 72 *Twin .50 Browning M2HB Machine Guns (Wing Turret-Mounted):* Same, with Limited Arc of Fire (roughly 60° to the Side, -½) [1700]
- 10 *Twin .50 Browning M2HB Machine Guns:* 3 More Wing Twin Machine Guns (Total of 4) [1700]
- 123 *Quad Mounted .50 Browning M2HB Machine Guns (Tail Turret):* RKA 6d6, Autofire (20 shots, +1½), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), 1700 Charges (+1); OIF (Bulky, -1), Limited Arc of Fire (60° to the Rear, -½), Reduced Penetration (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼) **plus** +2 OCV; OIF (Bulky, -1) **plus** +4 RMod; OIF (Bulky, -1) [1120]
- 50 *Internal Weapons Carriage:* RKA 4d6, Explosion (-1 DC/2", +¾), Autofire (5

Shots, +½), Increased Maximum Range (2625", +¼); OIF (Bulky, Bomb Launcher, -1), 10 Charges (-¼), Dropped (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) [10]

Operations Systems

- 4 *Communications System:* Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as Hearing Group as Well as Radio Group (-¼) 0

Personnel Systems

- 14 *Sealed Environment:* LS (Self-Contained Breathing, Safe in Intense Cold, Low Pressure/Vacuum) 0

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 398

Total Vehicle Cost: 480

Value Disadvantages

- 25 *Distinctive Features:* US Air Force Bomber (Not Concealable, Extreme Reaction [Fear])

Total Disadvantage Points: 25

Total Cost: 455/5 = 91

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

YB-49: To simulate the jet-powered version of the Flying Wing, make the following changes, listed below. Total vehicle cost becomes 301 points, 276 after disadvantages, for a total cost of 55 points.

Cost Equipment

- 2 58 STR
- 38 Remove Propeller-Driven Bomber, replace with:
 - 17 *Jet Bomber:* Flight 27", 16x Noncombat, 8x Engines; 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (Easily Obtained Fuel, 8 Hours, -0), Side Effects (KA 2d6, 6" Line Behind Jets, Automatically Occurs when Flight is in Use, Only Affects Environment Around Vehicle, -1¾), Stall Velocity (6", -¼), Takeoff/Landing (-1) [1cc]
- 171 *Tail Gun Only:* Remove all .50 Browning M2HB Machine Guns, Except for the Tail Turret
- 50 Remove Internal Weapons Carriage, Replace with:
 - 65 *Internal Weapons Carriage:* RKA 4d6, Explosion (-1 DC/2", +¾), Autofire (5 Shots, +½), Increased Maximum Range (2625", +¼), 32 Charges (+½); OIF (Bulky, Bomb Launcher, -1), Dropped (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) [10]

Hughes H-4 Hercules Flying Boat

History: As the Second World War was fought on a truly global scale, it didn't take long for the military commanders of many different nations to recognize the need for ways to move men and material vast distances in a (relatively) short amount of time. Although one could send staggering quantities of material by ship, there was always the danger of submarine attack and large convoys were limited to the speed of the slowest vessel. A second method was to go by air. Planes were faster than ships and it was easier to spot an enemy attack from the air. The Germans were the first to field a heavy-lift aircraft with the Messerschmitt Me-323 "Gigant," an immense eight-engine craft built around the equally immense Me-321 transport glider frame. America, meanwhile, responded with a monster aircraft of its own.

The Hughes H-4 Flying Boat was developed as a way to ship men and equipment across the ocean to help in the war effort. Initially a co-venture between Howard Hughes and Henry Kaiser (the man behind the rapid production of Liberty Ships), the vehicle was originally known as the HK-1, then simply the H-4 Hercules after Kaiser left. Capable of carrying hundreds of men, the H-4 was to be the biggest airplane ever made.

Made almost entirely from wood (in response to wartime metal shortages) the H-4 became known to many as the "Spruce Goose" (a name Hughes despised), despite being made mostly of laminated birch. Although derided as a "flying lumberyard" due to the amount of time it took to develop, the H-4 was, in fact, ahead of its time, spearheading research into the possibilities of heavy-lift capabilities and gigantic lifting bodies (Not to mention overcoming the massive engineering problems inherent in building such a immense craft out of wood!).

Due to various developmental problems, the H-4 wasn't completed until after World War II and never was used to transport anyone anywhere. In fact, it's only been flown once in its life. On November 2, 1947, Howard Hughes and a small crew of engineers started up the H-4's engines in order to test its ability to taxi. Hughes then allowed the plane to lift off from the water, flying at a height of 70 feet and a speed of 80 miles per hour for about a minute, covering about one mile. After making a perfect landing (Hughes would later claim he never intended to take off) the H-4 project came to an end. The "Spruce Goose," although kept in perfect working order by Hughes until his death in 1976, would never fly again.

Description: Describing the Hughes H-4 is an exercise in the colossal. The fuselage is 67 meters long, 7.5 meters wide, and 9 meters in height. The wing span is 97.5 meters from tip to tip while the horizontal tail measures a "mere" 34.4 meters across. The H-4 weighs 136,077 kg and can carry 59,000 kg of men and equipment. Eight 3,000 horsepower engines are mounted in the wing, giving it a top speed of 218 miles per hour, and a cruising speed of 175. With 14,000 gallons of fuel, the H-4 has a range of 3,500 miles.

Campaign Use: What do you do with the largest airplane to ever fly (albeit briefly?) in your campaign. Whatever you want, I guess. Okay, okay, all kidding aside, the H-4's sheer size demands it be used in a suitable dramatic way. Perhaps a chase through its innards to find a spy? Or a fight atop the massive wing surface as the strong-jawed heroes seek to stop a saboteur from planting a bomb in the engines? If you play a bit with history, the H-4 could have been finished in early 1945, leading to the image of the H-4 (or a whole fleet of H-4s!) crossing the Pacific loaded with troops for the invasion of Japan (with a superhero escort?). And, of course, in a *Popular Mechanics* version of the 1950s, the H-4 Flying Boat could end up as an immense passenger airliner, allowing the PCs to cross the Pacific in true style (All the while on the lookout for the Communist spy you know *has* to be on board!).

SIZE DOES MATTER

The H-4 Flying Boat may be the largest airplane ever to fly, but it only did it once, and only for about a mile. Then there's the Antonov AN-225. The AN-225 was derived from the AN-124, the Russian equivalent of the American C-5 Galaxy. It has a wingspan of 88 meters, is 84 meters long, and can carry 250 tons of cargo. Known as *Mriya* ("dream"), the AN-225 (like the H-4, there's only one) was made for only one purpose – to transport the Soviet version of the Space Shuttle, *Buran* ("snowstorm").

Hughes H-4 Hercules Flying Boat

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
15	SIZE	75	32" x 16", -15" KB, -10 DCV
65	STR	-20	Lift 200 tons; 13d6 HTH
10	DEX	0	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
30	BODY	10	
5	DEF	6	
3	SPD	10	Phases: 4, 8, 12

Total Characteristics Cost: 76

Movement: Ground: 0"/0"
 Swimming: 6"/12"
 Flight: 13"/208"

Abilities and Equipment

Cost	Powers	END
Propulsion Systems		
14	<i>Propeller-Driven Transport:</i> Flight 13", 16x Noncombat, 8x Propellers; 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (Easily Obtained Fuel, 20 hours, -0), Side Effects (KA 2d6 to Anyone who Comes in Contact with the Propeller, Automatically Occurs when Flight is in Use, Only Affects Environment Near Propellers, -3/4), Stall Velocity (7", -1/4), Takeoff/Landing (-1)	[1cc]

1	<i>Floats:</i> Swimming +4" (6" Total); Cannot Move Backwards (-1/4), Limited Maneuverability (-1/2), Surface Only (-1)	1
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Operations Systems

4	<i>Communications System:</i> Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as Hearing Group as Well as Radio Group (-1/4)	0
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Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 19

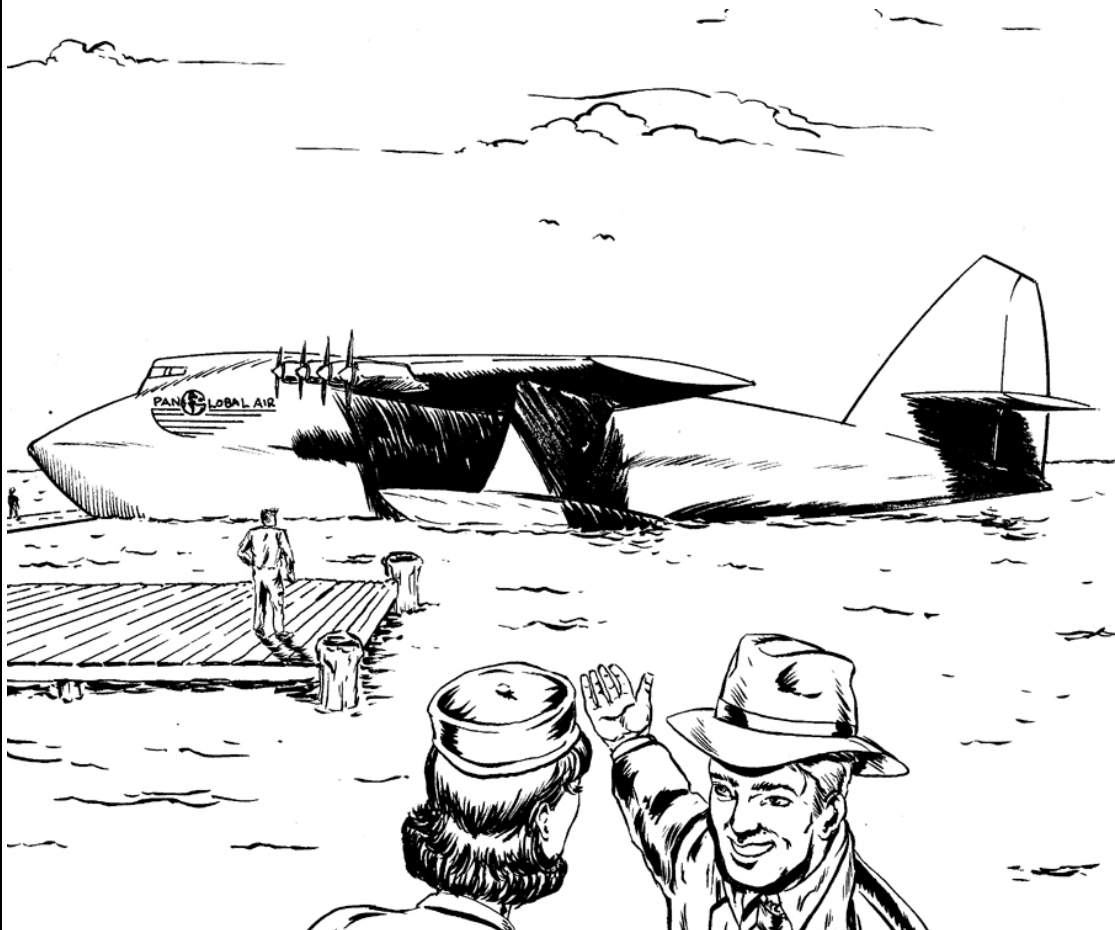
Total Vehicle Cost: 95

Value Disadvantages

25	<i>Distinctive Features:</i> Giant Military Transport (Not Concealable, Causes Extreme Reaction [Awe])
10	<i>Reputation:</i> "The Flying Lumberyard" a.k.a. "The Spruce Goose," 11-

Total Disadvantage Points: 35

Total Cost: 60/5 = 12



Convair B-36D "Peacemaker"

History: With the spectre of a German victory in Europe looming over the heads of the Allies in 1941, the US Army Air Force asked for a bomber capable of flying from America to Europe and back. Convair came back with the B-36, an immense pusher-prop aircraft with the ability to fly 10,000 miles before needing to refuel and the capacity for 86,000 pounds in bombs.

The first B-36s were delivered for testing in 1948. Designated the B-36A, they were unarmed trainers. The first operational bombers were the B-36B, delivered in 1952. Several different models followed, including a reconnaissance version (the RB-36E), a version with Variable Discharge Turbine (VDT) tractor engines (the B-36C), one with twin turbojets in pods under the wings for added thrust (the B-36D), and a number of planes with all armament but the tail guns removed (known as "Featherweights"). One B-36 (designated NB-36H) had a nuclear reactor mounted inside it. These reactor didn't power the plane (although that was the eventual goal of the test), but instead was used to test various forms of radiation shielding, of which the NB-36H carried four tons.

Although a better plane than many initially thought (the B-36D outperformed all other Air Force bombers in range, altitude, and bomb capacity), the B-36 suffered from the opinion it was an obsolete aircraft. Its flaws aside (to be honest, it was a very heavy aircraft, wasn't very fast, and took 12 hours to be flight ready), the B-36 was the only intercontinental bomber America had, and so production continued, even as charges of corruption and favoritism were leveled at Louis A. Johnson, the Secretary of Defense (and a former director at Convair). The United States Navy was the biggest opponent of the B-36, as their own super-carrier, the *United States*, had been canceled in favor of the B-36. To make matters worse, the Soviet Union publicly demonstrated their new MiG-15 swept-wing jet interceptor on May Day 1949, leading many to feel the B-36 would end up easy prey for the enemy if war ever broke out.

The development of the B-52 Stratofortress meant the end of the B-36. It arrived in the mid-50s and by 1958 the last B-36 was retired from active military service.

Description: The B-36 (known as "The Big Stick") is the largest bomber ever put into active service by the United States Air Force. It has a 70 meter wingspan, is 50 meters long, and is 14 meters high. Six pusher-propeller engines are mounted in the wings, while four turbojet engines are set in paired pods under the wings. Top speed for the B-36D is around 430 miles per hour with a cruising speed of over 300. It can reach an altitude of 45,000 feet and has a range in excess of 7,500 miles. The aircraft weighs 73,350 kg empty and 168,181 kg fully loaded.

The B-36 was designed to carry both conventional munitions and nuclear weapons. The normal bomb load for the B-36 was 72,000 pounds with a maximum load of 86,000. Defensively it mounted 16 20mm cannon in paired turrets; one in the nose, one (radar-guided) in the tail, and six more in retractable turrets along the fuselage. The normal crew compliment for a B-36 was 15, although the reconnaissance versions carried as many as 22 men while the Featherweight versions only carried 13.

Campaign Use: An aircraft as big as the B-36 demands the GM to think big as well. A scenario involving the B-36 directly should be a high-stakes one, especially considering the 1950s were start of the Cold War and "better dead than red" was a common theme. Perhaps Communist spies and/or superhumans are trying to steal a B-36? Or, even worse, hijack one and use it to bomb the White House? You could have a race against time in which the PCs must get into the plane and recover it, or (if superheroes) shoot it down. To make matters more intense for the superheroes, have the B-36 carrying some new atomic bomb, so it *can't* be shot down and must be recovered in flight. And let's not even think about what a 1950s version of VIPER might decide to do with such a plane....

On a more positive note, imagine the campaign possibilities of a nuclear-powered B-36! Remove all the guns, add in some laboratories, and you now have the ultimate Tom Swift-styled flying base for your 1950s-era PCs to operate from. And for even more fun, stick a few XF-85s inside (see the next entry) so the PCs have a way to shuttle from their base to the ground and back. The sky is literally the limit!

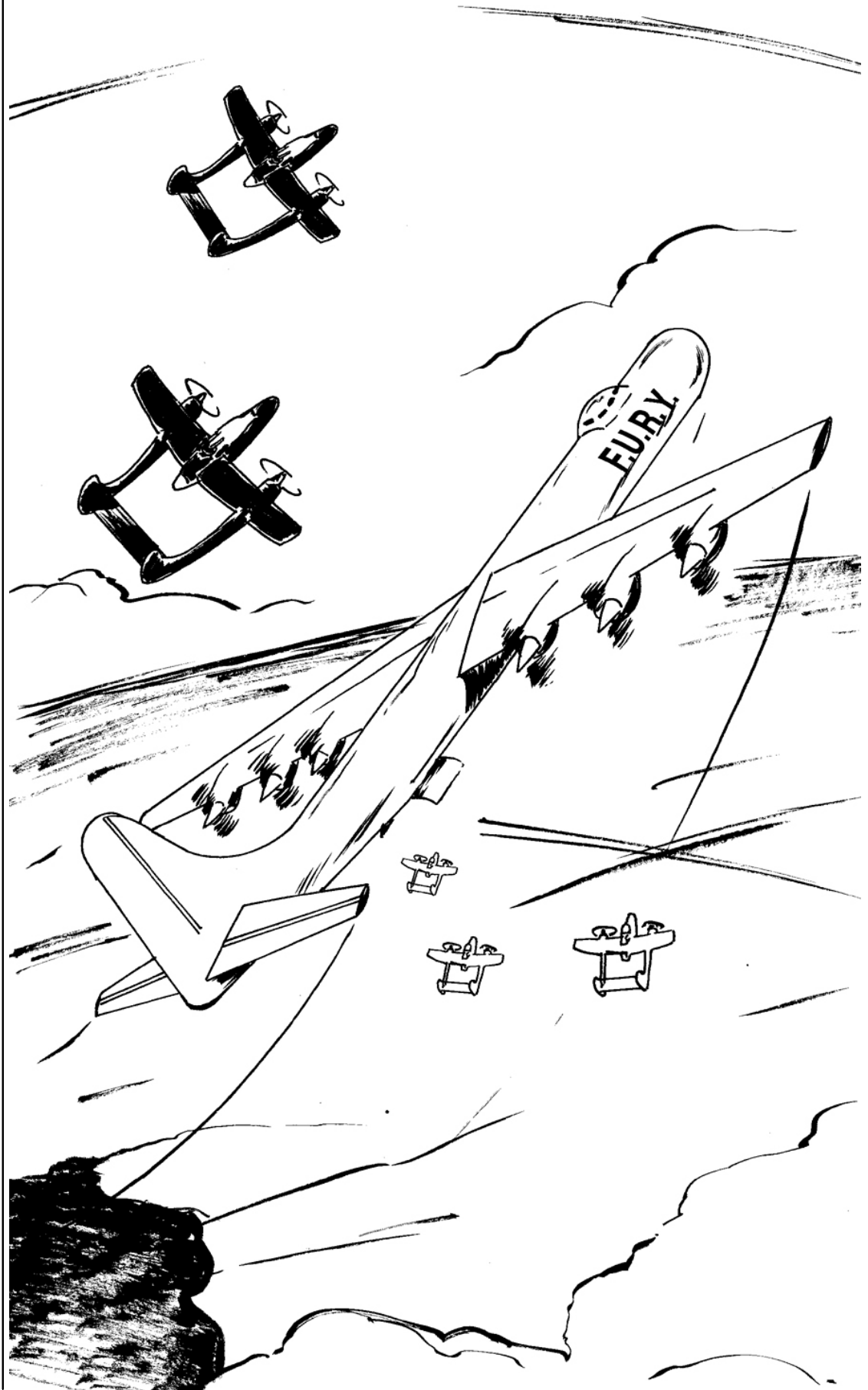
ONE BIG BOMB

Eighteen B-36Bs were adapted to carry the Bell VB-13/ASM-A-1 *Tarzon*, a 12,000 pound free-fall bomb. So big it had to be carried partially *outside* a B-29 Superfortress, the B-36B could carry *two* each! The VB-13 was 6.4 meters long, 1 meter wide and weighed in at 5,400 kg. It had a radio receiver connected to moveable control surfaces in the tail and course corrections were possible in mid-flight.

Bell VB-13/ASM-A-1 *Tarzon*: *RKA 8d6, Armor Piercing (+1/2), Explosion (-1 DC/3"); +1), Increased Maximum Range (8250"); +1/4) (330 Active Points); OIF Bulky (launcher; -1), 2 Charges (-1 1/2), Dropped (-1/2), Real Weapon (-1/4). Total Cost: 78 points.*

Radio Guidance: *+2 OCV with Bell VB-13/ASM-A-1 Tarzon (10 Active Points); OIF Bulky (radio receiver; -1), Levels Can Be Flashed As Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-1/4). Total Cost: 4 points.*

Convair B-36D "Peacemaker"



DIGITAL HERO #25

Convair B-36D "Peacemaker"

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
14	SIZE	70	25" x 12.5", -14" KB, -9 DCV
63	STR	-17	Lift 150 tons; 10½d6 HTH
10	DEX	0	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
28	BODY	8	
5	DEF	8	
3	SPD	10	Phases: 4, 8, 12

Total Characteristics Cost: 79

Movement:	Ground:	6"/12"
	Swimming:	0"/0"
	Flight:	20"/320"

Abilities and Equipment

Cost Powers END

Propulsion Systems

- 14 *Propeller And Turbojet-Driven Bomber:* Flight 20", 16x Noncombat, 6x Propellers and 4x Turbojets; 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (Easily Obtained Fuel, 40 Hours, -0), Side Effects (KA 2d6, 7" Line Behind Turbojets and to Anyone who Comes in Contact with the Propeller, Automatically Occurs when Flight is in Use, Only Affects Environment in Front of Vehicle, -1¾), Stall Velocity (10", -¼), Takeoff/Landing (-1) [1cc]
- 2 *Can Only Fly:* Swimming -2" (0" Total) 0

Tactical Systems

- 79 *Twin 20mm M24A1 Cannon (Turret-Mounted):* RKA 4d6, Autofire (10 shots, +1), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), 1150 Charges (+1); OIF (Bulky, -1), Limited Arc of Fire (60°, -½), Real Weapon (-¼) **plus** +2 OCV; OIF (Bulky, -1) **plus** +2 RMod; OIF (Bulky, -1) [1150]
- 15 *Twin 20mm M24A1 Cannons (Turret-Mounted):* 6 More Twin M24A1 Cannon (total of 8 Pairs) [1150]
- 90 *Internal Weapons Carriage:* RKA 6d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Explosion (-1 DC/2", +¾), Autofire (5 Shots, +½), Increased Maximum Range (6175", +¼); OIF (Bulky, Bomb Launcher, -1), 9 Charges (-¼), Dropped (-½), Real Weapon (-¼) [16]
- 10 *Internal Weapons Carriage:* 3 More Carriages (Total of 4) [9]

Operations Systems

- 14 *K-3A Radar Systems:* Radar (Radio Group), Increased Arc of Perception (360°), Targeting, Telescopic (+6 versus RMod); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as Sight Group as Well as Radio Group (-½) 0
- 4 *Communications System:* Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as Hearing Group as Well as Radio Group (-¼) 0

Personnel Systems

- 14 *Sealed Environment:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe in Intense Cold, Low Pressure/Vacuum) 0

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 238

Total Vehicle Cost: 317

Value Disadvantages

- 25 *Distinctive Features:* US Air Force Bomber (Not Concealable, Causes Extreme Reaction [Fear])

Total Disadvantage Points: 25

Total Cost: 292/5 = 58

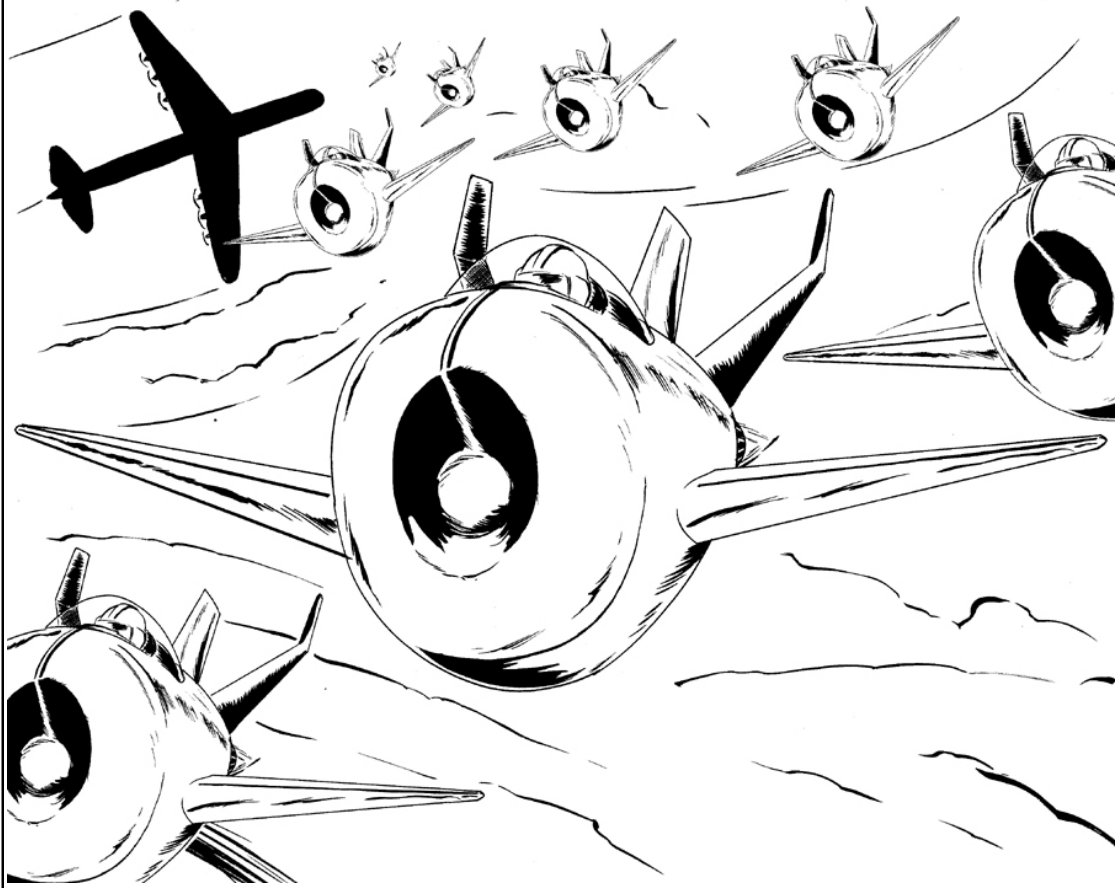
McDonnell XF-85 "Goblin"

History: This tiny fighter was designed to be carried *inside* a B-36 bomber and was meant to be launched from the bomb bay in case of enemy attack. As one can expect, its performance capabilities weren't the best and the plan was scrapped when it was determined traditional fighter escorts would serve much better.

Description: Nicknamed the "Bumblebee," the XF-85 has a tiny egg-shaped body only 4.3 meters long with a wingspan of 6.5 meters. Weighing in at a 2,068 kg, the Goblin's top speed is 650 mph. For defending the B-36, it mounts four .50 caliber machine guns in the nose. It has a crew of one.

Designed to re-dock with its B-36 mothership in flight, the Goblin doesn't have any landing gear aside from an emergency skid. Technically it can't really land, although a pilot could try it with appropriate minuses to his Combat Piloting roll.

Campaign Use: Nothing screams 1950's rocket science more than the idea of a tiny jet fighter carried inside of a mammoth propeller-driven bomber (except maybe a water-based jet fighter – see the next entry). You can use the Goblin to model your own microjets, to be used either by the PCs (for getting to and from their nuclear-powered B-36 flying base, of course), or as craft used by the villains (and launched from their own massive flying mothership).



DIGITAL HERO #25

McDonnell XF-85 "Goblin"

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
4	SIZE	20	2.5" x 1.25", -4" KB, -2 DCV
30	STR	0	Lift 1.6 tons; 6d6 HTH
20	DEX	30	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
14	BODY	0	
5	DEF	8	
4	SPD	10	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12

Total Characteristics Cost: 68

Movement: Ground: 0"/0"
Swimming: 0"/0"
Flight: 54"/432"

Abilities and Equipment

Cost Powers **END**

Propulsion Systems

- 23 **Jet Fighter:** Flight 27", 16x
Noncombat; 1 Continuing Fuel
Charge (Easy to Obtain Fuel; 1½
Hours, -0), Side Effects (KA 2d6, 7"
Line Behind Engines, Automatically
Occurs when Flight is in Use, Only
Effects Environment around Vehicle,
-1¾), Stall Velocity (13", -¼) [1cc]
- 12 **Can Only Fly:** Running -6" (0" Total) 0
- 2 **Can Only Fly:** Swimming -2" (0"
Total) 0

Tactical Systems

- 107 **Quad Mounted .50 Browning M2HB
Machine Guns (Forward-Mounted):**
RKA 6d6, Autofire (20 shots, +1½),
+1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼),
1120 Charges (+1); OIF (Bulky, -1),
Limited Arc Of Fire (0° Forward,
Same Horizontal Level, -1), Reduced
Penetration (-¼), Real Weapon (-¼)
plus +2 OCV; OIF (Bulky, -1) **plus** +4
RMod; OIF (Bulky, -1) [1120]

Operations Systems

- 4 **Communications System:** Radio
Perception/Transmission (Radio
Group); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as
Hearing Group as Well as Radio
Group (-¼) 0

Personnel Systems

- 14 **Sealed Environment:** Life Support
(Self-Contained Breathing; Safe in
Intense Cold, Low Pressure/Vacuum) 0

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 134

Total Vehicle Cost: 202

Value Disadvantages

- 25 Distinctive Features: US Air Force Jet
Fighter (Not Concealable, Causes
Extreme Reaction [Fear])
- 15 Physical Limitation: Cannot Land
(Infrequently, Fully Impairing)

Total Disadvantage Points: 40

Total Cost: 162/5 = 32

Convair F2Y "Sea Dart"

History: Operating under the belief one couldn't launch high-speed supersonic-capable jet aircraft from the deck of an aircraft carrier, the United States navy sponsored a contest in 1948 to develop a sea-based jet-powered interceptor. Convair won the contest after submitting a delta-winged design that rested directly on the water when not in operation. In 1951 they started construction on two prototypes, both of which would use retractable skis to skim across the water when taking off and landing.

The Navy liked the design so much they ordered a production run of 12 aircraft in August of 1952, later bumping that number up to a grand total of 22 planes. However, testing soon showed the plane (as designed) to be underpowered and subject to severe vibrations upon take off and landing. It was also slow in the air and was only able to break the speed of sound in a dive, becoming the first (and only) seaplane to do so. To make matters worse, in 1954 one of the test aircraft, designated XF2Y-1, disintegrated in midair when pushed past its safety margins. The Navy, rethinking its position on supersonic carrier-based fighters, canceled most of the production models of the F2Y, and made the Sea Dart a test program.

The remaining Sea Darts were reconfigured and tested for several years, with one model managing an open-sea takeoff and landing before being retired and placed in storage. The last tests were performed in the fall of 1957, after which the project was terminated, the four surviving Sea Darts eventually ending up in museums.

Description: The Sea Dart is a delta-winged airplane 16 meters long with a wingspan of 10 meters. It weighs 5,727 kg empty, and has a maximum takeoff weight of 9,752 kg. It has a top speed of 825 miles per hour at 36,000 feet, but can only achieve 695 miles per hour at 8,000 feet, and has a climb rate of 17,100 feet per minute. With only 1,000 gallons of fuel, the Sea Dart's range is a mere 513 miles. A Sea Dart has a crew of one.

The Sea Dart was never equipped with any armament, the listed 20mm cannon are simply proposed ideas. The Sea Dart was also supposed to mount 2.75 inch unguided rockets, but for the life of me, I can't figure out where.



DIGITAL HERO #25

Convair F2Y "Sea Dart"

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
9	SIZE	45	8" x 4", -9" KB, -6 DCV
43	STR	-12	Lift 9.45 tons; 6½d6 HTH
20	DEX	30	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
19	BODY	0	
6	DEF	12	
4	SPD	10	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12

Total Characteristics Cost: 85

Movement: Ground: 1"/2"
Swimming: 6"/48"
Flight: 34"/544"

Abilities and Equipment

Cost Powers **END**

Propulsion Systems

- 21 *Jet Fighter:* Flight 34", 16x Noncombat; 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easy to obtain fuel; 1 Hour, -0), Side Effects (KA 2d6, 7" Line Behind Engines, Automatically Occurs when Flight is in Use, Only Effects Environment around Vehicle, -1¾), Stall Velocity (13", -¼), Takeoff/Landing (-1) [1cc]
- 10 *Seaplane:* Running -5" (1" Total) 1
- 5 *Seaplane:* Swimming +4" (6" Total), 8x Noncombat; Cannot Move Backwards (-¼), Limited Maneuverability (-½), Surface Only (-1) 1

Tactical Systems

- 62 *20mm M24A1 Cannon (Forward-Mounted):* RKA 4d6, Autofire (5 Shots, +½), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼), 575 Charges (+1); OIF (Bulky, -1), Limited Arc of Fire (0° Forward, Same Horizontal Level, -1), Real Weapon (-¼) **plus** +2 OCV; OIF (Bulky, -1) **plus** +4 RMod; OIF (Bulky, -1) [575]
- 10 *20mm M24A1 Cannon (Forward-Mounted):* 3 More 20mm Cannons (Total of 4) [575]
- 5 *Reinforced Belly:* +2 DEF; Limited Coverage (Bottom of Plane/"Hull", -¼) 0

Operations Systems

- 4 *Communications System:* Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as Hearing Group as Well as Radio Group (-¼) 0

Personnel Systems

- 14 *Sealed Environment:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe in Intense Cold, Low Pressure/Vacuum) 0

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 111

Total Vehicle Cost: 196

Value Disadvantages

- 25 Distinctive Features: US Air Force Jet Fighter (Not Concealable, Causes Extreme Reaction [Fear])
- 10 Physical Limitation: Can Only Land on Water (Infrequently, Greatly Impairing)

Total Disadvantage Points: 35

Total Cost: 161/5 = 32

Campaign Use: This write-up presumes a working and viable Sea Dart. It's perfect for one of those "special forces" campaigns where the PCs are part of an elite team of agents. Just imagine it: a small group of Sea Darts sitting nice and peaceful under the tropical sun... when suddenly an alarm sounds and our heroes must scramble to get into their planes, get into the air, and jet off into the wild blue yonder to Make America Safe (insert dramatic theme music here). Having trouble buying a US Navy Special Forces team? No problem, make them part of the United Nations! (Anyone for a 1950s-version of UNTIL?)

North American XB-70 "Valkyrie"

History: The air war of World War II saw huge fleets of bombers take to the air to hit their targets. They came in such large numbers for two reasons; one was to totally saturate the target with unguided freefall bombs, the other was for mutual protection. Fighter escorts, for most of the war, could only go so far, after that, the bombers were on their own. Thus, World War II-era bombers were all heavily armed. The B-17 Flying Fortresses, for example, claimed over 6,500 enemy fighters shot down, although they lost over 5,000 bombers in the process.

The development of the jet engine allowed bombers to fly faster and higher than before, getting them out of the range of ground-based guns. In addition, a surprising new development occurred; it was discovered, that at the right altitudes, the massive B-36 (see entry above), with its huge wingspan, could outmaneuver an F-86 Sabre fighter. Although the B-36 was eventually scrapped, more successful models included the B-47 Stratojet, a high-speed long range bomber, and the B-58 Hustler, a medium bomber capable of Mach 2. The success of these planes led to the decision to develop "Weapons System 110," a bomber capable of "dashing" to the target at Mach 3 speeds. Further refinement of the WS110's requirements resulted in the request for a plane that had the following characteristics: a cruising speed of 2,000 miles per hour (Mach 3), a top altitude of 70,000 feet, a pressurized "shirtsleeve" environment for the crew, a 50,000 pound payload, and a range of 7,500 miles.

North American eventually won the contract in 1959, presenting the United States Air Force with the XB-70, a six-engined jet bomber that used "compression lift" to assist its flight characteristics. Simply put, compression lift uses a cone-shaped body under the wing to push air to either side, increasing pressure under the wing, and thus increasing lift without increasing drag. The end result was a plane with a better lift-to-drag ratio than any manned aircraft to date.

In 1961, Gary Powers was shot down over the Soviet Union while flying a Lockheed U-2, bringing the XB-70 project to a sudden halt. Altitude and speed was not going to protect a bomber from advanced surface-to-air missiles, meaning the XB-70 was no longer needed (the \$700 million price tag per plane didn't help matters). However, provisions were made to build and develop three XB-70s as test vehicles for high-speed flight research.

The first XB-70 was rolled out on May 11, 1964. It took to the air on September 21 for a series of handling and speed tests, and finally broke the sound barrier on October 12. The plane eventually reached speeds in excess of Mach 2,

at one point spending over 50 minutes beyond Mach 2 (a record at that time). The second XB-70 took to the air in July of 1965, its design having benefited from the testing the first plane had undergone (there would never be a third plane, by the way). Meanwhile, the first test plane reached Mach 3 on October 14, 1965, but would never do so again, as design problems made it dangerous to attempt such high speeds. The second test plane reached Mach 3 in late 1965.

The XB-70 program came under the partial domain of NASA in 1966, as a test bed for various high-speed experiments. Unfortunately, disaster struck soon after when one of the XB-70s, flying in formation with four other aircraft, was struck by an F-104 Starfighter, resulting in the destruction of both planes and the death of two of the three pilots involved. The surviving XB-70 continued to make test flights however, and was finally retired in 1969, after making a total of 82 flights.

Description: The XB-70 is a huge plane, 60 meters long with a 32 meter wingspan (giving it a very sleek profile). Empty it weighs 93,000 kg, and has a maximum takeoff weight of 250,000 kg. Six engines are mounted under the wings, allowing the XB-70 to reach a top speed of around 2,000 miles per hour (roughly Mach 3). The aircraft has a maximum altitude of 70,000 feet and a range of around 7,500 miles. The XB-70 was never equipped with any armament, but was supposed to carry around 50,000 pounds in dropped ordinance (it could carry 14 nuclear weapons if needed), but no wing mounted weapons due to problems with turbulence at high speeds.

Campaign Use: Tired of your old B-36 flying base? Why not trade it in for an XB-70! Now you can have a high-speed, high-altitude plane no one can catch! Of course, the odds of any group of PCs getting one seems a bit low, as only two were ever built, but in the world of comics superheroes you never know (After all, the X-Men did get their own SR-71 – and in a passenger version no less!) In a different and darker world, the XB-70 may have become a production aircraft, seeing action in some unspecified conflict or another. For those running near-future games, the XB-70 makes an excellent model for a high-altitude "scramjet" passenger liner.

North American XB-70 "Valkyrie"



North American XB-70 "Valkyrie"

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
15	SIZE	75	32" x 16", -15" KB, -10 DCV
66	STR	-19	Lift 250 tons; 13d6 HTH
18	DEX	24	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
25	BODY	0	
5	DEF	9	
5	SPD	22	Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12

Total Characteristics Cost: 111

Movement: Ground: 6"/12"
 Swimming: 0"/0"
 Flight: 45"/360"
 MegaFlight: 3"/6"

Abilities and Equipment

Cost Powers **END**

Propulsion Systems

- 36 *Jet Bomber:* Multipower. 100-point reserve; all Side Effects (-1¾), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (Easily Obtained Fuel, 6 Hours, -0) for Entire Multipower [1cc]
- 2u 1) *Standard Flight:* Flight 45", 8x Noncombat; Side Effects (KA 2d6, 7" Line Behind Engines, Automatically Occurs when Flight is in Use, Only Effects Environment around Vehicle, -1¾), Stall Velocity (23", -¼), Takeoff/Landing (-1) [1cc]
- 1u 2) *Mach Speed Flight:* Flight 3", MegaScale (1" = 1 km, +¼), 6x Engines; Side Effects (KA 2d6, 7" Line Behind Engines, Automatically Occurs when Flight is in Use, Only Effects Environment around Vehicle, -1¾), Cannot Take Off or Land at This Speed (-0) [1cc]
- 2 *Can Only Fly:* Swimming -2" (0" Total) 0

Tactical Systems

- 33 *Electronic Countermeasures:* Suppress Radar 6d6, Area Of Effect (3" Radius, +1), MegaArea (1" = 1 km, +¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); OIF (Bulky, -1), No Range (-½) 0
- 33 *Electronic Counter-Countermeasures:* Suppress Electronic Warfare 6d6, Any Power One at a Time (+¼), Increased Maximum Range (11,250", or about 14 miles, +½), No Range Modifier (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½); OAF (Bulky, -1½) 0
- 10 *ECM Systems:* Radio Group Flash Defense (10 points) 0
- 8 *ECM Systems:* Power Defense (10 points); Only Works against Electronic Warfare Attacks (-¼) 0

Operations Systems

- 20 *Radar:* Radar (Radio Group), Discriminatory, Increased Arc of Perception (360°), Telescopic (+24 versus RMod); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as Sight Group as Well as Radio Group (-½) 0
- 4 *Radar Warning Receiver:* Detect Detection by Radar 14- (Radio Group); OIF (Bulky, -1) 0
- 4 *Communications System:* Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as Hearing Group as Well as Radio Group (-¼) 0

Personnel Systems

- 6 *Ejection Seats:* Telekinesis (26 STR); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affects Whole Object (-¼), No Range (-½), Only to Throw Target Straight Up (-2), 1 Recoverable Charge (-1¾) [1rc]
- 5 *Ejection Seats:* Another Ejection Seat (Total of 2) [1rc]
- 14 *Sealed Environment:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe in Intense Cold, Low Pressure/Vacuum) 0

Skills

- 5 *TACAN (Tactical Air Navigation) System:* +4 to Navigation (Air) Roll; OAF (Bulky, -1½)

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 179

Total Vehicle Cost: 290

Value Disadvantages

- 25 *Distinctive Features:* US Air Force Bomber (Not Concealable, Causes Extreme Reaction [Fear])

Total Disadvantage Points: 25

Total Cost: 265/5 = 53

Flying Triangles

History: You're driving along a lonely back country road when you see it... a huge shape, as large as a football field, blots out the night sky over head. Triangular in outline, it cruises silently through the air, finally vanishing into the distance. An alien encounter? Perhaps... or perhaps not.

Ever since the early 1980s, people have been reporting sightings of immense flying triangles. The aircraft are usually black in color, are normally seen at night, and often make no noise. The National Institute for Discovery Science (NIDS), in Las Vegas, Nevada has collected 200 cases for what it calls Big Black Delta (or BBD) sightings. Many are clustered in and around the air corridors between Air Force Material Command (AFMC) and Air Mobility Command (AMC) bases all over the country. This has led to the theory that the BBDs are part of a Defense Department project to develop a large heavy-lift lighter-than-air craft capable of carrying large amounts of cargo over immense distances.

Description: If it's as big as they say, then a Flying Triangle is the largest thing to ever fly. Conservative estimates describe it as being the "size of a football field," or roughly 100 yards (300 feet) long. This version is even bigger, measuring a full 600 feet long, with a maximum width of 300 feet. It is also 40 feet tall and masses roughly 100 tons. The Triangles fly via electrokinetic propulsion, generating an aerostatic field around the craft, providing virtually silent thrust in any direction. When coupled with inner lifting gas cells (and a possible nuclear reactor for power), a Triangle can fly at virtually any altitude and stay aloft for weeks at a time.

Campaign Use: The Flying Triangle is probably the ultimate flying base. It's lighter-than-air, so it doesn't require any power to stay aloft. It also has no external propellers, so there is no engine noise, propwash, or exhaust trail. Add in some smoke generators and you now have the perfect hidden flying base! Of course, something like this just begs to be used by more than the good guys. I can easily see VIPER having one or two, with upgraded high-speed engines and radar-absorbing coatings. Or better yet, Doctor Destroyer....



Flying Triangles

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
20	SIZE	100	100" x 50", -20" KB, -13 DCV
110	STR	0	Lift 100 kton; 22d6 HTH
15	DEX	15	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
30	BODY	0	
6	DEF	12	
3	SPD	5	Phases: 4, 8, 12

Total Characteristics Cost: 132

Movement: Ground: 0"/0"
Swimming: 0"/0"
Flight: 33"/152"

Abilities and Equipment

Cost	Powers	END
Propulsion Systems		
162	<i>Electrokinetic Propulsion:</i> Flight 38", 4x Noncombat, No Turn Mode (+1/4), Sideways Maneuverability (+1/2), Invisible to Hearing Group (+1/4)	0
-12	<i>Can Only Fly:</i> Running -6" (0" Total)	0
-2	<i>Can Only Fly:</i> Swimming -2" (0" Total)	0
Operations Systems		
12	<i>Radar System:</i> Radar (Radio Group), Discriminatory, Increased Arc of Perception (360°), Telescopic (+6 versus RMod); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as Sight Group as Well as Radio Group (-0)	0
4	<i>Communications System:</i> Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as Hearing Group as Well as Radio Group (-1/4)	0
Personnel Systems		
14	<i>Sealed Environment:</i> Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe in Intense Cold, Low Pressure/Vacuum)	0

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 178**Total Vehicle Cost: 310****Value Disadvantages**

25	Distinctive Features: Giant Military Transport (Not Concealable, Causes Extreme Reaction [Awe])
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Total Disadvantage Points: 25**Total Cost: 285/5 = 57**

Lockheed (?) Aurora

History: In 1990 the United States Air Force retired its fleet of SR-71 “Blackbird” spy planes (although NASA still uses one for testing). Their reason? The SR-71 fleet cost between \$200 and \$300 million a year to operate, and besides, spy satellites could do the same job, better, for less. All sensible reasons – at least on the surface. But if you think about it, \$300 million is nothing compared to the 4 billion dollars the USAF spends on satellite reconnaissance. Why not keep the SR-71s around then, just in case? Unless – of course – you had something *faster* than an SR-71.

In August of 1989, a British oil engineer working on a North Sea oil rig spotted a long, roughly diamond-shaped aircraft flying overhead accompanied by a K-135 fueling tanker and two F-111 fighter bombers. This sighting seemed to confirm what many suspected – the United States had found a replacement for the Blackbird. A very fast replacement.

Known as Aurora (from a line item that appeared in a 1985 budget request next to the SR-71 and U-2 programs) this plane looks to be a the next generation of high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft. It seems to be based off of an experimental hypersonic aircraft developed

by Lockheed in the mid-1970s, who claimed to have flown a test model at Mach 6! Development would have started in the early ‘80s, with the first test flights occurring in the mid-1980s. There is some evidence to lead one to believe the Aurora was used to fly over Iraq before the start of the first Gulf War.

Currently, the strongest evidence for the existence of the Aurora doesn’t come from sightings of the aircraft, but the noise it makes. Observers around Groom Lake in Nevada (a.k.a. “Area 51”) have reported loud pulsing reports that echo across the desert. Similar reports, of a loud “popping,” have been reported from many locations. Sonic booms are also a common occurrence at Groom Lake, and there is at least one widespread visual clue: strange high-altitude contrails described as a doughnut (or a series of doughnuts) strung along a rope.

Description: As the Aurora many not really exist, the following information is, of course, highly conjectural.

The Aurora is thought to be roughly 80 to 90 feet long. Filled with a special liquid methane fuel (to help absorb heat in flight), the plane will weigh in at around 77,110 kg.



Lockheed (?) Aurora

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
11	SIZE	55	12.5" x 6.4", -11" KB, -7 DCV
58	STR	-7	Lift 75 tons; 11½d6 HTH
20	DEX	30	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
20	BODY	-1	
6	DEF	12	
6	SPD	30	Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12

Total Characteristics Cost: 119

Movement: Ground: 6"/12"
 Swimming: 0"/0"
 Flight: 104"/416"
 MegaFlight: 4"/8"

Abilities and Equipment

Cost Powers **END**

Propulsion Systems

- 77 *Ramjet Reconnaissance Plane:* Multipower, 213-point reserve; all Side Effects (-1¾), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (Easily-Obtained Fuel, 2 Hours, -0) for Entire Multipower [1cc]
- 5u 1) *Standard Flight:* 104", 4x Noncombat, 4x Engines; Side Effects (KA 2d6, 7" Line Behind Engines, Automatically Occurs when Flight is in Use, Only Effects Environment around Vehicle, -1¾), Stall Velocity (52", -¼), Takeoff/Landing (-1) [1cc]
- 1u 2) *Mach Speed Flight:* Flight 4", Mega-Scale (1" = 1 km, +¼), 4x Engines; Side Effects (KA 2d6, 7" Line Behind Engines, Automatically Occurs when Flight is in Use, Only Effects Environment around Vehicle, -1¾), Cannot Take Off or Land at This Speed (-0) [1cc]
- 2 *Can Only Fly:* Swimming -2" (0" Total) 0

Tactical Systems

- 12 *ECM Systems:* Radio Group Flash Defense (12 points) 0
- 10 *ECM Systems:* Power Defense (12 points); Only Works against Electronic Warfare Attacks (-¼) 0

Operations Systems

- 26 *Radar:* Radar (Radio Group), Discriminatory, Increased Arc of Perception (360°), Telescopic (+40 versus RMod); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as Sight Group as Well as Radio Group (-½) 0
- 6 *Radar Warning Receiver:* Detect Detection by Radar 18- (Radio Group); OIF (Bulky, -1) 0
- 4 *Communications System:* Radio Perception/Transmission (Radio Group); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affected as

Hearing Group as Well as Radio Group (-¼) 0

Personnel Systems

- 6 *Ejection Seats:* Telekinesis (26 STR); OIF (Bulky, -1), Affects Whole Object (-¼), No Range (-½), Only to Throw Target Straight Up (-2), 1 Recoverable Charge (-1¾) [1rc]
- 5 *Ejection Seats:* Another Ejection Seat (Total of 2) [1rc]
- 14 *Sealed Environment:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe in Intense Cold, Low Pressure/Vacuum) 0

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 164

Total Vehicle Cost: 283

Value Disadvantages

- 25 *Distinctive Features:* US Spyplane (Not Concealable, Causes Extreme Reaction [Fear])

Total Disadvantage Points: 25

Total Cost: 258/5 = 52

Roughly triangular in form (or possibly shaped like an elongated diamond), the Aurora's fuselage is designed to take advantage of compression lift in the same way as the XB-70 Valkyrie. A ramjet runs the length of the plane, forcing air into the four engines and allowing speeds in excess of 4,000 miles per hour (*i.e.* Mach 6). Maximum altitude is around 100,000 feet. The plane has a crew of two, consisting of a pilot and a Reconnaissance Systems Officer (or RSO). Interestingly, the plane is so fast there's a good chance the cockpit doesn't have any windows, or, if it does, they are covered with shields when the Aurora reaches certain speeds.

Campaign Use: The Aurora (which, if it was ever called that, certainly has a new name now), lends itself to near-future campaigns with ease. In a *Champions* setting it could be a fantastic new superplane for a powerful superhero team. In addition, the mere existence of the Aurora would be more than enough to tempt the likes of many a supervillain. Especially if certain components were designed and/or built by a well known technological superhero. In a *Cyber Hero* setting, it could be an experimental corporate spyplane and/or strike craft. Finally, one could turn it into an aerospace fighter in certain types of *Star Hero* campaigns.

