

MGP  
3345



## **The Psi Corps**



**Written By  
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**Babylon 5 Created by J. Michael Straczynski**

*'I will look upon him who shall have taught me this Art as one of my parents. I will share my substance with him, and I will supply his necessities if he be in need. I will regard his offspring even as my own brethren and I will teach them this Art by precept, by lecture, and by every mode of teaching; and I will teach his Art to all others. The regimen I adopt shall be for the benefit of all mankind according to my ability and judgment, and not for hurt or wrong. I will give no deadly thought to any, though it be asked of me.'*

*Whatsoever mind I enter, there will I go for the benefit of man, refraining from all wrong-doing and corruption. Whatsoever thoughts I see or hear in the mind of man which ought not to be known, I will keep silence thereon, counting such things to be as sacred secrets.'*

*– The Esper Pledge from The Demolished Man, by  
Alfred Bester (1913–1987)*

# The Psi Corps

Gareth Hanrahan

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Friends – by now you will have read my official report on the Babylon 5 debacle. Young Byron Gordon is dead, as is the core of his little cult. However, the situation has not been contained – most of his followers have fled B5 and the station's resident teep, Lyta Alexander (see my earlier communications, as well as Sigma file 32215/a) has become influenced by Byron's beliefs. In short, we have a problem. The recent bombings at TeepTown show that the rogue movement is now more organised and active than it has been at any time since Stephen Walters' cell was destroyed.

Still, I come to praise Byron, not to bury him. I found a bundle of documents (copies attached) in his little Jonestown in Downbelow. He stole various Corps publications and files before he left and was annotating and 'correcting' them from his perspective as part of writing a kiss-and-tell expose of our 'nefarious and evil' activities. It is possible that some of the escaped rogues have their own copies of this document, so we should put containment and damage control measures into place as soon as possible.

However, that is not why I'm sending these to you. We face a war on two fronts – a public battle with those who 'Remember Byron' and an internal struggle with O'Brien and the other vestiges of Clark's regime. We need to reclaim full control of the Corps for the telepaths before we can properly deal with the rogues. Byron has, in his death as a martyr, far more credibility than he did in life. Instead of trying to win minds in the training cadres directly, I propose we leak an edited version of Byron's document to the younger telepaths. They are still too awed by Mother and Father to believe in the existence of Shadow Science if we tell them but having the information come from an 'objective' third party should swing the balance.

This much disclosure is a risk but I am convinced that it will do more to further our efforts than any conventional move against O'Brien. We need to *co-opt* Byron's legacy, not fight it. He can do more for the Psi Corps as a rogue than he ever did as a Psi Cop. Mother and Father can still love their prodigal son.

Be seeing you – AI



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# Welcome to Psi Corps

Telepathy is fundamentally communication – a bridging of thoughts, a direct link between minds. Civilisation is built on communication; telepathy is the most recent link in a chain that began with cave paintings, primitive grunts and gestures. Each new medium of communication brings upheaval in society. The printing press, the telephone, tachyon transmission and the rest all wrought change, engendered fear and confusion before they were understood and seen by society as necessary steps in evolution.

The Psi Corps is a bridge to the future. As the past century has shown, the changes needed to assimilate telepathy into human society are difficult and painful. The Psi Corps holds telepathy in trust, protecting it from abuse and finding the best possible path for it. It is a necessary step as we take our place in the galaxy.

*There have been too many lies.*

*The history of the Psi Corps presented here is their fiction of the past. They alter documents as easily as they alter memories and then they argue that since the past is what we remember, then they control reality. It is still a lie, though, as long as one of us remembers. As long as we carry the truth in our hearts and minds, they cannot win.*

*I carried these documents out of Psi Corps when I left and in snatched moments in transit and here on Babylon 5, I have noted the most egregious lies and deceptions. This is my legacy to the telepaths who will come after me – a glimpse of our true heritage, unobfuscated by the lies our 'parents' told us.*

*The truth shall set you free.*

## The History of the Corps

### Holocaust – 2115

**A sample population of 1,000 volunteers was screened for metasensory abilities using a standard set of Zener cards, Black Box Randomiser and blind curtain tests. Two individuals demonstrated consistently accurate results for each test and ten demonstrated statistically improbable accuracy. HCl and Dao cortex imaging demonstrated collateral brain cortex activity between senders and receivers in accurate tests. The sample population was increased to 5,000 individuals. Two members of the larger sample conclusively demonstrated metasensory abilities, with thirteen sets of statistically improbable results. Cortex imaging was consistent with the findings of the preliminary study.**

— *Investigations into Biochemical Sensory Transmission, Duffy & Philsen, New England Journal of Medicine, September 2115 issue*

Telepathy is a recent development in humanity. It is believed to be a natural mutation, one that has recurred time and again in sufficiently developed alien species. Current theories suggest that it is triggered by leaving the cradle of the homeworld and that once a race goes to the stars, it copes with the opportunities and threats of other races by activating the cluster of ancient genetic traits that give rise to telepathy. Within a generation of humanity becoming a partially telepathic species, we had made contact with the Centauri, and through them, the galaxy



– but that is jumping ahead. The history of telepathy is a series of small, cautious steps, with each misstep bringing tragedy.

The publication of the Duffy-Philsen study was followed by a series of follow-up articles from every respected scientific journal and university, confirming the incredible findings of the first study. Telepathy was suddenly an indisputable scientific fact. A small percentage of people could speak mind to mind! The phenomenon was soon found to have a genetic basis, like any other physical trait. A simple test was developed to identify telepaths, by looking for a specific combination of genes in human DNA.

The other, more common reaction to telepathy was fear. The media took the initial report and presented an exaggerated, distorted version of it. Ludicrous speculation and outright lies took the place of balanced, professional journalism – and the mob reacted as they always do. Telepaths became the latest in a long line of minorities to be singled out and persecuted. Anyone suspected of having the telepathic gift was attacked by the fearful and the misinformed. Telepathy was born in fire and blood, darkness and pain, in lynchings, burnings and torture. It was a pogrom, a witch hunt, a holocaust – and it must never happen again.

All this was before a strong, centralised EarthGov. Local governments and authorities reacted as they could to the growing tragedy but without a single will to guide them, the various police and security forces could not bring order. Without full-scale genetic testing, the telepaths could not be protected from the mobs at their door, nor could they be



taught the proper use of their abilities. This early explosion of violence spawned the terrorist rogue movement and also drove telepaths into the service of illegal criminal syndicates.

Then, in 2116, Senators Lee Crawford and Vladimir Tokash proposed the formation of a global organisation to deal with the problem, under the auspices of the Earth Alliance Committee on Metasensory Regulation. This organisation was the Metasensory Regulatory Authority – and would one day become the Psi Corps.

## **The Learning Curve – 2117**

### **‘In a hundred years, people will look back at this as the beginning of something wonderful.’**

— *Senator Lee Crawford, hero of Grissom Lunar Colony and chair of the Committee on Metasensory Regulation*

Under Senator Crawford's leadership, the newly-formed Authority reacted quickly. Genetic testing became a part of medical checkups, so that the vast majority of telepaths were soon identified and contacted by the MRA. However, the test was only 70% accurate – it never gave a false positive (identifying a non-telepath as a telepath), but almost 30% of the time, it would fail to identify a telepath as such (modern technology and research has made the genetic test much more accurate; when coupled with surface probes and psychological evaluations, Psi Corps testing teams can identify latent telepaths with 90%+ accuracy). To find the one in three telepaths who would slip through the genetic test and to find those who were outside the normal channels of society, the Metasensory Regulatory Authority was given

*The Corps has records of telepaths going back to around 2080 – a full generation before the Duffy-Philsen study. Many of the early telepaths formed protective cults around themselves, becoming bargain-basement messiahs to the foolish and weak-minded. The Katun Prophecy, the Starchildren and the Third Testament Brotherhood were all manipulated by telepaths. The ultimate origin of telepathy remained a mystery to the Corps, despite their best efforts.*

*I suspect Vacit blocked some of their investigations but I'm getting ahead of myself. More later.*

3

permission to train telepaths as hunters and investigators. The best way to find a telepath, after all, is with another telepath.

These investigators, dubbed bloodhound units, crisscrossed Earth and the Lunar, Martian and Belt colonies, searching for lost telepaths. Working in concert with Earth Alliance security forces, they located and rescued telepaths who had gone underground. They also dealt with telepaths who, in response to mistrust and hate, had begun to abuse their powers and gone rogue. In response to these rogues, the Metasensory Regulatory Authority created a set of guidelines on the ethical and legal uses of telepathy.

These guidelines outlawed the use of telepathy without the permission of the MRA. Unauthorised scans and telepathic manipulation of the minds of others became a criminal offence. The flipside of these laws was that telepathy became authorised in certain situations – scans where the target allowed the probe or medical scans to bring patients out of comas or fugue states.

Initially, these authorised scans were rare but the business world soon realised the benefits of telepathy. Public confidence had been shaken by a series of high-profile cases of fraud and deception, where major companies had misreported their profitability and business practises, leading to a world-wide recession. With telepaths to ensure truth and honesty in business, such fraudulent practises became impossible. An authorised telepathic scan became part of due diligence in any major business deal. A double-dealing executive might be able to hide his illegal affairs and stolen funds from auditors and accountants but he could not hide from a telepathic scan. Public and investor confidence was re-established and the Earth economy boomed – thanks to

the development of the solar system, thanks to trade with the Centauri and thanks to telepathy.

## Sleepers - 2120

**‘Why not make every telepath take these drugs and end the problem that way?’**

**‘That’s not ending the problem, son, that’s postponing it. Sleepers just let telepaths live an ordinary life, but we’re living in extraordinary times.’**

— *Interview with Senator Crawford on The Senate Today programme*

Research based on the first tests soon led to the development of a psionic inhibitor drug, dubbed a ‘sleeper’. Telepathic communication happens at the fringes of nerve cells, in delicate electrical impulses that are only fractionally above the threshold of detection. The sleeper drugs marginally inhibit the electrical activity of the brain, dampening the impulses by a tiny fraction – just enough to block psionic activity, without affecting any of the other brain functions.

Sleeper drugs were quickly passed through the medical trials and put under the authority of the MRA. Anyone with telepathic abilities could sign up for a regular regimen of sleepers, dispensed by the MRA’s medical staff. Only a small fraction of telepaths took the offer of the sleeper drugs but the development of sleepers gave them the freedom of choice between joining the MRA and ordinary life.



## The MRA Planned Community - 2123

**‘Goddamn it, boy, I feel like Professor whatshisname, the one in the wheelchair! Does the swimming pool have a jet plane underneath it?’**

— *Attributed to Senator Lee Crawford on his first visit to the Compound*



Those telepaths who chose not to suppress their abilities using the sleeper drugs were invited to the Metasensory Compound, a planned and remote community located near Geneva. This community was designed to cater specifically for the needs of telepaths, providing housing, training and education. Perhaps inevitably, the place was soon nicknamed 'TeepTown'.

To help pay for the construction and running of the compound (not to mention its security), the Metasensory Regulatory Authority began selling the services of telepaths. Commercial telepaths to oversee business deals, medical telepaths to aid in psychological counselling and therapy, translators to provide instantaneous, contextual translations, court and military telepaths to aid in interrogation and information retrieval – every year brought new opportunities and new uses for telepathy. Within ten years, the MRA was self-funding; within twelve, it was able to sponsor the construction of a network of stations in major cities, so that no telepath was ever far from help.

## Rogues and Terrorists – 2133

**'Those who killed Desa, I must admit, make me very angry but I try to control my anger. Desa Alexander would have wanted me to. What she wanted for her**

**fellow telepaths was a life free of fear and violence, a productive and fulfilled life like her own. It is truly sad when people fight with such animal violence the very things that are best for them.'**

— Senator Lee Crawford, speaking in the aftermath of the attempted assassination of Senator Philip Lai

The rogue movement grew out of telepath-engineered religious cults and illegal military projects – two groups who prevented the MRA from contacting and helping their gifted members. Some of the rogues were simply misguided, believing that the MRA was some bizarre Orwellian thought-control conspiracy; others wilfully rejected the laws on legal telepathic scans, preferring to abuse their abilities out of greed, lust or a desire for power. The MRA's bloodhound units fought a constant shadow war against these terrorists but they suffered their own bloody losses – in 2133, a terrorist attack on an Earth Alliance senator cost the life of senior MRA officer Desa Alexander.

The rogue terrorism would continue for nearly a century until its leaders were defeated by the Psi Cops. Still, there exist secret cells and conspiracies seeded by those leaders, requiring constant vigilance.

*The rogue movement has opposed Psi Corps since the beginning. Much of its success can be put down to its early organisers and leaders. Most Corps telepaths never even hear of these rogue leaders – the rogues are invariably presented as confused and helpless blips, or diabolical mind-shredding loner terrorists. The idea that there might be a widespread blip network or underground railroad is suppressed.*

*The Psi Cops, however, know the rogue leaders intimately. Metapol is aware that there is a well-established network of cells providing shelter and support to runaways. Direct attacks against the Corps' facilities have dropped off since Stephen Walters was killed but the rogues still oppose the Corps and work to undermine it.*

*The basic structure of the rogue network was put in place by an early telepath called Jack O'Hannlon, better known in teep circles by his nom-de-guerre of Monkey. He was an organisational genius and a brash trickster, steeped in conspiracy building techniques and methods of lavish destruction. From what I've gathered, he was also part of the Katun Prophecy sect, which was also home to telepaths like Desa 'Blood' Alexander and Adam Teal. Inside. Regardless of how he managed it, Monkey organised the telepath underground. He made contacts with corporations and other, less reputable groups, gave them access to telepaths who weren't bound by the Corps rules and used the funding he got from those groups to pay for his war against order.*



## The Telepath and the President - 2158

**'It was a gift, you see...'**

— *Last words of William Karges*

By 2158, genetic testing for telepathy was widespread – but it still only detected 70% of those with psionic ability. Almost a third of telepaths slipped through the MRA's programmes. Some of these had a low P-rating and never realised they were telepaths. Many others reported themselves voluntarily to the MRA and were given training or treatment to deal with their psionic powers. Some went rogue. A small fraction, however, tried to discipline themselves and cope with telepathy on their own. It takes a person of extraordinary will to do such a thing, to live with the power of telepathy without the support of other telepaths and a training regimen such as that provided by Psi Corps.

William Karges was a man of extraordinary will. He discovered his telepathic abilities at age 13 but was never found by the MRA. He joined the Earth Alliance military and was quickly promoted into the security division, where he was placed in charge of the personal security of President Robinson.

The late 2150s were a chaotic period on Earth. First contact with the Centauri threw everything we knew about the universe into abeyance. Suddenly, we were no longer alone. Rumours spread that Earth was an alien colony, that telepaths were alien agents and that a Centauri invasion fleet was about to attack spread everywhere. Panic gripped the whole world – and fearful people struck out against whatever they could hit.

William Karges foiled three terrorist plots in 2157–58, using a combination of his telepathic gifts and his natural intelligence and intuition. He was specially commended by the President twice, winning the EA Medal of Honour. All this time, he kept his telepathic powers secret, using it as his hidden edge against the terrorists. In 2158, a man named Lou Holland Orwood planned to assassinate the President. His opportunity came one bright July afternoon in 2158.

The President was scheduled to give a speech in the Memorial Gardens outside San Diego. Orwood was hiding in the crowd of some 20,000, a bomb strapped to his chest. The explosive was of a new type based on Centauri technology, undetectable by the scanners used by Karges' security teams. Orwood's twisted and hate-filled mind, however, was readily detectable by Karges' telepathy.

There was a brief struggle, during which Karges was fatally shot – but Orwood was stopped and the President's life was saved.

On his deathbed, Karges told President Robinson that he was a telepath and that all that he had accomplished in his life was made possible by his psionic gift. In gratitude for Karges' heroic sacrifice, President Robinson redoubled her support of the growing Metasensory Regulatory Authority. In his name, she signed the Presidential Order that transformed the MRA from an ungainly bureaucratic tangle of agencies and departments attached to a Senate committee into an independent and self-contained international organisation – the Psi Corps.

*Karges is the archetype of the Loyal Telepath, selflessly throwing himself into the line of fire to save a mundane. It is quite astonishing how much mileage the Corps has gotten out of one martyr – any accusation that the Corps is plotting against mundanes or involved in anything the least bit shady is met with cries of 'remember William Karges!'*

*Did William Karges exist? Yes, despite what some rogues claim. Not even the Psi Corps could fake so many historical documents.*

*Did Karges save the President at the cost of his own life? Again, yes.*

*Was the whole incident staged? Possibly. I do not believe that Karges was a Corps agent – to become a Presidential bodyguard, his background would have been carefully examined and investigated. However, the convenient suicide bomber is much more suspicious and was likely a conditioned agent. The whole Karges incident is much too similar to the attack on Senator Lai in 2133. Someone in Psi Corps took revenge on Monkey's rogue movement by using their own techniques against them – they telepathically prompted the bomber to attack and probably shaped his mind so it would stand out even to a P5 like Karges.*

*Psi Corps was built on a lie.*

## Moments of Transition - the MRA becomes the Psi Corps

Why did the Metasensory Regulatory Authority transform into the Psi Corps? Fundamentally, it was a question of scale – the MRA had become much too large to continue as it was. The planned community was now a small city, with thousands of telepaths living and working within its precincts. 97% of the Fortune 500 companies had registered telepaths working for them. The MRA's budget was over a thousand times bigger than it was when it began. To cope with all these changes, the MRA had to become independent.

Its independence also gave the MRA a new level of authority for dealing with rogue telepaths – now, it could establish its own extradition treaties with the few governments outside the Earth Alliance and gave telepaths the right to govern themselves and develop their own society.

Finally, the creation of Psi Corps offered greater protection to telepaths. The arrival of the Centauri and the discovery that the aliens had their own telepaths triggered a huge outbreak of anti-telepath violence. Extremists believed that telepaths were alien-engineered monsters, despite the fact that Earth had been free of alien influence since after the Vree fly-bys of the 1940s. The Psi Corps could protect telepaths and protect normal humans from rogues, by turning its hunter teams into a genuine, well-trained security force – the Psi Cops.

### Psi Corps - 2161

**'The Psi Corps will be mother and father to a new generation of telepaths, ones who are not feared for what they might do or confused by their own abilities, but are instead honoured and cherished as a new and special branch of humanity.'**

— *Director Kevin Vacit, speaking at the signing of the Internal Security act which created Psi Corps*

The Psi Corps was officially founded on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2161.

Tragically, Senator Lee Crawford never lived to see his dreams of an independent MRA come to fruition. After a lifetime in the service of the Earth Alliance, Crawford was assassinated by a rogue telepath outside the Centauri embassy.

The role destined for Crawford – Director of Psi Corps – instead went to Crawford's long-term assistant, Kevin Vacit. The directorship is a lifetime appointment and Vacit would serve from 2161 until his death in 2199. During his tenure, Vacit oversaw the transformation from the MRA to Psi Corps and the development of the Corps' facilities across Earth and the colonies. He also founded the Science branch of the Psi Corps, researching into the nature and development of telepathy, as well as expanding the Corps' educational and medical branches.

That same year, Earth purchased jumpgate technology from the Centauri and we – telepaths and normals alike – were on a path to the galaxy.

### Earth Takes Her Place In The Stars - 2163

**'The alien ship had locked weapons onto us and was about to blow us away, when suddenly they just stopped. Our telepath turns to me with a beatific smile on her face and says 'It's all right. They were scared of us... I've made them understand now'. We owe our life - and our treaty with the Mentaban - to her.'**

— *Captain of the EAS Persephone.*

The EAS *Argo* was the first human-built jump-capable ship and she carried a pair of telepaths on board. While the Centauri sold humanity the rudiments of translation technology and some dossiers on other alien races, our ability to understand alien cultures and languages was severely limited. The only solution was to use telepathy, the universal language of the mind. Telepaths also travelled with Interplanetary Expeditions vessels and other corporate ships as they explored the galaxy. Telepaths and the Psi



In any official Psi Corps histories, Kevin Vacit is the forgotten director. Lee Cranford is the father of the Corps, the larger-than-life cowboy politician who fooled the mundanes and founded the Corps. Director Johnston is the stern guiding hand that was the voice of policy and control for as long as most telepaths alive today can remember. Vacit is ignored, a footnote in the Corps history notable only for being Cranford's stand-in when the Corps was founded.

In the higher echelons of the Corps, though, Vacit is the subject of endlessly fevered speculation. He was responsible for setting up the majority of the Corps' secret projects, from the re-education camps to Department Sigma. He created the first programmes to enhance telepathic ability and improving telepaths was a passion of his. This leads to the first speculation about Kevin Vacit — that he was a telepath.

The idea that a telepath could hold the directorship is (amusingly) unthinkable to EarthGov. The whole point of the position of Psi Corps director is that it is held by a mundane, ensuring that the teeps are kept on a leash. If Vacit was a telepath, he could have initiated all sorts of pro-telepath projects (and, indeed, he did). He would also have been able to create his own personal empire inside the government. Cranford was sometimes referred to as 'the most powerful man on Earth' due to his control over the Corps. Add telepathy to that and you end up with EarthGov's worst nightmare. If Vacit was a telepath, though, he would have to have been absurdly strong, able to block PI2s without them even noticing it. Such strength and control would require a PI3 at least.

The second theory about Kevin Vacit — he was in league with the rogues. On the face of it, this is even more improbable than him being a telepath but several incidents involving information leaks suggest that someone in Vacit's office was a rogue sympathiser.

The third theory about Vacit is the one that has the most proof but is also the most bizarre. During his service to Cranford and later when he was director of the Corps, Vacit made several long trips to rather odd locations. He visited the old Katun temple in the Yucatan, searching for clues into the origins of telepathy. He sponsored an investigation into telepath ancestry, which traced the inheritance of the psi-genes to a small, specific group — people who had experienced 'missing time' in Antarctica. Vacit visited the Antarctic region in 2178. He was looking for something.

Whatever it was, he went looking for it on Venus in 2181. Vacit's Pilgrimage, as it was referred to within the Corps by those who knew, was an unsolvable mystery for almost a century. What was the Director of Psi Corps doing out there in the hot orbits? What was he looking for? The theory within Psi Corps was that Vacit was somehow connected to whoever created telepaths — most believed that it was one of the megacorporations, or possibly an unknown alien race.

Now, with Lyta's help, I believe I know the answer. We now know that the Vorlons were responsible for the blossoming of telepathy among humans. Although Vacit cannot have known who he was looking for, he must have realised the alien connection. He traced the Vorlon emissaries to their staging base amid the ice and then onto Venus. What he found there, we can never know unless we follow the Vorlon trail out beyond the Rim.

Still, it is a strange thing to know that for much of its existence, Psi Corps was under the care of another one touched by the Vorlons.



Corps have always been at the leading edge of human development and exploration.

The Centauri were found not to be the only alien race with telepaths – most of the other major races encountered, with the notable exception of the Narn, had their own telepaths. Out in the galaxy, telepathy was another weapon and Earth had to be ready to fight her alien foes on that battlefield as well as any other.

The Dilgar War in the 2220s proved how vital telepaths are to modern warfare. Without Psi Corps, captured Dilgar could not have been interrogated, nor could the heroic Earth Expeditionary Force have made its quick alliances with the League of Non-Aligned Worlds and formed the Liberation Navy. Military telepaths stood with Admiral Hamato when his fleet attacked the Dilgar fortress world of Omelos and died with him when his flagship was rammed by a crippled enemy vessel.

**The Golden Age – 2200**  
**'Of course there's a telepath problem. Fear, misunderstanding and prejudice are the oldest problems we have. It's up to the Psi Corps and myself to solve it.'**

— Director Alistair Johnston

Director Vacit died in his sleep in 2199 and was succeeded by the great Director Alistair Johnston. Under Director Johnston, the Psi Corps grew to its present form and established new links with other government departments such as the Ministry of Peace. With loyal human telepaths, alien threats and alien infiltrators on Earth could be detected and stopped before they threatened the people of Earth. Psi Corps works hand in glove with the other security agencies to safeguard all humanity, both telepaths and mundanes.

In 2220, the third phase of construction of the Metasensory Compound in Geneva was completed and the city of 'TeepTown' now had a population of almost three-quarters of a million – half the total active telepath population of Earth, all living and working in a single town. This would obviously be a tempting target to anti-telepath terrorists and rogues, so the Compound was equipped with the finest security systems available. The rogue threat was largely



ended in 2223, when a Psi Cop named Bester caught the last significant ringleader of the rogues.

2236 saw the construction of the Crawford building inside EarthDome itself, a base of operations for the Corps in the very heart of government. Just as William Karges saved

*The Psi Corps killed Monkey in 2176 but he passed his knowledge onto his adoptive granddaughter, Fiona Temple. She was captured by the Corps for a brief period but escaped in the company of two other telepaths, Matthew Dexter and Stephen Walters.*

*Dexter was a strong P12, one of the most powerful telepaths on record. Stephen Walters is notorious in Metapol history as the only 'rogue Psi Cop' (he was something of an inspiration to me, I must admit). The Temple/Dexter/Walters triumvirate ran the underground and expanded it offworld until 2189, when Fiona and her husband Matthew were killed in a Psi Corps raid. Stephen Walters escaped and continued on their legacy until Bester killed him in 2223.*

*It's odd (if I may slip into personal reminiscence for a moment) that Bester never discussed this incident. He showed no such reluctance to discuss his other 'triumphs' and kills but his greatest accomplishment was always shrouded in melancholy for him.*

*Following Walters' death, the underground was essentially leaderless but the cell structure put in place by Monkey allowed individual groups of rogues to continue their efforts against Psi Corps. Direct action such as raids or bombings ceased but the spirit of secret resistance against the Corps has continued until the present day.*

President Robinson at the birth of the Corps, so too do the Psi Corps watch over our leaders, guarding them against alien telepathic influence.

## The Minbari Invasion - 2248

**'We tried talking to them, we tried signalling and in the end we tried telepathic communication, but they didn't listen.... they never listen.'**

— Director Johnston, speaking in the wake of the Minbari Invasion

In 2245, the Minbari launched an almost unprovoked attack on humanity. Beginning with our outer outposts and quickly progressing onto our colonies and the Sol system itself, the massive alien warships of the Minbari prosecuted a brutal assault. EarthForce's warships were unable to target the Minbari vessels; our fighters were outclassed and outgunned by their flyers. While human ground forces were able to match their Minbari counterparts, the space superiority enjoyed by the aliens meant that we rarely met them on a level playing field.

Telepathy was often our only defence against the Minbari. Captured Minbari were quickly scanned, giving humanity

advance warning of where the aliens would strike next. Human telepaths were also hidden in military units – although our sensors could not lock weapons onto the alien vessels, the alien minds within could be sensed and used as a way to target weapons. There were telepaths on the Line when the night came to Earth.

## Today - 2260

After Earth was given that glorious, mysterious respite from destruction, the rallying cry was 'Never Again'. While EarthForce rebuilt the fleet and the EarthGov brought our civilisation back from the edge of extinction, the Psi Corps began a radical programme of expansion and development. While our technological superiority may still be challenged by the Minbari and other, older races, humanity is second to none in the field of telepathy.

Director Johnston died in 2258 during a tour of the Psi Corps stations near Jupiter. He was replaced by the Corps' current director, Director Michael O'Brien. In his investiture speech, Director O'Brien said: *'In these troubled times, knowing that we can trust and rely on the telepathically gifted members of humanity is more important than ever. I wish to make a personal guarantee to President Clark and to every member of EarthGov and every human being, from Earth to Vega Colony and beyond – I promise you all, the Psi Corps is here to help and protect you.'*

Director Johnston was terrified of telepaths. During his time in office, Psi Corps was divided in a hidden civil war, between Johnston's attempts to control the Corps and yoke it to EarthGov policy and the attempts by powerful telepaths to gain full control of their own destinies. This war spilled over into the rest of EarthGov and the various intelligence agencies, until the sides were so blurred that even the telepaths could not trust themselves.

Johnston's replacement O'Brien was a weak, Clark appointee – Clark wanted his 'thought police' and the radical elements in Psi Corps were only too happy to comply, as putting telepaths into a position of authority over mundanes fitted perfectly with their twisted plans.

I will postpone a fuller analysis of the current state of Psi Corps. Before we can understand the nature of the problem, we must first see how it came to be. The Corps was dedicated from the beginning to the principle of CONTROL. It began as Control of Panic, offering humanity a stop-gap measure to deal with the telepath problem. Under Vacit, it became Control of Telepathy, developing the telepathic abilities of its members and building the strength of the Corps. Johnston made it into Control of Telepaths, trying to make sure that telepathy was so restricted and contained that it could never threaten change within human culture. Finally, under O'Brien, it became Control of Thought.

Always, always, Control.

Within the Corps, Control by scan, by breeding programme, by evaluation and constant psychoprogramming. Outside the Corps, Control by fear and propaganda.

No telepath has ever been truly free.



## Director O'Brien

Born January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2201 in the United Kingdom, Michael O'Brien was educated at the University of London, Cambridge and Sandhurst. He distinguished himself by serving in the Dilgar War. He was wounded during the initial assault on Omelos but recovered quickly enough to be put in charge of peacekeeping forces in the Dilgar city of Ujia. He left EarthForce in 2235 to enter politics and was appointed Earth ambassador to the Brakiri for three years. He had won the respect of the aliens due to his heroism during the war.

Following this period offworld, O'Brien returned to Earth where he sought and won election to the Senate. He served two terms before the tragic death of Alistair Johnston in an accident on Ganymede. O'Brien was one of five candidates put forward to replace Johnston by the committee and he was selected by newly inaugurated President Clark during the president's first year in office.

## The Structure of Psi Corps

Even though the old Metasensory Regulatory Authority was reformed a century ago, the basic structure of Psi Corps is still based on the MRA. The head of the Corps is the Director, who is appointed by the President of the Earth Alliance. The Director is selected from a short-list of candidates selected by the Senate Committee on Metasensory Regulation. The current Director is Michael O'Brien, who took office on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2259. The Director attends the infrequent meetings of the Committee but the day-to-day running of Psi Corps is in his hands.

Internally, Psi Corps is divided into four Corps and seven departments:

- ⑤ **Education:** The Department of Education is responsible for the training and education of telepaths, both in the use of their abilities and in normal skills. There are several schools and universities in the Metasensory Compound, and every telepath is given the benefit of a first-class education. The Department of Education also helps inform normal humans about telepaths.
- ⑤ **Commerce:** The Department of Commerce is the most commonly seen part of the Psi Corps and is the single largest Department. Commercial telepaths can be found throughout the Earth Alliance, helping their employers negotiate business deals and ensuring honesty and openness in financial affairs.

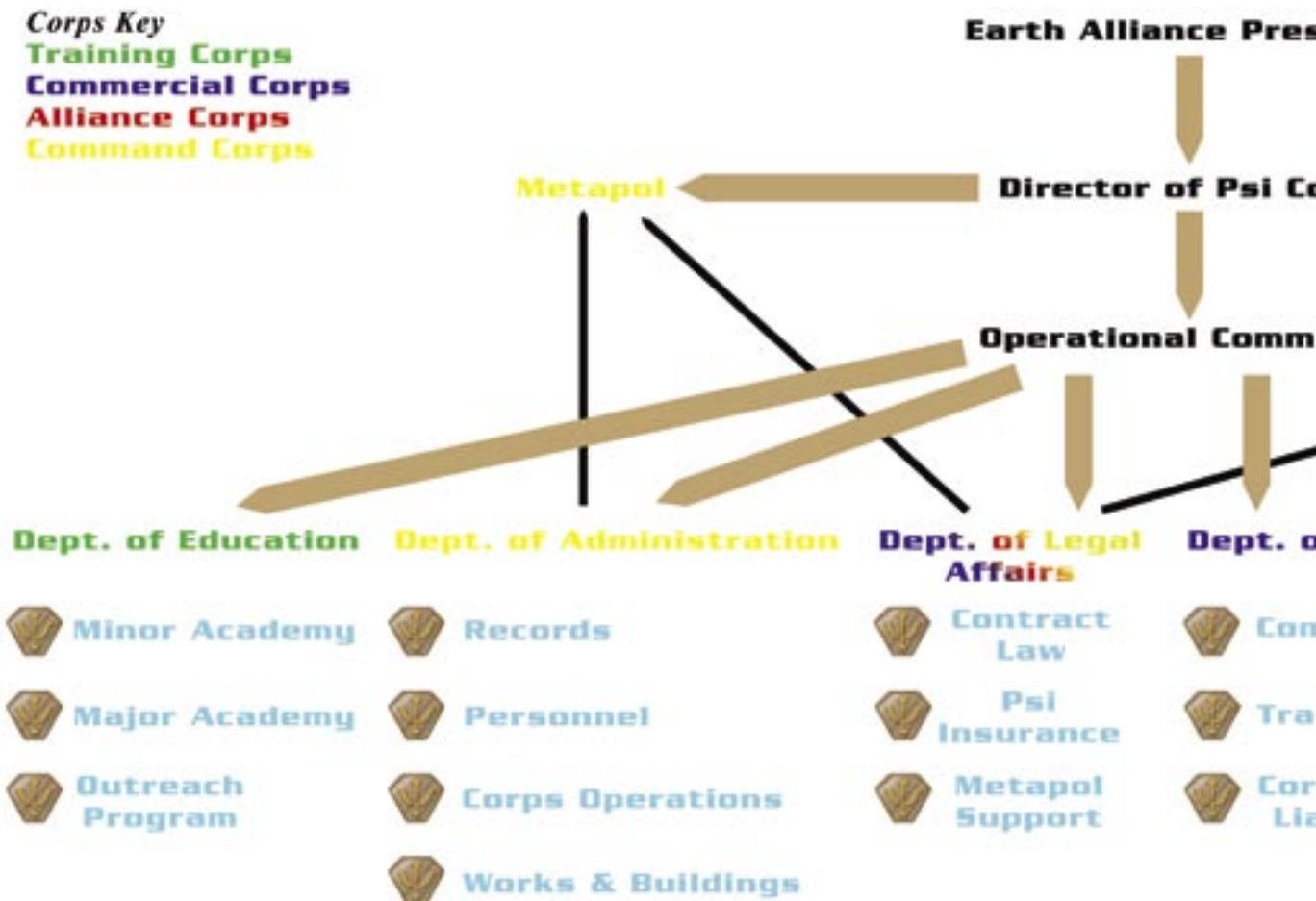
- ⑤ **Legal:** The telepaths of the Legal Department help law enforcement agencies across the Earth Alliance. Contrary to popular belief, these telepaths are rarely employed to retrieve information from the minds of suspects (and this is only done with a court order). Instead, the Legal telepaths are used to help witnesses recall important clues and to build psychological profiles of wanted deviants. The Legal department also deals with the rare cases of telepathic abuse by rogue telepaths, and also provides field assistance and support to Metapol.

- ⑤ **Medical:** The Medical Department runs a state-of-the-art hospital in the Metasensory Compound and another on Mars. The telepaths here are the world's best healers of psychological trauma, combining telepathic support with traditional psychotherapy. The Medical Department also specialises in neurosurgery and neural cybernetics.





**Corps Key**  
**Training Corps**  
**Commercial Corps**  
**Alliance Corps**  
**Command Corps**



## Psi Corps Organisation

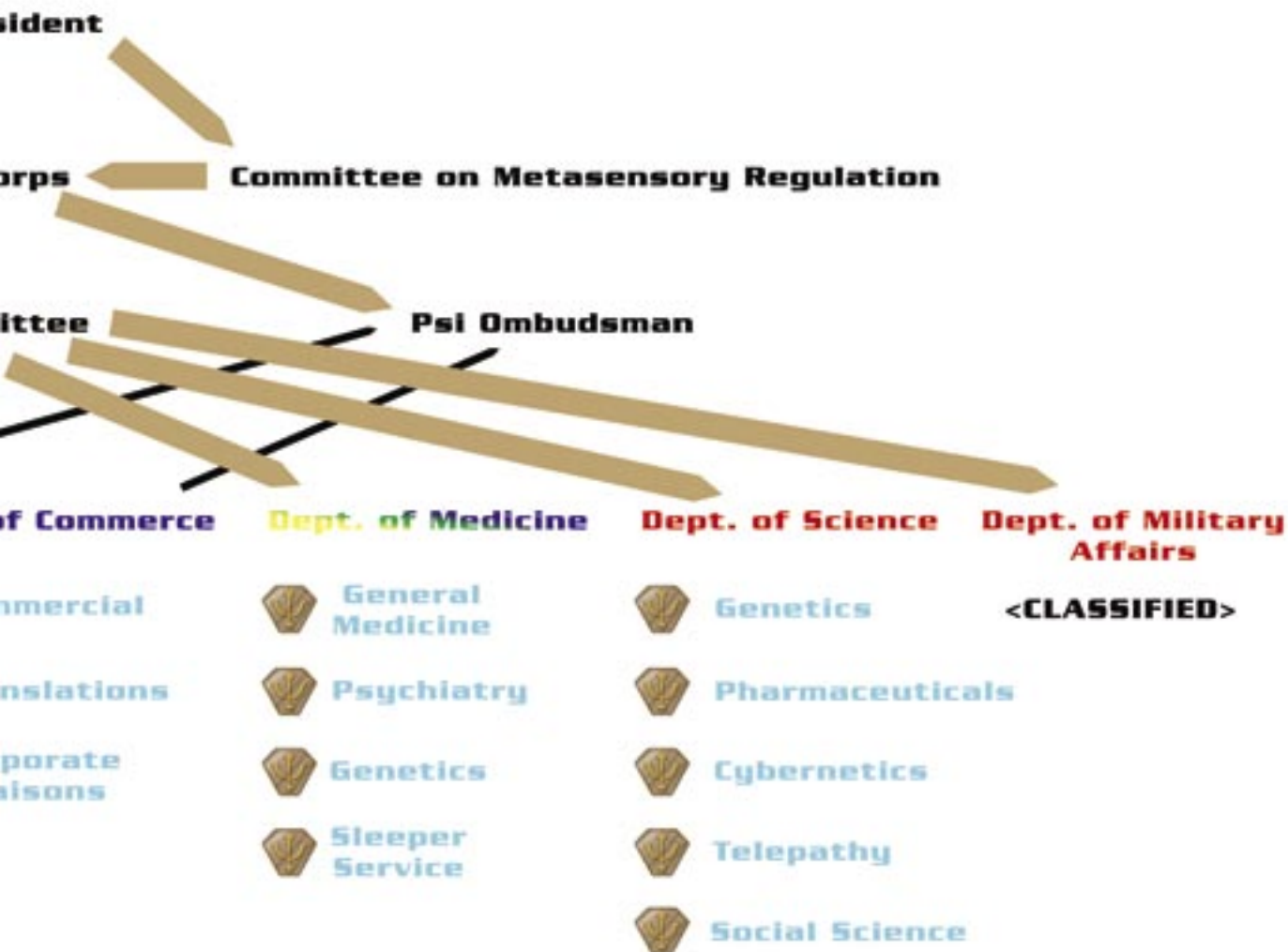
Note that not all the departmental sections are shown in this diagram – please contact the individual departments for full details on all their activities. Contact the Department of Administration for EarthCom or StellarCom contact details, or find your local Psi Corps office through your local directory.

- ⑤ **Science:** Literally located next door to Medical, the telepath scientists of the Science Department study – themselves! The Science Department is dedicated to investigating telepathy in all its forms.
- ⑤ **Military:** Much of the work performed by the Military Department is, of course, classified but EarthForce uses telepaths for intelligence gathering and counter-telepathy when dealing with aliens.
- ⑤ **Administration:** The Administration Department is the bureaucracy of the Corps.

Each department is overseen by a department head, who sits on the Psi Corps Operational Committee and reports to the Director. The Operational Committee meets on average once per month, or more often when necessary.

There are two Psi Corps sections outside the departmental structure, reporting directly to the Director instead of to the Operational Committee. Metapol, better known as the Psi Cops, is made up of telepaths from the Legal and Administrative departments and is responsible for dealing with rogue and criminal telepaths. The Office of the Psi Ombudsman handles complaints made against the Corps and can conduct independent investigations.

The Psi Corps is further divided into four sections, referred to as the four branches of the Corps. After graduating from the Major Academy, a new member of the Corps interns with one of the four branches for a year before officially joining it. This year provides special training and skills; while the telepath's Department determines what skills and talents he develops during training, a telepath's branch gives him or her practical experience in the field.



The four branches are:

- ⑤ **Training Corps**, for telepaths who will educate the next generation of the Psi Corps.
- ⑤ **Commercial Corps**, for telepaths who will deal with non-telepaths outside the Corps.
- ⑤ **Alliance Corps**, for telepaths who will serve the Earth Alliance government. The section also covers the military telepaths.
- ⑤ Finally, **Command Corps** contains the administrative section of the Corps itself, including the Psi Cops.

Two telepaths from the same Department can be in different Corps and vice versa. For example, a Department

### Corps Assignments

Training	Commercial	Alliance	Command
Dept. of Education Dept. of Medicine	Dept. of Commerce Dept. of Legal Affairs Dept. of Medicine	Dept. of Legal Affairs Dept. of Science Dept. of Military Affairs	Dept. of Legal Affairs Dept. of Medicine Dept. of Administration Metapol

## New Feats

### Training Corps Telepath (Telepath)

You have completed advanced training within the Training Corps of the Psi Corps.

**Prerequisite:** Mind Shield ability.

**Benefit:** You have a +2 competence bonus to any one Knowledge skill and a +1 competence bonus to Telepathy checks made to use the Mind Shield ability.

### Commercial Corps Telepath (Telepath)

You have completed advanced training within the Commercial Corps of the Psi Corps.

**Prerequisite:** Surface Scan ability.

**Benefit:** You have a +2 competence bonus to Diplomacy checks and a +1 competence bonus to Telepathy checks made to use the Surface Scan ability.

### Alliance Corps Telepath (Telepath)

You have completed advanced training within the Alliance Corps of the Psi Corps.

**Prerequisite:** Deep Scan ability.

**Benefit:** You have a +2 competence bonus to Gather Information checks and a +1 competence bonus to Telepathy checks made to use the Deep Scan ability.

### Command Corps Telepath (Telepath)

You have completed advanced training within the Command Corps of the Psi Corps.

**Prerequisite:** Jamming ability.

**Benefit:** You have a +2 competence bonus to Concentration checks and a +1 competence bonus to Telepathy checks made to use the Jamming ability.

of Education telepath will normally be assigned to the Training Corps but the Outreach section is under the jurisdiction of the Alliance Corps. A translator from the Department of Commerce might be in the Commercial Corps while working freelance, but transferred into the Alliance Corps when assigned to an Earth Alliance station.

The normal Department assignments are shown in the Corps Assignments table.

*There are at least three other Departments and innumerable Sections within Psi Corps that are unknown to outsiders. The oldest of these is Department Sigma, founded by Kevin Vacit sometime in the 2180s. Sigma is responsible for advanced telepathic research. It was the Sigma witch-doctors who produced Jason Ironheart, who created Dust, who dissected Talia Winters. Any Science Department efforts that show promise are brought under Sigma's control. Sigma also oversees any other black projects too sensitive for the other departments to handle.*

*The Department of Transport oversees the Psi Corps' offworld assets, from the Motherships to the Black Omega units to the Foundation Colony. The Corps uses the Transport department to secretly move telepaths and other resources around the Earth Alliance and beyond without the authorities knowing.*

*The Department of Resources is responsible for... adjustments. These are the butchers who run the re-education camps and the mindshredders who twist the memories and personalities of EarthGov's enemies.*



# The Metasensory Compound

The Metasensory Compound, also known as TeepTown, is located some 30 miles outside Geneva, Switzerland. The primary language of TeepTown is English, although the residents are also fluent in French and German. Visitors to the Compound are welcome, although non-Corps visitors must register with the security office.

## 1 - Station

TeepTown is linked directly to Geneva and to EarthDome by a high-speed maglev line and trains depart every five minutes to Geneva. Travel time is a leisurely ten minutes, to give travellers a chance to view the magnificent mountains surrounding the town. A faster direct line is reserved for the use of EarthGov and Psi Corps personnel. The station also has landing pads for personal flyers but the airspace in the Compound valley is restricted and all personal flight plans must be registered ahead of time.

## 2 - Psi Corps Headquarters

The design of this magnificent building was chosen by Senator Lee Crawford himself and is deliberately reminiscent of the old colonial architecture of the American south. Part of the Headquarters building contains a museum and visitor's centre but most of it is given over to the Director's office and administration. The Operating Committee meets here in the Headquarters when face-to-face meetings are required.

Exhibitions currently on display include 'Alien Telepaths', which has holos and descriptions of alien telepaths from

Abbai to Zendamor, and the famous gold badge that all the Psi Corps insignia are copied from. Admission to the Headquarters is free.

## 3 - Crawford Gallery & Auditorium

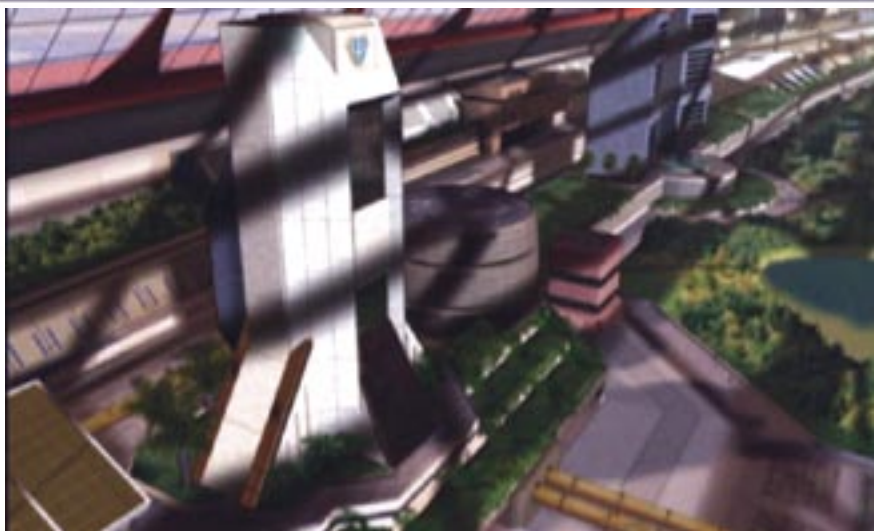
The Crawford Gallery is dedicated to telepathic art. Most of the exhibits are artworks created by telepaths, which attempt to express how it feels to touch another's mind. Every possible artistic medium has been used in this endeavour, from music (Hasiko's *INter\*face Symphony*) to visual art (Muir's series of holos, *Mindtouch I to X*). Some of the most notable non-telepath artists of humanity have also contributed to the gallery.

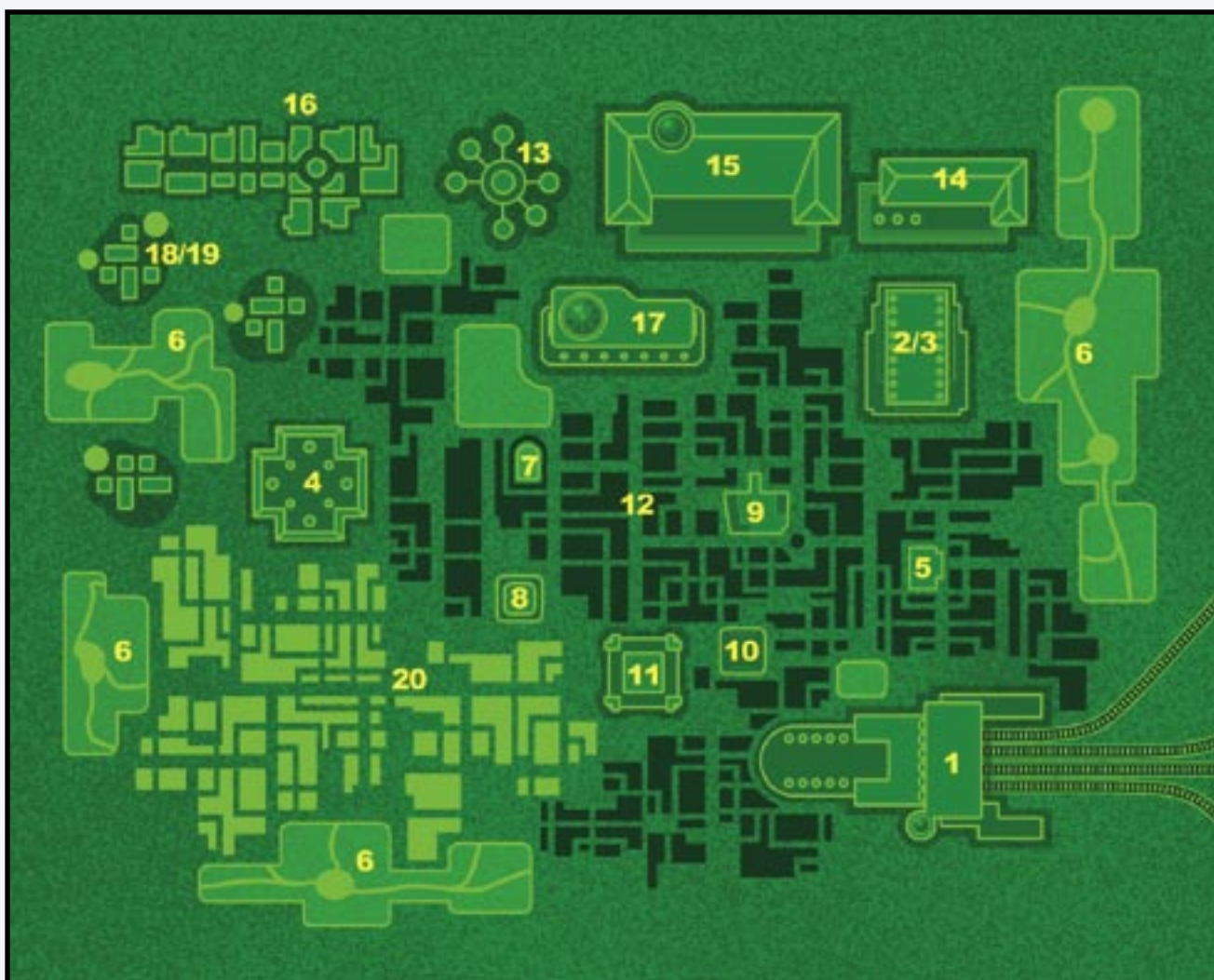
Other exhibits in the gallery cannot be appreciated by the non-telepath, as they are the world's first examples of telepathic art. The found art gallery in the east wing, for example, gathers objects from all over the planet that have telepathic memory echoes embedded on them. Items include a wedding ring that telepathically radiates joy and a section of barbed-wire fence taken from Belsen. To normal humans these objects seem unremarkable but telepaths can sense the emotions imprinted onto them.

Most telepathic art, however, relies on the telepathic artist projecting his work into the minds of the audience. It is somewhere between performance art and traditional gallery displays; the artist sits in the gallery for hours at a time, projecting his art at the visitors. Please contact the gallery for the current display list.

The Crawford gallery has four small and one large auditorium. The smaller auditoriums can project holos but lectures and especially dramas are more popular. Telepathy has revitalised the stage play ever since the famous 2180 performance of *Hamlet* where the Dane's soliloquies were projected into the minds of the audience. In modern telepath drama, the actors must construct mental 'theatre masks' – artificial minds within their own, which are then read by the audience. The actor does not merely recite the lines, he must embody, both mentally and physically, the role.

The larger auditorium is used for the more popular dramas and public debates. The Operating





Committee holds at least one public meeting each year in the Crawford. A season ticket to the Crawford, giving access to all sections of the gallery and entry to any events in the auditoriums in a three-month period, can be purchased for 25 credits from the Gallery Shop.

*I played Hamlet during my second year at the Major Academy.*

*I must confess to a certain fascination with the character. We both waited too long before acting and we both have trouble with our mother and father.*

#### 4 - Vacit Hospital

The towering Vacit Hospital was constructed in 2210 and remains one of the most advanced medical facilities in the entire Earth Alliance. It is the premier centre for

the study of the brain and nervous system on Earth and has one of the four active CCED machines in human space. Of course, the Vacit is also the general hospital for all of TeepTown, so much of the building is dedicated to maternity units, children's wards, operating theatres and so on – the MedLab facilities take up only the top five floors of the building.

All Psi Corps members receive full medical coverage and care – not just at the Vacit Hospital, but at any recognised medical facility within the Earth Alliance.

#### 5 - Metapol

The elite forces of Metapol (colloquially known as the Psi Cops) use this impressive fortress as their main base and training centre. The Metapol building has state-of-the-art forensics and computer analysis laboratories. Metapol is not open to visitors.



*The Psi Cops have largely abandoned this building – apart from training first and second-year cadets from the Major Academy and a bit of administration, the Metapol Headquarters is largely unused. It is much too public. Most Psi Cop operations are planned either at Syria Planum or on the Motherships.*

## 6 – Gardens

The Compound uses green areas extensively, to provide areas of solitude and quietness for the resident telepaths. The stress of having so many minds in close proximity can overwhelm telepaths, so the designers of the Metasensory Compound ensured that there would be quiet areas of tranquil greenery within easy reach. Garden areas divide the administration section from the Village and the Academies and dormitories from the rest of the Compound. Another ring of greenery surrounds the whole Compound.

## 7 – Karges Memorial

This simple, modest statue marks the grave of William Karges, who saved President Robinson from an assassin and is remembered in the foundation of the Corps.

## 8 – Psi Testing Centre

Obviously, few people come all the way to TeepTown to be tested, as there are handy Psi Corps Centres in every major metropolis. The centre here in the Compound is referred to as the Model Centre and is the template on which all the others are based. Visitors can see the latest version of the genetic testing kit (which can now test a DNA sample for the presence of psionic genes within 30 seconds with a 73% detection rate) or the Revised Philsen P-Level test. The staff of the centre are more than happy to answer any questions or offer advice on telepathy. Please pick up a complimentary copy of our brochure, 'The Psi Corps and You'.

## 9 – PsiCom

PsiCom is the local computer network. It has a direct tap into the EarthCom network and from there to StellarCom, so the Corps can be contacted from anywhere in the galaxy. PsiCom also has its own studios, producing documentaries and educational programs on telepathy as part of the Outreach Programme. PsiCom also broadcasts local programmes for telepaths, giving updates on Corps current affairs and social news.

## 10 – Ombudsman's Office

The Ombudsman's Office is located next to the towering Commercial Centre and is also accessible via PsiCom. All complaints against members of the Corps will be treated with the strictest confidentiality but complainants may be required to report in person to the Office for a telepathic scan.

## 11 – Commercial Centre

The single largest building in the Compound is the Commercial Centre. The lower floors of this complex are a large shopping mall, while the upper 30 floors contain the administration offices for the Psi Corps commercial telepaths. Ten percent of every telepath's fee goes back to the Corps to pay for the telepath's education and medical bills, so much of this building is taken up with accountancy. The Corps also owns numerous semi-private corporations, which offer both telepathic services such as personality tweaking, designer mindscapes and enhanced recall, as well as spin-off technologies from the Corps' research division.

Those wishing to hire a telepath may inquire at the New Clients desk on the ground floor of the Centre. Corporate clients should contact the centre via PsiCom.

## 12 – The Village

The Village is the tangle of streets, shops and older buildings that makes up the heart of TeepTown. When the town was first constructed, the Village was all there was. Now it nestles in the shadow of the Commercial Centre. Many visitors to the Village are struck by its charm and simplicity; although it is only slightly over a century old, it feels like a little Swiss mountain hamlet that has existed for centuries. There are apartments located over most of the shops and restaurants in the Village, which are sought after by telepaths wishing to live in the very heart of the Corps.

## 13 – Cadre Dormitories

Young telepaths (13 or younger) live in these dormitory chalets overseen by their loving House Parents. Please note that visitors must report to Campus Security before entering any of the Education Department's areas.

## 14 – Minor Academy Campus

The Minor Academy provides secondary level education and training to telepaths. The school structure is based on that of boarding schools and all students live on the campus. Contact the Department of Education for curriculum details.



## 15 - Major Academy Campus

The Major Academy trains telepaths for their future roles in the Psi Corps. Students enter the Major Academy at the age of 18 and graduate four to eight years later. The Major Academy has schools dedicated to Science, Commerce, Medicine, Psychology, Tactics and Military Theory, Law Enforcement and the Arts. Students intern with the appropriate Psi Corps department during their time at the Academy. Again, please see the Department of Education for more details.

## 16 - Campus Accommodation

These dormitories are familiar to generations of Psi Corps members – everyone attending the Minor or Major Academies stays in these large buildings. The Minor Dormitories offer accommodation to a cadre-sized number of students (ten to 30), while the Major Dormitories are a mix of single, double, triple and quadruple accommodation (although some of the Major Academy students rent homes in the Village or suburbs).

## 17 - Sports Grounds

This facility is for the use of the Academy students and faculty, although many residents of TeepTown also purchase membership (500cr/year). The facility includes

two Olympic-sized swimming pools, football, baseball and hockey grounds, running tracks, a shooting range and an environment simulator. Mountaineering is also very popular in the Corps, given the Compound's easy access to the Swiss Alps.

## 18 - Singles Accommodation

Originally, all telepaths were guaranteed accommodation within TeepTown. As the telepath population expands, more and more telepaths are living offworld or in other cities but many still maintain residences in TeepTown. These small apartments are for unmarried telepaths.

## 19 - Married Accommodation

These larger and more comfortable apartments are reserved for the use of married telepaths. As the children of telepaths are cared for by the cadres, these apartments can be considerably more spacious than those of non-telepaths.

## 20 - New Town

The third phase of expansion of the Compound is referred to as New Town and contains accommodation and support structures to supply the growing needs of the Compound, such as a fusion plant.

*What this little tourist guide doesn't mention is that TeepTown is a fortress. It was originally built to keep the telepaths in but now it exists to keep the mundanes – and the rogues – out. The airspace over the valley is controlled by the Corps and there are concealed anti-aircraft guns dotted around the peaks. The Corps also shares EarthDome's air defence network. The Compound is located in a high mountain valley, which has only one easy approach. The maglev train and the roads up to the Compound have concealed explosive charges, laser fields and magnetic burst charges that can disable any unshielded vehicle.*

*An overland approach is equally difficult. While the razor-wire fences and watchtowers are gone, the land around the Compound has a network of screamers and scanners that pick up on any movement or heat sources. There are concealed microfilament helices and security drones that activate after dark – telepaths are warned not to wander off the path at night.*

*There are many underground passages beneath the Compound. There are bunkers big enough to hold the entire population of the town that are deep enough to withstand a mass driver hit. Secret passages connect most of the major structures. Most of the visitors' centres, hotels and the conference rooms in the Commercial Centre have hidden compartments where a telepath can observe and scan the mundanes without being seen. The compartments can't be found by commercial security scans.*

*Still, TeepTown should never be a rogue target. The vast majority of the telepaths there know nothing about the dark side of the Corps. It is at Syria Planum and in the Motherships that the darkness dwells. Burning the nest will avail us nothing; it is the black bird that must be killed.*

# The Corps is Mother

The motto of the Psi Corps is 'Maternis, Paternis' – the Corps is Mother, the Corps is Father. Telepaths live their whole lives within the Corps. Their every need is taken care of by the Corps, from education to housing to medical care to socialisation. Biologically, telepaths have parents of course, but from an early age, the Corps sees to their well-being with the infinite devotion and care of a natural parent. No telepath need ever be alone.

*And oh, how this parental bond rankles with some in the Corps. They have in-vitro fertilisation and clone-growth tanks in the basement and there are a few young telepaths in the Corps who were decanted, not born, their genetic material an artificial amalgam of dozens of fathers and mothers. The parental bond is one of the strongest human emotions, so the Corps seeks to control and usurp that bond.*

## Education

Telepathic ability generally manifests between the ages of three and 13, although there have been recorded cases of telepaths active from birth and 'late bloomers' whose psionic activity activates at the age of 30 or even older. Most telepaths are discovered long before their abilities come into bloom, as genetic testing is commonplace and identifies 73% of potential telepaths automatically. Newborn children within most Earth Alliance countries have their DNA recorded and scanned as a matter of course, and the Psi Corps have access to this DNA database.

When a child with the genetic potential for telepathy is found, his record is automatically tagged by the Corps' computers. The genetic test is inexact – some 40% of potential telepaths identified by the test will *always* manifest telepathic abilities. The remainder (60% of telepaths) *might* manifest abilities, or may have such a low level of telepathic ability that no further action is necessary. These low-level latent telepaths may have only one or two flashes of psionic ability in their entire lifetimes, and do not even need sleeper drugs to keep their powers under control. Most go through their entire lives not even knowing that, with a minuscule shift in the genetic lottery, they would have been telepaths.

In cases where the child is a certain telepath, the child's parents are immediately contacted, told of their child's gift and visited by a counsellor to

explain the opportunity offered by the Psi Corps. The Corps will give the child a first-class education, full medical cover, housing, training in his telepathic abilities and everything he could possibly wish for or need. In some cases (where the child has special medical needs, where the parents are deemed unfit or unable to support the child, where the child's telepathic abilities have already manifested or where the child is the product of a Corps-arranged marriage), the Corps takes custody of the infant immediately.

In the majority of cases, however, the Corps waits until the child's telepathic abilities begin to manifest and the parents bring the child to one of the many Psi Corps centres located in every major metropolitan area. There, the child is tested to confirm that his telepathic abilities have manifested, and (if the child is telepathically active) he is offered a place in the Corps. Should the child's parents refuse, the child must take the sleeper drugs. Once the child reaches the age of maturity, of course, he can make his own decisions about continuing with the drugs or joining the Corps.

One of the most important occasions in any telepath's life is the first time their psionic ability is measured. This test, commonly referred to as the P-Scale or P-Level test, is officially known as the Revised Philsen Psionic Scale. The original version of the test could be administered by

*In cases of a particularly promising telepath, such as a PIO or higher, the Psi Corps is not above arranging for the child's parents to be found unfit to take care of their child. It is rarely necessary – the combination of Corps propaganda and the very real difficulties of mundane parents raising a telepathic child is a devastating combination, so most parents do give their psionic children over to the Corps. We must take care of our own, but not like this.*





## How Many Telepaths Are There? How Big Is The Corps?

As can be seen from the above diagram, the power of telepaths follows a curve – as you go up the power scale from P1 to P12, the fewer telepaths you find at each level. There are an estimated six and a half million human telepaths (roughly one in 1,000 humans shows some level of telepathic ability, although only one in 2,000 score on the P-Scale. The majority of the P-rated are P1s or P2s, possessed of only modest abilities. Many of these P1s and P2s choose sleepers instead of membership in the Corps.

Currently, the Psi Corps is made up of approximately three million members.

*more even – there are plenty of P5s and stronger in the Corps.*

*My best estimates suggest that there are about eight to ten million human telepaths (that's between two and four million more than the Corps claim exist), of which slightly less than four million are either working directly for the Corps, or under its control. Another four million or so are on sleepers. That puts the free rogue population – the blips – at somewhere between half a million and two million.*

a mundane and involved asking a set of 120 questions connected to a set of Zener cards. The newer version of the test requires a telepath to perform it – the tester creates a series of mental blocks and images and asks the subject to probe these mental constructs.

The P-Scale starts at 0 and is theoretically open-ended, although no human telepath has ever gone past P12. The simplest definition is that using a brute-force probe, a P2 can break through a P1's blocks, while a P3 can break through a P2's blocks, and so on up until P12. In practise, each P-level is associated with a distinct level of psionic ability and so has a different set of abilities associated with it.

*Telepath demographics have been intentionally hidden by the Corps, to confuse the rogues about how successful they are and to convince mundanes that telepaths are too few to be real threat to them. The figure of one-in-a-thousand is roughly accurate, but the P-curve is much*

## Basic Education

Once a young telepath joins the Corps and is brought to the Metasensory Compound, his education begins. Young children (under 14), who still need the support of a family structure are placed in the training cadres, which consist of between ten and 30 children of roughly the same age and telepathic experience. Each cadre is cared for by a pair of adult telepaths, referred to as the House Father and Mother. A cadre has its own dormitory and the Father and Mother live with the children. Generally, House parents change every two years, while new members are added to the cadres each year on Birthday (April 12<sup>th</sup>).

The cadres are encouraged to compete with each other and to develop their own family rituals and bonds. The friends a child makes in a cadre will serve him in good stead throughout his lifetime and often one's cadre-mates can be as close to you as siblings. The cadres are referred to

## P-Scale

P-Level	% of Telepaths	Abilities	Roles
0	0%	None	None
1	31.5%	Touch-telepathy, blocks	Administration, technical
2	23.5%	Mental communication	Educational, counselling
3	19.5%	Basic scanning	Medical, counselling
4	11%	Advanced blocks	Legal, education, commerce
5	6%	Advanced scanning	Commerce, science, legal
6	4%	Detection	Legal, commerce, medical
7	1.5%	Neuro-kinesis	Medical, legal, science
8	1%	Advanced communication	Medical, legal, science
9	0.7%	Advanced neuro-kinesis	Science, education
10	0.2%	Expert blocks	Education, commerce, military
11	0.1%	Psychoengineering	Medical, education, military
12	0.05%	All	Psi Cops, military

by number, although they are also named for the House Mother (Melissa's Cadre, Ann's Cadre and so on).

Discipline in the cadres is enforced by the 'Grins' – adult telepaths wearing facemasks. The Grins behave like nightmarish automatons to instil fear into the children and use telepathy to ferret out the children's wrongdoing and broadcast the shame to the rest of the cadre. While this may appear bizarre and cruel, it does serve a useful purpose. When the telepath children leave basic education and graduate to the Minor Academy at age 14, the Grins remove their masks to reveal themselves as beloved House Fathers and Mothers. The lesson is a clear one – while Corps discipline may seem harsh, it conceals care and love for its telepaths. The children learn to Trust The Corps.

During their time in the cadres, the children are given an excellent education in literacy, mathematics, computing and other basic fields. Telepaths are very quick students when taught by another telepath – the teacher can visualise a problem and transmit this image to his students and whole discussions can be held at the speed of thought. Psi Corps students regularly obtain average results that are 22% better than their counterparts of the same age from other schools.

The students need this enhanced learning ability, of course, as they have to study telepathy in addition to their normal curriculum. The first techniques learned by the young telepaths include controlling their own senses so they do not accidentally read the minds of those around them, blocking their own thoughts from 'leaking' to others, receiving and transmitting information to other telepaths and the basics of blocking and scanning. The students practise their psionic skills in games like 'hide and block' (where one student

hides both his body and his mind, while the rest of the cadre search for him) or 'cops and blips'.

## The Minor Academy

The Minor Academy is little different to any other second-level (high) school in the Earth Alliance. The students take classes in a variety of subjects, although languages (English, French and German), math and computing, civics and telepathy are required subjects. Most of the teachers and all of the students are telepaths, although some junior teaching positions are held by non-telepaths. Classes start at 9am and finish between 3pm and 6pm, depending on the student's age and selected courses.

All the students live on campus in the dormitories and have access to all the recreational facilities on campus and in TeepTown. They may also leave the Compound in the company of a teacher or with a special pass. Students who are having difficulties, either scholastically or emotionally, are assigned a mentor from elsewhere in the Corps. This mentor helps the student cope with his problems and overcome whatever difficulties he faces.

During the summer months, the younger students stay on campus, while the other students usually tour other cities on Earth or volunteer to help with Psi Corps social programmes or other departments.

At the end of the student's time in the Minor Academy, he must swear allegiance to the Earth Alliance and take the Psi Corps oath. This graduation ceremony is the proudest moment in a young telepath's life. During this ceremony, which is attended by the Director himself, the students receive their Psi Corps badges and gloves. Before graduating, telepaths must wear gloves and a Psi Corps logo when in public but the familiar black gloves and metal badges are awarded only when the student takes the oath.

More details on the Psi Corps oath can be found in the section on the Legal Department.

## The Major Academy

The Major Academy is made up of several faculties, each of which is sponsored by one of the other departments in Psi Corps. By the time a student





## Telepath Terminology

**Baseline:** A term for a non-telepath human.

**Block:** A mental shield to block probes.

**Bloop:** To accidentally broadcast a telepathic message or leak inner thoughts.

**Blip:** A telepath who was never found by the Corps and so never trained.

**Brainwaste:** A telepath who is failing the Corps training programmes.

**Clickblock:** A very rudimentary block, derived from the name of a child's toy.

**Emote:** Telepathic transmission of a feeling; unlike empathy, the recipient of an emote experiences the emotion on an intellectual level – he knows the emote sender feels happy or sad instead of feeling happy or sad himself.

**Esper:** A telepath, especially a skilled one.

**Ghost:** A blooped thought that no-one admits to or claims ownership of.

**Glyph:** A telepathic image transmitted mind to mind.

**Mindblind:** Someone incapable of communicating telepathically – either a non-telepath, or someone whose telepathic powers are inactive or dulled through sleepers or alcohol.

**Mundane:** A non-telepath.

**Peep:** To scan another person without permission.

**Poke:** A sharp probe that would lead to a spark if the target had no blocks.

**Probe:** An attempt to scan another, or establish mind-to-mind contact.

**P'sense:** Telepathic activities are usually perceived in terms of the other senses – the telepath 'sees' another person's block, or 'smells' a thought pattern. Appending a 'p' in front of a sense denotes the telepathic version of that sense, giving p'see, p'hear, p'feel and so on.

**Spark:** A probe that momentarily disrupts the target's thought processes – the telepathic equivalent of a punch.

**Teek:** A telekinetic.

**Teep:** A telepath.

**Unthought:** What you do to apologise for a bloop. A thought you take back.

**Zeitgeist:** A term for the telepathic 'feel' of a place; the texture of the background mental noise. The zeitgeist of a world at war might feel angry or fearful to a telepath.

leaves the Major Academy, he is ready to join the appropriate department in the Corps.

The faculties in the Major Academy and the major course groups offered are:

- ⑤ **Science:** Computing, Biology, Neuroscience, Telepathic Studies, Engineering, Physics.
- ⑤ **Commerce:** Accounting, Business Studies, Corporate Law, Business Telepathy, Business Information Systems.
- ⑤ **Medicine:** General Medicine, Genetics, Neurosurgery, Cybernetics, Exobiology.
- ⑤ **Psychology:** Counselling, Social Studies, Psychotherapy, Interventions, Telepathy and Psychology.
- ⑤ **Tactics and Military Theory:** Military History, Military Telepathy, Strategy and Advanced Tactics, Spacecraft Operation.
- ⑤ **Law Enforcement:** Criminal Law, Civil Law, Investigating and Interrogation, Combat Telepathy.
- ⑤ **Arts:** Creative Writing, Visual Art, History, Civics, Cultural Studies, Music.

Each year, a student chooses three courses from his primary faculty and one course from another faculty. One of the three subjects from the primary faculty is the student's speciality and is taken every year. For example, a student studying Neuroscience in the Science Faculty would take the Neuroscience course module every year, as well as two other science modules and one non-science module that could all change each year.

The study of telepathy is not mandatory in the Major Academy – the student's time in the Minor Academy has taught the basics of blocks, controls, probes, glyphs and other telepathic techniques. However, each student must pass a telepathy test every six months, to ensure their control of their powers is within acceptable levels for the Corps. Those who fail the test are required to take refresher courses on telepathy. Many students voluntarily attend these courses, to keep honing and developing their talents.

## Courses Not Offered

Telepaths are not legally permitted to become lawyers, journalists or stockbrokers, so no courses are offered that lead to these professions. However, the courses on criminal law, creative writing and business studies do give enough training for a telepath to pass as a lawyer, journalist or stockbroker if necessary.

## A Student's Day

Time	Cadre (Age 8)	Minor Academy (Age 15)	Major Academy (Age 21)
0700	Morning cartoons	Callisthenics	Sleep
0800	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
0900	Classes begin	Classes begin	Neuroscience 301 (telepathy and the brain)
1000	Basic telepathy (blocks)	History	Neuroscience 302 (structure of the nervous system)
1100	Reading and writing	Chemistry	Biology 201 (fundamentals of exobiology)
1200	Maths	Telepathy (probes)	Biology lab work
1300	Picnic lunch in gardens	Lunch in school cafeteria	Lunch in the Village
1400	History of Psi Corps	Physics	Telepathy training
1500	Science	Language studies	Neuroscience 304 (EEGs and other scanning techniques)
1600	End of school. Sports	Civics and the ethics of telepathy	Computing 101 (Basics of computing)
1700	Homework	Geography	Computer lab
1800	Dinner	End of school. Dinner	Debate club
1900	Kid's holo in Crawford Auditorium	Homework	Telepathy training
2000	Kid's holo in Crawford Auditorium	Homework	Train to Geneva
2100	Bedtime	Sports	Dinner in restaurant with classmates
2200	Lights out	Checking messages/games on computer	Pub
2300	Sleep	Checking messages/games on computer	Nightclub
2400	Sleep	Bedtime	Nightclub
0100	Sleep	Sleep	Nightclub
0200	Sleep	Sleep	Train back to TeepTown
0300	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep

After completing his training in the Major Academy, the new Corps member interns with one of the four branches of the Corps. Assuming the student finds that branch acceptable, he joins that branch at the end of the year. The four branches (Training Corps, Commercial Corps, Alliance Corps and Command Corps) are the major administrative divisions for telepaths in the field – a telepath would introduce himself as being 'Department of Medicine, Alliance Corps' or 'Medical teep, Training Corps' and so on, although those in Education and Commerce tend up to use their Corps branch instead of department, as 95% of the Department of Education telepaths are in Training and 95% of the Commerce teeps are in the Commercial Corps.

## Outreach Project

The Department of Education is also responsible for producing educational awareness programmes and correcting the myths and misconceptions about telepathy. These efforts are collectively known as the Outreach Projects. The various projects are designed in concert with the other departments, so the Science Department helps explain telepathic phenomenon to normal humans, while

the Medical Department is consulted on programmes that advertise the benefits of psych-adjustment and psionic surgery.

Several popular entertainment programmes are produced in association with the Corps, beginning with the classic *John Trakker, Psi Cop* back in the 2200s. These programmes show the Corps in a positive light and are responsible for a slow shift in public opinion towards support of telepaths.

*Outreach is a synonym for propaganda, psych-engineering, subliminal messaging – the Corps' real 'public' face. There is no-one better at twisting minds, even without using telepathy. The Psi Corps has been inserting its messages into programmes for years; illegally at first using PsiCom, then with the blessing of EarthGov in recent times.*

*The ultimate aim of Outreach is not simply to create a swell of popular support for the Corps. The mundanes will never love telepaths and all the Corps' propaganda can do is make them accept the telepaths as useful tools.*



No, Outreach is a shaping hand, implanting meme-seeds and familiar handles in the human minds of the populace. One day, if it is allowed to continue, the seeds – TRUST THE CORPS, THE CORPS IS YOUR FRIEND, TRUST THE CORPS – will bloom, giving telepaths a common and easy set of access points and handles that can be used on any human in the Earth Alliance. The psych-engineers estimate the process will take another two generations – more now that Clark's government is gone and the Corps no longer has such influence – but they are patient.

*They sow seeds for a bitter harvest of mundanes.*

## Telepathic Training

A telepath's training never really ends – there are always refinements and new tricks to be learned. Some telepaths never bother to go past the basics of blocks, controls and probes, while others obsessively hone their skills daily.

The basics of training are taught in the cadres and the Minor Academy. As telepathy is a recent development in humans, the information received through telepathic channels is processed in whatever sections of the brain can most easily

adapt to handle it. A telepath might 'see' another person's shields, 'hear' thoughts, 'smell' or 'taste' an emotion and so on. The initial parts of telepathic training concentrate on teaching the telepath to interpret the sense-data and to activate his own abilities by sending the right signals. A telepath trying to push past another's blocks might find himself squinting – in trying to focus his telepathic probe, he ends up focussing his eyes. The body's senses must be mastered and divided from the telepathic.

The second stage of training is control. A telepath does not need to scan at all to pick up random thoughts and images from others. However, as telepaths are only supposed to know the thoughts of others as part of a legal and authorised scan, therefore they must learn to control their abilities and block off these random thoughts. The simplest form of control is distraction; the telepath keeps his own mind so busy he cannot pay attention to the thoughts of others. Most telepaths run little rhymes and songs through their minds to keep themselves occupied – one popular telepath vid-channel consists of nothing but the catchiest pop songs gathered from all over the galaxy. Others build elaborate fantasy worlds in their minds, filled with imaginary characters that chatter constantly. More experienced telepaths can establish blocks, using their own telepathic abilities to block their telepathic abilities. This sort of double-think is quite

## Department of Education Characters

A character working in the Department of Education should have a Charisma of 10 or higher. He may be of any P-rating (characters with low P-ratings will be lecturers, teachers and lab technicians; high-rating characters might be trainers or invigilators).

**Recommended Telepathic Abilities:** None.

**Recommended Feats:** Defensive Block.

**Recommended Skills:** Computer Use, Concentration, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge (any), Perform, Technical (any), Telepathy.

Educator telepaths are rarely found outside TeepTown or the Corps' other education facilities.

## Scenarios

A campaign set at the Minor or Major Academies could follow the fortunes of a group of young telepaths. This could be the prequel to a campaign – run three or four short adventures that take place in TeepTown when the telepaths are being trained, then move onto their adult careers. Another alternative is to run a game set entirely at the schools – perhaps the characters are a misfit bunch of 'quirky' telepaths – a telekinetic, a powerful but uncontrolled mindshredder, an unwitting psi experiment and so on, who are kept in their own little cadre and trained separately from the other telepaths. Alternatively, just have a normal group of telepaths living at the boarding school – Harry Bester and the Telepath Academy. TeepTown is a target for blip or anti-telepath terrorists, so the characters may be faced with bigger problems than missed lectures and exams.

difficult but does allow the telepath to avoid the irritating pop songs.

The third stage of training involves communication. Telepaths can easily transmit thoughts to one another but these thoughts are a mix of 'public' and 'private' thoughts;

once he learns control, he can choose which thoughts are sent and which are kept in the telepath's own mind. The telepath also learns to transmit 'glyphs' – mental images, diagrams, concepts and so on. Skilled telepaths can transmit whole mindsets or broadcast their sensorium, allowing another to know what they know or feel what they feel.

*Here are some other statistics that the Psi Corps does not advertise quite so proudly.*

*Approximately 10% of telepaths fail to graduate from the Major Academy. As the Corps provides the best tutors and mentors, it is virtually impossible to fail to due to academic performance. No, they fail because the Corps breaks them. If the number of students from the Minor Academy and the cadres – children – is taken into account, then nearly a third of telepaths inducted into the Corps never make it out.*

*The Vorlons inflicted telepathy on humanity – an unwanted gift, a power we were not meant to have. When the Corps glibly talks about training the brain to adapt to handle telepathy, they do not mention the pain, the confusion, the fear, the sheer wrongness of having one's senses overwhelmed by feelings that do not fit there. The suicide rate for telepaths is ten times the human average; the incidence of mental illness and aberrant behaviour is equally high. One reason the Corps teaches control so fiercely is to make its telepaths seem 'normal' to mundanes, to avoid scaring off its customers.*

*To weed out those who cannot ape mundane behaviour and present the approved corporate face of the Corps, the trainers use the cruellest methods possible. The cadres are peer pressure cooks and any child who fails to force his psionic powers to develop will be ostracised from the group. Of course, forcing one's telepathic abilities too much causes mental strain and instability and any child whose behaviour is strange is also ostracised. Conform. Obey. Burn out your mind living up to the Corps' demands.*

*The Minor Academy is modelled on boarding schools and inherited all the traditions and hazing rituals of those institutions. Students soon learn that to survive, they must obey those ahead of them in the school and dominate those behind them. Unlike mundane schools, most of this takes place on a telepathic level. Mundane school inspectors and visitors can walk into the school and see nothing but happy smiling faces and are oblivious to the pain, the torment, the psychic bullying and the turf wars that are constantly being fought. The Minor Academy 'builds character', according to the administrators, but the characters it builds are telepaths who are used to following orders and have had as much individuality and beauty as possible stamped out of them.*

*At the Major Academy, the Corps PIO Instructors take an active hand in removing those who do not live up to the Corps' demands. Almost every student will, at some point, be subjected to random scans or even telepathic attacks from strangers. Some are dragged out of their beds in the middle of the night and tested with brutal psionic blasts from more powerful teeps. Others are drugged, flown out of TeepTown or even brought offworld and dropped into surreal psychological tests. Some have their memories forcibly re-written several times to make them more suitable. Few get out of the Corps without being altered.*

*The Corps wants strong telepaths who love and obey the Corps – nothing else. Those who fail to conform to this ideal are removed. The low-P are quietly kicked out and put on sleepers. The high-P are sent to the re-education camps, where the Corps uses far more powerful methods of adjustment. Others are sent to Department Sigma, as test subjects.*

*Learn to Obey is the mantra of the Training Corps.*



The fourth stage of basic training is the construction of blocks. These are mental walls that divide the telepath's mind from the outside world. Blocks both prevent the telepath from detecting the thoughts of others and also keep other telepaths out. Maintaining blocks is somewhat draining for the telepath at first but soon become second nature, and telepaths rating P5 or more can maintain their blocks indefinitely.

The fifth and final stage of telepathic basic training is the use of probes. A probe is a tendril of telepathy that creates a connection between minds. The probe is the medium used for a telepathic scan. When scanning other telepaths, the probe is used to penetrate their blocks through finesse. When targeting non-telepaths, the probe technique is used to avoid overwhelming their minds – the shock of deep scanning can be physically damaging, so telepaths are trained to wield their minds with surgical precision and reduce the trauma as much as possible.

## Commerce

The Commerce Department is the financial backbone of the Psi Corps. 10% of each telepath's fee goes to the Corps. There are thousands of telepath-mediated transactions every business day and the revenue stream from these transactions runs into billions of credits. The Corps invests much of this money and is a key player in the financial markets of the Earth Alliance.

### Commercial Services

Service	Minimums	Base Cost
Simple veracity test (contract scan)	P3	60 credits
Advanced veracity test (special contract scan)	P3	110 credits
Multi-target veracity test	P3	+30 credits/person
Deep scan	P5	250 credits
Memory retrieval	P5	150 credits
Interpretation	P5	200 credits
Telepathic investigation	P6	250 credits
Counter-telepathy	P10	300 credits
Long-term hire	Varies	100 credits/day
Special requests	Varies	Varies



All these services are covered by the standard Earth Alliance and Psi Corps legislation and rules; see the Legal Department section for more details. It is generally assumed that the telepath is hired for a single task, which lasts no more than three hours; if the client wants to hire the telepath for a longer period then the cost is increased – see Optional Costs, below.

### Simple Veracity Test (Contract Scan)

This is the simplest form of commercial service offered; the telepath does a surface scan of one person as they are being questioned. Any attempt at deception by an untrained liar causes a very obvious thought pattern to appear; the truth is overlaid by the thoughts of the lie and any telepath can spot this pattern.

Normally, the telepath is hired by one party in a negotiation to scan the other party; each person involved in a deal brings their own trusted telepath to the table. A telepath can be hired to scan everyone present, but this is more expensive (see the Multi-target Test, below).

To perform a simple veracity test, the telepath uses the Surface Scan ability. This means that when the target lies, the telepath usually detects both the truth and the lie – all the subject's surface thoughts and emotions are read by the telepath, not just the intent to lie. However, under the Corps' rules, the telepath is not obligated to reveal anything more than whether or not the subject is lying.

The simple veracity test has become ingrained into modern business practises (with a little help from Psi Corps advertising). After all, if a prospective business partner refuses to be scanned, then he must something to hide.

Telepathic scans have become part of due diligence for any major business deal.

**Performing a Simple Veracity Test:** The telepath character uses the Surface Scan ability and looks for lies. Normally, the target cannot hide the truth from the telepath; the Games Master may give especially deceitful characters the chance to make a Bluff check, against a DC of 20 + the telepath's Sense Motive (basically, assume the Surface Scan allows the telepath to constantly take 20 on Sense Motive checks).

### Advanced Veracity Test (Special Contract Scan)

The advanced veracity test is more expensive than the simple test but gives the client more information. The telepath is now legally permitted to reveal what he detected in the target's thoughts *when the target was lying*. Most people think of the truth when they lie and it takes someone trained in telepath evasion techniques to bury the truth when lying. This ability is not a deep scan and will not ferret out the truth if the subject can hide it but it does allow the telepath to give the client whatever extra information was obtained during the surface scan – as long as this information relates to the business deal.

For example, a client intends to purchase a consignment of spare engine parts from a Narn and wants to know if the parts are compatible with a human-built cargo vessel. He therefore hires a telepath to perform a simple veracity test. The telepath does a Surface Scan of the Narn while the client questions him. The telepath discovers that while the engine parts are perfectly compatible, they are also out of date and prone to break down. However, by the rules of the simple veracity test, the telepath can only say if the target is lying and cannot volunteer information. If the client had paid the extra 50 credits for an advanced test, then the telepath could have revealed what he discovered.

The extra cost of the advanced test goes mostly towards the Corps' insurance premiums, to safeguard against telepaths who reveal information that is not directly related to the purpose for which the client hired the telepath. Note that for the Advanced Test to be employed, the telepath must be told some details about the client's goals and interests, so that the telepath can reveal any detected information is that is relevant to his client's affairs. Some businesses prefer not to inform their hired telepaths about their secret dealings and so just use the cheaper simple test.

**Performing an Advanced Veracity Test:** The advanced test uses the same rules as the simple test.





## Multi-target Veracity Test

While most telepaths can only scan one person at a time, they can change targets with great speed. A telepath can scan half-a-dozen people in a few seconds, which is enough to ascertain that everyone present at a business meeting is telling the truth. The telepath scans each person as they are speaking and is permitted to ask people to repeat statements if they speak out of turn, when the telepath was not scanning their minds.

Multiple surface scans in a short period of time can be tiring and disorienting to a telepath, so the price increases for every other person that the telepath must monitor.

**Performing a Multi-target Veracity Test:** This uses the same rules as the simple test, but the telepath must scan each person in turn separately as they are speaking. Often, the telepath will have to make a separate scan attempt each round.

## Deep Scan

A surface scan only detects whatever thoughts are currently running through a person's mind. A deep scan, on the other hand, can dive into a person's hidden thoughts and memories and retrieve any information that the target has ever known. A surface scan is passive but a deep scan is invasively *active*. It is well known that a deep scan can be physically damaging to the target; this is partially because the telepath's scan triggers activity in sectors of the brain without activating the intervening cells. Memories are accessed without the target's mind choosing to access them. The experience is traumatic and often painful.

Deep scans are rarely used by the Commercial Corps, except in investigations and audits. Most commonly, the scan is used to gather full information about an incident; a surface scan can only pick up whatever relevant information flows through the target's mind but a deep scan can locate everything the target knows.

These scans are also used in cases where a surface scan will do no good at all; patients in comas or who lack the ability to understand the questions put to them will not reveal anything useful in a surface scan, so the telepath must probe deeper.

Again, the telepath may learn information as part of the scan that is not relevant to the interests of the client. The telepath is not permitted to reveal or act on any of this information, as per the standard

Psi Corps rules. Confidentiality extends to both the client and the subject of the scan.

**Performing a Deep Scan:** The telepath uses the Deep Scan ability to retrieve whatever information is needed.

## Interpretation

While translator programmes and cultural databases are common, there is nothing better than knowing what the other person *means* to say. A telepath can punch through all the vagaries of culture, language and so on to discover the other person's original *intent*. The telepath can then communicate that intent right into the client's mind. Telepathic interpreters went with the first Earth Alliance traders to the stars; telepaths helped build humanity's place among the other races. Many established companies and traders prefer to use telepathic interpreters instead of relying on mechanical substitutes; it is a sign of wealth and prestige in some of the outer trading colonies like Beta Durani.

**Performing an Interpretation:** The telepath uses Surface Scan to detect the target's intent then transmits this information using Communication. More powerful telepaths can even use a combination of Second Sight and Reality Fabrication to wholly immerse the client in the target's sensorium, giving the client a perfect insight into the other party in the negotiation.

## Memory Retrieval

Memory retrieval involves a deep scan of the client. Telepaths are adept at uncovering lost memory fragments and assembling patchy recollections into a coherent whole. A memory retrieval allows the telepath to enter the client's mind to retrieve whatever information is needed. This is done in partnership with the client; while a deep scan is invasive, the memory retrieval is much more of a guided





meditation, with the telepath psionically stimulating the client's ability to recall memories.

**Performing a Memory Retrieval:** The telepath uses the Deep Scan ability but is trying to trigger the client's memories instead of just dredging the information out of the brain. In game terms, the telepath may give a synergy bonus equal to his Telepathy skill ranks to any Intelligence check or Intelligence-based skill check made by the client to recall information. For example, a scientist trying to remember a particular Minbari technical term (using Knowledge (alien life)) might hire a telepath. The telepath has 10 ranks in Telepathy, so the scientist would have a +10 bonus to his Knowledge check.

A memory retrieval only helps the target recover information he already knows, no matter how faintly. It can be used to enhance a fading memory or enable a person to perfectly recall a computer screen full of text that he only glimpsed for an instant, but it cannot provide information that the target does not already know.

## Telepathic Investigation

A telepathic investigation is normally a task conducted by the Psi Cops or the Legal Department but the same techniques can be used by the Commercial Corps. In a telepathic investigation, the telepath uses whatever abilities he has (Surface and Deep Scan, Sense Telepathy, Locate Mind and so on) to gather whatever information the client is looking for. Telepathic investigation is normally used to investigate cases of industrial espionage or white-collar crime. The telepath may of course not violate the standard Psi Corps rules on unauthorised scans but many corporations include clauses in their employee contracts that state that the employee permits telepathic scans when required by the company.

Telepathic investigation is essentially detective work carried out through the medium of telepathy.

### Performing a Telepathic Investigation:

The telepath interviews and scans the people involved. Deep and Surface scans are the normal tools used, although Locate Mind, Second Sight and Sense Telepath are also useful.

## Counter-telepathy

While Psi Corps rules prohibit unauthorised scans and other illegal uses of telepathy, alien telepaths are under no such restrictions. The Centauri regularly use military telepath techniques as part of their courtly intrigues, while half the

League of Non-Aligned Worlds have telepathic spies or diplomats. Any major trade negotiations involving aliens will probably include at least one telepath. Human traders are obviously at a major disadvantage.

While the Corps rules prohibit unauthorised scans, they do allow counter-telepathy. A sufficiently powerful telepath can produce psychic static and block scans from other telepaths. A telepath hired to perform counter-telepathy acts as a mind-guard for his client, preventing him from being scanned, dazed or otherwise affected. However, as the jamming ability is possibly only for potent (P10+) telepaths, counter-telepathy is rather expensive and rare.

Some canny traders hire lesser (P5) commercial telepaths. The telepath uses Sense Telepathy to monitor the client and alerts the client if he senses telepathic activity. While this does not stop the aliens using telepathy, it does give the human trader a fighting chance.

**Performing Counter-telepathy:** The simplest approach is to simply use the Jamming ability and keep maintaining it for the duration of the contract. The cheaper, P5 version involves constantly using Sense Telepathy and Warning.

## Long-term hire

Many corporations hire telepaths on a long-term (one year or more) basis. The telepath is expected to advise the corporation on psionic-related issues, liaise with the corporation's legal and management staff about negotiations, perform scans and counter-telepathy when needed and generally act as a hired specialist for the duration of the contract. Some companies have specialised needs for telepath – Interplanetary Expeditions, for example, is a major employer of telepaths and puts them to work scanning



for ancient psychic echoes or negotiating with previously unknown species out on the Rim.

The cost of 100 credits per day may seem low but most telepaths will not find work every single day. In a bustling freeport like Babylon 5 a telepath might be fully booked but most Earth-side telepaths are more than happy to exchange the uncertainty of freelance telepathy for the relative sinecure of a corporate desk job. In cases where the telepath is called to use his abilities multiple times per day, his daily cost rises proportionately. Some major corporations pay thousands of credits per day to their prized house telepaths.

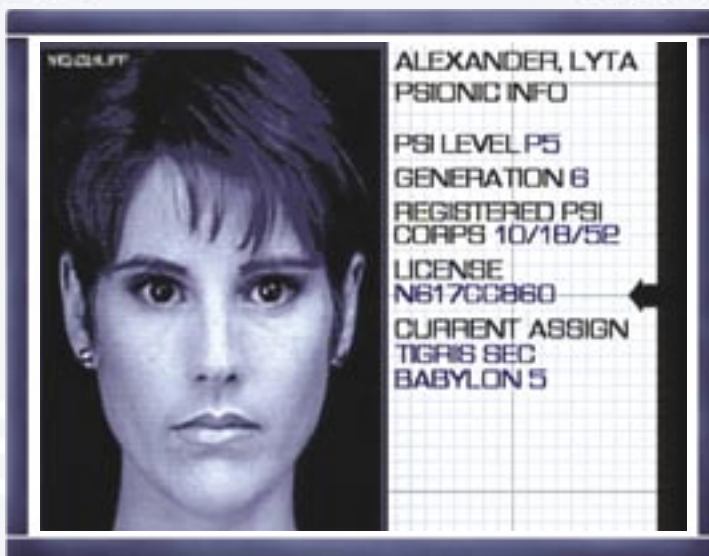
**Performing a Long-term Hire:** The telepath sits in a cushy corporate office (or in a fragile exploratory ship out on the Rim) and does whatever the corporation asks (assuming such requests do not break Psi Corps law). Depending on the corporation, a long-term hire can be absurdly easy, soul-crushingly boring, highly dangerous or borderline illegal.

## Special Requests

Every telepath in the Commercial Corps has a wealth of anecdotes about the weird clients. There is the story about the man trying to contact the spirit of his dead wife; the woman who wants counter-telepathy against her pet cat (which keeps scanning her); the cult that wants the telepath to send a psychic signal to the Greater Magellanic Cloud (to contact the Space Angels) and so on. There are plenty of misinformed or clueless people who believe that telepaths can do anything or solve any problem, as well as people who are simply nuts. As part of the Commercial Corps training, the telepath is taught how to politely but firmly get rid of 'invalid client requests'.

That said, there are some tasks that fall outside the normal set of services offered by the Commercial Corps. From scanning alien artefacts to creating tailored hallucinations, the telepath must be flexible and able to cope with a wide variety of customers' needs. There are no Corps guidelines for these special requests, so the telepath is free to set his own price, subject to the difficulty of the task and the status of the client.

The Commercial Corps is constantly experimenting with new services, such as telepathic speed-learning (*'Need to learn Narn? Have our telepaths fill your mind with knowledge!'*), psychic holidays (*'We can remember it for you wholesale!'*), telepathic employee evaluations and so on. Commercial telepaths may be authorised to offer these services on a trial basis for a short period of time.



## Hiring A Commercial Telepath

Every Psi Corps centre maintains a list of local telepaths for hire (and telepaths are required to register with the nearest centre when they move to a new city or region). Telepaths can have the centre handle negotiations for an additional 5% fee or simply have the centre pass requests onto them. If there is no Psi Corps centre nearby, the telepath should register with the local business bureau or Com centre.

The Commercial Telepaths offer a variety of services at a range of prices to suit all needs. More experienced and powerful telepaths can demand higher fees, depending on their grade within the Commerce Department.

## Grade Multipliers

Telepath's Grade	Percentage of base fee
1	60%
2	80%
3	100%
4	120%
5	150%
6	175%
7	200%
8	250%
9	400%
10	500%

High-grade telepaths can charge quite exorbitant rates for their services, so they are employed only by the richest megacorporations and institutions for the most delicate and important work.

See page 90 (Department of Administration, Personnel Section) for details on calculating a telepath's grade.

## Optional Costs

Telepaths have a certain amount of latitude when it comes to setting their prices; while the Psi Corps has set the base cost of the various telepathic services and does not permit telepaths to deviate too much from these costs, there are optional costs that a telepath may choose to add on.

### Optional Costs

Optional Cost	Cost Increase
Alien mind	5%
Dangerous conditions	10% to 50%
Difficult scan	10%
Extended contact	5%
Extra confidentiality	10%
Mental exhaustion	5%
Mental strain	10%
Mental trauma	10% to 20%
Physical contact	1 to 10%

### Alien Mind

If the target of the telepathic scan is an alien whose mindset is quite unlike that of humanity, then the telepath may add up to 5% to the cost of the scan. Any of the following species incur the extra cost: Abbai, Golians, Pak'mara, Tokati and Vree. Any previous unseen species also automatically warrants this extra price. This cost can also be added on if the telepath must establish contact with an unusual subject, such as an animal or object.

### Dangerous Conditions

If the telepath will be exposed to dangers, such as noxious environments, hostile enemies, damaging telepathic impulses or other threats, then he may add 'danger money' to the bill. The client is still expected to provide for the protection and security of the telepath. The dangerous conditions clause is rarely applied on Earth or any of the established colonies but it is a standard rider on most contracts out in deep space.

### Difficult Scan

If the telepath believes that the scan will be a difficult one, due to the target being unusually strong-willed or well-defended, or because the target is so physically weak that the telepath must take extra care to avoid doing damage, then the difficult scan cost may be added. This cost is also added when the telepath must do something especially complicated (Telepathy DC 18+).

## Extended Contact

The extended contact cost applies if the telepath must maintain a scan for a long period of time (longer than twenty minutes). The extended contact cost does not apply for non-scan abilities – jamming, for example, can be maintained for hours without incurring the extended contact cost. Long scans are both much more draining for the telepath and much more dangerous to the target, so the extra cost only applies to them. Note that the telepath may be able to apply the mental exhaustion fee for jamming or other, non-scan abilities.

## Extra Confidentiality

A telepath may choose to apply the extra confidentiality clause in situations where he feels that what is learned during the scan will be extremely delicate or personal and the telepath needs extra money before risking a lawsuit. The extra confidentiality clause is normally invoked in 'domestic telepathy', where a telepath is used to sort out a personal matter (divorce cases are the classic example). While a telepath is never permitted to use information obtained during a scan, there is a whole spectrum between the minor secrets and trivialities accidentally found out during a surface scan and knowing a person's deepest, most personal secrets. A telepath is often in a similar situation to a confessor, though their profession is arguably more career than vocation.

## Mental Exhaustion

If a telepath is called to use more abilities than normal, he may invoke the mental exhaustion clause. As a rule of thumb, the telepath will perform one scan or other telepathic action per grade level as part of his standard service; anything beyond that is a strain and incurs this extra cost. Especially lengthy sessions (more than one hour per grade level) also incur this cost.





## Mental Strain

The mental strain clause is invoked if the telepath suffers stress or other feedback from the telepathic contact. Some races have natural defences against telepathy; some minds are sharp or prickly or acidic. In game terms, the telepath may invoke this clause if he suffers extra damage during a contract session, beyond that required to activate his telepathic abilities.

## Mental Trauma

If the telepath is forced to relive a traumatic experience or intense emotion, then this clause is automatically invoked. The mental trauma clause normally crops up in criminal or domestic scans, not business contracts. The standard Psi Corps business contract does specify that clients must attempt to maintain some emotional composure and telepaths are trained to ignore most emotions from their clients, but intense spill-over can trigger the mental trauma clause.

## Physical Contact

If the telepath must remove his trademark gloves to better establish contact, a nominal fee of 1% is applied. This can rise to up to 10% if the telepath risks injury, infection, exposure to dangerous atmospheres and so on.

## Standard Contract Protocol

Once the telepath and the client have made contact and agreed on a price, they sign a standard Commercial Corps contract. This contract is automatically filed with the local Psi Corps centre and the telepath's fee is deducted from the client's credit chit and placed in a special holding account. It will be transferred to the telepath's account when the contract is completed. In the case of long-term contracts lasting for two weeks or longer, a fraction of the fee may be paid each week to the telepath.

Should either the client or the telepath breach the terms of the contract, the fee is kept in the holding account until the case is dealt with. Disputes over telepath breach-of-contract are generally referred back to the Psi Corps Legal Department, although local magistrates or ombudsmen may handle the cases in isolated areas.

A Commercial Corps telepath is expected to pay his own local taxes and fees. He must also give 10% of his gross income from his contracts to the Psi Corps. This is referred to as the Corps Dues, or informally as the 'tithe'. The dues are supposed to be paid monthly if the telepath is on Earth, or quarterly when offworld. However, most Corps members set their computers to automatically deduct 10% from their income and send it to the Psi Corps after each contract.

## Department of Commerce Characters

A Commercial Telepath needs to have as high a Telepathy score as possible, so a high Charisma is common but not required.

**Recommended Telepathic Abilities:** Surface Scan, Deep Scan.

**Recommended Feats:** Ability Focus (Surface Scan, Deep Scan).

**Recommended Skills:** Concentration, Diplomacy, Profession, Speak Language, Telepathy.

Commercial telepaths are found throughout the Earth Alliance, although generally only in wealthier areas. Still, most colonies and stations will have at least one resident telepath and most cities have dozens of working teeps. When roaming freelance and corporate telepaths are taken into account, a Commercial telepath might be found anywhere in known space and beyond.

## Scenarios

Commercial telepaths are very easy to work into a group – as long as they pay their dues and obey the Corps rules, they can do anything they want. Many telepaths want to see the galaxy for a while after completing their Psi Corps training, so they take passage on a ship and work as a freelance telepath for a few months.

In addition to the normal adventures a wandering character can encounter, a telepath's contracts can cause him all sorts of problems. Clients might want him to go beyond the Psi Corps guidelines and perform illegal scans, he can learn terrible (or highly profitable) secrets while inside the minds of clients, teep-hating bigots might hunt him down.

If a character fails to pay dues twice in a row, or if the yearly total of a character's dues falls below 500 credits, the telepath is contacted by the Corps and may be disciplined or brought back to Earth for retraining.

*Harnessed workhorses and chattels, the Commercial Teeps are largely ignored by the higher echelons of the Corps. They are called 'busybodies', 'P-roles' or 'P-eons'. Few in the Commercial Corps have P-ratings higher than 5. The handful of PIOs or P12s in the Commercial Corps are either spies in the megacorporations or too morally inflexible or clueless to be of use in the Psi Corps or the other departments.*

*But if there is hope, it lies in the Commercial Corps. Here are many thousands of telepaths who live outside the direct supervision of the Corps, who have tasted a little freedom. The Corps tries to keep them in check with surprise inspections, with rules and regulations and laws, with harsh dues and threats of terrible lawsuits and most of all with fear of the Psi Corps. If the Commercial Corps could be united and taught to throw off the shackles of the Corps, then their ebony tower would crumble. The Psi Corps relies on the vast income from the busybodies to fund its black projects. Cut off the money supply and they are ruined.*

## Other Commerce

### Department Activities

The Commerce Department also handles the Corps' budgeting and accounting in association with administration. The Psi Corps is operating at a considerable profit, and many of these profits are invested into the Earth Alliance stock markets by the Commerce Department's non-telepath agents. The Corps has a controlling interest in several genetics and pharmaceutical companies, including those that produce the sleeper drugs.

*The Corps owns Jensen Biogenetics, New World System, Rieber Medicals, Tamboline and CellTech, all of which are mid-level biogenetics firms. The Corps efforts to expand further have been foiled by the established megacorporations like Edgars and Takashi. The megacorporations distrust the Corps and have repeatedly blocked their expansions.*

*When I was with the Psi Corps, there was an ongoing investigation into a scheme within Commerce to break the megacorporations using telepathic industrial espionage and insider trading. The teeps involved were senior members of Commerce and were very good at staying one step ahead of the Corps. I suspect they're still out there, which means that the Earth Alliance economy might be heading for a serious telepath-engineered crash within five years.*

## Legal

**Recognising that a fraction of humanity has been gifted with psionic abilities that are real and measurable, and that this gift presents both a great step forward and a clear and present danger to the security and stability of human society, we act to safeguard and guide this gift.**

— *From the preamble to the Metasensory Regulatory Act*

The laws governing telepathy were originally drafted by the Committee on Metasensory Regulation, and revised by the Internal Security Act of 2161. Much of the work done by the Psi Corps Legal Department revolves around ensuring that all telepaths obey those laws, and protecting the rights of telepaths as determined by those laws.

Telepaths are given their first introduction to these laws in the cadres – as soon as a child is old enough to scan, he needs to know the rules. In short, these rules are as follows:

- ⑤ A telepath must avoid accidental scans.
- ⑤ A telepath may not make a scan without authorisation.
- ⑤ A telepath may not use information gained through telepathy for illegal or immoral purposes.

## Accidental Scans

A telepath can pick up stray surface thoughts and emotions from the surrounding population without even trying. The constant background noise of random thoughts and psychic traffic batters the telepath's mind, forcing him to erect mental barricades to hold back the surface thoughts. These blocks are not always strong enough to hold back powerful thoughts, but they do push the vast majority of these thoughts down below the threshold of detection.

Failure to maintain blocks against accidental scans is a Class VI offence – see Disciplinary Procedures, below. The Metasensory Regulatory Act states that:

*A telepath must make all reasonable efforts to avoid learning information that is private to other individuals. These efforts include but are not limited to:*





1. *Maintaining mental blocks, as described in Appendix A*
2. *Avoiding situations of mental stress and high emotion*
3. *Avoiding physical contact or close proximity to others*
4. *Informing others of his 'condition'*

The 'condition' mentioned is telepathy. The fourth clause was responsible for a great deal of anti-telepath violence in the years immediately after the Metasensory Regulatory Act. The act obliged the telepath to tell others that he was a telepath but this often triggered hostility from others – 'I am a telepath' was quickly misinterpreted as 'I'm reading your mind right now'. Many telepaths took to wearing badges or other symbols to passively show others that they were a telepath; the habit was adopted and codified by Psi Corps in the form of the familiar Psi Corps badge.

Not wearing gloves or the Psi badge in public is a Class VI offence.

Should the telepath accidentally pick up information from another individual, he is expected to treat it with the same confidence as information received in a professional capacity; the information may not be revealed to anyone, or used by the telepath in any way. In short, the telepath is expected to act as if he had not detected anything.

There are a few exceptions to this rule – the telepath may act on information received in an accidental scan if:

- ⑤ There is a direct threat to the telepath's personal safety.
- ⑤ There is a direct threat to public safety.

The first exception is obvious – most telepaths are sensitive to threats to their person anyway and targeted thoughts of violence and hostility are easy to detect. The telepath is permitted to act in self-defence. The second exception covers terrorist acts, intentions to cause large disasters, disgruntled teenagers with shotguns and accidental threats – a crewman on a freighter powering up the engine reactors, even though the telepath knows the safety plates are not closed and that the reactors will explode.

The 2259 revision to the Internal Security Act, which provided the foundation for the Ministry of Peace and Nightwatch, also added three other exceptions to the Accidental Scan rules:

- ⑤ There is a direct threat to EarthGov, the local government or public order.
- ⑤ There is evidence of illegal activity.
- ⑤ There is seditious intent to conspire for the purposes of illegal activity or threatening EarthGov.

In all cases, the telepath must be *absolutely* sure that there is a direct threat. If the telepath acts on illegally obtained telepathic evidence, then he is breaking the law and faces both criminal and civil proceedings. Acting on an accidental scan without due cause is a Class IV offence within Psi Corps (Class V in minor incidents) but a member of the public may also sue the telepath for Unwarranted Telepathic Intrusion. The Corps will deal with the resulting court case and pay any fines incurred by the telepath.



## Unauthorised Scans

The Surface and Deep Scan abilities possessed by telepaths are the foundation of the Commercial Corps' success, the primary tool of the Medical Corps, the chief focus of the Science Corps... they are the quintessential psychic disciplines. They are also the subject of the most legislation.

The Metasensory Regulatory Act states that:

*A telepath may not deliberately and intentionally use his abilities to actively probe, retrieve information from or manipulate the minds of others under any circumstances, except where:*

1. *The telepath's actions are permitted by the subject of the telepathic contact, who makes this permission known verbally, in writing or by affidavit, and where the client is compos mentis, not under the influence of any mind-altering substance or telepathic interference and fully aware of the nature of the telepathic contact.*
2. *The telepath's actions are permitted by a party who holds the legal right to act for the subject of the telepath contact in cases where the subject is unable to make their own decisions. These cases include but are not limited to: the subject is mentally unfit; the subject is in a coma state; the subject is unconscious and the information is of critical importance.*
3. *The telepath's actions are permitted by a civil authority, such as a court of law or a doctor.*
4. *In time of war or under martial law, the telepath's actions may be authorised by a military officer.*

The 2161 act clarifies these rules by adding an extensive appendix which describes telepathic scans and contact in scientific detail, the result of years of study and examination. The 2259 revision also adds officials in the Ministries of Security and Peace to the list of those permitted to authorise scans.

For someone to legally authorise a scan, they must understand the restrictions and abilities of telepathy; that the telepath may inadvertently cause stress, pain or even damage during a deep scan and that the telepath may learn information other than what is being scanned for. These restrictions are summarised in a short passage that telepaths are required to read to their clients before beginning a deep scan; this passage is referred to in the Corps as the Cassandra Rights.

Should the telepath cause measurable damage during a scan due to clumsiness, he has committed a Class V offence. Not

## The Cassandra Rights

While I am scanning for (whatever the client requested), I may learn other things about you; I will of course keep these in the strictest confidence. The scan can be uncomfortable or even painful; are you on any medication I should know about? Have you had any trouble with your heart? This scan is being conducted in accordance with Psi Corps rules and guidelines and any resulting disputes or problems will be arbitrated as per those rules. Do you understand and agree to all this?

checking for known problems that interfere with telepathy, such as recent brain surgery, haemorrhages, cancers, irregular heartbeat and so on is a Class III offence. Other medical problems arising during scans (headaches, nausea, etc) are generally ignored by the Corps. Clients have been known to cause a fuss over the smallest problem arising from a scan but these trivial cases are invariably defeated in court. A scan can be authorised by:

- ⑤ The client himself. The client must make the authorisation clearly and know what the scan entails. While this can be done informally and verbally, most telepaths prefer to have the authorisation in writing.
- ⑤ A representative who holds power of attorney for the target and can authorise a scan when the target is unable to do so. This is normally invoked in the case of coma patients or the mentally unwell. The Medical Corps normally handles medical scans but Commercial Corps telepaths in isolated areas may be called on to serve in emergencies.
- ⑤ A doctor or psychiatrist can authorise a scan for a patient who is not medically able to make his own decisions. This can be countermanded by the patient's next-of-kin.
- ⑤ A court order can be obtained from a magistrate to authorise a scan. Most magistrates are very unwilling to issue such an order and only authorise it in circumstances where time is of the essence.
- ⑤ Military officers can order a scan but only in areas under martial law.
- ⑤ Finally, it is possible to sign away one's protection from telepathic scan. Some megacorporations insist that their employees permit any deep scans that are required as part of audits or internal investigations; some military officers and senior government officials are scanned for telepathic meddling as a matter of course – and members of the Psi Corps may be scanned by their superiors freely.



Making a scan without proper authorisation is a Class IV offence if the telepath had good reason to make the scan, while making a scan without any authorisation or valid reason is a Class III offence.

The status of aliens under the scan is a matter for debate. Officially, any unauthorised scan, regardless of the target, is forbidden. However, aliens unfamiliar with humanity are usually unfamiliar with Psi Corps rules and so are unlikely to complain or be protected by Earth Alliance law. While the Corps still forbids unauthorised scans of aliens (not wishing to sow temptation or open a door to illegal scans), the punishment for such a scan is one Class less than it is for scanning a human.

## Acting on Information obtained through Telepathic Scan

According to the rules, a telepath may not act on information gained through a scan. Obviously, only the telepath knows what he learned inside the mind of the scan's subject, so whether or not the telepath is acting on illegally obtained information is difficult to determine. There are several professions that cannot be held by telepaths:

- ⑤ **Stockbroker:** A telepath may not speculate on the stock market or own stock with a value in excess of 1,000 credits. They may not offer financial advice, or invest in any way.
- ⑤ **Journalist:** A telepath may not be employed by any news-gathering company or organisation; write articles about topical events or otherwise profit from any endeavour based on personal information.
- ⑤ **Lawyer:** A telepath may not act as a lawyer, barrister, judge, magistrate or ombudsman in any Earth Alliance court of law, nor may they serve on a jury.
- ⑤ **Military Office:** Telepaths are barred from serving in EarthForce in any capacity. The Military Department of Psi Corps works closely with EarthForce but is not in the direct chain of command. Even telepaths in the Military Department may not hold rank.
- ⑤ **Gambler:** Telepaths may not gamble, except in games of pure chance such as lotteries. Most large casinos employ counter-telepaths and have random DNA tests to look for the telepathic marker genes.



Any telepath who is found in any of the positions listed above is guilty of a Class IV offence.

There are of course a huge number of things that a telepath might do that does not fall into any of the above job categories but are still violations of the law. Blackmail is the obvious example; there are several cases of telepaths making millions of credits by scanning wealthy individuals and using their secrets against them. Industrial espionage is another huge market for illegal telepathy – both the Russian and Indonesian Consortiums used telepaths for espionage before the establishment of the MRA and there are rumours that there are bloodlines of telepaths still held within those governments. There is also the Class II offence of puppeteering – the telepath completely dominates the mind of a person, controlling all their actions and having them work in the telepath's best interest. A blackmailed individual can go to the authorities or otherwise defeat the blackmailer; a puppet is incapable of doing anything against his puppeteer.

An individual who believes that a telepath is using information obtained illegally should report the incident to the Psi Corps Legal Department, who will investigate the matter. An individual may also bring a civil case against the telepath under Earth Alliance law; the Corps looks poorly upon such cases and fights them fiercely.

## Legal Status of Telepathy

Under Earth Alliance law, telepathically-obtained evidence cannot be used to convict the accused. Nor can a telepath reveal what he learned while inside another person's mind (sometimes referred to as 'peripheral information') – it must be held in the strictest confidence. A telepath may testify as to what was learned as part of a scan but may only speak on what the subject of the scan was and what information that was directly related to the subject was learned.

For example, a telepath scans a suspect to learn the disarm codes for a bomb. While scanning the subject, the telepath learns that the suspect is having an affair with an opposition politician whose position is strengthened by the bombings. While the telepath may inform the authorities of the disarm codes, he cannot tell them about the affair. It is peripheral information and therefore sacrosanct.

The legal status of telepathy is in a state of flux. Under the 2161 act, telepathic evidence should only be used to support a case and law enforcement agencies may not open a case based on telepathy alone. Scanning of a suspect in custody or the defendant in a trial was strictly forbidden. The recent revisions, however, open the way for telepaths to investigate crimes based on detected thoughts and peripheral information.

*Thoughtcrime. Telepathic police. Sedition as a reason for scanning. Clark's laws are cruel ones. I can only hope that whoever comes after him undoes all this evil. We cannot judge mundanes, for we are not their peers.*

## Legal Procedures

The Corps takes care of its own. A telepath's legal fees in any major court case will be paid by the Corps and the Legal Department will appoint a lawyer to represent the telepath. The Corps also has very comprehensive insurance coverage for all of its members – this coverage includes payments to the victims should the telepath breach Corps law and make an illegal scan.

A telepath who is accused of a crime such as murder will, one way or the other, be dealt with within the Corps. The Psi Corps claims jurisdiction over all telepaths within the Earth Alliance and will request that any arrested telepaths be transferred to their custody. The Corps has extradition treaties with all the Alliance member states and can use Earth Alliance channels to retrieve telepaths arrested by alien governments. In some situations, the Corps waits for the telepath to be processed and convicted before taking custody (it takes a special jail to hold a telepath) but in general problems are dealt with within the Corps. The Psi Cops arrive and whisk the criminal telepath out of the public eye – and into an internal Corps investigation, which is dealt with by Administration and the Cops.

Contract disputes and breaches are dealt with by Legal with the help of the Ombudsman's Office and the Commerce branch. The telepath accused of contract breach is scanned by the Corps' investigators as a matter of course and the cases are usually found in favour of the telepath.

Legal also protects telepaths against accusations of illegal scans, mind rape and so on. There is a constant stream of disgruntled mundanes who believe that the evil telepaths have been peeking into the minds or controlling their emotions; the tireless staff of Legal deal with each of these cases in concert with the Psi Ombudsman. Only a tiny fraction of these cases have any merit and none of those ever reach the news channels. In cases where the telepath did commit unwarranted telepathic intrusion, the Corps' Psi-insurance department ensures that the victims are well compensated. The public reputation of the Corps must remain unsullied.

Another important aspect of the Legal Department's duties is the retrieval of telepaths. Staff from Legal visit hospitals and orphanages to retrieve newly-found telepaths; they make the initial visits to the parents of young telepaths to offer the Corps' protection and help to their children; they bring troubled blips out of asylums and holding cells and into the care of the Corps.

## Internal Investigations

The Legal Department has very little influence over internal investigations, although they are officially under its jurisdiction. While the Legal Department runs the paperwork and actually enforces whatever penalties and punishments are decreed, the actual investigation is run by the Psi Cops or by Administration telepaths, and all decisions are made by Administration.







## Censure and Punishment

There are six levels of offence within the Psi Corps, designated Class VI to I. The first three (Class VI to IV) are considered misdemeanours and are punished merely by fines or demotion; the second three (III to I) are crimes and are punished by adjustment or imprisonment.

The Corps is not without leniency – several offences have a lesser and greater version and Administration can choose whichever level is most appropriate to the situation. In general, the primary deciding factors are; did the crime hurt any

telepaths; did it bring the Corps into disrepute; does the telepath feel genuine remorse for his crimes and can he be brought back into good standing and service?

The punishments set for each level of offence are as follows:

- ⑤ **Class VI:** Fines of 50 to 100 credits; temporary demotion by one grade level for one month; shunning for one day; no mark on permanent record.
- ⑤ **Class V:** Fines of 200 to 500 credits; temporary demotion for three months; one week of shunning; mark on permanent record (increases number of skill points needed for promotion by +2).
- ⑤ **Class IV:** Fines of 1,000 to 10,000 credits; permanent demotion by one grade level, shunning for three months or more, mark on permanent record (increases number of skill points needed for promotion by +2); reassignment and retraining, monitored.

Internal investigations run quickly and smoothly. Unlike mundane court cases, with their reams of evidence and endless legal jargon, the Corps simply uses scans to ascertain the truth. The telepath at the centre of the investigation is probed, deeply and repeatedly, to get a full image of everything he knows about the situation. The situation is also investigated using mundane methods – forensics in a criminal case, bookkeeping analysis and audits in a case of financial irregularities and so on – but these methods are there just to provide hooks and channels for the scan.

The scan is the ultimate arbiter of truth. The investigative telepaths are skilled at discerning truth from simple belief, and can quickly ferret out what the suspect telepath actually did with a minimum of medical side-effects. At least three telepaths conduct deep scans of the suspect and make a report to a senior Psi Corps official from Administration, who decides on an appropriate punishment.

### Psi Corps Offence Classes

Class	Sample Crimes
VI	Not maintaining blocks, appearing in public without Psi Corps gloves and psi symbol, not filing reports.
V	Causing damage during a scan, acting on an accidental scan (lesser), missed payment of dues, public intoxication.
IV	Holding a forbidden job, gambling, acting on an accidental scan (greater), lying or withholding information from the Corps, making an unauthorised scan (lesser).
III	Not checking for medical problems before a scan, aiding a rogue telepath, making an unauthorised scan (greater), disobeying an order from the Corps (lesser), breaching client confidentiality (lesser).
II	Puppeteering, rape, murder of mundanes, blackmail using telepathic information, consorting with rogues, disobeying an order from the Corps (greater), breaching client confidentiality (greater).
I	Murder of a telepath, conspiring against Psi Corps.

## Psi Corps and Mindwiping

The mindwipe procedure that has replaced the death penalty in Earth Alliance courts is not, surprisingly, a product of Psi Corps. It was developed as part of research into memory. The Corps has tried, several times, to get control of the procedure transferred to its technicians by pointing out that no organisation has a better understanding of the human mind than the Psi Corps. The Alliance has recommended that a telepath scan the subject of the procedure both before and after the personality is wiped, to ensure that the mindwipe was successful.

The telepath may order a temporary stay of execution if he feels that the subject will be damaged or the mindwipe fail due to the subject's current mental state. This stay lasts no more than three days, during which time the subject is given counselling and medicated to make him more prepared for death-of-personality.

Telepaths are never subject to death-of-personality, at least not in sentences handed down by the Earth Alliance judicial system. Metapol takes custody of the telepath before such a sentence can be carried out. Telepathic training and control would be destroyed along with the personality, which is unacceptable to the Corps. The equivalent punishment for a telepath is the slow deconstruction of his mind, readjustment and then reconstruction. This is done in the Corps' re-education centres.

- ⑤ **Class III:** Readjustment, permanent reassignment, permanent demotion by three grade levels, monitored.
- ⑤ **Class II:** Major readjustment, imprisonment in re-education facility.
- ⑤ **Class I:** Complete readjustment, imprisonment in re-education facility.

**Fines** are taken from the telepath's savings; if the fine cannot be paid immediately, then it is added to the telepath's future dues until the fine is paid with interest.

**Temporary Demotion** only applies to those departments with clear grade structures, like the Commercial Corps.

**Shunning** is a punishment largely unique to telepaths and only applies in TeepTown and other communities with a high proportion of telepaths. The criminal is *ignored* by everyone; they block off their thoughts from him, refuse to communicate with him in any way and cut him off from the telepathic 'grapevine'. For a telepath, this social silence can be deeply painful and unsettling.

**Mark on Permanent Record:** Every telepath registered with the Psi Corps has a permanent record, which contains every event in their career. The record contains a copy of the telepath's DNA and P-level tests, educational records, commendations, client histories – and any censures or disciplinary actions taken against the telepath. The permanent record is used when determining a telepath's arranged marriage, when deciding on promotions, when selecting telepaths for assignment and practically every major decision made by the Corps. A permanent mark is a major hindrance to a telepath's career.

The permanent records are held in a vault in the Metasensory Compound, and a copy is kept updated by tachyon synch at Syria Planum.

**Reassignment:** The telepath is moved from their current role to one more suited to their personality and skills. Any telepath who publicly embarrasses the Corps is moved to a position out of the public eye; an administrative position on Mars or in TeepTown, for example.

**Retraining:** The telepath is retrained in a new set of skills to fit with his new position.

**Monitored:** Another telepath is assigned to watch the convicted telepath. The monitor scans the censured telepath on a regular basis (once a week, usually) and checks to ensure that the censured telepath is pure in thought and deed. Monitoring lasts for three months on average. The monitoring is carried out by a representative from the Legal Department.

**Readjustment:** The telepath's personality is adjusted so that they will never commit those crimes again. This adjustment is done by powerful telepaths from the Medical Corps. The amount of readjustment varies depending on the severity of the crime; at Class III, the telepath is implanted with aversion nodes, which force him to make a Will save (DC 15) to even consider thinking of the crime again. Failing the Will save results in nausea.

**Major Readjustment:** The telepath's personality is implanted with Asimovs or other active compulsions, forcing him to comply with Psi Corps policies and rules. The sections of his personality that led to him to breach the relevant laws are excised or walled off.



**Imprisonment in Re-education Camps:** The criminal is treated as a blip and sent to one of the camps where rogue telepaths are treated. These treatment facilities are run by the Department of Administration. The telepath is held for a period from one to 20 years, until his debt to the Corps has been paid.

*Only the public treatment facility is run by Administration and this is a bowdlerised Disneyplanet version of the real camps. Those rogues who are 'responding' to the psychic assault and death-of-personality that the butchers inflict on them are brought to this sanitised little centre on Earth and trotted out to be shown to visitors and dignitaries. See how the bedraggled, criminal rogues are turned into product little Psi-Corps drones! See how generous and caring we are, after breaking them with electroshock and drugs!*

*Imprisonment rarely lasts more than a few months. Those who can be 'salvaged' are adjusted. Those who cannot be moulded by the Corps are given to Sigma.*

**Complete Re-adjustment:** Death-of-personality, or the equivalent thereof.

Again, see page 90 (Department of Administration, Personnel Section) for details concerning a telepath's grade within Psi Corps.

## Other Legal Department Activities

Legal sections work closely with several other departments in Psi Corps:

- ⑤ **Education:** Legal staff arrange for the care and acquisition of telepaths discovered by random DNA scans and psi testing centres.
- ⑤ **Commerce:** The legal department deal with contract law, breaches of contract and other legal problems caused by telepaths in the business community.

## Department of Legal Affairs Characters

Legal telepaths tend to have a high Wisdom or Intelligence. They also tend to be of relatively low P-rating.

**Recommended Telepathic Abilities:** Surface Scan, Communication.

**Recommended Feats:** Data Access.

**Recommended Skills:** Diplomacy, Knowledge (law), Sense Motive.

Legal telepaths are stationed only at major Psi Corps holdings – TeepTown, EarthDome, Io, Mars, Proxima colony and so on. They are sometimes found off on missions, investigating a case, defending a telepath accused of a crime, negotiating a major contract and so on but legal department staff are rarely assigned outside Corps holds for long.

## Scenarios

Teeps from Legal will normally show up as investigators in the support of Psi Cops or as the black-suited figures who appear at the end of a scenario to foil everything the characters have done through legal trickery. They are the ones who show up to take the alien artefact off for study or to claim custody of the unfortunate rogue telepaths.

Legal telepaths can be used as the protagonists of adventures, of course. A team could be sent out from TeepTown or Mars to investigate tricky situations involving Psi Corps staff. While the Psi Cops deal with rogues, situations like the murder of telepaths, telepaths being framed for crimes they did not commit, financial irregularities, the consequences of illegal scans and so on fall under the jurisdiction of the Legal Department.

- 5 **Administration:** The legal staff are aides and office staff for the sections of administration that deal with politics and contact with EarthGov.
- 5 **Metapol:** In concert with Medical, Legal provides interns and support staff for the Psi Corps.

*Legal stumbles forward, a walking corpse of bureaucracy stitched together by necessity. It is a patchwork of sections, united by paper chains. Two telepaths sitting at the same desk in Legal might be working in fields that will never, ever touch. While Administration is kept small, compact, restricted to the people the Director trusts, Legal is allowed to bloat. Perhaps if we waited, Legal would bring the whole Corps down with it in a black hole of red tape.*

*Or maybe it can expand indefinitely, until the death of the universe.*

*Legal is the secret realm of back doors and hidden places within the Corps. Its telepaths have access to all the records, all the departments. If it can be infiltrated, then it can be used against them. There may be other options.*

## Medical

Psi Corps Medical consists of four major sections and numerous subsections. For example, General Medicine also includes Paediatrics, which provides medical care for the children in the cadres, and Geriatrics, which oversees the Corps' retirement community in TeepTown. The age of retirement for most telepaths is 80, although the Corps values its elders and permits them to continue serving the Corps unless senility is interfering with their control.

Medical is closely allied with the Science Department and there are moves underway to reorganise the two into a single Department.

## General Medicine

This section runs the Vacit Hospital in the Metasensory Compound, as well as the MedLabs in the other Psi Corps stations. These facilities are the equal of any other in the Earth Alliance and are equipped with the finest equipment available. Psi Corps doctors are especially skilled at diagnosis – they can scan a patient and sense their pain and symptoms from the inside. All telepaths are entitled to full medical care at any Psi Corps medical facility.

The Psi Corps mandates a basic level of fitness in all telepaths. While their work is done with the mind, the body must not be neglected. There are regular callisthenics sessions at





any Corps facility and members are required to have regular checkups. Telepaths are especially vulnerable to blood clots, strokes and heart attacks due to the stress they place on their brains and bodies, so Corps members are required to keep their cholesterol and body fat levels within acceptable limits. Those who fail to keep to these limits are implanted with telepathic compulsions towards exercise. A surface scan is a standard part of any checkup by General Medicine.

The genetic mutations responsible for telepathy in humans do sometimes cause minor medical problems; these are discussed in greater detail in the Genetics section but it is General Medicine who is responsible for treating them.

The Corps surgeons are the best neurosurgeons in Earth-controlled space, specialising in nanocyte reconstruction and neuro-electric rebalancing. Together with the Science Department, the surgeons are also making great strides in cybernetic systems that can be interfaced directly into the human brain. They are also experienced in repairing the damage caused by telepathic scans; a deep probe can cause brain lesions and burst blood vessels and the best place for a victim of telepathic damage is in a Corps MedLab.

*Where they can have their minds adjusted once more.  
Heaven forbid that the Corps takes responsibility for its  
mistakes. No, Trust The Corps above all else.*

*Few senior telepaths have actually died in the last  
50 years. The Corps instituted a policy where dying  
telepaths are put into stasis, so that they can be  
consulted through telepathic scan when needed. The  
'icebank' facility contains all the secrets of the Corps  
and has as much security as any computer vault.  
There are rumours that some are experimenting with  
personality transfers — take a rogue telepath and break  
his mind, leaving him open to telepathic influence, then  
lock him in the icebank for a night. According to the  
stories, the telepath comes out changed and the techs  
find that one of the stasis pods has shut down, killing its  
occupant.*

*I could a tale unfold who lightest word would harrow up  
thy soul, freeze thy young blood...*



The use of scans to rouse coma patients is becoming increasingly popular; while only a small fraction of coma patients can be contacted by a telepath, it is a quick and nearly harmless procedure that has a measurable chance of working. The telepath enters the patient's mind and attempts to reconnect the broken links that keep the patient from waking up.

A related phenomenon to coma scans are the deathbed or 'necro-scans', where the telepath retrieves information from the mind of a dying patient. These scans are extremely dangerous — leaving aside the bizarre threshold phenomenon of doors of light and out-of-body experiences reported by some telepaths, the random misfiring of a dying brain can create a feedback loop, trapping the telepath's mind inside the patient and leaving the telepath in a fugue state.

## Psychiatry

The development of telepathy has revolutionised the understanding of the human mind. For the first time, it is possible for one individual to truly understand another. A telepath counsellor can reach inside the mind of a patient and see the same problems and fears that they see, feel what they feel — but retain enough independent perspective to offer advice.

There is a certain amount of ingrained dislike for telepathic methods among Earth's normal psychiatric community but the success rate of telepathic treatment is considerably higher than mundane methods. The contribution of telepaths to psychiatric literature and diagnosis is considerable and these writings are slowly bridging the divide between normal and telepathic psychologists.

## Performing a Coma Scan

To perform a coma scan, the telepath establishes a Deep Scan of a coma patient and then makes a Telepathy check. The DC for this check varies depending on the nature of the coma, but is generally around DC 25. If the telepathy check succeeds, the patient may make a Fortitude save (DC 15) to wake up, assuming there is no physical barrier to this recovery. If the telepathy check fails, then the patient takes 1d6 points of subdual damage. The DC for the Telepathy check rises by +5 each time.

## Performing a Deathbed Scan

A deathbed scan works just like a normal Deep Scan but when the target takes subdual damage, he must make a Fortitude save at a DC of 5 + (5 x the amount of subdual damage dealt) or die. If the patient dies, the telepath must make a Will save at the same DC to avoid taking 1d6 points of temporary Wisdom and Charisma damage.

Treatment sessions with a trained telepathic counsellor can cost upwards of 1,000 credits an hour, so it is generally only the very rich and powerful who can afford their services. Often, the emphasis is on speed; a telepathic counsellor can get to the root of a problem with great efficiency. The Corps is experimenting with new methods of treatment; phobias and psycho-sexual issues can be surgically excised from the mind, while implanted compulsions can help with a lack of willpower or focus.

*It's rumoured that Psych section has been building its own private little empire, by implanting psychic trapdoors in the rich people who hire them as therapists and healers. If true, and if discovered, it will be a major scandal for the Corps.*

The Psychiatric Section is also responsible for the psychological care of Psi Corps members. Telepaths have a higher incidence of psychological problems and aberrant behaviour than normals, due to their special sensitivity. Psychiatry offers support and counselling for these troubled telepaths. It also ensures that the telepaths have an environment that reinforces their discipline and control; the seemingly-oppressive signs that decorate some Psi Corps facility proclaiming messages like 'OBEY' or 'THE CORPS IS MOTHER, THE CORPS IS FATHER' actually help telepaths stay stable and calm. Subliminal music and scents are also used to focus the mind; through a long series of experiments, the Psychiatric Section has mastered the art of triggering psychological events and emotions through stimuli just below the threshold of perception.

Psychiatry also runs a secure facility for telepaths on Mars outside the research facility at Syria Planum. There, by using a combination of holographic simulations, drugs, cybernetics and telepathic care, the staff of Psychiatric Section can create illusionary situations that help telepaths find their way back to sanity.

*A madhouse for insane telepaths – and a place to drive men insane. Psychiatric Section are drunk on their own power. They know more of how to twist and shatter the human mind than anyone has ever known before. They can create artificial personalities and sleeper agents tailored to a particular mission; they can create fanatics and*

*messiahs. They can make two people fall madly in love or convince someone that everything they know is a lie.*

*As of 2259, the section was wholly under the control of Keyes' followers. Their primary goal has become weeding out those telepaths not loyal to Keyes' faction. Those they suspect of having more sympathy with the pro-telepath group in the Corps are tested by Psychiatry, either through scans or by dropping them into hallucinogen-fuelled nightmares where their real loyalties are revealed.*

*I have written a brief monograph on internal politics and dissent within Psi Corps, which I will insert later in these notes.*

One of the stranger projects undertaken by Psychiatry Section was the creation of the 'grapevine'. Corps telepaths of P2 or greater are trained to unconsciously dedicate a section of their mind to sending and receiving information on a specific telepathic channel. In a community with a sufficient number of telepaths, this acts as a sort of telepathic network, similar to a computer network. A telepath could leave a message for another person on the network; this message would be passed from one telepath to another on the grapevine until the recipient encounters someone who has the message in their mind.

The grapevine is accessible by any telepath and information on it cannot be kept secret. In most places, it is used mainly for gossip and social messaging. However, as the grapevine



exists only in the mind of telepaths, it is sometimes used to hold information that the local teeps do not want mundanes knowing about. A computer file can be hacked, a whisper overheard, but a thought is secure against normals.

*There is a secret higher-level grapevine, accessible only to those telepaths capable of broadcasting on a rarefied frequency (PIOs only). This second grapevine is reserved for secrets that the Corps does not want EarthGov to find out about. There are telepaths whose sole duty it is to be the walking memory banks of the Corps, living datacrystals who remember thousands of pieces of information and are scanned to retrieve this data. Some of them have been brainwashed so they are unaware of their true purpose within the Corps. Information is power and power is control.*

## Genetics

There is no single gene that controls telepathy. It is a synergistic effect that stems from a dozen or more genes. Most of these are on the Y chromosome, so the maternal side is more important when determining whether or not a child will be telepathically active. The strength of an individual's telepathy is similarly not directly linked to any single gene – solving the puzzle of which combination of genes creates which P-level is the main aim of the Genetics Section. The puzzle is further complicated by 'mundane' genes – genes that have existed in humanity for millions of years but have new effects when acting in concert with the 'new' telepathic genes.

Telepathy is certainly a new development in humanity – many of the genes involved in it have DNA structures quite unlike the majority of the human genome and could not have evolved naturally. While the Psi Corps 'officially' believes that telepathy is a mutation, most of Genetics are convinced that it was engineered sometime in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, probably around 2080. The staff are divided on the question of who engineered it; as it was before contact with alien races, some suspect that it was the product of military research, while others point to the distinct similarities between the human telepath genetic codes and those of alien telepaths and believe that another alien race 'seeded' the universe with telepaths.

Genetics research works closely with the Science Department to improve the Corps' understanding of telepath DNA. Experiments are underway to use gene therapy to inject a full complement of telepath genes into an individual and to use in vitro retrosequencing to improve unborn telepaths.

*Most Corps telepaths believe we were a mutation, an evolution into something better than humanity. Homo Superior, we crowed. I certainly did – it is easier to think that you are a wonderful product of the living universe, than to find out that you were a mass-produced, self-replicating weapon in a billion-year-old alien war.*

*Being a telepath means you cannot lie to yourself or other telepaths. We must face the truth of our Vorlon heritage, and bring the Corps to see it too. Their belief in their own superiority through evolution is at the heart of the Corps' callousness and cruelty.*

*As for improving telepaths – Sigma has been at that for three generations. It is only now that the Corps is beginning to admit some of these efforts. The truth is far worse...*

The enhanced genetic structure of telepaths does have its drawbacks, however; telepaths are considerably more likely to suffer birth defects, immune-system failures, certain cancers (especially brain tumours), epilepsy and other nervous system disorders, colour-blindness, depression and infertility. There are also several disorders unique to telepaths, which straddle the boundary between psychological problems and physical illnesses:

- ⑤ **Cascade Telepathy** is related to psionic displacement (see below) and is an illness where more and more of the victim's mind is given over to telepathy. Sufferers often experience a sudden growth in their telepathic abilities but also quickly become lost within the minds of others; they cease to think for themselves and simply passively exist as psionic ghosts, slipping from mind to mind while their bodies decay.



- 5 **Psionic Displacement:** The telepath cannot stop scanning others and is constantly making surface scans of those around. Unless this is treated with sleepers and control techniques, the telepath stops consciously thinking for himself and essentially becomes a gestalt being, composed of the reflections of those nearby. The telepath lacks his own will entirely and simply 'follows the crowd' involuntarily – peer pressure on the genetic level.

If left untreated, this soon develops into **Advanced Psionic Displacement**, where the telepath's physical movements and actions are inspired by those around him.

If someone walks nearby, the telepath's legs mimic their walking motions. If someone is drinking, the telepath's mouth and throat muscles make drinking motions too. The telepath is unaware of his limbs moving of their own accord (or, rather, in sync with those around him). Sleepwalking is an especially common symptom of this disorder.

The final stage, **Terminal Psionic Displacement**, occurs in only a fraction of cases. The telepath's autonomic nervous system shuts down and becomes entirely dependant on the nervous systems of others. The telepath will stop breathing on his own and instead

## Game Rules

A telepath character has a percentage chance equal to his P-level to suffer from one of the listed disorders. This chance should be rolled once per age category (child, adult, old, venerable and so on). It is up to the Games Master whether this illness is one of the mundane ones that telepaths are prone to, such as epilepsy, or one of the new disorders.

- 5 **Cascade Telepathy:** Each month, the character's Telepathy bonus increases by +1d6 – but he also suffers an equal amount of Intelligence drain.
- 5 **Psionic Displacement:** The telepath must make a Will save (DC equal to the number of people within a range equal to  $10 + (2 \times \text{P-rating})$  feet to avoid agreeing with any group decisions. If the group is split, the telepath follows the majority.

**Advanced Psionic Displacement:** The telepath must make a Will save (DC 10) each round to avoid mimicking one of the movements of the nearest character within a range equal to  $10 + (2 \times \text{P-rating})$  feet. The movement mimicked is a random one (roll 1d6 – 1=facial expression, 2=posture, 3=left arm, 4=right arm, 5=left leg, 6=right leg). The character that is being mimicked may, as a standard action, make an opposed Will save against the telepath. If the character wins the contest, he may choose how the telepath moves next round if the telepath fails the normal DC 10 Will save.

**Terminal Psionic Displacement:** The telepath cannot breathe unless there is another human within  $10 + (2 \times \text{P-rating})$  feet.

- 5 **Sparkd Neurons:** Whenever the character takes subdual damage from the use of telepathy, it is converted into lethal damage.
- 5 **Surge Syndrome:** Whenever the character rolls a natural 1 on a telepathy check, he begins to unconsciously use the Communication ability to contact random targets within range and broadcast his current thoughts to them. This lasts for 2d6 rounds. The use of Communication does not stop the telepath from using other telepathic abilities at the same time but the character must still make Telepathy checks to activate Communication and takes subdual damage from the exercise of his abilities. If the character lacks the Communication ability, he gains it when he develops this disorder even if he lacks the P-rating necessary.



start copying the breathing patterns of those nearby. Heartbeat and muscle twitches will likewise mirror those of people nearby. Unless the telepath has someone nearby at all times to serve as an autonomic model, he will stop breathing altogether.

5 **Sparked Neurons:** One of the physical manifestations of telepathy is the spontaneous occurrence of electrical activity between unusually widely-separated neurons; telepathy occurs in the 'gaps' between brain cells. Telepaths can use this technique in psychic combat, by 'sparking' each other's brains to cause momentary shocks. A victim of sparked neurons suffers from unusually powerful electrical explosions whenever he uses telepathy. This spontaneously generated electrical activity actually burns the surrounding nerve cells, causing brain lesions and eventually death.

5 **Surge Syndrome:** The telepath experiences mental 'flushes', during which he broadcasts his thoughts and emotions to all within range (informally, this is referred to in the Corps as 'mental incontinence'). While all telepaths are prone to broadcast their thoughts during stress or extreme emotion, the victim of surge syndrome

can accidentally send his thoughts with such strength that they can be sensed by normals.

The primary goal of the Genetics section is conserving and strengthening the various telepathic bloodlines. By cross-matching and breeding telepaths, the Corps ensures that none of telepathic genes vanish. Many of the genes are recessive, so the Corps must ensure that both parents are carriers of the gene.

It is a misconception that the Corps arranges marriages for every telepath. Only a tiny fraction of teeps have their sexual partners deliberately assigned by the Corps doctors and then only to protect a very rare combinations of genes. In most cases, a telepath wishing to marry must request permission from the Genetics Section, who will run a comparison test to ensure that the potential prodigy from the union will be telepaths. For telepaths with especially powerful abilities, the Genetics Section provides a short-list of acceptable partners. A P10, for example, will have a half-dozen or so partners with acceptable genetics and age selected by the Genetics Section by the age of nine.

*There is tremendous social pressure on Corps telepaths to 'do their duty' and provide the next generation of drones for the Psi Corps. The decision is made as 'painless' as possible — soon after birth, the child is whisked away to the cadre and raised by the Corps. It is rumoured that the painkillers and anti-nausea drugs given to pregnant telepaths also contain low level of sleepers and hormonal adjusters that prevent a proper parent-child bond forming. Psychiatry also deliberately induces postpartum depression, convincing the mother that only the Corps can take care of the child.*

*As long as the union produces children, though, the Corps and teep society don't give a damn about the marriage. Affairs and marriages of convenience are common. For a community of people who can see into each other's minds, the Corps teeps can maintain social fictions with the best of them. Your marriage is a sham, but so is mine, we must meet for tennis sometime. When someone defies the traditions, when telepaths marry for love or refuse to hand their babies over to the cadres, then the full weight of community disapproval is levelled at them. Any true love is a danger to the Corps, and must be stamped out.*

*Arranged marriages are not the only method for producing new generations of Corps-approved telepaths. The genetic material of every telepath is kept on ice. There are children in the cadres whose genetic fathers have been dead for a century. Sometimes, the Genetics Section makes mistakes — they discover that a marriage will not produce the right offspring. They can ask the couple to divorce, or (more often) just inseminate the 'correct' mother using stolen sperm.*

*The Genetics Section is terrified by the thought that their 'magic gene', the answer to all their crossbreeding and bloodline problems, is held by a rogue, sleeper or blip telepath. The Sleeper Service has been instructed to collect genetic material from the sleeping teeps. Rogues already have their genetic material on file so they are less of a problem. As for the blips — anyone captured by the Psi Corps has a blood sample taken as part of their initial arrest, and telepaths can be entered into the breeding programme while still in the camps.*

Clinical and cold as all this sounds, the Corps does not treat its telepaths as walking containers of sperm and ova. Genetics consults with Psychiatry and attempts to match telepaths by personality as well as genetics. The rate of divorce and marriage breakdown among telepaths is less than a quarter of that among normals (one problem that telepaths do not have is communication).

A Corps telepath is expected to marry another telepath by the age of thirty-five and produce at least three children. As these children are raised by the cadres and the Corps offers excellent terms of parenthood leave and compensation, having a child has little impact on a telepath's career.

## Sleeper Service

The section of Medical responsible for treating inactive telepaths with sleeper drugs is referred to as the Sleeper Service. Sleeper drugs are among the most controlled substances in the Earth Alliance; while the drugs are completely legal, they cannot be purchased under any circumstances. The only way to get sleeper drugs is to register with the Psi Corps as an inactive telepath. A tiny amount does make its way out on the black market but the Corps hunt sleeper dealers down with the same ferocity that they hunt rogues. There have been cases where Psi Cops are dosed with sleepers and then murdered when they are unable to psionically call for help.

A sleeping telepath is visited once a week by representatives from the sleeper service. The service representatives carry just enough doses of the drugs to serve each of their patients once. During a visit, the representatives carry out a quick medical exam, including a surface scan, and ensure that the patient's telepathic abilities are still sedated. The sleeper drugs are then injected into the wrist or neck. The drugs are tailored to the patient's biochemistry and P-level and should not be used by others. Sleeper drugs are provided free of charge but the patient must sign a contract with the Corps which includes travel restrictions – the patient must inform the Corps of any moves and may not travel offworld without their permission. The Corps also requires access to the patient's medical records and may act as the patient's doctor.



Once per year, the patient's case is reviewed. If the patient is deemed adaptable enough, he is offered another chance to join the Corps and come off the sleeper drugs. These offers are rarely made after the age of 15, although exceptions are made for especially promising candidates.

The sleeper drugs work by slightly decreasing the electrical activity and level of neurotransmitters in the brain. While the side-effects are minimal, mild depression is common. The Psi Corps treats any problems arising from the sleepers by adding more drugs to the weekly dosage, such as anti-depressants.

To ensure security for the sleeper drugs, they are manufactured in robotic orbital factories run by the megacorporations then shipped by armed shuttle to a handful of distribution points in major metropolitan areas on Earth. The drugs are then brought by maglev or groundcar by the Psi Corps representatives. Each vehicle has a specially built container that contains the individually packaged drug doses, each of which has a unique code to retrieve it. If the wrong code is entered into the system, or the packaging is tampered with, the container automatically incinerates its contents and automatically activates a distress beacon.

*A telepath has only two choices – death or hope for freedom. Joining the Psi Corps is death. Refuse to join and you must go on sleepers – which will eventually kill you – or be imprisoned in a Corps-run facility, where you will either be brainwashed into joining the Corps, forcibly put on sleepers or just killed.*

*The rogues are the only hope for freedom.*



## Office of the Psi Ombudsman

There are only two positions within the Psi Corps that *must* be held by non-telepaths. The first is the directorship of the Corps; the second is the Psi Ombudsman. The Psi Ombudsman is responsible for investigating any complaints of misconduct or irregularity within the Corps. He has the power to launch investigations and inquiries into any aspect of the Corps' activities, from the lowliest Commercial teep to the Office of the Director himself.

All complaints or allegations of impropriety made against the Corps are first referred to the Office of the Psi Ombudsman. Most of these are quickly shunted over to Legal or given over to investigation by Metapol. The remainder are investigated by the Ombudsman and his staff, who are personally selected

by the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman himself is appointed directly by the Committee on Metasensory Regulation.

Failure to comply with an investigation from the Ombudsman's Office carries severe (up to Class III) penalties for a telepath. Scans are used as part of these investigations, but the majority of the Ombudsman's efforts rely on traditional paper trails and interviews.

*The Psi Ombudsman is the government's watchdog and perhaps the loneliest job in the world; he is surrounded, every day, by telepaths who speak in words he cannot hear and mistrust him for what he does. Successive administrations and Directors have so defanged the position that it is now little more than a joke. However, they have made a habit of transferring intelligent troublemakers over to the Ombudsman, so we may have unexpected allies within the heart of Psi Corps itself...*

## Sleeper Drugs

A dose of sleepers costs 200 credits on the black market and suppresses all telepathic ability. After one year of continuous use, the user must make a Fortitude save (DC 10) each week, or suffer from bouts of depression, during which they lose interest in normal activities and suffer a -3 penalty to all Will saves. The Fortitude save DC increases by +1 for each additional year the sleeper drug is used without a break of at least two months. If this save is ever failed by more than 15, additional mental problems such as schizophrenia set in.

The Psi Corps has developed several variants of sleepers; including a lethal version that slowly poisons the user and a diluted version that allows the user to faintly feel the thoughts of others (used to tempt candidates into joining the Corps). Sleeper drugs also work on alien telepaths.

## Department of Medicine Characters

Medical characters can be of any P-rating.

**Recommended Telepathic Abilities:** Surface Scan, Second Sight, Reality Fabrication.

**Recommended Feats:** Alien Anatomy.

**Recommended Skills:** Medical.

Medical telepaths can be found throughout the Earth Alliance, although usually only in Psi Corps installations. Private medical teeps work as psychologists or analysts – or mind-warping men in black.

## Scenarios

Most adventuring parties out on the Rim will have both a telepath and a doctor; a medical teep can combine the two roles. The Psi Corps' continuing quest for telepath genetic material could have the characters involved in bodysnatching. A rogue telepath dies offworld and the characters are sent in to recover his DNA from the graveyard. The arranged marriage policy of the Corps could also be a source of scenarios – the characters might have to ensure that the right two telepaths get together by any means necessary.

# The Corps is Father

While all of the other departments are headquartered on Earth, Science Department was moved to Mars in the 2190s, to a new research facility at Syria Planum. Over the next two decades, the facility was greatly expanded, as more and more sections within Psi Corps found the Martian station suitable to their needs.

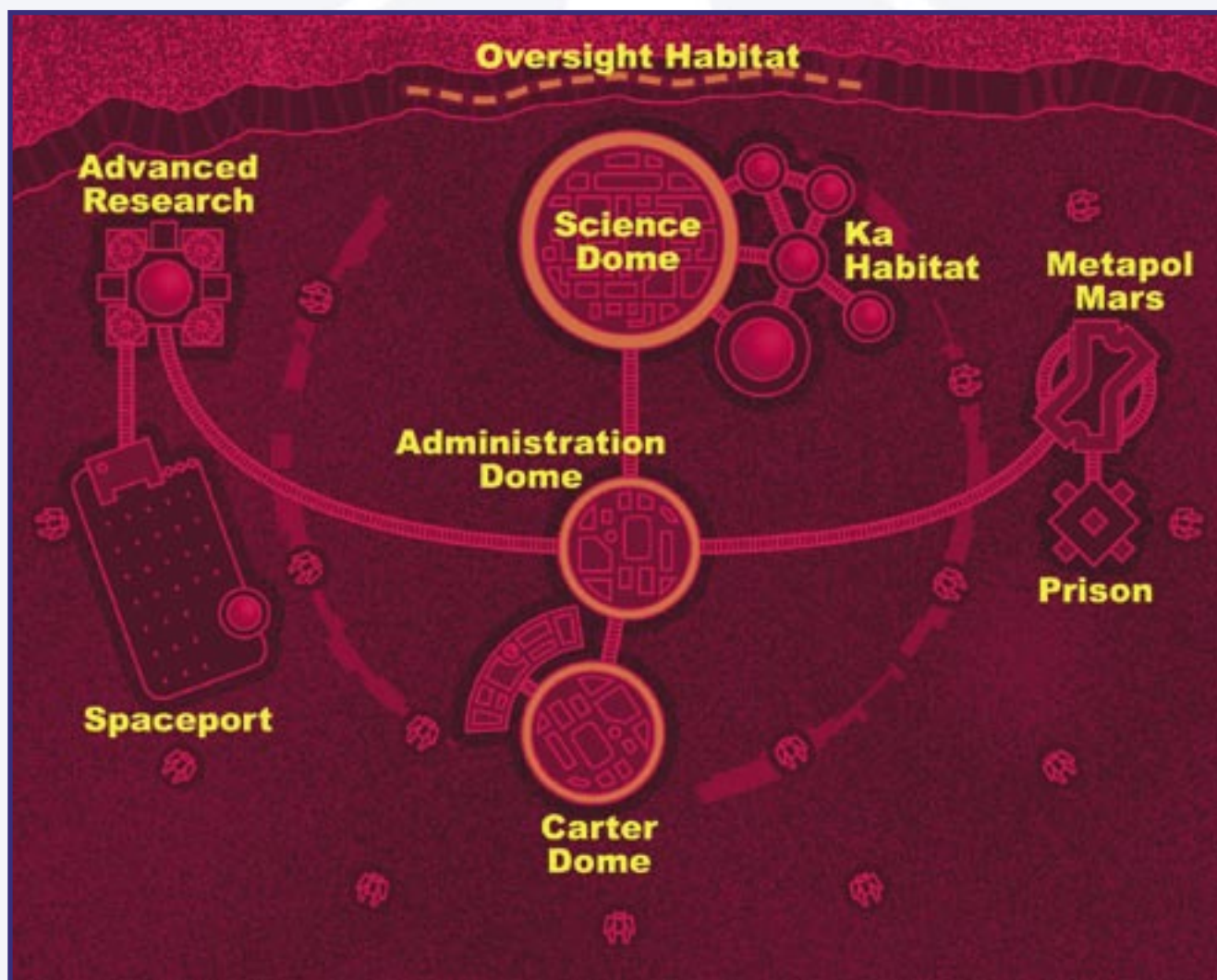
As of 2259, the Psi Corps base at Syria Planum consists of three main domes and several dozen smaller domes and structures cut into the rock, spread over a dozen square kilometres of the Martian surface and linked by a network of transport tubes and tunnels. Over 20,000 people live and work at Syria Planum, making it one of the largest cities on Mars. Syria Planum is not linked to Bethesda or the MarsDome complex by transport, so the only way to reach the facility is by shuttle or surface rover.

## Science Dome

The first section of Syria Planum to be completed, this dome holds the headquarters of Science Division. The bedrock beneath the dome is honeycombed with laboratories, while the outer ring of the dome contains manufacturing facilities and factories. A quarter of the dome is given over to a medical research section and hospital run by the Medical Department. The primary fields of research are the underlying nature of telepathy, cybernetics, genetics and neurochemistry, but Science Dome also has some of the best general science laboratories on Mars. It has an extensive fleet of surface rovers and mobile habitats and has carried out several large geological surveys and sub-surface explorations.

## Administration Dome

The smaller Administration Dome contains the environmental controls for the whole complex, including a pair of fusion reactors to provide power. The computer core for the complex's network is also kept here in a hardened





chamber accessible only by authorised personnel. The computer is one of the most powerful on Mars and includes a tachyon uplink to the PsiCom network on Earth.

The Administration Dome also contains the Psi Corps headquarters on Mars, which includes a backup copy of every important file and document, as well as staff trained to take over Corps operations at a moment's notice. Due to the rogue bombings of the 22<sup>nd</sup> century, the Corps was made forcibly aware of the need for redundancy. If the facilities at TeepTown were wiped out by a terrorist nuke, then the Administration Dome on Mars would take over and keep Corps operations going.

Increasingly, MarsDome is taking care of the Corps' offworld interests, while Earth-side admin only looks after Earth-side affairs. This has led to some within the Corps fearing that the Martian telepaths are becoming much too independent and may even be sympathising with Free Mars rebels. Martian Psi Cops have been instructed to pay closer attention to the day-to-day operations of the administration at Syria Planum.

*Firstly, the Corps have been on Mars since 2171. Department Sigma was out in the wilderness and they built the Science Dome. It was transferred to the Science Department when Sigma's custom-built fortress was ready.*

*Secondly, Mars was up until recently the stronghold of those telepaths who saw the Corps as their own personal empire — Bester and his ilk — as opposed to those who saw the Corps as a snarling Bloodhound to be used against political enemies. The common telepaths are, of course, caught in the middle and ignored. Recent purges and reassignments have diminished this somewhat, but still, a Corps civil war will, at least initially, be between Mars and Earth before it is decided by the Motherships. Sigma is still Vacit's creation, even after all those years.*

## Carter Dome

The third dome is the newest of the three, and contains the germ of a modern Martian city. While Syria Planum is still too isolated from Capital City to be a major part of the Mars economy, the transport tube network is slowly snaking across the red sands. Carter Dome contains factories, shopping malls, apartments and hydroponics gardens but almost a third of the dome is still open to development. The Corps anticipate a great deal of expansion here on Mars and Carter Dome will be ready.



Thanks to the tight security and telepathic scans provided by the Psi Corps Military section, Syria Planum has suffered much less from Free Mars terrorism and dome bombings than any other major Martian settlement. Having an apartment in Carter Dome is increasingly popular among Mars' wealthy elite, although the truly rich can afford their own security.

## Oversight Habitat

Oversight Habitat is so named because it is cut into the rock overlooking Science Dome. The habitat was originally constructed for the workers building the first dome back in the 2100s, so most of Oversight consists of small, dimly lit cubicles buried beneath several metres of Martian bedrock. The outermost ring of homes, though, is set into the cliff itself and has magnificent windows overlooking the dome below. The environmental seals at Oversight have also degraded over the years and fines (microscopic dust particles that blow across the plains) are a constant problem. Despite these problems, the wonderful views and antique charm of the place makes Oversight popular among senior Psi Corps staff.

*That the windows also give powerful P12s line of sight across the whole complex is never mentioned.*

## Ka Habitat

Built to provide living space as the domes expanded, Ka Habitat is a much more extensive and elaborate housing complex than Oversight. Hailed as the harbinger of a new era in Martian architecture, it used polished natural stone, décor inspired by ancient myths of Mars and plenty of transparent ceiling panels.

Ka Habitat is perhaps the only place in the galaxy where painting almost every surface white or black and putting up signs like 'OBEY' or 'TRUST THE CORPS' would

actually make it feel more comfortable and homely. Sadly for the residents, the original architecture has been retained in most sections of the habitat. A major renovation project has been scheduled but security fears about bringing in a host of workers has resulted in continual postponements.

## Metapol Mars

While there is a large Psi Corps building in the Administration Dome, this squat fortress is perhaps the heart of the Psi Cops organisation. Over 80% of the building is underground, in ferrocrete vaults deep enough to withstand a nuke. It contains interrogation rooms, forensic labs, training facilities, armouries, accommodation for Psi Cops and their Bloodhound Units and all the other tools of Metapol, but the single largest section is given over to information sorting; carefully analysing billions of transit logs, news reports, business transactions and other trivial data, looking for the unmistakable signs of telepathic interference.

Metapol is connected to the prison by a direct transit tube.

## Construction Site

Work has begun on a new, larger dome modelled on the Capital City Dome. When completed (estimated finish date 2270), the new dome will cover all three of the current domes and most of the two habitats as well as a significant section of the surrounding plain. The new dome will

be named Nirgal Dome (after the Babylonian name for Mars) and will be the third biggest urban environment on Mars, behind Bethesda and Capital City. It will also be considerably more secure and advanced, including superior environmental control and computer networks. The construction of Nirgal has been slowed by recent unrest and terrorism on Mars, so now all workers must agree to random scans from Psi Corps security.

## Spaceport

The spaceport at Syria Planum was one of the first spaceports on Mars and is optimised for handling bulk cargo carriers. These days, most of the traffic consists of fast shuttles carrying Psi Cops (most commercial traffic goes to Capital City port).

## Defence Grid

The Syria Planum base is protected by anti-aircraft guns and warship-grade interceptors. A squadron of atmosphere fighters is kept at the spaceport, along with four Thunderbolt-class Starfuries. The only ways to get to Syria Planum are by driving across the surface (easy to spot and take out using vibration sensors and computer-activated mines), walking (Syria Planum is swept constantly by Bloodhound teams)

*Metapol is the heart of darkness on Mars. Those halls are awash in blood and they echo with screams. Only the Psi Cops and their minions are allowed in; not even other telepaths can enter under normal circumstances. All the horror stories you have heard are true — rogues are tortured, brainwashed, murdered — even dissected. The Bloodhounds are one step above animals, howling at the leash and frothing with psychic bloodlust. The Psi Cops are...*

*They believe. Some are fanatics, but the worst are those who have considered what they do, how they do it and have then justified it to themselves. My sleep is endlessly broken with nightmares; I do not believe Bester ever doubts himself for a moment. To him and his kind, every rogue that they catch is another rogue that they save. They are convinced they are doing this for our own good and they are all the more dangerous for this.*

*I reserve a special hatred, though, for those grey men, those hollow men in the record offices. All of them are telepaths, all of them have a special, wonderful, unique gift to reach out and touch the minds and souls of other human beings. They could, if they chose, know all the hopes and dreams and loves of another intimately and completely... they could know others in a way undreamt-of for all of human history. They could understand.*

*But they sit there, day after day, in their grey rooms, and they sort records of murders and suicides, of rogues and blips, as their souls slip away like fines on the Martian wind.*

...

*There are tunnels, old tunnels, linking the fortress to the prison and also to the advanced research facility. These were cut by Sigma back in the 2170s and are still in service. Prisoners are sometimes dragged off in the dead of night to be used in Science's experiments.*



or flying (easily stopped by the defence grid). Infiltrators will be caught by random scans. Not even orbital bombardment is a sure way of destroying Syria Planum base, thanks to the interceptors.

## Prison

The Psi Corps prison for rogues is unassailable. It is constructed from the same ferrocrete as the Metapol building. The only way in is via a transport tube, which goes directly to Metapol. There are no external doors leading out onto the Martian surface and rebreathers are absolutely forbidden. Escapees would have to attempt to leave via the transport tube and that is under the control of Metapol security staff. The train can be shut down and the tube evacuated of air.

Inside, the cells are patrolled by armed remote drones, controlled by operators hundreds of metres away in another building entirely to prevent telepathic interference. The floor consists entirely of metal deck plating, each section of which can be electrified separately. As a further security measure, every prisoner is kept on sleeper drugs to suppress their abilities.

The prison does largely comply with Earth Alliance laws on the civil treatment of prisoners but special consideration has been given because of the prisoners' powers. Few prisoners spend very long here; after being interrogated several times in the lower floors of the prison, most are transferred to re-education facilities on Earth.

*The prison is reserved for those the Corps fear. Most rogues can be broken in a few weeks; robbed of their will through the suppression of their powers and a series of brutal telepathic assaults. Psych division is called in to distort the prisoners' sense of reality; torture is used to ruin their bodies. They do not need such an elaborate prison facility for this – the Psi Corps could shatter a rogue in the most idyllic conditions. No, the real prisoners here are people who know things about the Corps that cannot be erased, or those with abilities who would be destroyed by demolition and reconstruction. Jason Ironheart was on his way here before he escaped; other telekinetics are still kept here. If they catch Lyta, they'll hold her here until she is sent to Sigma for dissection.*

*There is a way out. The old tunnels do connect to the prison; filled with traps and sensor-fields and killer drones and Bloodhound patrols, but they can be used as a way in – or a way out.*



## Advanced Research

This smaller facility is reserved for projects that might be dangerous, such as those involving high-energy physics, biogenetics, nanotechnology or powerful telepathic abilities. The advanced research facility can instantly be isolated from the rest of Syria Planum base and has its own power generation and environmental systems. In the enclosed habitats of Mars, pathogens and bacteria can spread terribly quickly, so a separate research facility is a necessity. Most of the research carried out here is classified on behalf of the Psi Corps Military Department.

## Science

The Department of Science was one of the first projects undertaken by the Metasensory Regulatory Authority. Even back in the early days of the 22<sup>nd</sup> century, when the bulk of the MRA was desperately trying to track down runaway telepaths and deal with fanatical teep-engineered religious cults, a few underfunded scientists were delving into the underlying physics of the phenomenon. The MRA was not the only group trying to understand how telepathy worked – universities were originally responsible for discovering the existence of telepathy and had a large head start on the MRA's efforts. Corporations were also obviously interested in the commercial applications of a whole new field of science and threw astronomical amounts of money at the problem.

50 years later, the only group still working on the fundamental physics of telepathy was the newly formed Science Department of the Psi Corps. Every other group, save a few fringe scientists and blue-sky corporate projects, had given up in the face of a seemingly insolvable mystery – there was absolutely no scientific basis for telepathy.

Initial theories suggested that telepathy was an electromagnetic phenomenon, with the telepath's brain

somehow detecting and interpreting electrical patterns in the minds of others. The limited range of telepathy certainly appeared to be based on the inverse-square law. Telekinesis was the damned thing in this theory – researchers hoped to find magnetic induction currents within the object being levitated, which would lend credence to the electromagnetic school. The theory was eventually debunked in 2165, following a series of experiments using Centauri-technology medical instruments.

The other major theory on how telepathy worked was termed the quantum theory and posited that thought existed as a quantum fluctuation on the sub-atomic level and that telepaths could entangle their thoughts with those of others. That telepathy relies strongly on line-of-sight was claimed as support for this theory, because of the ‘observer effect’ in quantum theory. Physicists would generally tell telepathists at this point that that was not what the ‘observer effect’ meant, whereupon the telepathists would reply that if the physicists had a better explanation for telepathy, they should say so. Telepathy rapidly became a ghetto of science. While the quantum school did suggest several avenues for experimentation, it was never developed into a rigorous and coherent theory – the observed telepathic phenomenon never matched up with quantum concepts.

The current working theory within Psi Corps is that telepathy exists primarily in hyperspace. Certainly, being in hyperspace greatly increases the range of telepathic powers and hyperspace does violate causality and laws of information conservation in the same way telepathy does. The theory suggests that at least some portion of the mind exists in hyperspace and that the telepath can access these energy patterns. Telekinesis is believed to function by creating gravitational eddies in hyperspace that spill over into normal space. Experiments have been carried out involving ships in hyperspace carrying telepaths on board while holding position near inhabited space stations, to see if the telepaths can detect the hyperspace-side thought of the crew of the stations. The results are cautiously positive and the Psi Corps is now working with Earth Alliance hyperspace physicists in a new attempt to reconcile telepathy with modern physics.

Still, for the most part, the Science Department has an official policy of assuming that telepathy works and going from there. Most of its major successes are in the fields of cybernetics and biogenetics, not physics.

At the entrance to the Science Department headquarters on Mars is a framed sheet of paper, made by the first head of the department. The paper is crumpled and torn; one side bears a printout of yet another failed attempt to explain telepathy. On the other side, written in a hasty, angry hand is the motto

*‘any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from a headache’.*

## Pharmaceuticals

Any changes to brain chemistry can have significant effects on telepathic abilities. The sleeper drugs are the best-known example of this but the Corps continues to experiment with other projects.

The original development of sleepers was completed more than a century ago – within ten years of the discovery of telepathy, there was an affordable and effective suppressant. Some governments even mandated that all telepaths within their control had to take sleepers, although these laws were superseded by Earth Alliance’s Metasensory Regulation Authority’s regime. Currently, the production of sleepers is outsourced to a consortium of Earth corporations who build and maintain the orbital factories, while Science Department continues to experiment with more effective variants.

The Corps also licences a range of other products to the corporations. Every dose of Memory or Metazine sold brings another few credits back to the Corps, as these drugs were originally developed in the Corps’ laboratories. Popular anti-depressants and mood stabilisers like Somanol and Rethink are diluted versions of medications created by the Corps to help telepaths cope. The illegal drug, Dust, is commonly known to have originated in Corps laboratories, although it was stolen by rogues and sold to fund their anti-Corps activity. A full file on the nature and effects of Dust has been given to Earth Alliance law enforcement.

Within the Corps, several other products of Pharmaceuticals section are available on request. Most of these drugs

*The Corps has its own production facility on Mars but EarthGov doesn't want to give the Corps full control over the sleepers, so it forces them to give sleeper production over to the corporations.*

*As for Dust – it was indeed stolen but not by the rogues. The Psi Corps uncovered a ring of Corps telepaths who were involved with organised crime gangs from the Russian Consortium. The level of their involvement ranged from mere kickbacks to the teeps puppeteering the gang leaders. The formula for Dust was leaked to them, along with the means for production. The investigation never rooted out all the conspirators, though – Bester told me that Sigma may have approved the leak, believing that Dust needs to percolate through the human gene pool as part of some larger product.*



Recreational drug use within the Corps is relatively rare — while the legal forms of indulgence are permissible, any addiction or sign of weakness can damage one's advancement prospects. The Corps is Mother, The Corps is Father, and don't disappoint your parents. The social pressure to be a good little teep is huge. The few younger telepaths who crack under the strain of the Academies and relieve their pain with harder drugs are quickly detected by scans and either mentored back to acceptability (if the telepath is deemed worth salvaging) or kicked out or recycled.

There is a subculture in parts of the Corps known as 'riding', where the telepath gets his pleasures vicariously through mundanes, by telepathically scanning and sharing the experiences of others involved in sex or drugs. The Corps punishes this practise harshly but for many young telepaths riding is their one defiance of Corps rules. Some turn rogue to keep the Corps from finding out — others are picked up by Military, who use teeps willing to treat mundanes as cattle.

cannot be purchased; they may only be issued by Medical Department staff. These include:

- ⑤ **Resyk:** This common drug is based on the formula for the popular oxy pills but specifically targets the mental strain and tiredness caused by the use of telepathic abilities. Long-term use of Resyk is not recommended, but it is regularly used by telepaths involved in long business meetings.
- ⑤ **Resyk Plus** is generally available only to P10s or better involved in important work, as the drug is both expensive and dangerous. Overdosing on Resyk Plus can damage the blood vessels in the brain, greatly increasing the likelihood of aneurysms.
- ⑤ **Catabasis:** This sharpens the user's senses slightly and makes it easier to visualise telepathic structures like probes and blocks. However, it makes the user more vulnerable to feedback from his abilities.
- ⑤ **Mute:** Rarely used by telepaths, Mute is a diluted form of the sleeper drugs. Instead of wholly blanking a telepath's abilities, it merely reduces them. A telepath can focus and push past the added barrier of Mute but it does stop most emotional overspill and accidental scans. Mute is taken as a

precaution before a telepath visits a crowded or emotional situation.

- ⑤ **Psion:** The closest the Corps has come to a telepathy-boosting drug, Psion is a synthetic neurotransmitter that increases the user's abilities for a brief time. The downside of Psion is that when the synthetic transmitters are depleted, the user suffers a severe mental crash — exhaustion, depression, loss of memory and so on. Psion is used only under carefully controlled conditions where the user can be observed and cared for.
- ⑤ **Scramble:** Heavily restricted and rarely dispensed, Scramble causes telepathic feedback by triggering random flashbacks and activity in the brain. The user of scramble experiences extreme mood swings and may be confused or dizzy, but is also protected against telepathic scans. Scramble is sometimes prescribed for those who must deal with alien telepaths but is also used in Psi Cop training, as it simulates powerful blocks and jamming conditions.
- ⑤ **Jericho:** Named for the city whose walls fell, this drug dissolves telepathic blocks from the inside. The usual safeguards such as reciting rhymes or other distractions just fade away as the drug leaves the user perfectly calm and perfectly open to telepathic probes. Jericho is generally used only by the Corps' Military department during interrogations; it is quicker and more effective than truth serum.

## Genetics

Genetics Section concentrates on improving the genetic quality of telepaths. There are several dozen genes (some old, some strangely new) that combine to produce telepathy. The breeding programme is run jointly by the Medical Genetics section and Administration but the basic building



- ⑤ **Resyk:** This works just like an oxy pill but erases subdual damage caused by telepathic abilities. Up to five Resyk pills can be taken at once and their effects are cumulative. Cost: 5 credits/dose.
- ⑤ **Resyk Plus:** This cures four points of subdual damage instead of two. However, if more than three Resyk Plus pills are taken in a single day, the user must make a Fortitude save (DC 12). If this save is failed, all the subdual damage cured by the pills return as normal (lethal) damage. Cost: 25 credits/dose.
- ⑤ **Catabasis:** The user of this drug gains a +2 bonus to Concentration and Telepathy checks for one hour. However, any subdual damage taken due to telepathy during this time is doubled. Cost: 10 credits/dose.
- ⑤ **Mute:** Mute increases the DC of all Telepathy checks by +2. Any checks that are not deliberately initiated by the character (such as Accidental Scan) have their DCs increased by +6. Cost: 25 credits/dose.
- ⑤ **Psion:** The user of Psion may increase his P-rating by +1 for 2d6 minutes, to a maximum of P10. However, after this time, the user suffers a -4 penalty to all Will saves for a number of hours equal to the duration of the Psion boost in minutes. Cost: 100 credits/dose.
- ⑤ **Scramble:** The user of Scramble suffers a -2 penalty to all skill checks, ability checks and saving throws for 1d4 hours. However, the DC to affect him with any telepathic ability is increased by +2d4 while the drug is in effect. Cost: 50 credits/dose.
- ⑤ **Jericho:** The only effect of Jericho is to reduce the DC to affect the character with telepathic abilities by -2d4. Cost: 200 credits/dose.

blocks were put in place by Science's Genetics. The two Genetics sections do work very closely together and will be the first sections combined if the proposed Medical/Science merger goes ahead.

While the breeding programme continues, Genetics continues to experiment with quicker and more direct methods. This is made more difficult by the lack of experimental subjects – as only sentients can be telepathic, Genetics Section has no lab animals or test subjects. The majority of experiments therefore take place in virtual space or in test tubes and human volunteers are only used once after a lengthy approval process. The experiments have had some small success in using retroviruses to insert more telepathic genes into the cells of subjects but the risk of accidentally triggering a cancer or systemic reaction means that Science must move slowly.

*This section is really just a placeholder for Sigma. The Corps must have a public face for its genetics research, so they prop a few scientists in a room on Mars and make them smile for the cameras. The real work is done in Sigma and in the Corps' hidden laboratories – and they have no need to quibble over the ethics of human test subjects.*

*After all, rogues are a renewable resource, meat for Sigma's grinders.*

## Cybernetics

Cybernetics Section concentrates on two areas of research – augmenting telepathy through technology and interfacing telepathy and technology. Augmentation is a slow process – most brain implants are used to repair lost functionality, not add new abilities. The use of cybernetics to treat Psionic Displacement has met with some success; as more of the





The data stored on the crystal can be either a few words (about thirty seconds of speech) or a series of mental impressions and images, such as the results of a scan. The main virtue of this method is that only a telepath can read the data, making it a secure medium for secret Corps communications.

An interface rig weighs 3 lb. and costs 5,000 credits.

## Vickers

Telepaths can become Vickers, as described on page 208 of the *Babylon Five* rulebook. However, the replacement of so much of the telepath's brain with cybernetic

implants can damage his psionic abilities – reduce his P-rating by 1d6–3 (minimum 0).

patient's brain is used by his telepathic abilities, implants are used to maintain patient's breathing reflex and other autonomic functions. The Corps has also developed a method of transferring telepathic experiences via data crystal, although this process (known as electronic mindstate copying) is not especially efficient in terms of storage space.

During the aftermath of the Dilgar war and the sudden acquisition of a wealth of advanced alien cybernetics, the Psi Corps experimented with the so-called 'Vickers' and several Corps volunteers were altered into cyborgs. These telepathic Vickers are still active within the Corps under the control of this section, although problems with maintenance and stability mean that no more will be constructed at present.

The Vicker programme also led to the creation of Psionic Booster Nodes, Psi-lock Probes and a class of telepaths termed 'cyberpaths'. These experimental subjects are still considered part of Science Department and are not available for hire.

## Electronic Mindstate Copying

This technology consists of a special interface rig, which is worn on the telepath's head. The telepath concentrates and makes a Telepathy check (DC 20) to create a telepathic construct inside his mind. The interface rig records this construct onto a standard data crystal. The information stored on the crystal cannot be read by any normal computer system, and appears to be random gibberish. However, if the data crystal is placed into another interface rig, the telepath wearing the rig can 'read' the crystal by making another Telepathy check (DC 20). The telepath must have the Surface Scan ability to use this technology.

## Psionic Booster Nodes

These brain implants increase neurotransmitter activity and enhance telepathic power. However, they cause dangerous feedback that can kill the user. A character can have nodes implanted as part of surgery (they are drilled into the back and sides of the skull). Each node can be activated or deactivated separately by means of a subcutaneous switch.

Each active node gives a +2 bonus to Telepathy checks but also deals one point of lethal damage to the telepath for every hour of activation. Furthermore, if the user rolls a natural 1 on a Telepathy check, the nodes crossfire and deal another point of lethal damage per implanted node (active or not). A Psionic Booster Node costs 7,500 credits.

## Psi-lock Probes

Psi-lock Probes are silver traceries of circuitry on the skin that follow the path of major nerve clusters across the human body. They are most commonly implanted into the user's hands, where they can be hidden by the trademark Corps-issue gloves. The Psi-lock Probes make the user more sensitive to electromagnetic signals, especially the faint electric field of the human nervous system. This can be used as a guide for telepathic probes.

A character with an implanted Psi-lock Probe gains a +2 bonus to any attempt to scan a target within Close range. A Probe can be hidden using the Disguise skill and noticed using Spot. A Probe costs 10,000 credits.

## Cyberpaths

A cyberpath is a telepath who has been augmented to interface with electronic systems instead of biological ones. This is a three-stage process. Firstly, the telepath is implanted with psionic booster nodes and other cybernetic devices; this upgrade is not as extensive as the old Vicker cyborgs but the modifications are quite obvious to observers. The second stage involves chemically treating the telepath's brain to make it easier for his implants to detect his thought patterns. As part of this stage, a large portion of the telepath's brain is formatted and he is taught to think in machine code. The third and final section involves the implanting of long-range electromagnetic effectors, which allow the telepath to interface with computers at range. Some believe the mysterious Technomages began as cyberpaths, long, long ago.

To qualify to become a cyberpath, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

**Abilities:** Intelligence 13+.

**P-rating:** 3 or higher.

**Skills:** Computer Use 5 ranks, Concentration 5 ranks, Telepathy 5 ranks.

**Feats:** Data Access.

## Class Skills

The cyberpath's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (telepathy) (Int), Technical (electronics) (Int) and Telepathy (Cha).

**Skill Points per Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

## Class Features

All of the following are class features of the cyberpath prestige class.

**Hit Points Per Level:** 2.

**Altered Telepathy:** The character's abilities are now configured to work with computers and other electronic

devices instead of the minds of living beings. He may still make Telepathy checks as normal but suffers a –6 penalty to all attempts. When interfacing with machines, he uses Computer Use or Technical skill instead of Telepathy, but all the other rules of Telepathy (subdual damage, interference from Jamming) still apply.

**Computer Scan:** The cyberpath may now telepathically scan computers with a range of Touch. He uses the Computer Use skill instead of Telepathy. He suffers a –4 penalty to his check when dealing with alien or very unusual computer systems. This ability only allows the cyberpath to retrieve information from a computer but it can be done almost instantly. Protected information increases the DC, as follows:

Information Sought	DC
Easily Accessible (publicly available data)	15
Obscure (available with a computer search)	20
Protected (simple password)	25
Heavily Protected (personal code)	30+

**Shutdown:** The cyberpath may make a Computer Use or Technical check to shut down a device by touching it. The DC varies depending on the size and complexity of the device; shutting down a desktop computer is DC 10, deactivating a PPG is DC 15 and shutting down a fusion reactor is DC 30. The cyberpath activates the device's own shutdown sequence.

**Computer Probe:** The cyberpath can now dive into computer systems, reprogramming them and gaining any information held within them. He may do anything that the Computer Use skill can do, but making a check in this fashion only takes 1d4 rounds instead of minutes or hours. The DC for these checks is the same as using 'normal' Computer Use +5. This ability has a range of Touch.

**Spark:** The cyberpath can project electric fields using his thoughts alone. This ability is identical to the Nerve Stimulation ability but also deals one point of damage to the target.

**Living ECM:** The cyberpath is now able to jam electronic transmissions within Medium range of him. He also adds +1 to a vehicle's Stealth score while aboard a Huge or smaller vehicle.

## The Cyberpath

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Altered Telepathy, Computer Scan
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Shutdown
3	+2	+1	+1	+3	Computer Probe, Spark
4	+3	+1	+1	+4	Living ECM
5	+3	+1	+1	+4	Reprogramming



**Reprogramming:** The cyberpath is now unconsciously reprogramming all computers within Close range of him. Doors will spontaneously open for him, cameras will not record his image and so on. This ability is not under his conscious control (use Computer Probe for conscious manipulation of equipment) but it can be very useful.

*Just like Genetics, this section is largely a cover for Sigma and Shadow Science. Most of the Psi Corps research takes place off the grid, in the Martian wastelands, in empty rooms in grey prefabs built during the Dilgar War, in isolated buildings full of pain. There is precious little actual science in the Science Department. Those scientists who are morally flexible are transferred to the 'real' Departments; those who refuse to dissect their fellow telepaths in the name of bloody Progress are abandoned to a pointless life breeding telekinetic lab rats and experimenting with the effects of telepathy on tulips.*

## Telepathy

Most of Telepathy Section is more reminiscent of a monastery than a research facility. All the experimentation here is carried out in the mind, as telepaths try to expand their powers. There are plenty of instruments and probes but they are hidden – the researchers need perfect calm and focus for their work. Currently, the main areas of focus for Telepathy Section are:

- ⑤ Creating a scientific scale for blocks and probes.
- ⑤ Improving telepathic skill transfers.
- ⑤ Designing better low-level blocks to end accidental scans entirely.
- ⑤ Extending the range of telepathic communication to that of Centauri telepaths.
- ⑤ Experimenting with the effects of hyperspace on telepathy.

Most of these experiments are almost literal thought experiments – the researchers sit in a comfortable, white-walled room and commune in perfect silence. Others, such as the hyperspace experiments, require much more extensive equipment (a ship with a jump point generator, for example).

The researchers draw extensively on various meditative and mental exercises from historical philosophies and religions, from martial arts to ritual magic. The Corps officially endorses no religion, has no opinion on the religious status of telepathy and telepaths are forbidden from holding any rank in an organised religion. Attending services is not forbidden but is frowned upon.

Telepathy Section has had some success in developing new techniques and uses for telepathy but has largely been overshadowed by the quicker, easier approaches pioneered by the other Science sections.

## New Telepathic Abilities

These abilities use the same rules as the psi abilities from the main rulebook, and can be selected in the same way. However, these abilities are not taught as part of the normal Psi Corps training, so a character must either spend time working with Telepathy Research or (rarely) spontaneously develop the ability on his own.

## Action Block

(Reprinted from *No Surrender, No Retreat*)

**P-Rating:** P8 or higher.

**Prerequisite:** Deep Scan

**Telepathy Check:** DC 25

**Concentration:** Yes

**Multiple Subjects:** No

Few telepaths, and even fewer mundanes, realise that a telepath can program a human mind to prevent it from taking specific actions. Even if they did know it, they would most likely avoid taking the idea to its logical conclusion; that telepaths can control the actions of others by forcing them to avoid specific ways of thinking. However, those



telepaths who know how to establish these 'action blocks' use them liberally in their pursuit of the Corps' goals.

Implanting an action block requires at least one minute of uninterrupted concentration. The target may make one Will save every round to resist the effect. Success results in the block breaking down before it fully integrates with the target's personality.

An action block may prohibit the target from taking one general type of action, or it may prevent him from taking a specific action for a given duration. Typically these blocks take the form of 'You may not harm or allow through inaction harm to come to (a certain person)' – this type of action block is often nicknamed an Asimov. At most, a block can prevent a character from acting against one person or a specific location.

## Emotional Adjustment

**P-Rating:** P5

**Prerequisite:** Deep Scan

**Range:** Touch (P10 Line of Sight)

**Telepathy Check:** DC 20

**Concentration:** Yes

**Multiple Subjects:** No

The telepath reaches out and attempts to manipulate the emotional content of memories, making the target feel the associated emotions without consciously remembering the original events. The telepath might assail a target by dragging up the sorrow at the loss of a parent, or trigger joy by calling up the emotional content of a child's first Christmas memory.

If the target of this ability fails his Will save, he is affected by the emotion. This is rarely strong enough to incapacitate the target but it can distract him or make him more vulnerable to some forms of persuasion or influence. The telepath keeps the emotion in the target's mind as long as he concentrates; once the telepath stops concentrating, the unnatural emotion fades.

## Hallucination

**P-Rating:** P8

**Prerequisite:** Deep Scan

**Range:** Line of Sight

**Telepathy Check:** DC 20

**Concentration:** Yes

**Multiple Subjects:** No

A lesser form of the Reality Fabrication ability, this creates a single unreal image in the target's mind. The exact form of the hallucination tends to draw on the target's own hopes and fears – the telepath can dictate the rough form of the hallucination ('something terrifying', 'an authority figure',

'an explosion', 'a danger') but the precise details are filled in by the target. If the telepath has scanned the target and knows his mind, then the target suffers a –2 penalty to his Will save.

## Idea Seed

**P-Rating:** P4

**Prerequisite:** Communication

**Range:** Line of Sight (P7 Close, P9 Medium, P11 Long)

**Telepathy Check:** DC 16

**Concentration:** No.

**Multiple Subjects:** No

This ability plants a simple idea in the target's subconscious using the Communication ability. The idea must be one that can be conveyed using Communication (a dozen words or so). For a number of hours equal to the result of the telepath's Telepathy check, the idea will stick in the target's mind. Whenever the target is involved in a boring or routine task, or is not doing anything in particular and has the opportunity to act on the planted idea, he must make a Concentration check at DC 12 to avoid acting on the idea.

Idea seed works on the subconscious level – planting the idea 'let me out of this cell' in a guard's mind will not make him throw open the cell door but it might mean that when he goes back to his security office and is sitting there reading *Universe Today*, he accidentally rests his foot on a button and opens the cell door slightly, or just does not pay attention to the security monitors. If the target is busy and concentrating, the idea seed cannot take hold.

## Self-Control

**P-Rating:** P3

**Range:** Self

**Telepathy Check:** DC 18

**Concentration:** Yes

**Multiple Subjects:** No

This power lets the telepath turn his powers on himself, controlling his own mind and body through telepathic techniques. Self-control lets the character use Telepathy instead of Concentration or Fortitude when resisting pain, poison and so on.

## Transfer Skill

**P-Rating:** P10

**Prerequisite:** Deep Scan

**Range:** Touch

**Telepathy Check:** DC 20 + skill ranks

**Concentration:** Yes

**Multiple Subjects:** No

The Transfer Skill ability allows the telepath to quickly learn or teach a skill. If the telepath is learning a skill, he must touch a target who has the required skill. The



DC for the Telepathy check is 20 + the number of ranks the telepath wants to copy. The target must have at least that number of skill ranks in the skill – the telepath cannot borrow knowledge that is not there. Teaching a skill works the same way. The telepath can copy skills from one person and transfer them to another.

This ability has several restrictions. Firstly, the telepath is still limited by his level – he cannot have more ranks in any skill than his own character level + 3. Secondly, while the telepath may have the knowledge, he lacks practise and experience and so suffers a -4 penalty to all his skill checks.

Thirdly, and most importantly, having all that information clogging the user's mind can be very confusing and distracting. For every rank of skill transferred, the user suffers a -1 penalty to one other skill. For example, a telepath uses Transfer Skill to gain 10 ranks of Bluff. He must now apply a total penalty of -10 to his other skills; -5 to Move Silently and -5 to Concentration, for example.

A character may choose to forget skills gained using this ability. Normally, skill ranks are lost at the rate of 1 + the character's Wisdom modifier per day (minimum loss of one skill rank per day). A telepath may use Transfer Skill to 'dump' borrowed skill ranks into the minds of others.

*Telepathy research is increasingly seen as a dead end for the Corps – why bother understanding the human soul when you can chain it in drugs and dead metal? Lyta suspects that the Shadows' influence on the Corps encouraged them to abandon this line of research, as it was dangerous to them but I say that there was no need for their interference, if any. The Corps are quite capable of being foolish, blind and cruel without alien help.*

*Just because this section is currently outmoded by other Science sections does not make it a halcyon enclave of serene joy within the Corps by comparison; these are the men who reduce the spirit and mind to numbers. They know nothing of the poetry and beauty of telepathy; they mistake the art for the tool.*

## Social Sciences

The Social Sciences section originally existed as a Department in its own right but was split into the Psychology section of Medical and the current Social Science section in Science. It is mainly concerned with crowd psychology and the prediction and manipulation of large numbers of people. Very small changes can have huge knock-on effects in groups. Planting an idea telepathically in one person can result in the idea being transmitted to everyone in the group



with surprising speed. One telepath in a crowd could turn that crowd into a bloodthirsty mob or band of starry-eyed idealists if he knew the right ideas and identified the nexus people within the group.

One long-term goal of this section is to produce a workable mathematics of society that would allow large-scale trends and movements within humanity to be predicted in advance. This set of formulae, dubbed psychohistory, will help the Psi Corps guide and protect humanity (not to mention identify methods for reducing the fear and distrust suffered by telepaths). As yet, psychohistory remains a theory, not an actual science, but research continues.

The Social Sciences section also has extensive research ongoing into other aspects of human society, in anticipation of a day when telepathy is wholly integrated into the species. Should all of humanity become telepathic or another alien invasion like the Minbari attack threaten us again, Social Science has contingency plans in effect to keep society on track and moving smoothly forwards.

Social Science observers can be found throughout the Earth Alliance, gathering field data on emerging social trends and the flow of new ideas.

Social Sciences is also responsible for tracing the history of telepathy – while the phenomenon was first discovered in 2115, there are numerous indications of prior incidents of telepathy. The section has confirmed telepathic activity as far back as 2085 and has possibly signs of telepaths throughout Earth history.

## Damned Things

Technically, this section is officially called Parapsionic Phenomena but is commonly referred to within Psi Corps as the Section of Damned Things. The 'Damned Things' are all the curious quirks and variants of the psionic gift that rarely manifest in humanity and do not fit into most theories about the nature of telepathy. Telekinesis is the best known

of these, and telekinetics make up less than a hundredth of one percent of the telepathic community (one in 10,000 telepaths has a measure of telekinetic ability). The other abilities are even rarer – genuine empathic abilities occur in less than one in 20,000 telepaths and strong precognition (relatively common among Centauri telepaths) occurs in one in 50,000.

Parapsionic Phenomena section studies these powers and works on harnessing them for the good of the Earth Alliance. Telekinesis can be used both for large-scale construction work and fine manipulation – having reliable telekinesis could revolutionise microsurgery or give Earth Alliance ships impenetrable force shields in battle. Unfortunately, stable strong telekinetics are almost unheard of, as the power seems to go hand in hand with reduced brain capacity or severe genetic problems. Weak telekinetics can live relatively normal lives with the help of medication and the Corps but can do little more than slowly push small weights around with their minds.

Telekinesis is common enough to be included as part of the standard Psi Corps testing. The revised Philsen Scale also includes a T-Scale, which also goes from 1 to 15. The strongest known telekinetics have never made it past T7.

'Phasing', the ability to move through solid objects, is believed to be a combination of telekinesis and hyperspatial travel. The Corps has had some success in training telepaths to develop this ability, leading to the development of the elite Black Fist teams. Experiments into phasing are continuing and there is some evidence to suggest that this could be used as an alternate method for entering hyperspace.

Precognition is one psionic ability that the Psi Corps is loathed to publicise, as it is misunderstood by most people. It is not the ability to see the future with any great deal of

Phasing and telekinesis as class options are dealt with in the *Earth Alliance Fact Book*, pages 51–56.

Precognition uses the human precognitive prestige class, although like telekinetics, precognitives are so astonishingly rare that they should only be used as characters in special circumstances.

precision and certainly cannot give the winning numbers from New Vegas. The precognitive receives momentary glimpses of possible futures, which may or may not actually happen. There are precognitives with a 100% success rate but it is believed that they are simply beating the odds. Where telepaths actually get these glimpses is something of a mystery. One theory states that precognition actually works by calculating the most likely future, drawing on the computational and informational resources of those nearby (which explains why precognitives get images of people they touch). Another suggests that the precognitive actually receives telepathic communications from himself in the future, somehow manipulating hyperspace or tachyons to convey the vision of the events to come.

Corps precognitives have made several long-term predictions about potential futures of the Earth Alliance and the Psi Corps. The results of these predictions are in sealed folders available only to the President, certain members of the Senate and the Earth Alliance Intelligence, and to the Psi Corps Director and the members of the Operational Committee. These predictions will be released to the public at some future date.



The philosophical implications of precognition are chilling – the Corps would deny us free will even at the most basic levels, by dictating the very paths of the future. Their predictions are mostly nonsense, a melange of prophecy and vague implication, but they interweave these with genuine predictions and use them to terrify Earth's politicians. What does it matter if a precognitive is right or wrong, if the Corps can use him to guide events in the way it wants? The present gives rise to the future; control now and you will control forever.









## Precognitive

Human precognitives are adrift in time. Their special ability to dimly perceive future events means that they spend much of their time having conversations with people they have yet to meet or crying in confusion because the people around them do not understand when it is all so simple; the telepath told them years ago this would happen; 'Why won't they listen. It's coming, it's coming...'

Most precognitives are kept under Corps-mandated sedation, revived only in controlled circumstances when their abilities are needed. The few who go rogue and escape are rarely able to survive in mundane society unless they are constantly cared for.

To qualify to become a precognitive, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

**Abilities:** Charisma 13+

**P-rating:** 8 or higher.

**Skills:** Telepathy 8 ranks.

**Feats:** Ability Focus (danger sense)

### Class Skills

The Precognitive's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (telepathy) (Int) and Telepathy (Cha).

**Skill Points per Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

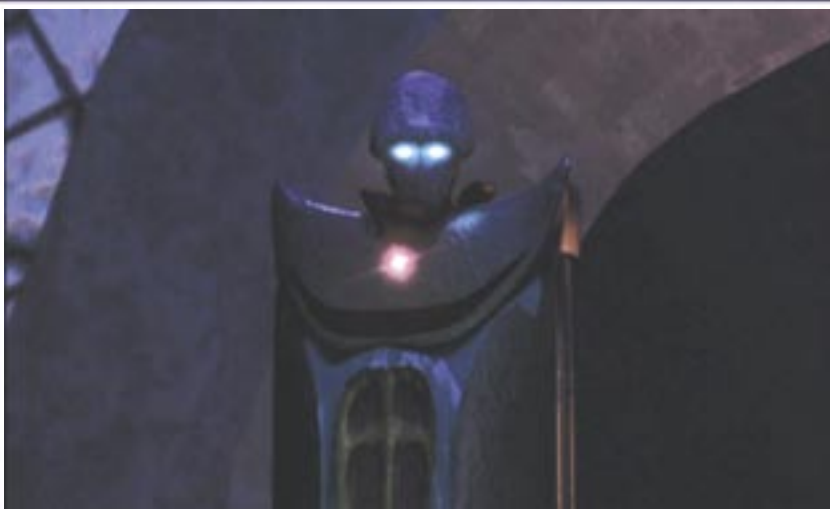
### Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Precognitive prestige class.

**Hit Points Per Level:** 1.

### The Precognitive

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Adrift
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Lesser Prediction
3	+2	+1	+1	+3	Improved Danger Sense
4	+3	+1	+1	+4	Greater Prediction
5	+3	+1	+1	+4	Reality Shift



**Adrift:** The precognitive tends to slip into the past or future. The distractions of having to remember that it is 2260, not 2255 or 2265 and that certain events have or have not happened yet make it hard to concentrate. The precognitive suffers a –2 penalty to all attack rolls, Initiative and saving throws.

Furthermore, if the precognitive is ever without a way to remind himself of his current timeframe (without someone to talk to, or a newsfeed to watch and so on) for more than ten minutes, he must make a Concentration check (DC 15). If this check fails, the precognitive is lost in time, suffering a –4 penalty (rather than –2) to all rolls for the next 2d4 hours.

**Lesser Prediction:** The character may now touch someone or something and make a Telepathy check (DC 20) to receive a momentary flash of some important event from one of their possible futures. The effect of this ability is under the Games Master's control – it is essentially a foreshadowing ability, and may not provide any useful information. Knowing that something green will be present when you die is not especially useful for a character, even if it is an accurate prediction of his fate.

More usefully, the character can use this ability at the start of each day. If the Telepathy check is successful, then once

## Department of Science Characters

Science characters have a high Intelligence and can be of any P-level.

**Recommended Telepathic Abilities:** Surface Scan.

**Recommended Feats:** Data Access.

**Recommended Skills:** Computer Use, Concentration, Knowledge (any), Medical, Technical (any), Telepathy.

The Corps' primary public science facilities are on Earth and Mars but they can have laboratories and field research teams anywhere – even outside the Earth Alliance if necessary. Many of the telepaths who go on IPX missions are hired through Commercial but are actually members of the Science Department.

### Scenarios

Firstly, remember that the nasty black science projects that the Psi Corps are known for – the Jason Ironhearts and the frozen telepaths and so on – are not actually done by the Science Department. It is Department Sigma (see page 95) and Shadow Science (see page 104) that do the real work. The 'real' Science Department is largely a cover for these illicit activities.

Of course, the characters may not know that. The early stages of a campaign could have the characters be assigned to the Science Department and slowly work out that it is really little more than a joke. The characters could then either join up with one of the secret science groups, go rogue or try to expose Sigma and Shadow Science. They could also be assigned to help cover up failed Psi Corps experiments, by concocting plausible explanations for weird events.

This department does do some real research; the Corps has been behind numerous breakthroughs and profitable new developments, so espionage from Earth corporations and alien governments could threaten the characters. Science Department is the cover for the illegal science, so the characters could be targeted by rogue telepath bombers and terrorists who have mistaken the cover for the real thing. The characters could also stumble across mysteries to investigate, such as alien artefacts – the challenge here would be unravelling the mystery before Sigma swoops in and takes it away from them.

during the day, the character may add half the result of the Telepathy check to any skill roll, saving throw, attack roll or ability check he makes. He instinctively positions himself to take advantage of the future vision, by pointing his gun in the right direction before the assassin bursts in or picking up an obscure book on alien biology just before meeting an injured Drazi.

**Improved Danger Sense:** The precognitive gains a +4 bonus to any Telepathy checks when using the Danger Sense ability and may use Danger Sense on non-sentient dangers.

**Greater Prediction:** The telepath may now use his Lesser Prediction ability to provide bonuses twice a day and adds the full result of the Telepathy check to his rolls instead

of half the result. Furthermore, his predictions become somewhat clearer and more useful – again, this is in the hands of the Games Master.

**Reality Shift:** The precognitive now knows where the nexus points are, the places where the universe balances for a moment and can be tipped one way or the other. This ability allows the universe to tell the precognitive where action needs to be taken to move events. A precognitive with this ability in 2261 would know that Babylon 5, Z'h'dum and Coriana VI are nexus points, as events at each place could have been tipped with a minimum of force and will affect the whole galaxy for thousands of years.



## Military

Officially, no telepath may serve in EarthForce and the various sectors of Alliance intelligence do not use telepaths to gather information.

This is true. Neither organisation includes telepaths but both work closely with telepaths assigned from the Psi Corps Military Department. Having the telepaths exist outside the normal chain of command is a restriction imposed by the Psi Corps – telepaths are much too valuable to hand wholly over to the control of the military and the track record of human intelligence agencies using telepaths is less than stellar. The Corps has a long memory for injuries done to its family and remembers well the enforced use of telepaths as spies and living interrogation machines in the early 2100s.

The Military Department is also responsible for the security and defence of the Corps. It is essentially a small, highly-trained private army, with its own air force and even carrier ships.

### Telepaths in the Military

A telepathic weapon is one of the holy grails of modern weapons research – if a telepath could reach out and control, say, the captain of an enemy vessel, or its gunnery officer, or even the technician controlling the safety interlocks on its fusion reactor, then the battle could be won without firing a shot. A sufficiently powerful telepath could capture a whole ship with a thought. No known race has yet to develop a telepath of such power but EarthForce has contingency plans to deal with such a threat – such as carrying human telepaths onboard starships, who could jam an enemy teep and block their control of the crew.

While telepaths have never been able to take down a capital ship, telepaths have been used in the past to augment fighter squadrons and ground troops. Fighter engagements take place at very close range; close enough for even an average telepath to touch another pilot's mind. In the chaos of a dogfight, all that telepath needs is an instant of contact to know which way the other fighter will turn, or to push the other pilot into crashing into his own capital ship. Ground detachments are even more vulnerable – a soldier could be telepathically subverted and dominated; a few days later, the war is lost when the soldier throws a grenade into the general's tent. Most Military telepaths are assigned as counter-telepaths (euphemistically called 'loyalty officers' by some) – they check for telepathic interference and jam it if they can.

Telepaths make excellent special operations soldiers, able to defeat an enemy by thought alone and so maintain secrecy. Their infiltration skills are astonishing – a telepath with a

black light camouflage suit could stroll into an enemy base, scan their officers for all their secrets and walk out again with ease. Following the Dilgar war, when EarthForce got its first real look at alien methods of warfare, they requested that the Corps provide them with teams of telepathic special operations troopers. The Black Fist programme was begun in 2223 and has been highly successful.

More conventional telepaths are also used as interrogators and counter-intelligence agents. Many terrorist groups, including Free Mars and several raider factions, are willing to take in rogue telepaths to use against EarthForce. The Psi Corps are usually called in to track down and detain these rogues but Military telepaths are used to block the rogues until they can be found and re-educated.

Most Military telepaths are attached to high-level command staff or to special operations or telepath-suppression units but a few are secretly scattered throughout the ranks. They serve as the bridge crews of starships, or as pilots, or as counter-intelligence operatives who watch for enemy telepath interference. The Psi Corps keeps close tabs on these hidden telepaths and tries to keep them out of the most dangerous trouble spots. After a tour of duty hidden within EarthForce, these telepaths are rotated into the Psi Security section and promoted.

*Military telepaths weep when their assignments are made; EarthForce is a poisonous psychic environment, full of night terrors sired by Minbari warships and a dizzying intoxication born of shiny new killing machines. Being a telepath in a crowd is irritating and difficult; being the only telepath aboard a civilian vessel is painful – and being the only telepath aboard a military ship is like fighting a war every day. They are unable to find any quiet places, unable to block out the clogging miasma of the other minds. They hate it so... but the Corps keeps them there. The Corps has political ambitions, after all, and control of the army has been a necessary step in such ambitions from the time of Alexander and Caesar.*

### Telepaths in the Intelligence Service

The single earliest recorded incident of telepathy being used on Earth was in 2085, in the Russian Consortium. Records show that the GRU (one of the Consortium's secret police forces) used a former engineer named Mariana to scan suspected dissidents and conspirators. She vanished in 2087 under questionable circumstances; the GRU privately blamed either the Chinese or Israeli security forces but the mystery was never solved. Still, the intelligence community knew of at least one human with telepathic gifts and the chase was on.

It took them over 20 years to find another – and then another and another. By 2110, the various spy networks and intelligence agencies were the main ‘consumers’ of telepathy. As most telepaths were not trained spies but simply ordinary people drafted or even kidnapped into service, the intelligence agencies could not rely on their new tools to keep secrets and stay loyal. Extreme measures were used to keep telepaths under control, from blackmail and sedation to abduction and brainwashing. During the 2120s and ‘30s, there was a three-way hidden war for control of telepaths between the new MRA, the rogues and the intelligence sector.

By the time the Psi Corps was created, most of their old antagonists in the various agencies were retired – or else were senior members in Earth Alliance Intelligence. Indeed, if it were not for the Karges Incident and President Robinson’s change of heart, there is every chance that the MRA would have been dissolved and all telepaths put on sleepers or brought under the control of EAI. Many in intelligence were angered and threatened by the creation of the Psi Corps and had hoped to see telepaths returned to their ‘proper’ place as information gathering devices.

The Intelligence Section of the Military Department trains telepaths to work with EAI, as interrogators, agents, analysts and reprogrammers. They are permitted to make scans and use other telepathic abilities when required to by their EAI handlers. Officially, most EAI activities involve counter-intelligence against alien governments and watching for threats to the Alliance but they are increasingly used to investigate sedition and conspiracy within the Alliance itself. Telepaths are even more useful in such internal investigations – so much so that the Psi Corps Intelligence Section has been recognised for its contributions by EarthGov and is now in charge of much of internal security.

*A second hidden war is brewing; the Psi Corps has proved to be much too good at intelligence work for its own good and has taken over many of the roles and duties once held by EAI. Half of EAI wants to bring down the Corps to reclaim its prestige and influence or out of long-held distrust of telepaths. The other half has either thrown its fate in with the Corps (Bureau 13, for example) or has been telepathically influenced. Telepaths remember injuries done to their kind and their long-delayed revenge against their cloak-and-dagger rivals is slowly coming to pass.*

*Within five years, according to the Corps’ internal predictions, 80% of EAI will be controlled by the Corps or have agents conditioned to serve the Corps interests. Much of this effort is backed by elements of EarthGov who have allied themselves with the Corps – or perhaps been influenced by the Corps themselves. Not even the Corps agents are immune to telepathic control; the higher echelons are a constantly shifting strata of lies and conditioning, where no one can be trusted – not even your own mind.*

## Psi Security

The Corps’ own private army, Psi Security protects TeepTown and the Corps’ other facilities, like Syria Planum. The individual Psi Corps centres in the colonies and major Earth cities also employ security guards but these are mostly non-telepath hired guards commanded by a single telepath officer from Psi Security. Due to the constant threat of terrorism, anti-telepath hostility and rogue bombings, the Corps needs strong and well-trained security forces.

Psi Security units are equipped with shock sticks, W&G Model 10 PPGs and flak jackets. They are trained to accept orders telepathically (for low-ranking normal guards) or even co-ordinate attacks using mental contact (for senior commanders and the elite telepathic defence units at TeepTown and Syria Planum). Psi Security is also responsible for the weapons protecting the Syria Planum facility on Mars.

The Black Omega squadron of telepath-piloted Starfuries was originally created by request of the Psi Cops – as rogue telepaths began moving more and more away from the core worlds and out to the colonies, the Corps needed a fast-response unit that could intercept rogue transports.





The alternative of informing EarthForce, requisitioning a flight of Starfuries, having the fighters moved into position and so on was much too time-consuming and led to the escapes of several dangerous rogues. Initially, the Black Omegas were wholly under the control of Military but now they share fighters and support bases with the Psi Cops – a Metapol officer is rotated into the squadron and trained in basic spacecraft operation, so that they can command the squadron when necessary.

Black Omega has been expanded several times since it was created in the mid-2250s and now consists of four specially built small carriers, each with a complement of 12 Starfuries. The carriers are designed to resemble civilian transports from the outside, allowing the Corps hunters to move secretly in the Alliance without alerting rogues.

## New Feats

### Telepathic Co-ordination (Telepath Only)

You are trained at co-ordinating your attacks with others in the middle of combat using telepathy.

**Prerequisites:** Must have Communication ability; if working with non-telepaths, the character must also have Surface Scan.

**Benefits:** If fighting with one or more allies within 30 feet, the telepath may make a Telepathy check (DC 15). If this check is successful, the character gets an insight bonus equal to the number of allies, to a maximum of his Wisdom bonus. This bonus may be applied to one attack roll or the character's Defence Value for one round. At least one ally must have line-of-sight to the enemy.

### Fighter Telepathic Co-ordination (Telepath Only)

You are trained in co-ordinating your attacks with other spacecraft in your squadron.

**Prerequisites:** Telepathic Co-ordination.

**Benefits:** This feat functions similarly to the basic Telepathic Co-ordination feat but the insight bonus can be applied to evasive actions, or to the Pilot check needed to line up a targeting run.

*Less than half the Corps' military is public knowledge. Military section also provides security for the re-education camps and the secret science facility and Psi Security Starfuries are also carried on Transport's Motherships. While the Corps' army is no match for EarthForce, it is one of the largest private armies operating in the Alliance and its almost total secrecy makes it extremely dangerous.*

*For the most part, its equipment is standard EarthForce issue, bought from the same suppliers and manufacturers. The Corps purchases as much as it can through conventional channels and uses a combination of front companies (Fennyman Mercenary and QVR are both shell companies used to hide Corps weapons purchases) and duplicity (scan a general on Earth and find out when Beta Durani is getting a shipment of Thunderbolt-class fighters. Infiltrate the transport with a few PIO agents, who control the crew. Ambush the transport and take out its defenders, then mindwipe the crew and convince them they were hit by raiders. Finally, have the whole incident investigated by an intelligence agent loyal to the Corps and hide all the evidence). The Corps is also active in the alien black market where, up until recently, it was a buyers' market for weapons.*

*Combine all this with the Corps' increasing control of EAI and the placement of Military telepaths on key EarthForce bases and ships and the Psi Corps could possibly fight a creditable war with the mundanes, at least initially. The Corps has no intention of doing so, preferring to control from within instead of conquer from without but Military has at least considered the option. At the very least, the Corps' military might is enough for them to stage a controlled withdrawal from Earth and Mars should public opinion turn against telepaths. They will not go quietly into exile, should it come to that.*

*The strength of the Corps' internal security reinforces my contention that the old rogue tricks of bombings and assassinations are futile – we may hurt them, brothers and sisters, but we will not break the Corps. Blowing up the Commerce building in TeepTown may wreck one of the most public symbols of the Psi Corps but it does nothing to the true monsters. Violence is not our way and must not become our way; it will destroy our souls if we win and our bodies if we lose.*

## Requisition Checks

Both the Psi Cop and the Military Specialist prestige classes have access to the 'Corps is Mother' and 'Corps is Father' special abilities, which allow them to make Requisition Checks to obtain special support and equipment from the Psi Corps. The 'Corps is Mother' ability lets the character draw on the Psi Corps, while 'Corps is Father' lets the character leverage his position in the Psi Corps to get aid from mundane militaries and governments. A Requisition check is resolved by rolling 1d20 and adding the character's level in the prestige class.

A character may take one (and only one) Contact (as defined by the Diplomat/Psi Cop class feature and the Contact feat) within the Psi Corps, which gives a +4 bonus to Requisition Checks for the Corps is Mother. He may also take a Contact in the military or government, which gives a +4 bonus to Corps is Father Requisition Checks.

A character in authority (the Captain of a ship or station, the governor of a colony, the commissioner of a police force and so on) may attempt to oppose a Corps is Father check, while another character with the Corps is Mother ability may oppose a Corps is Mother check. To resolve such opposition, both characters make Diplomacy checks. If the

### Common Requisition Checks

Request	DC
<i>The Corps is Mother – Psi Corps aid only</i>	
Additional P5 intern	5
One additional P10 Bloodhound	10
Full Bloodhound team	20
Credits <sup>1</sup>	Amount of credits required/200 (e.g. 2,000 credits = DC 10)
Access to secret Psi Corps documents <sup>2</sup>	10
Use of a Black Omega squadron	20
Use of a Mothership <sup>3</sup>	20
Pressure from Psi Corps on other EA organisations	See the <i>Corps is Father</i> Requisition table section but add +5 to all the DCs
<i>The Corps is Father – Earth Alliance aid</i>	
Having a troublesome junior officer/police officer removed <sup>4</sup>	5
Having a troublesome senior officer/police captain removed <sup>4</sup>	10
Having a troublesome command officer removed <sup>4</sup>	20
Gaining control of a telepath-related investigation <sup>5</sup>	15
Gaining operational command of troops during a rogue capture operation <sup>6</sup>	15
Requisitioning a vehicle or other item of equipment	5
Requisitioning a squadron of Starfuries	15
Requisitioning a ship of the line <sup>7</sup>	25 or more
Gaining access to restricted computer files or information	15 or more

<sup>1</sup> These credits are to be used to pay for needed equipment, medical care, bribes and so on, not for personal gain. Abusing this credit facility is a Class IV offence.

<sup>2</sup> These documents must relate to the mission at hand. A runaway telepath's secret dossier from Department Sigma could be retrieved if the Psi Cop was chasing that particular telepath.

<sup>3</sup> The secrecy of the Motherships is paramount. No Psi Cop will be permitted to use a Mothership in such a way that their existence is revealed.

<sup>4</sup> 'Removed' means taken off the case, not removed permanently. Permanent removal increases the DC by +10, takes much longer and involves more bloodshed or more padded cells.

<sup>5</sup> 'Control' means that the Corps calls the shots on the investigation, but must still work within the existing local chain of command.

<sup>6</sup> This means that the Corps issues orders to the foot troops, but the investigation is still run by the local mundane authorities.

<sup>7</sup> The use of a ship is limited to blocking a jumpgate, capturing a transport and so on. Anything that requires the vessel to deviate from its current operations for more than a few hours is very difficult to arrange.



## Department of Military Affairs Characters

Military characters need to have a worthwhile Strength or Dexterity if they expect to see any action and a decent Charisma helps when in command. They can be of any P-level, although anyone below P5 will be herded straight into the Black Fist units.

**Recommended Telepathic Abilities:** Deep Scan, Jamming.

**Recommended Feats:** Combat Telepath, Dogfighter, Spacecraft Proficiency.

**Recommended Skills:** Bluff, Gather Information, Pilot, Telepathy.

Special operations and intelligence telepaths tend to take the Telepath Black Ops or Black Fist prestige classes from the *Earth Alliance Fact Book*, pages 42–44 and 54–55. Military telepaths take the Psi Corps Military Specialist prestige class from the *Babylon 5* rulebook, pages 282–283. The majority of the Corps' military is *officially* stationed at its bases on Earth and Mars, or at its smaller testing centres throughout the Alliance. In actuality, Military telepaths can be found anywhere EarthForce or the Corps is operating – and beyond, as intelligence agents and Black Fists are often sent on missions deep into alien space.

## Scenarios

Military Telepath agents can be sent anywhere the Corps needs them to be, getting into the same sort of adventures and difficulties as conventional troops. Telepaths tend to be kept off the front lines but important missions may force them into the heart of darkness to scan alien commanders. They may also have to deal with distrust and dissent among their own officers, or have to maintain their loyalty in the face of seemingly contradictory or suicidal orders from EarthForce. A lone telepath assigned to a deep-space mission would have an especially difficult time.

Security agents might have to fight off rogue telepath terrorist bombers and anti-telepath conspiracies. Bester may have stopped William Edgars from releasing his anti-telepath bioweapon but there are lots of other megacorporations who may feel the same way about telepaths. Edgars intimated that EarthGov is dominated by the corporations, so the hidden war for control of Earth Alliance Intelligence may turn into a war for survival between the Corps and the corporations.

The Corps' offworld bases and Motherships often stray into alien space; the characters might have to fight a private war against alien aggressors. The need for secrecy means that the characters cannot call in outside help or get reinforcements – they must defeat the aliens using only what resources they have in-system when the attacks begin.

character in opposition wins, the Requisition check suffers a –4 penalty. Each subsequent Requisition Check made during a mission suffers a –4 penalty unless the situation changes greatly.

A Requisition check made very close to a group's stronghold gains a +4 bonus – for example, it is easier to request help from the Psi Corps while in TeepTown and it is easier to borrow an EarthForce destroyer when at an EarthForce base. Conversely, a Requisition check suffers a –4 penalty if made when the character is far off the beaten track – trying to get a

full team of Bloodhounds sent out to some little Rim colony is much harder than normal, because the Bloodhounds will have to travel for weeks to reach the colony.

## Time Required

A Requisition check normally takes one hour to make. A character may take 20 on a check, which means that the character spends a whole day dealing with the relevant bureaucracies or making calls to his contacts. Checks made in distant places (places which inflict a –4 penalty on

the check) take four times as long, due to the delays and difficulties inherent in long-distance communication.

The results of a Requisition check show up as soon as possible; requesting additional funds takes only a few seconds as the money is transferred electronically. Requesting a Black Omega squadron, however, requires more time for the fighters to be assembled and sent out. A character can take a -8 penalty to his Requisition check to halve the time it takes for the help to be sent out.

## Metapol – The Psi Cops

‘The thin black line’ between chaos and order, the Psi Cops are the most instantly recognisable part of the Psi Corps. They are popular heroes both within and without; Corps members are taught to idolise and fear the hand of the Corps, while non-telepaths have been raised on a diet of *John Trakker – Psi Cop* vids and news reports showing how the Psi Cops deal with the rogue monsters of every normal’s nightmares.

The line is very thin indeed. Every one of the Psi Cops is a P12, as strong a telepath as humans can be. It is popularly believed that all P12s become Cops; actually, an equal number are brought into the Corps’ military and administration, but every P12 has an obligation to serve the Corps in one way or another. There are very, very few Psi Cops – less than two thousand – to patrol all the Earth Alliance. Very few survive to retirement and most of those who do have burnt out their minds to the point of madness long before they are old. They are proud bastions against the worst of humanity.

Fortunately, the Psi Cops do not stand entirely alone. The whole of the Metapol department exists to support and aid them. Metapol reports directly to the Director and the Operational Committee, although most of its day-to-day interactions with the rest of Psi Corps are through the Legal and Administrative Departments. Metapol’s headquarters are located in TeepTown, although its Martian branch office is almost as important.

### Support

Interns and low-P telepaths with Metapol perform basic scans, question suspects, file paperwork and reports and so on. The Psi Cops themselves

are the cutting edge of the investigation – behind every Psi Cop are 50 or so Bloodhounds, forensic telepaths, pilots, engineers and clerks. Most of the support staff stay at the headquarters; only a fraction of the 50 other telepaths accompany each Cop on a mission.

One of the main duties of Metapol Support is reading – the Corps has access to all the police and government computer networks and constantly scans for suspicious incidents that might be caused by telepathy. Police reports are especially scrutinised and if there is any sign that telepaths are involved in an incident, the police force in question is contacted and a Psi Cop is dispatched to investigate. Several police forces have taken to using codewords in their internal communications to keep the Psi Cops from interfering. The Corps also monitors travel records, looking for the names or known false identities of rogues. Should one of these be picked up by a random identiscan, the Psi Cops are soon hot on the trail.

Once a rogue telepath has been located and secured, Support launches an investigation into his family and friends. As telepathy is a genetic trait, finding one blip in a family can often lead to discovering several more. Also, it is very hard to hide from the Psi Corps without help and helping an unregistered or rogue telepath escape is a criminal offence. The Psi Cops must hand collaborators over to the local authorities for trial but may investigate collaboration without involving them.

The Support section also monitors telepaths within the Psi Corps for signs of dissatisfaction and dissent. Reports are scrutinised, the results of random scans are collated and the telepath’s computer time, social circles and contacts, travel patterns and other activities are logged and measured. If the signs suggest that the telepath is exhibiting rogue-like





behaviour, then the Support section may request additional random scans, the recording of the telepath's communications and computer messages, the activation of hidden spybots, intrusive urine analysis and other added measures. They may also recommend that a telepath be given counselling by Psychology section.

## Forensics

Despite the name, the Psi Cops are not police officers. There is no trial, no due process, no need to prove guilt or innocence and therefore no need to gather evidence to support a case. However, even the best Bloodhound is still limited to a detection range of line-of-sight or a few hundred feet and there is an awful lot of space for rogues to hide in. The Psi Cops are not police officers but there is a lot of detective work involved in tracking down their quarries.

The forensics section of Metapol uses all the same techniques as regular law enforcement, such as DNA sniffing and energy signature analysis. They also have an excellent computer cryptography section. Forensics also have tools normal police do not, such as being able to pick up telepathic 'ghosts' – images left at scenes of high emotion or stress.

*The Forensics section is much larger and better funded than it needs to be to track down blips – but blips are not the only things the Psi Cops hunt. Alien telepaths operating in human space, escaped psi experiments from Syria Planum, rogue telepaths equipped with stolen chameleon nets and prototype Starfuries... the blips are the easy hunts. Forensics is also skilled at covering up Psi Cop indiscretions – they can easily, for example, make it look like a dangerous rogue shot a mundane while hiding the burst blood vessels caused by the Psi Cop's mindshredding scan.*

## Bloodhounds

The Bloodhound units were created soon after the first MRA hunter units. While it was clear that the MRA's frontline hunters had to be the strongest telepaths possible, sending P12s against runaway P2s and P3s was simply overkill. While the hunters were chasing down one low-P teep, another five scattered into the underground. The hunters needed help, they needed more eyes and hands and minds. The MRA authorised the creation of special Bloodhound units, made up of strong (P9–P11) telepaths to help in hunting down rogues. These Bloodhounds were trained to work together in small teams, quickly sweeping through a whole apartment block or large crowd of people with quick surface scans to find the hidden blips.

The tradition of the Bloodhound units has continued for almost a century and a half. Their duties have been expanded – in addition to their primary purpose of helping the Psi Cops hunt down rogues, Bloodhounds are also called in by normal security forces to locate assassins, terrorists and other enemies of the state that must be located and secured immediately. While on duty, the Bloodhounds have a special exemption from the normal rules about unauthorised scans and are permitted to freely scan anyone they encounter while performing a sweep. Officially, this is limited to surface scans but Bloodhounds who probe deeply when necessary are usually exonerated by the subsequent inquiry. By telepathically co-ordinating their scans, the Bloodhounds can methodically work through a large number of people very quickly. They can even combine their scanning ability in the same way a set of radio dishes can be combined into a single huge receiver, vastly extending their effective range.

Perhaps because the Bloodhounds are partially exempt from the rules on scanning, they are even more mistrusted than

## Famous Bloodhound Packs

**The Moscow Pack** actually predates the Metasensory Regulatory Authority and was founded by the Russian Consortium GRU to seek out other telepaths for use as spies and psychic interrogators. The Moscow Pack is perversely proud of this reputation but is hated and feared by most other telepaths because of it. They are the best blip hunters on Earth.

**The Langton Hunt** is another old Bloodhound pack, this one based in the United Kingdom. The original pack had close ties to the government and was used to secretly scan whole cities at a time for terrorists and criminals. The Langton Hunt's area of expertise is subtlety – unlike most Bloodhound packs, who turn up in black uniforms and may as well be wearing jackboots, the Langton Hunt can blend into the mundane population and scan without arousing suspicion or fear.

**The Sirius Dogs**, based at Io, are seen as something of an upstart pack by the more established Bloodhounds. Every member of this pack is trained in Spacecraft Operations and one of the Psi Corps fighter carriers is permanently assigned to the Dogs. They are the hunters of the spacelanes and the jump gates and are the best pack for hunting blip transports.

Bloodhound characters usually take the Bloodhound prestige class from the *Earth Alliance Fact Book*, pages 45–46. They also may also take the following telepathic abilities, which are usually taught only to Bloodhounds:

### Mass Scan

**P-Rating:** P10

**Prerequisite:** Deep Scan

**Range:** Line of Sight

**Telepathy Check:** DC 20

**Concentration:** Yes

**Multiple Subjects:** Special

This ability allows the telepath to open his mind and receive the information gained in a Surface Scan. Unlike a normal scan, the telepath can switch targets of a Mass Scan each round without taking more subdual damage but he must make a Telepathy check each time. If the character fails the Telepathy check, he cannot use Mass Scan on that target and must use a normal Scan instead.

For example, if a Bloodhound wanted to scan ten people in a crowd, he could make a single Surface Scan of each of them, taking one point of subdual damage each time. Alternatively, he could use a single Mass Scan, and assuming he did not fail any of his Telepathy checks, he could scan the whole crowd for only one point of subdual damage.

### Combined Scan

**P-Rating:** P9.

**Prerequisites:** Deep Scan.

**Range:** Special.

**Telepathy check:** 16

**Concentration:** Yes.

**Multiple Subjects:** No.

By using this ability, a pack of Bloodhounds can combine their powers and vastly extend the range and sensitivity of their powers. Several telepaths must all possess this power and use it simultaneously. One of these telepaths is the lead telepath of the scan. For every telepath using this ability that makes their Telepathy checks, the lead telepath may increase the range of his Surface Scan or Mass Scan abilities by 50%. The scan is not limited by line of sight while boosted by this ability.

the rest of the Psi Corps. Even their fellow telepaths feel somewhat uneasy around a pack. The Bloodhounds are therefore much more insular than most telepaths; their only friends are fellow pack-members and their only loyalty is to the pack. Each pack has its own unique name and traditions, some of which go back for four or five generations. While the Corps is still mother and father to the hounds the rest of the pack – and only the pack are their siblings. Some packs even encourage their members to pair off and breed and there are Bloodhounds whose lineage within the pack goes back three generations.

Packs live together in specially-built barracks attached to Psi Corps centres or bases. There is no official command structure in a pack – some decide everything through consensus, while others arrange themselves in order of telepathic ability. Each pack is assigned a liaison officer, unimaginatively referred to as a handler.

Bloodhound packs are not called into every investigation or rogue hunt, as they tend to disrupt the normal functioning of whatever base or city they visit. A pair of Psi Cops can slip in, arrest a rogue and leave again without anyone except





senior staff knowing about it, but two dozen Bloodhounds scanning everyone in sight is much less subtle. The packs are the best method for flushing rogues out if the Cops run out of avenues of investigation – a mass scan will always turn up *something* worth pursuing. Single Bloodhounds are also used to track down rogues in cases where the Psi Cops are too over-extended. The Bloodhounds actually find the rogues, and the Cops come in to make the arrest.

## Psi Cop Training

The Psi Cops are simultaneously feared and feted by lesser telepaths. They are the ultimate symbol of authority and order within the Corps, held up as moral paragons and the ideal loyal children of the Corps. They are Father's right hand, the knights and paladins of the Psi Corps. At the same time, they are the all-knowing bogeymen who will come for you in the night if you harbour disloyal thoughts. Psi Cop training is deliberately shrouded in mystery; interns with Metapol may know about the mundane aspects of the training, such as instruction in combat techniques, profiling, tracking and so on but the psychic abilities of the Psi Cops are the subject of endless rumour and speculation.

The Cops encourage this. Fear keeps telepaths in line and if the belief that all Psi Cops are mindshredders prevents one potential rogue from betraying the Corps, then it is all worth it. The truth is not so far from the rumours – Psi Cop training is brutal. Having forensic staff to find a rogue and Bloodhounds to track them only goes so far, but someone has to go in and take the rogue down, and that is the purpose and duty of the Psi Cops.

A Cop must be able to defeat any other telepath in a one-on-one telepathic contest, regardless of the other's training and P-rating. A Cop must be able to deal with armed, dangerous, suicidal and desperate blips who would rather

kill themselves than go to the re-education camps. A Cop must be able to protect mundanes from the worst abuses of telepaths, without ever forgetting that it is the telepath who must be rescued above all else. A Cop needs utterly fanatical faith in the Corps but this faith must be tempered by reason and understanding. A Psi Cop must be the best of the best, the ultimate expression of *homo sapiens superior* – but must never fall to the temptations of abusing his power.

Only a third of Psi Cop candidates make it through each year in the Major Academy. Many of those who fail will repeat the year, trying again to pass

the astonishingly difficult tests. Others will simply burn out and be reassigned but this is a mark of terrible shame. It is commonly known that all P12s are expected to become Psi Cops, so a P12 encountered outside the Cops or Military may as well have 'Failure' stamped on his forehead and may even be excised from the Corps breeding programmes, despite his power. The training includes extremely dangerous probe/block and mind war exercises as well as physical combat, police procedure, spacecraft operation and psychology. Candidates are also subjected to all sorts of surprise tests – most telepaths can expect a sudden scan once or twice during their time at the Major Academy but Psi Cops are telepathically attacked by random instructors on an almost weekly basis. A candidate might wake up to find himself dumped in the middle of the wilderness and expected to find his way to the nearest settlement, or be locked in a cell and subjected to cybernetic neural net brainwashing or red noise generators for days. A Psi Cop has to be able to resist telepathic scans for an hour and block a gestalt probe from half-a-dozen attacking telepaths.

The final year tests are especially brutal. For the last two years in the Major Academy, pairs of Psi Cop candidates are put into two-bed dormitories together. The pair are expected to become friends and act as partners in combat simulations, lab tests and so on, and it is implied that the two will be assigned together once they graduate. In the final test, though, each pair is told that only one will graduate – the two must battle each other in a contest of blocks and probes and whichever one scans the other first wins. The loser may repeat the year but will be roomed with another failure instead of a younger student. Some students have been stuck in the last year of training for years, losing to a succession of roommates. The level of paranoia and sabotage in these dormitories is nightmarish.

After graduation, the new cop will be partnered with a more experienced Psi Cop and sent out on field work. A new graduate is still considered to be on probation for up to three years until he proves his worth. During this time, the new cop will usually be involved in at least one killing – the duties of the Psi Cops are highly dangerous and lethal force is employed with unfortunate regularity. While the powerful telepaths can usually bring down a rogue through non-lethal psychic assault, it is not always an option. Many more experienced Psi Cops are well aware of this statistic and so arrange for their new partner to be ‘blooded’ as smoothly and painlessly as possible.

## Black Omega

Each Psi Cop is expected to spend at least one year training with the elite Black Omega squadrons. This is a relatively new development, suggested by Alfred Bester in 2245 and implemented soon afterwards, as it became obvious that more and more hunts were taking place in space. The Cop is not expected to be the equal of a professional fighter pilot but few rogues have access to Starfuries and most Black Omega interceptions are of civilian transports that do not fight back. During this year with the Black Omegas, the Psi Cop visits as many stations and colonies as possible, learning the terrain and making local contacts. Psi Cops have special permission to go incognito while exploring in this fashion, removing their gloves and badges and dressing in civilian clothes. They are expected, but not required, to register their presence with the local authorities. The Black Omega year, as it is known, is one of the most exhausting periods of a Psi Cop’s career, as he is constantly moved from one base to another and logs hundreds of hours in a Starfury.

*This is also when you're told about Transport and the Motherships, although many Cops have an inkling that the Corps had something out there before being officially informed. The idea that the Cops visit stations undercover to learn the terrain during this year is a lie; most of these visits involve the Cop brainwashing a few useful contacts and setting up his own little information-gathering networks. There are customs officials on Proxima and airlock techs at Io who still send messages to my account at PsiCom without knowing it.*

## Psi Cops Off Duty

The Cops are well compensated for the harshness of their training and duties. In addition to having all medical bills, housing costs and other incidentals covered by the Corps, the Cop earns around 80,000 credits per year as a starting salary, which increases at regular intervals throughout his career. He is assigned relatively luxurious quarters on either Earth or Mars and is given priority on any Psi Corps housing lists should he wish to purchase a second home in TeepTown or another Corps-controlled community. The Cop is also placed on the priority list at the breeding programme and most Psi Cops are married within two years of graduation. Due to the danger of their work, sperm and ova samples are taken from every Cop to preserve their genetic material in the face of death. Female Psi Cops are also encouraged to use surrogate parents to carry their offspring to term.

There is something of a social divide within the Corps; the Psi Cops and other powerful telepaths and senior administrators form a sort of elite, sundered from their fellow telepaths by the burdens of power and duty. Most Psi Cops are friends only with other Psi Cops and the vast majority of marriages are between one Psi Cop and another. To prevent the Cops

from becoming too isolated and an adversarial relationship developing between the Cops and the rank-and-file telepaths, the Psi Cops are expected to take an interest in Psi Corps social and cultural events. The familiar black uniforms of the Cops are a common sight whenever telepaths gather together.

*I can still remember how the Corps arranged my marriage with such clinical and inhuman efficiency. She*

*It was another country and besides, the wench is dead.*





## Monitors

Though no Psi Cop has gone rogue since the days of Stephen Walters in the 2180s, there are occasional incidents that warrant investigation. A group of five Psi Cops work exclusively for the Director's Office and are referred to as the Monitors. A Monitor is dispatched to scan any Psi Cop whose reports or actions are deemed questionable. While a Psi Cop is strong enough to resist a Monitor's scan, the *act* of resisting a scan is an admission of guilt. The Monitors are experts at locating hidden thoughts, shades of guilt, memory vaults and other passive methods of hiding information from a scan, so a single unblocked probe will invariably discern the truth of the matter.

*Up until a few years ago, the Monitors were little more than a joke. No Psi Cop — except Walters and myself — has ever betrayed the Corps. They are incorruptible and fanatically loyal; what temptation could there be for them to turn on the Psi Corps? They have more power and influence there than they could have anywhere else. The Monitors were just a rubberstamp, approving whatever the Psi Cops did in pursuit of the Corps' interests.*

*When Director O'Brien took over, he had the Monitors replaced with five Psi Cops loyal to him. The Psi Cops are a stronghold of the pro-teep faction within the Corps but O'Brien now has control over the one institution that can censor them. At the time I left, O'Brien's Monitors had not yet begun to push the issue, yet I suspect one reason Bester spends so much time heading out to Babylon 5 is because he's trying to avoid the Monitors on Earth. O'Brien and his former Clark-administration allies have to control the Psi Cops if they want to hold onto the Corps.*

## Blips and Rogues

Technically, a 'blip' is a telepath who was never found by the Psi Corps and so was never registered, tested or trained to control their abilities. According to Corps tradition, the term was coined back in 2117, during discussion of the first version of the genetic test for telepathy. One over-eager scientist claimed that the only telepaths who would escape detection would be a few 'statistical blips'. Given that the older version of the test had a 30%+ failure rate, many of the MRA's rogue hunter units found this claim to be grimly amusing.

A rogue is a telepath who was trained by the Psi Corps but has fled its care and escaped. Rogues tend to bear a grudge against the Psi Corps for real or imagined grievances, while blips are usually just scared and confused by powers they do not understand. Rogues are responsible for the majority of attacks against Psi Corps and for most telepathic crime. The blip's lack of training in telepathy means that most are not very dangerous and do not have the power or the insight to really abuse their powers.

The terms have become somewhat confused by the media, a confusion that the Corps approves of and fosters. If the public perception of blips is that they are dangerous criminals, the public are more likely to report blips to Metapol. Similarly, if people do not know the difference between blips and rogues, then the Corps suffers less of a media backlash for the crimes of its runaways.

Internally, the difference between blips and rogues is well understood.

## Blips

The average blip is aged between 15 and 23 and was born on either one of the outer colonies or else in an economically depressed area on Earth or Mars. He has little formal education, probably having left school before random genetic testing. His powers manifested relatively late in adolescence due to malnutrition or inadequate social stimuli. Due to his lack of training and control, he may be unable to correctly use many of his abilities and is almost certain to do serious damage when scanning. This is referred to as a Type I or nascent blip.

On discovering some of his abilities, he uses them for petty crime and blackmail, taking revenge against those who have wronged him. His control improves through trial and error, though he still lacks any real psychic technique. His abilities



are a jumble of half-understood powers and erroneous beliefs – he might be able to make a Deep Scan but not a Surface one, or only be able to read others under very specific conditions (only while having sexual intercourse, only while the target is asleep, only while under the influence of drugs). The telepath is quickly able to build up a power base through blackmail and telepathic influence. A few especially honest blips just hide their abilities and live normal lives but most fall into a life of crime and corruption. This is referred to as a Type II or antisocial blip.

Soon, the blip's activities are picked up by the Psi Corps, through:



- ⑤ Anonymous calls to Blip Hotline (35.1% of cases).
- ⑤ Direct reports from local law enforcement (22.4% of cases).
- ⑤ Scanning reports from local law enforcement/news media (18.5% of cases).
- ⑤ Random Bloodhound sweeps for telepathic activity (10.2% of cases).
- ⑤ Noticing signs of illegal tampering during Commercial or Medical scans (5.1% of cases).
- ⑤ Other (8.7% of cases)

Ideally, a blip is picked up by the Psi Cops while still a Type I or II. These situations are by far the most likely to result in the blip being acquired without any violence or trouble.

A Type III blip has heard of the Psi Corps but the temptation to abuse his powers is too strong. Rather than voluntarily register himself, he attempts to protect himself from the Corps by surrounding himself with hired thugs and physical barriers. This behaviour is nicknamed 'laagering up' or 'circling the mundanes'. The Psi Cops face a double challenge, as they have to secure the telepath without harming the mundane protectors too much. Such situations call for a close partnership with local law enforcement. Stun batons and grenades, knockout gas and other riot-control methods are used to diffuse the situation without resorting to firearms. The Psi Cops also use telepathic methods to remove the blip's defenders and are specifically exempted from the normal rules banning unauthorised scans during siege situations. The blip is taken into custody by the Psi Cops and brought to a re-education centre.

Some blips join criminal or illegal organisations, such as raiders, Free Mars or the dust syndicates. These Type IV (very antisocial) blips are an even bigger problem to the Cops – a Type III might be surrounded by half-a-dozen armed thugs but a Type IV might be hiding in a Free Mars base surrounded by 50 or so well-trained and heavily armed terrorists. Type IVs are usually dealt with either through covert means (infiltrating the organisation using undercover agents, then extracting the blip and the agents) or by working with the mundane counter-terrorism and law enforcement agencies. Many Type IV blips are simply not worth the trouble. The Psi Cops do give confused, lost telepaths the benefit of the doubt as much as possible – the unfortunates were left without the care and guidance of the Corps – but when the little lost blip is working with organised crime syndicates or fanatical terrorists, it is generally time to incapacitate first and re-educate later.

Type V (runaway) blips respond to the Cops by trying to escape. They may either hide themselves in the crowds, dampening down their telepathic abilities as much as possible and creating a series of cover identities for themselves or else flee as far away from civilisation as they can. Increasingly, Type Vs are taking to the outer colonies or even beyond human space. Tracking down Type Vs is difficult and time-consuming but not especially dangerous. The creation of a Psi Cops precinct at the Io transit point means that most Type Vs from Earth or Mars are caught there and only a handful need to be followed outsystem.

Type VI (underground) blips are the most troublesome of all. These blips have made contact with other blips and formed a sort of underground society or cult dedicated to evading the Psi Corps. Up until 2259, there was a so-called 'underground railroad' of mundanes who helped Type VI Blips escape, but the Corps dismantled this at Babylon 5. Still, Type VI Blips are by far the most dangerous – they



can easily acquire all the resources of a Type IV but because the group is composed entirely of telepaths, the local law enforcement agencies are much less willing or able to help. At the same time, the capture of Type VIs is a priority for the Corps, as the ability to survive and organise in this fashion shows that the telepath is intelligent and flexible and so should be salvaged if at all possible.

Finally, a Type 0 (terminal) blip is one that is succumbing to the depression and confusion common to untrained and fearful telepaths in a world that distrusts and hates them. More than 20% of blips commit suicide within a year of developing their powers; around 40% of rogues do the same after leaving the Corps. Any of the other blip types can slip into Type 0 status easily. For the Psi Cops, every investigation is a race against time.

## Rogues

The average rogue is a telepath trained by the Psi Corps, usually between the ages of 35 and 45. He tends to be of moderate P-level (P5 to P8). He probably is part of either the Education, Commerce or Science Departments. He has held a low- to mid-level position for some time and has failed to win promotion repeatedly. He has also failed to have at least one marriage approved on the ground of genetic incompatibility. Finally, he has avoided or accidentally missed at least two scans by Corps psychologists or instructors who would normally spot rogue tendencies.

A Type I (chicken) rogue's departure from the Corps was a spur-of-the-moment decision. Usually, he was either on assignment away from his normal duties or on holiday, when the opportunity to slip away from the normal Corps safeguards arose. Other Type I departures are as a result of an exam failure, pressure at the Academies, an accident or failure at work, an accidental breach of regulations and so on. The common factor is that the decision to go rogue is not premeditated, although it may stem from multiple subconscious forms of dissatisfaction with the Corps. Type I rogues are relatively easy to catch, as they have no real plan or destination other than 'hiding from the Corps'. Most take the most obvious routes, such as dressing in the opposite of their normal colour patterns, removing the Psi Corps badge, taking a shuttle to the furthest destination possible and so on. They try to avoid using telepathy, but generally resort to using their powers when pressed or panicked.

Type II (slip) rogues have planned their departures from the Corps. They have constructed memory vaults inside their

minds to hide these intentions and so can only act on them rarely. Most Type IIs never actually go rogue, as their preparations are noticed and they are shown the error of their ways. Signs of Type II behaviour include:

- ⑤ The telepath saving more money than normal, opening a new account or transferring an unusual amount of money into credit chits.
- ⑤ The telepath's computer records show that he has been researching travel destinations, flight plans and so on.
- ⑤ A lack of interest in upcoming Psi Corps events (or, perversely, too much interest to avoid suspicion).
- ⑤ Attempts to access Psi Cop records or news reports about rogue activity.

Most Type II rogues attempt to get posted to offworld colonies or other locations where they are the only members of the Psi Corps present. They then set up automated computer programmes to send back reports, to keep the Corps from noticing that the telepath assigned to Callisto Station or Fairfax or the Centauri Embassy has gone missing. The better-prepared and more powerful Type IIs also rewrite the memories of the mundanes around them to hide their departure. If a Type II is not detected before he goes rogue, he can be quite difficult to catch.

A Type III (long runner) rogue is a Type I or II who has made it past the Cops' initial detection networks and become... troublesome. A rogue who sneaks onto an Explorer ship or long-range mining surveyor might be out of human space for years or even decades and it is a waste of time and resources for the Psi Cops to go chasing a single rogue out into the most distant reaches of space. However, the Cops cannot of course admit to this – a large part of their power



## The Psi Cops' Top Five Most Wanted

1. **Golmar Kuln:** Easily recognisable due to his dwarfism, Golmar Kuln was a test subject in a series of telepathic experiments (ref. *Ironheart Incident*). He was believed killed on Babylon 5 in 2259 but recent sightings suggest that he was able to use his augmented abilities to escape. Golmar Kuln is to be considered extremely dangerous and may have unusually powerful telekinetic abilities. (P10+?, Type VI)
2. **Janet Wilmore:** A former senior military officer, Wilmore defected to an alien government, carrying with her a set of key documents relating to the security of Department Sigma. (P10, Type IV)
3. **Byron Gordon:** A rogue Psi Cop trainee, Byron is deemed a threat to the successful reacquisition of other rogues and blips. (P12, Type V)
4. **Carl Leto:** The only blip in the Top Five, Leto has become addicted to necroscans and has murdered in excess of 50 people on Earth and Io, scanning them as he kills them. He uses his telepathic powers to escape capture. Currently, the public and media do not know that Leto is a telepath and this perception will continue. (P9+?, Type III)
5. **Cormac Smythe:** A former Commercial Corps telepath, Smythe is notorious for having broken the bank on New Vegas. After this exploit, he is believed to have fled to Centauri space to hide from pursuing bounty hunters. (P10, Type III)

*This section was passed onto me by a rogue friend. Should I be honoured?*

comes from the belief that there is no escape from the Psi Cops. The usual response to Type III Rogues depends on the rogue's telepathic ability. A low-P rogue can be retrieved by a mundane bounty hunter, while a more powerful telepath must be intercepted by a Psi Cop. A bounty hunter or Bloodhound is sent after the rogue and tracks his position and the Black Omegas are used to catch him as soon as he comes back within easy reach.

Type IV (turncoat) rogues are usually Type IIs (or, more rarely, IIIs) who have made contact with an organisation such as Free Mars. There are elements within EarthForce Intelligence who are also willing to recruit rogue Psi Corps members, as are the megacorporations. A Type IV rogue with the right connections can wake up as a minor functionary within the Corps, and go to sleep that night on top of a bed of corporate money with several beautiful women. The secrets held by the Psi Corps are incredibly valuable.

Turncoats are the primary targets of the Psi Cops. The moment a turncoat situation is identified, the Cop apparatus goes into action. The Forensics section descends on the turncoat's quarters and workplace, looking for clues. Bloodhounds begin sweeping airports and train stations, looking for the rogue's trail, while other staff begin questioning the rogue's friends and family. Co-ordinating all these hunters are the Psi Cops themselves. The stated aim of this operation is to catch the rogue but almost as important is uncovering which organisation turned the rogue and punishing them. Those who attempt to steal the Corps' children must suffer Father's right hand, the steel inside the black glove.

Type V (orphan) rogues bear a strong grudge towards the Corps and have made contact with other Type Vs. The destruction of the original telepath underground and the death of Stephen Walters 30 years ago temporarily brought an end to Type V cells but the expansion of humanity and the growth of the Corps mean that there are more rogues and more places for them to hide. The Psi Cops protections suggest that there will be a massive growth in working Type V cells unless the rate of teeps going rogue is greatly reduced.

As with a Type IV operation, merely recovering a Type V rogue is not enough. The whole cell must be rooted out and destroyed.

Finally, Type VI (unacceptable) rogues are telepaths of such power or influence that they simply *cannot* be allowed to go rogue. This category is reserved for Psi Cops, senior administrators, staff from the Director's Office, senior science staff and their charges and high-ranking Military Telepaths. The list of people who would be considered Type VI candidates is constantly updated and everyone on that list is regularly checked by Psi Cops members. There have only been three Type VI rogues in the last five years and two of those were part of the same incident.

A Type VI must be either recaptured or terminated. Failure is not an option.



## Hunts – A Standard Psi Cop Operation

Transcript of a lecture delivered to P12 Metapol Trainees by Psi Cop Alfred Bester, Major Academy, January 2254

**B:** Bester

**S#:** Individual students.

Good afternoon class. I'll be speaking verbally so I can glyph you additional information over mindlinks. Please don't try to scan past my blocks – I don't know the answers to the end of year exam either (laughter). Instructor Lysenko has been teaching you the theory of how Metapol operations works but today I'm going to brief you on the practise. All this material is classified <B: glyph of a Psi Corps seal> and loose wits sink ships (laughter mixed with groans).

More than half the time, your job begins when Support happens across a rogue's trail. More and more, the rogues are heading out into space where our resources are spread more thinly. <B: glyph of rogue incidents on a map of the Earth Alliance, with outer colonies and stations highlighted><S1: public question: why don't rogues head out beyond the Alliance altogether, where we can't pursue them at all?><B: private answer: good question> For those who didn't pick that up, I was just asked why rogues don't keep going and leave EA space altogether. Well, has anyone here ever scanned an alien? <B: public poll?><S: consensus: no>. The texture of the mind is quite, well, alien. <B: emote of alien mindstate><S: consensus: ewww!>. Imagine being surrounded by that mindstate every day for the rest of your life – you'd go mad. The rogues can't block it out, either. Telepaths need to exercise their abilities, or depression and mindblindness sets in. <B: glyph of sleepers>. No, long runner rogues may try leaving the EA but they'll come back to human space sooner or later.

Anyway, if I may continue <B: glyph of the student who asked the question being dragged away by Psi Cops> (laughter), our job really begins when the general location of a rogue has been uncovered by Support. This is often distressingly sketchy information. If you're lucky, they'll have a name, P-rating and bio on the rogue. More often, especially with blips, you'll just get a report on whatever incident alerted Support. <B: series of glyphs of sample reports and biographies, in the format of name/P-Rating/Department/Biography/Physical Description/Psychological Evaluation/Known Abilities/Associates/Last Known Location/Other Information. The glyph series ends with a report where every detail in the report is blank except for a P-rating of '5+?', a Last Known Location of 'Beta 7 Mining Outpost Tiger' and an Other Information of: 'Mining Company supervisor says crew are acting funny, and a Commercial teep scan showed possible interference.'><S2: private question: emote of incredulity at sketchiness of

report><B: private answer: glyph of entirely empty report and emote of fatalistic acceptance of incompetence of others>. Depending on the nature of the incident and the location, you will either be acting on your own, with a partner or with the full support of a Bloodhound unit. Get used to the 'acting on your own' part (laughter). You are expected, of course, to inform whatever mundane authorities are present and get the help of local law enforcement. <B: glyph of old Keystone Kops footage> (laughter).

In general, we try to keep our presence as quiet as possible. While fear is one of our weapons, surprise is even more important. Remember, every mundane should be treated as just another pair of eyes and ears for the rogue to p'see through. Assume that *everything* you tell the mundanes will also be known to the rogues. <S3: private question: But we're training to extend blocks to the mundanes, to protect them from being compromised by rogue scans> <B: private answer: You can't and shouldn't protect them all. Too much effort – it's best just to compartmentalise information on a need to know basis and mundanes don't need to know>. Yes, you can extend your blocks but not even a P12 can protect every mundane he interacts with from rogue scans. <B: and if you're higher than P12, what are you doing in this classroom? You should be sitting in a lab being probed!> (laughter). Your first action should be locking down the rogue's means of escape. Rely on electronic and mechanical means as much as possible. Tell customs officials to look for the rogue but also have the computer alert you if a rogue's identicard is scanned. Weld the airlocks shut instead of posting guards there. Always, always assume the mundanes are going to fail you unless you're standing right next to them to protect them.

Once you know that the rogue cannot escape, the real hunt begins. Learn to think like a rogue; learn to empathise with them. Put yourself in their shoes. <B: glyph of further reading on such techniques>. Let's take the example of the Beta 7 Colony Mining Station. You're a despicable filthy rogue and you've just heard that the notably handsome and heroic Psi Cop Al Bester has arrived to catch you. <S4: glyph of idealised caricature of Bester, square-jawed and muscular wearing an overlarge Psi Cops badge and carrying an absurdly big gun> (laughter). What do you do? <S: telepathic conference among students. Consensus: Flee the station and hide in the mines>.

Wrong. Minds up, those who said flee the station. <S: glyphs of admission><B: glyphs of students dressed as bedraggled rogues being mown down by a barrage of fire from caricature-Bester's absurdly big gun> (embarrassed laughter). You want to get into a one-on-one mindwar with the target. During your time here at the Academy, you will be trained to beat any telepath in a mindwar. You will also be trained to beat almost any mundane in a physical contest. By combining

your skills, you will be as unstoppable as it is possible for any human to be. The Psi Cops are the *best of the best*. Realise what you are, what you can be and take pride in it. You are the pinnacle of human evolution, trained to the pinnacle of human ability. You are the future and there is no-one better than you.

If the rogue flees out of the station, then you've got to track him across miles of bare rock, with only a breathing mask or environment suit between you and a rather agonising death by sulphur inhalation. You'll have to follow him into a mine filled with toxic gases, rockfalls, blind passages, hidden explosive charges, lethal mining tools and pits so deep that if you fall in, they won't find your body before the death of the universe. *<B: glyph of the mine>*. That's the easy option, the one you hope the rogue will take. Why? Because you'll have mindripped a map of the mine out of the heads of the mundanes. You'll know it better than they do. It will just be you and the rogue in there and you can win any one-on-one fight. *<B: glyph of the mine again, with the information learned from scanning the mine workers overlaid on the map. All the dangerous locations and pitfalls are highlighted and a clear route through the mine to the rogue's best hiding places is visible>*. *<S2: Private question: (Slightly embarrassed) But aren't such scans against the rules?>* *<B: Private answer: You are your brother's keeper. Yes, keep the mundanes happy and try not to blow their minds but your priorities are your safety and the safe recovery of your target>*.

Now, who said that the rogue should hide in the mining station? *<S: glyphs of admission>* Correct, you're thinking like a rogue. Please report for termination (laughter). Ideally, you catch the rogue before he realises 'hang on a moment – I'm a *rogue*. I don't have to obey Psi Corps rules anymore! I can scan people and rewrite them and smoke and stay up late and wear colours other than black and grey and –' (laughter). The Academies indoctrinate the Corps rules very thoroughly, so much so that they become instinctive. It takes time to break down these barriers. A blip doesn't suffer from the same problem but usually lacks the power or training to do as much damage as a rogue who has learned to break the rules.

I said a Psi Cop can beat anyone in a one-on-one confrontation and that's true. In the mining colony, there are, what, 50 or so miners. Without wanting to be unfair to them, these miners are not the toughest minds to crack (laughter). By the time a Psi Cop arrives, the rogue can have scanned every single one of them and learned enough to blackmail all of them, or found exactly how to win their



loyalty. If he's strong enough, he's implanted Asimovs or emotional compulsions in the nastiest of them. He's almost certainly planted suggestions that the Psi Cop is the *enemy* and is a threat to all miners, not just the rogue. I know it's hard for you to believe but not every mundane trusts and loves the Psi Corps as much as they should (laughter). The best approach in such a situation is to create a hard core of mundanes who you've freed from any telepathic influence *<B: except your own, of course>*, who you then protect from the rogue. You use these *trusted* mundanes as meatshields until you get to the rogue.

The other option is to hold off until you can bring in extra help. Later, you'll be shown how to evaluate a situation and how to make the call on whether or not to call for backup. The Psi Cops are overstretched, both in manpower and resources, and every time we're forced to hold off is an opportunity for another rogue to escape. Of course, you don't want to get yourself killed.

So, what help can you expect? *<B: glyph of a Psi Cop meeting Snoopy, dressed in a Bloodhound uniform>* *<S: consensus: confusion, followed by dawning realisation as the few who understand the classical reference share their information among the class>* (laughter.) A full Bloodhound team is about as subtle as a mass driver but it does add to the fear of the Cops and may break a rogue's will and convince them to turn themselves in. A Bloodhound team can also protect themselves against telepathic subversion, making them a lot more reliable than a mundane security squad. Make sure you've locked down the target area before deploying 'hounds. One Psi Cop may raise the alarm but a full pack of black-suited Bloodhounds will cause rumours to spread like wildfire. If you can't achieve lockdown, then just bring in a small few sniffer 'hounds. They'll do a few subtle scans and follow up on clues without alerting your target. *<B: glyph of recommended hound packs and tactics>*.



If there are local teeps on the scene, you should draw on them for local knowledge. Make sure you scan them first. Telepaths associate with each other, and the presence of a rogue may indicate that the local telepath harbours feelings of disloyalty. *<B: The Corps is Father> <S: consensus: The Corps is Mother> <B: Good>.* That association, that kinship, means that there is a good chance that a rogue knows or has had contact with any local telepaths. The local teep may not even know the rogue is another teep, especially if the rogue has a higher P-rating.

When you finally find your target, you want to bring him back alive. Often, you can just talk the rogue down. Use the fear of the Psi Cops to your advantage. The rogue knows that he can't escape and that it's futile to resist. A little mental push can help convince him of this but don't try to spark or influence the rogue unless you're sure you can beat him easily. The illusion of omnipotence is a key part of fear. If you have to get into a probe-block wrestling match with a rogue to convince him you can beat his blocks without trying, well, it's rather counter-productive. Instead, appeal to his intelligence, to his loyalty to the Corps, to his sense of self-preservation. If he's a rogue, that means he's gone through the Academy and must have at least a bit of intelligence. *<B: If he's a blip, then don't even assume basic literacy. Harsh but true>.* Apply psychological pressure.

If you do have to use force to bring him down, combine it with telepathic assault. Even the best rogue has trouble blocking a probe after you've shot him in the foot with a PPG, or with a face-full of morph gas. The rogue will probably try to do the same to you, which is why you must practise your control constantly. *<B suddenly probes half a dozen students. All but one of them fails to block his probes> <S: Shock and alarm>.* You see? Constant control. You're all P12s. You shouldn't be able to keep me out forever but you should at least put up more resistance than that. *<B: Private message to those who failed: To be fair, you at least don't have to worry about being psychically backstabbed by fellow Psi Cops until you're at least grade III> <B: Private message to the one who succeeded: Well done. See me after class>.* Your mind is the best and most flexible weapon you will ever have. Train it and use it.

In the words of William Karges, telepathy is a gift. That is your calling as Psi Cops – to protect that gift, even from those who possess it. We have to keep problems within the family, out of the media and the minds of mundanes, so that they don't succumb to their fear of the gifted and turn on us. We have to be guardians of that gift, using it properly and gracefully, so we can carry it into the future. We hold the gift of telepathy in trust for that future. We are the fathers and mothers of the future of humanity. We are Psi Corps. *<S: Consensus: The Corps is Mother, the Corps is Father>.*

Any questions? Broadcast them to everyone, please, not just to me.

*<S5: How do you bring a rogue back once you've caught him?>.* Ideally, you put him in stasis, or at least keep him sedated. If you have to, you can temporarily implant an antipathy block to keep him from accessing his telepathy but that just creates more work for the boys in the re-education camps. Another option is to use a temporary dose of sleepers. A tranq gun full of sleepers is a useful tool to have but keep it out of the hands of mundanes. As for transport, well, that's a more interesting question that you might think.

*<S6: What's the worst hunt you've ever been on?>.* The worst? Well, other than the time I ran off-campus to follow a rogue all the way to Paris when I was a student here *<S6: That's a true story?!> <B: Yes. And in this, kids, don't follow my example>.* there was this one blip who thought it would a great idea to hide on a Pak'mara agricultural transport that was en route to a new colony. The Pak'mara refused to go in after him, so I had to crawl into the ducts and, well... *<B: glyphs of inside of agricultural transport>.*

*<S2: Tell us about the Black Omegas>.* *One of my better ideas.* *<B: emote of amused pride>.* *The Cops needed a rapid-response unit to intercept long runners and give us more punch in the outer colonies. And flying our own Starfuries is fun (laughter). Seriously, log as much simulator time as you can. The closest friendships and alliances are formed out there, when it's just you and the other Cops and the cold, pitiless stars.*

*<S4: What are the biggest problems facing the Psi Cops in the future? What should we concentrate on fixing to avoid these problems?> Remember why you're here and what you are. The Corps does not need goose-stepping drones who cannot think for themselves. You need to be able to make your own decisions, and to see why the Psi Corps is a necessary institution for the family. The best Psi Cops can understand the rogues, they can see why they fled the embrace of Mother and Father but they can also see beyond this and see why the rogues are wrong.*

*Blind faith and obedience is not enough. You have to make a clear, reasoned decision to love the Corps, to love your family. If you can see all the arguments that might make a teep go rogue, answer them all truthfully and wholeheartedly and still love the Corps, then you are ready to be a good Psi Cop. As an exercise, I want you all to envision a situation where you would be tempted to go rogue – and then deconstruct and reject it.*

*And if you do rogue, well... I'll be seeing you (laughter).*

*<B & S: consensus: The Corps is Mother, The Corps is Father.>*  
**Lecture ends.**

## Psi Cops and Normal Cops

Despite the best efforts of Education's Outreach programme, the mundane law enforcement agencies generally distrust the Psi Cops. According to studies, they feel that the Psi Cops:

- ⑤ Are an unwanted and unasked-for intrusion into their investigations, in the same way the Earth Alliance Bureau of Investigations interferes in local investigations.
- ⑤ Do not share information that might help arrest the criminal telepaths.
- ⑤ Are generally heavy-handed and do not follow procedure.
- ⑤ Are arrogant and unpleasant to deal with.
- ⑤ Are just plain weird.

Psi Cops are encouraged to be as pleasant and co-operative as possible but the truth is that mundane law enforcement is next to useless against most telepaths. They can be deployed relatively safely against a low-P teep, who is unlikely to be able to focus his weak abilities in time to avoid capture. A mid-power telepath (P3+) could easily scan the mundane, learning who and where the Psi Cops are and so avoiding capture. To avoid this, it is Psi Cops policy to keep as much information as possible in the minds of those trained in avoiding scans and not telling mundane field operatives anything more than is absolutely necessary. This is for the mundane's benefit too – a P5 could telepathically injure or kill a mundane. Against a powerful telepath (P10+), the mundane law enforcement officer is a liability. At the very least, he will be incapacitated and his weapon lost to the

telepath. It is also likely that the P10 will be able to subvert or puppet the mundane, turning him against the Psi Cops.

Standard operating procedure is to use the mundanes as muscle and firepower, with the Psi Cops handling the investigation and then using their abilities to block the target's telepathy while the mundanes secure him. Technically, the Psi Cops only have the authority to assist and advise local enforcement on how to deal with a telepath and cannot issue orders. However, there is a wealth of past incidents where *not* handing the Psi Cop full authority has lead to disaster. Most law enforcement agencies are aware of these incidents and so they defer to the Psi Cops as a matter of course. Should a particularly troublesome officer not hand control over to the Psi Cop, the problem can be resolved by calling the Corps and having them contact the officer's superiors, a process which usually only takes a few hours.

## Securing the Target

The favoured approach used to take down a rogue is the application of the Pain ability. This incapacitates the rogue relatively quickly and harmlessly through telepathic means alone. A burst of Pain is used to show the rogue that the Psi Cop is in charge and that resistance is useless. Pain can even be used without line of sight, as long as the Psi Cop has sensed the rogue's mental patterns and can get a telepathic contact.

When dealing with multiple rogues, more conventional means such as morph gas, stun sticks or even precise PPG fire are used. The Psi Cops are instructed to 'bring them back alive' not 'bring them back unharmed'. A badly wounded rogue can be shot and quickly crammed into a stasis tube. The rogue has months of time at a re-education camp ahead of him, so it does not matter if he spends some of that time recuperating from being shot. While the Psi Cop should make every effort to bring a rogue in without too much damage, his priorities must be self-preservation and success, not minimal damage.

A tranq gun loaded with sleepers is used in some situations but the sleeper drugs take too long (three hours on average; Psi Cops carry a fast-acting, half-hour version) to work to be really effective. A cocktail of drugs consisting of sleepers mixed with normal sedatives is used instead. The sleepers just make the rogue easier to handle when he does wake up.





## Transport

Once a rogue or blip has been captured, he must be brought back to a Psi Corps centre. Officially, the only valid centres for this purpose are the major Psi Cops prisoners at Earth, Mars, Io and Proxima. Only a fraction of recovered telepaths actually make it to these processing centres. The majority are transferred over to the Department of Transport at a Mothership, who conveys them to Resource's re-education camps. Telepaths captured on Earth are flown to the camps at Amiento in the Republic of South America.

The Psi Cops are well aware that the re-education camps are a secret that must be kept within the family. When questioned by outsiders, the Cops are as vague as possible about the fate of telepaths, although references are made to the 'public' re-education centres at TeepTown and Mars. Private Corps shuttles are used to transport prisoners and commercial transports are only used in emergencies. It is of paramount importance that mundane authorities never learn how many rogues and blips just vanish off the system and end up in the secret camps.

Psi Cops take the Psi Cop prestige class, on pages 280–282 of the *Babylon 5* rulebook. Characters working for Metapol may also take the new feats and abilities listed in this section.

## New Feats

### Intensive Training (Telepath)

You are on the fast track to becoming a Psi Cop.

**Prerequisites:** P12, member of Psi Corps, Concentration 6 ranks, Telepathy 6 ranks.

**Benefit:** Due to the need for more Psi Cops on the beat, the Corps has instituted a new training programme. This feat gives the character three 'virtual' ranks in Bluff, Concentration, Intimidate and Telepathy. These ranks do not affect the character's skill checks but do count for the purposes of qualifying for Psi Corps prestige classes (usually the Psi Cop prestige class). For example, a Psi Corps character with no ranks in Bluff, 7 ranks in Concentration, 9 ranks in Intimidate and 10 ranks in Telepathy would have each skill virtually increased by three ranks – enough to enter the Psi Cop prestige class (see pages 280–282 of the *Babylon 5* rulebook).

**Special:** A character may only use this feat once to qualify for a prestige class. Once the prestige class is gained, the character must spend all skill points gained to meet the class' requirements. Once all skill requirements are met, this feat becomes redundant and the virtual skill ranks disappear.

## Dedicated to the Corps

Your belief in the Corps is so strong, it scares others.

**Prerequisites:** P10+, Concentration 6 ranks.

**Benefit:** Whenever you would normally take subdual damage from activating a telepathic ability, you may instead take a dedication point. For every five dedication points you have, you suffer a –1 penalty to any Charisma check that involves interpersonal communication, charm, likeability or anything other than telepathy. Others may see you as cold, off-putting or fanatically loyal to the Psi Corps.

**Normal:** A character takes one point of subdual damage whenever he activates a telepathic power.

**Special:** If you roll a natural 1 when using a telepathic ability and activating this feat, immediately roll percentile dice. If the result is equal to or less than the number of dedication points you have accumulated, then the strain of absorbing subdual damage in this fashion has caught up with you and you take normal damage equal to the number of dedication points you currently have. This damage comes in the form of a stroke or other brain damage.

## Fanatical Loyalty

The Corps *is* Mother, the Corps *is* Father.

**Prerequisite:** Dedicated to the Corps.

**Benefits:** You gain a morale bonus equal to one-fifth the total of your accumulated dedication points (rounded up) to Will saves and Concentration checks against anything that would make you betray the Psi Corps.



The Psi Cops are the spearhead, the leading edge of the Psi Corps. While the hidden departments and black science sections will keep blindly moving forward in the name of bloody progress, the actions and beliefs of the elite Psi Cops echo down through the pyramid. If the Psi Cops are harsh and brutal, then all the other telepaths in the Corps will be psychically bruised and assaulted and so become somewhat tougher and colder themselves. If the Psi Cops are, to grab a phrase out of the air, a fascist organisation of jackbooted monsters who are more interested in forcing innocents into their hellish conformity factory-camps than in actually protecting telepaths from the mundanes or mundane from twisted telepaths, then the whole Corps will be rotten. They have ruined everything. Perhaps the Corps could have been redeemed if it was only a few mad doctors and butchers in their caves on Mars but the Psi Cops represent a foul sickness that is endemic to the organisation.

I was a Psi Cop. There, I admit it in black and white, and should I touch your mind, I shall admit it with my soul too. I have hidden it for so long, walling it off in deep memory vaults like a prisoner in a dungeon of my own past. Would my friends who sing to me so sweetly turn on me if they knew I was once a thing out of nightmare, another willing cog in the fascist regime? Would they still open their minds to me?

Despite my attempts to exorcise all the ghosts of what-has-been, I cannot wholly dismiss them all. Telepaths were made as weapons, so is it any wonder that some of us hurt mundanes? I do not, of course, defend telepaths who turn their powers to evil (indeed, I judge them most harshly — we who can feel the pain and know the minds of others should be held to a higher standard of morality) but I do recognise the need for some sort of group of telepaths who can right the wrongs of others. I have discussed many times how justice will be done in our new homeland, how we shall use consensus to determine the right of issues and shunning or sevenfold magnification of sorrow to make wrongdoers see the error of their ways. However, in the night, I do wonder how our utopian ideals would deal with telepaths who blackmail mundanes for money or sex, or who enjoy causing pain to others, or who deny free will with mental controls and compulsions? As a Psi Cop, I saw the horrors that we are capable of.

There are three, perhaps four distinct factions within the Psi Cops. Firstly, there are the new or neutral Cops, those who have not chosen a side or who actually have some measure of honour or morality. I was, I think, one of these before I left. These Cops still hunt down rogues and blips but they actually believe they are doing good. The second faction is akin to these; it is made up of Bester and his circle of allies, who also believe they are doing good. However, they believe that telepaths and mundanes cannot co-exist without bloodshed and destruction, and that they must act to ensure that it is telepaths who are triumphant in the end.

The third sort of Psi Cops are the real monsters, who have burnt out every scrap of empathy and human feeling. They are soulless machines, who bring down rogue after rogue out of some sort of blind determination, addicts to the kill.

The fourth sort are a new breed of Cop, loyal to the mundanes more than the Corps. These are the creation of Johnston and O'Brien, the newer Directors. In the main, they are late bloomers, who joined the Corps after the age of the cadres and were never quite inculcated with Maternis, Paternis as they should have been. They see telepaths as the enemy, as things that must be controlled. They lack the love and loyalty to their own kind that makes Bester and his ilk so dangerous.

Three of these factions within the Cops have their own initiation rites and secrets; the organisation manages to be freer from bribery and malfeasance than any other police institution, yet is still hopelessly corrupt. They are merciless and cold, hateful and unrelenting. We shall never be free of their shadow while we are nothing more than rogues and blips — it is time to change the rules.



## Metapol Characters

Characters working for Metapol should have a high Intelligence as well as a good Dexterity and Charisma. Interns and support staff are rarely below P5 but Bloodhounds must be at least P9 and Psi Cops are famously always P12.

**Recommended Telepathic Abilities:** Deep Scan, Jamming, Mind Shield, Pain.

**Recommended Feats:** Combat Telepath, Data Access, Mental Fortress, Mindshredder, Far Telepathy.

**Recommended Skills:** Bluff, Concentration, Gather Information, Intimidate, Telepathy.

Obviously, Psi Cops and Bloodhounds take the appropriate prestige classes. Due to the high entry requirements for these classes, a character should plan his advancement from the very start of the campaign – failing to take the right combination of skills and abilities can delay entry into the prestige class for several levels. Other Metapol characters can take whatever classes and skills that help their investigations.

## Scenarios

Psi Cop investigations provide a standard template for adventures. The characters receive word of a rogue or blip problem, head out, investigate, track down the enemy telepaths and bring them back for re-education. Depending on the campaign, this can go to very dark places, with the characters being involved in crushing and suppressing innocent and harmless blips. Alternatively, the characters can be faced with twisted, monstrous telepaths who do warrant being put down by the Cops. Most campaigns will have a mix of such problems; it is generally best to start with the more black-and-white investigations where the characters' actions are justified and then increase the level of moral ambiguity and confusion.

A Psi Cop campaign could begin with the characters working as low-level trainees and interns, helping senior Psi Cops with their work. As the characters rise in level, they begin to see corruption and darkness within the Corps and must make a choice between becoming Psi Cops and having the power to change the system within (or enforce it) or turning rogue and being chased by their former allies.

Vary the location and nature of the investigations tackled by the Cops. One game might be set on Earth and the Cops might have to uncover a fraud ring based on telepathic insider trading. The next game might have the characters flying off to an outer colony to bring in runaway blips and the next game brings them into conflict with Centauri spies using telepaths to find human arms traders dealing with the Narn and so on.

## Telepathic Shot

Your attacks are guided by telepathy.

**Prerequisite:** Sense Telepathy.

**Benefits:** If you successfully use Sense Telepathy to locate a telepathic individual, you gain a +4 insight bonus to your next physical attack against that telepath, if the attack is made within one round of using Sense Telepathy.

## New Uses for Old Skills

**Intimidate:** Telepaths are taught to fear the Psi Cops. A Psi Cop who speaks to a rogue may make an Intimidate check, opposed by the telepath's Will save. If the Intimidate check

succeeds, the telepath suffers a –2 morale penalty to Will saves against the Psi Cop's telepathic abilities.

## New Abilities

### Skim Scan

**P-Rating:** P8 or higher

**Prerequisite:** Deep Scan

**Range:** Touch (P10 Close)

**Telepathy Check:** DC 20

**Concentration:** No

**Multiple Subjects:** No

A Skim Scan is a special quick version of a Deep Scan. A character may make a Skim Scan as a free action, even while performing another action (Concentration checks may be required if the character is involved in combat or another distracting situation). A Skim Scan is made to retrieve one particular fact or thought and gives no insight into anything else. A Skim Scan does not inflict any subdual damage on the target but cannot locate any deeply hidden or complex information.

## Extend Shield

**P-Rating:** P8 or higher

**Prerequisite:** Mind Shield

**Range:** Close (P10 Medium, P12 Long)

**Telepathy Check:** DC 17

**Concentration:** Yes

**Multiple Subjects:** No

This ability lets the telepath protect the mind of another character from telepathic interference. It works just like the normal Mind Shield ability but affects another character (who can even be a non-telepath). The telepath must concentrate to maintain the extended shield. Unlike the normal version of Mind Shield, this ability cannot be used as a free action.

## Suppress Telepathy

**P-Rating:** P12

**Prerequisite:** Jamming

**Range:** Touch

**Telepathy Check:** Special

**Concentration:** No

**Multiple Subjects:** No

This ability lets the telepath fill the mind of another telepath with psychic static, making it almost impossible for the target to use his abilities. The two telepaths make opposed Telepathy checks; if the ability succeeds, the target suffers the same penalties as for normal Jamming. This Jamming lasts for a number of minutes equal to  $1d6 +$  (the difference in the two telepath's P-rating, squared).

## Administration

The Department of Administration is by far the smallest of the Psi Corps Departments. It is only half the size of the next smallest (Medical), which is a testament to the level of compartmentalisation and ease of communication within the Psi Corps. Each Department is able to run its internal affairs and operations quite smoothly. Telepathy makes the Corps' organisation vastly more efficient and effective – an administrator can get a full report from an underling, clarify any problems and resolve any communication difficulties within seconds.

Administration consists of four sections: Records, Personnel, Corps Operations and Works & Buildings.

## Records

The Records section maintains detailed files on every human telepath who has ever lived. For those who have lived all their lives within the Corps, the file contains every aspect of their existence. Every school report, every evaluation, every medical exam, every scan is kept in the telepath's file. This is common knowledge in the Corps.

What is not commonly known is how much other data is also recorded in the file. The Corps keeps copies of every communication and message sent or received by a telepath via PsiCom. Mails are read and copied, as are personal files. In some cases, even thoughts are recorded by specially trained telepaths who can read surface thoughts without alerting the target.

The various Psi Corps departments are obliged to send detailed reports to the Records section. Every detail of every Commercial deal or Legal case is recorded; every failed experiment in Science or minor operation in Medical is kept. The Records section computers have almost infinite data capacity and it has been expanded almost annually since the section was established. The collection and collation of information has become endemic to the Psi Corps.

Telepaths who operate outside the normal areas of influence of the Corps, such as Commercial teeps on assignment to the new colonies or Military telepaths on spaceships are issued with special Psi Corps software packages, which they are supposed to use to record private logs and official Corps reports. These software packages contain hidden programs that secretly interface with whatever network they are installed in and record copies of any communications made by the telepath. These programmes are carefully written not to go beyond the telepath's user space on the network and so do not normally run afoul of anti-virus and security programmes.

Records works closely with the Genetics Sections of Medical and Science, plotting the telepath bloodlines for the eugenics programmes. While Science concentrates on finding the genes that produce the best telepaths and Medical tries to ensure that the genetic combination will produce a viable embryo, Records takes a more holistic view of the process. It does not merely want powerful telepaths, it selects for traits such as loyalty and intelligence. Good behaviour in the eye of Records leads to advancement within the breeding programme. The final match is handed over to Personnel for actual implementation.



Records also work with the Support section of Metapol. Potential rogues can often be spotted by their behaviour changes, so analysis of a telepath's record can show how likely it is that he will betray the Corps. Pre-emptive measures are often taken in such cases.

*One sealed section of every telepath's file is termed the IOI Protocol. This contains the results of a series of scans taken during the telepath's time in the Major Academy and the re-education camps, updated whenever the telepath is scanned by a Psi Cop or other senior teep. The IOI Protocol is a description of the telepath's deepest fears and secrets, material that could be used by a Psi Cop to shatter the telepath's defences or by an interrogator to break him. Normally, IOI Protocol information is only released for the highest-priority targets, as the Corps wants to keep the existence of this section of the file secret. Every telepath in the Corps has a IOI Protocol – if we could steal those files, we would have a weapon usable even against the Psi Cops. The Records archives are in TeepTown and Mars but the files themselves are encrypted and cannot be broken by any known system (but there are wonders out in the stars, in the vaults of dead cities...)*

*A possibly more accessible section of the files deals with the current assignments of telepaths. With this information, we could easily falsify identicards for all the rogues, simplifying our travel in the Alliance greatly.*

## Personnel

This blandly-named section is responsible for administrating the lives of every telepath in the Psi Corps. It works with the Education Department to ensure that the various branches of the Corps receive the telepaths they need to keep operating at peak efficiency. Telepaths wishing to move from one branch to another must apply to Personnel for a transfer order. Personnel also offers career counselling and advanced training for telepaths.

Personnel is also responsible for the implementation and administration of the Corps' breeding programme. While Medical's Genetics section actually runs the comparisons and determine whether or not a particular match is viable, Personnel handles the requests for matches, assigns telepaths to each other and deals with any interpersonal issues arising from the genetic match.

Another large part of Personnel's duties is running the Psi Corps' internal auditing and censure programmes. Telepaths who break the rules of the Corps are punished

by Personnel (see the Legal Department for more details). This section also works with the Psi Cops, providing the Support staff and administration. It also works with the Works & Buildings section of Administration, handling the management of the Psi Corps' re-education camps.

Personnel section also implements the Psi Corps' internal grading system. This is roughly a telepath's rank within the Corps and factors into his salary and responsibilities. A telepath's grade is partially dependant on his P-rating but experience and skill also factor into it. The grade system runs from 1 (trainee) to 10 (senior operative) within most Departments, although the Military, Metapol and Administration departments use a 16-grade scale.

Promotion is a matter for each Department, although Personnel can block or refuse to approve a promotion.

## Calculating a Telepath's Grade & Pay

A telepath's grade within the Psi Corps varies depending on his P-rating and the number of ranks he has in the specified skills, which vary from department to department. The character's beginning grade depends on his P-rating; for every eight ranks he gains in his departmental skills, his grade increases by one (to a maximum of +4 for most telepaths). Grade is measured from 1 (low P-rating intern) to 10 (highly experienced Section leader).

### Beginning Grade

P-rating	Beginning Grade
1–3	1
4–6	2
7–9	3
10–11	4
12	5

### Departmental Skills

Education	Telepathy, one Knowledge skill
Commerce	Diplomacy, Telepathy
Legal	Diplomacy, Knowledge (law)
Medical	Knowledge (telepathy), Medical
Science	One Knowledge skill, Technical
Military	Gather Information, Telepathy
Metapol	Concentration, Telepathy
Administration	Computer Use, Gather Information

The monthly pay for a Commercial telepath is detailed on page 28. For the other Departments, pay depends on the telepath's grade multiplied by a set value, as follows:

## Departmental Pay Rates

Education	Grade x 500
Legal	Grade x 600
Medical	Grade x 600
Science	Grade x 600
Military	Grade x 700
Metapol	Grade x 800
Administration	Grade x 600

For example, a 1<sup>st</sup> level P5 in the Medical Department has four ranks in Medical and Knowledge (telepathy). His grade is 3 (P5 = 2, +1 for having eight ranks in his Departmental skills). He earns 1800 credits per month. A doctor could earn considerably more than that working outside the Corps but would also have to pay for his education, housing, medical care and so on.

*These clerks have powers of life and death over the telepaths of the Psi Corps. A tick box in an evaluation form can have an unfortunate dragged off in the middle of the night to be forcibly interrogated and scanned or even sent to the Martian Prison for use as an experiment subject in some vile butchery.*

## Corps Operations

This is the nerve centre of Psi Corps, co-ordinating any cross-branch or cross-departmental initiatives. Information and reports from all over the Corps pass through Corps Operations. One of the primary purposes of this section is to utilise all the Corps' resources, so Corps Operations puts Metapol in touch with the latest telepathic techniques from Science and brings Legal expertise in to help the Director's Office when dealing with the government.

Corps Operations serves the Director's Office directly and is responsible for implementing any directives issued. Psi Corps personnel are familiar with the regular bulletins and updates from Corps Operations. At least one update is sent out every week and the message includes an automated response programme that reports when and for how long the recipient read the bulletin. Those who fail to read the bulletins in detail are reprimanded.

The section is also responsible for handling the Psi Corps' public relations, overseeing the PsiCom network and assisting the Director's Office liase with EarthGov. Corps Operations organises the monthly meetings of the Operational Committee and is responsible for assembling the Director's Briefing Reports from the various Departments.

*Operations is little more than Resource's puppet, its paid piper who makes the Corps dance to its tune. It is also heavily infiltrated and staffed by O'Brien's cronies.*

## Works & Buildings

The Works & Buildings section is responsible for the construction and upkeep of TeepTown, the Syria Planum facilities, the metropolitan Psi Corps Testing Centres and all the other permanent structures owned or administrated by the Corps. It also manages the Corps' motor pool, shuttle fleet, vehicle hire and so on.

One of the more notable facilities under the control of Works & Buildings are the Psi Corps Re-education Camps, located at Syria Planum and at Amiento in the Republic of South America. All the telepaths captured by the Psi Corps are taken to one of these facilities, where their personalities are broken down and adjusted by the Corps' carers. These camps have an almost total success record in turning blips into fully functional and productive members of the Psi Corps. In accordance with Earth Alliance law, a telepath convicted of breaking EA law must serve the same length of time as a normal who breaks the same law but a telepath's sentence is served at the Re-education Camp or spent doing social work on behalf of the Corps.

The re-education camps consist of a set of prisoner barracks where the rogues are kept. The rogues are kept dosed with sleeper drugs, which prevent them from using their powers. As their re-education progresses, their sleeper dosage is proportionately reduced; the more responsibility the telepath takes for their powers, the more power they are permitted. While at the Camps, telepathy (especially the Reality Fabrication power) is used to make the rogues understand what they have done wrong and why law-breaking





## Department of Administration Characters

Administration characters can be of any P-level, although there are a surprisingly high number of politically ambitious P10s, especially in Corps Operations and the Director's Office. A high Intelligence or Wisdom is a good choice for such a character.

**Recommended Telepathic Abilities:** Mind Shield, Communication.

**Recommended Feats:** Data Access, Mental Fortress.

**Recommended Skills:** Diplomacy, Gather Information, Telepathy.

Administrators rarely advance very far in the Telepath class, preferring to move to the Diplomat, Agent or similar prestige classes.

## Scenarios

Adventures in the heart of Psi Corps bureaucracy are hardly likely to be thrilling but a short scenario could have the characters trying to infiltrate this department. It is also a key department to have contacts in.

For example, a group of young rising star telepaths (the Player Characters) could be selected by an elderly administrator (probably with a deep, throaty voice) within Corps Operations. He has become concerned about alien influence (the Shadows) within the Corps and intends to use the characters as his tools to investigate it. He pulls strings to get the characters into places where they can find out what is really going on. Part two of the campaign, of course, kicks off when the administrator is caught or killed and the characters realise that they are next...

is wrong. Telepathy is also used to determine whether or not a rogue is responding to treatment. The rogues cannot fake remorse or rehabilitation – deep scans are used to delve into their minds to weed out any deceit or disloyalty.

The staff for the re-education camps include several non-telepath guards and technicians but the majority are

telepaths. Security is provided by the Psi Security force and consist of razor-wire fences (mines and screamers on Mars), electronic tags, regular patrols and riot control teams. These precautions are rarely needed; in all the years of operation, the camps have had only a handful of minor incidents and no major ones.

The real camps are hidden. These are just the shiny happy zoos where the shiny happy reformed telepaths flash their smiles and say how deeply the Corps has touched them and how happy they are to be pure and shiny once again.

Yes, the Corps has touched them deeply. Those brutes ripped their minds apart and tore out whatever made them alive then p□ the latest shade of black and don't forget your slave collar – I mean, your shiny happy Psi Corps badge.

Yes, they are happy to be pure once again. They have spent months or years being brutalised and degraded, raped and tortured. They have been psychically demolished, stripped down to the bare essentials of their personalities then turned into something they are not. God, but it sickens me.

'Carnal, bloody and unnatural acts, accidental judgements, casual slaughters, deaths put upon by cunning and forced cause...'

## Office of the Director

The original Office of the Director was housed in the Psi Corps Headquarters in TeepTown and that is still its official home. For the last 30 years, though, most of the Office's staff and activities have been located at Southwick House in England, just outside Greater London. This stately home has a long and proud tradition of service – for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was also known as HMS *Dryad* and was where the Normandy landings were planned. It was purchased by the Psi Corps in 2210 for use by the Military Department and was taken over by the Director's Office in 2228.

The Director is appointed by the Earth Alliance President himself, and is the ultimate authority within Psi Corps. He chairs the Operational Committee, which consists of all the heads of the various Departments and is responsible for determining Psi Corps policy and standards. The Director reports directly to the President and the Earth Senate Committee on Metasensory Affairs.

The Operational Committee meets every month at TeepTown. The Corps Operations centre sends the

Director a briefing document from each Department two weeks before the meeting, so the Director can raise any outstanding issues or problems with the department heads.

The Corps has four Assistant Directors, who act as substitutes for the main Director should he be unwell or unavailable. Three of the Assistant Directors also act as heads of the three main branches of the Corps. One is the Training Director, responsible for the Training Corps which encompasses the Department of Education, any cross-training or skill reinforcement exercises within the Corps, as well as the re-education camps. The second is the Alliance Director, who oversees Military and Legal and helps co-ordinate the use of telepaths within EarthGov. The third Assistant Director is the influential Commercial Director, who runs the Commercial Corps.

The fourth Assistant Directorship is the Martian Director, who acts as a proxy for the main Director on Mars colony. The growing scope of the Corps' activities outside the Sol system means that two new Assistant Directorships will soon be created (Director Proxima and Director-at-Large).

Director Johnston practically fled TeepTown in a panic back in '28 – the mundane was terrified of telepaths, so he moved the Director's office back to England. He staffed it with mundanes and the few telepaths he could bring himself to trust, mostly moderately powerful late bloomer Pios who he had personally vetted and trained. The current Director, O'Brien, has continued this policy. The only contact between Psi Corps and its Director comes during its monthly meetings and the only point of the monthly meetings is to pass on whatever orders come from Clark's office. Clark may be gone now but O'Brien is still in charge and the Corps is still going strong.

This is a good a time as any to discuss politics and conspiracy within Psi Corps. We do not face a monolithic, united foe – the Corps is riven with internal dissent and hatred. Their minds are closed and they lack the consensus, the unity... the love we share for each other.

The roots of this division go all the way back to Kevin Vacit. He pushed for a strong, independent Corps and created hidden operations like Sigma that made the secret sections of the Corps more powerful than ever. When Johnston took over, his brief was to drag the Corps back into line by any means necessary but also to expand the secret sections and make telepaths useful as military weapons, spies and so on to deal with threats like the Dilgar (and later the Minbari). Underlying all these political manoeuvrings and feints is the simple truth that mundanes hate and fear telepaths and that many telepaths believe they are superior to mundanes. This gives rise to several factions within the Corps... not all of these are organised conspiracies or formal power blocks, as that level of dissent is not tolerated in a society where everyone loves Mother and Father. Most are just political or philosophical leanings that are commonly known but go unspoken. Everyone knows that such-and-such is pro-telepath, or that Department Sigma quarrels endlessly with Shadow Science and the Director's Office. The hard core of each faction are formal conspiracies, though, secret societies and cells of desperate men.

The 'pro-telepath' faction, first formulated by Vacit and now led by Bester and his Cadre Prime cronies, believe that telepaths are superior and that the Corps is a necessary institution to strengthen and protect telepaths.



They seek to extend the Corps' powers in preparation for a day when telepaths will rule or replace humanity. Some are idealistic dreamers, who think that a new form of Dust or long-term breeding programmes will turn all humans into teeps and unite the species in consensus. Others prepare for an out-and-out bloody war with mundanes, where the Psi Corps uses whatever weapons it can to defeat the barbarians at the gate. Super-teeks, mass suicide directives, self-replicating terror thoughts and other telepathic weapons as well as conventional arms are fervently sought after by those who believe that an open war is coming. Others, including Bester, believe that it will be through manipulation and conspiracy that the war is won. If the mundanes elect their leaders, and the leaders are controlled by the teeps, who rules the world?

The 'anti-telepath' faction, instituted by Johnston and continued by much of the bureaucracy, holds that telepaths are dangerous and must be controlled or even eliminated. They seek to rob telepaths of freedom, of ambition, of any humanity or ability to rebel. They try to keep the Corps divided and fearful, to prevent telepaths uniting against their mundane gaolers.

There are degrees of extremism within both factions, from those who believe that telepaths should simply be segregated from mundanes to those who think that the Corps should be wiped out. Some on both sides sympathise with the rogues, believing that if telepaths get out of humanity, it will be better for all concerned.

Neither side is above using telepathic coercion or manipulation. Loyalties become fluid, changing depending on whose P12s get to the other side's first. One of the Director's most loyal anti-teep aides might be reprogrammed to pass information back to the pro-teeps; a Psi Cop might have an action block inserted compelling him to murder any powerful rogues he can instead of bringing them back, to keep telepath numbers down. No-one can be trusted, not even oneself.

Before I left the Corps, there were rumours of new factions forming, new complexities in the conspiracy. With Lyta's help, I have been able to re-evaluate rumours and curious pieces of evidence and I believe I know what went on in the Corps during the Shadow War.

EarthGov was contacted by agents of the Shadows sometime during 2253 or thereabouts – possibly soon after Sigma woke up the ship on Mars. They would have approached senior officials, just as Morden did here on Babylon 5. The Psi Corps would have known instantly of such meetings – they may have even spoken to O'Brien directly. Telepaths were created as weapons against the Shadows, so they must have feared us even when we did not know them. They already had an opening through which they could infect the Corps – the alien technologies section of the ill-named Shadow Science division. That section had uncovered a Shadow vessel on Mars years before, so they would have responded instantly to offers of help in uncovering its mysteries. The Shadows used the Corps to reactivate its buried warships and provide telepaths to serve as living computers in the heart of its weapons.

Always, we are used as weapons. As flies to wanton gods are we; they kill us for their sport – but no more!

As the Shadow influence on the Corps and EarthGov grew, agents of the darkness subtly prompted the various sections of the Corps to expand their influence. Mind control and thought policing became more common on Earth; the Corps' control of Earth Intelligence grew. This served the Shadows' plans in two ways – firstly, it made Earth stronger, more controlled, more able to survive in the coming chaos. Secondly, it ensured that Earth's telepaths were turned in on their own people, instead of out fighting the Shadow vessels.

The Shadows would doubtless have approached both the pro- and anti-telepath sections in the Corps. Some would have resisted, fearing alien influence or subversion and thus creating even more rifts within the Corps' leadership. To O'Brien, the Shadows would have offered methods of controlling telepaths. To the pro-teeps, the Shadows would have seductively whispered that they supported the ascension of superior beings, and that telepaths were destined to rule over common humanity.

Perhaps the only mistake the Shadows made was when some bureaucrat chose a rogue, Carol

Fire damage meant I was unable to retrieve the rest of this section. I'll fill it in myself, then you can have the lab techs integrate it with Byron's original. I'll add some Shakespeare quotes and heartfelt asides – oh, the humanity! – to make it seem like Byron.

— AI

# Trust The Psi Corps

*Everything up to this point, I based on documents I removed from the Corps before I left, which I updated when further stolen information came into my possession. The material in this section contains the Corps' most closely guarded secrets and they would never let such information slip away in the mind of a rogue. I must perforce use writer's licence and create documents where none exist based on rumours, stories, stray thoughts and suppositions. For consistency, I have endeavoured make these suppositions resemble the cold facts of previous chapters. I believe that what I record here is as close to the truth as any outside the Corps can know; let posterity be my judge.*

## SIGMA

'Sigma' denotes the summation of a thing and Department Sigma was created to be the sum of what telepathy is capable of. It was the first of the secret departments to be formed.

In 2148, early explorers on Mars discovered evidence of an ancient alien civilisation beneath the sands. The attempts to interface human technology with the recovered artefacts failed dismally, so the researchers turned to telepathy. The initial result of this experiment was perhaps a more dramatic failure – the telepath was able to awaken some aspects of the alien organic devices but was driven mad and soon committed suicide. The incident was investigated by the personal aide of the head of the Metasensory Regulatory Authority – one Kevin Vacit, who would soon become the first Director of the newly-formed Psi Corps.

Excavations and experiments continued, with more and more telepath involvement. In 2171, a new research facility was secretly built on Mars, officially under the aegis of the Department of Science. In reality, this facility answered only to Vacit and was dedicated to unravelling the mysteries of the organic technology. Vacit's fascination with the technology continued and drove him onto investigating the origins of telepathy.

In 2183, Vacit appointed his aide, Natasha Alexander, to head a new Department, codenamed Sigma. This department would

be completely independent of the Science Department and be dedicated to the improvement of telepaths by any means necessary. A second new facility was built on Mars, closer to the new dig sites, because the secrecy of the 2171 dome was compromised. The old dome was handed over to Science and the newly minted Department Sigma moved into its hidden fortress out in the wilds of Syria Planum.

## The Sigma Fortress

The current home of Department Sigma is a massive fortress, dug into the side of a small mountain on Mars. It is almost invisible to satellite scans – there are only a handful of outdoor buildings not covered by rock and the station's heat and other emissions are channelled deep underground where they dissipate without being detected. It is surrounded by elite forces of Psi Security, including gestalt teams of telepaths who randomly Scan and project Pain along the borders of the fortress' territory. Anyone caught by the security forces is taken into the bowels of the fortress and never seen again.

Inside, the complex is a warren of underground vaults. Each project has its own laboratories and its own building budget, which means that the Fortress is a maze of passageways, cells, redundant power networks and security systems. Staff only know their own project area and the few common areas; no-one knows the entirety of the Sigma Fortress.

Given the independence of each project area, it might be possible for a spy to find a hiding place in one area and stay there without alerting the whole complex. Getting into Sigma is practically impossible; a frontal assault would have to blast through nigh-invulnerable airlocks and security doors, while a covert group would have to face constant scans and Bloodhound tracking units.





## The Sigma Protocol

Natasha Alexander was given full authority to do whatever and use whoever she needed to augment telepaths as Vacit desired. Her initial projects still echo through the Psi Corps today:

- ⑤ Firstly, Alexander implemented the breeding programme. Telepath/telepath marriages had been a common practise in the Corps before 2183, as telepaths were naturally much more comfortable with each other and generally did not socialise with mundanes. After 2183, the mating of teeps and mundanes became forbidden and telepath marriages had to be approved by the Corps' geneticists.
- ⑤ Secondly, she initiated a recycling programme. Dumping rogue telepaths in prisons or putting them on sleepers was seen as a waste of their potential. Sigma began the practise of using teeps in experiments and forcibly reconstructing them in the re-education camps.
- ⑤ Thirdly, she embarked on an ambitious series of research projects that skirted and then wholly transgressed Earth Alliance law and scientific ethics. Some of the fruits of this research were allowed to become public and were 'bubbled up' through the public Science sections. Most of these black projects are still secrets held by the Corps.

## Project Daedelus

The Daedelus project of Sigma is designed to produce a stable telekinetic. Every naturally occurring telekinetic is either too weak to be useful or is mentally deficient. As telepathy and telekinesis are usually triggered by the onset of puberty, the flowering of telekinetic ability interferes with brain development around this time, leaving the most powerful telekinetics with the mentality of – at best – a 12 year old. If telekinesis could be induced to develop later in life, once the brain patterns were fully formed, then this retardation could be avoided.

Daedelus uses a combination of drug therapy to boost telepathic abilities, neural nanotech to reinforce the brain cells and retroviral gene therapy to graft genetic material of active telekinetics into the DNA of the test subjects. Daedelus uses a series of two-step cycles. In step one, rogues or blips are taken from the prison at Syria Planum or from the re-education camps and are forcibly subjected to the 'unrestrained' version of the retroviruses. This procedure invariably ends in brain-death but suitable material can be harvested from the dying subjects and used in step two, where the harvested material is used on volunteers. Sigma prefers volunteers for the second part of this process, following a rogue telepath who used his abilities to blow a hole in the dome and killed 16 researchers. Alarming,

this incident coincided *exactly* with the eruption of a massive and unforeseen solar flare, which appeared to form spontaneously. None of the solar weather satellites detected any subsurface plasma currents that could have lead to such a flare. Psi Corps researches believe that telekinesis can be magnified by hyperspace, just like telepathy. The rogue's telekinetic pulse travelled through hyperspace until it hit Sol. Fortunately, Earth was not on the line between Mars and the sun at that time. The sun's gravity well appeared to contain the pulse. Still, this does imply that long-range telekinetic warfare has the potential to trigger a nova – which raises interesting questions about the end of the Dilgar.

Despite these precautions, Daedelus recently suffered a series of major setbacks. Its most promising subject, a former instructor named Jason Ironheart, escaped from the facility after murdering the lead researcher. He took with him another subject named Golmar Kuln. Ironheart died in 2258 but Kuln is still at large.

*The Corps is still reeling from the Ironheart incident. After more than a century of research produced nothing but a few mild drugs and a lot of dead telepaths, they happen upon the formula to make God. If Ironheart had stayed loyal to the Corps – the prospect is terrifying. The telepath war might have been fought and won by now, unless some other power on a par with Ironheart intervened. It was only through conscience – the basic alchemy of morality that the Psi Corps deny – that we were delivered of this nightmare.*

*Golmar Kuln left Babylon 5 in 2259 and headed towards Minbari space. I suspect he may have been looking for the Vorlons, or perhaps simply wished to hide with the Minbari. Whatever his goal, I do not think we shall see him again in our lifetimes – but I do enjoy surprises.*

Before his death, Ironheart's telepathic and telekinetic abilities were augmented beyond the wildest dreams of the researchers. Based on initial tests and a report from the Psi Cops who brought him down, Ironheart's P-level was off the scale and his T-level was at least T14. He also had a level of control that appeared to reach down to the quantum scale, giving him control over space-time at its most basic level.

While Ironheart had the best response of the project to date, he is not its only success. The rogues who were used as the step one incubators are still on ice in Project Daedelus' laboratories and their material can be harvested and injected into another test subject. The next set of volunteers used Psi Corps agents who submitted to Action Blocks, to ensure their loyalty when they undergo the procedure. A replacement step two team is currently undergoing testing.



## Project Lazarus

The Psi Corps expects loyalty beyond death. Lazarus began in 2237, when a range of captured Dilgar cybernetic technology fell into the hands of Earth researchers. Psi Corps took its share of this bounty and began to experiment with using this technology to prolong the useful life of powerful telepaths. By telepathically fixating the mind of subjects on the moment of death, consciousness could be preserved as the body was switched over to running on cybernetic implants. While Lazarus provided this service to Earth Intelligence, it also experimented with the application of it to telepathy.

### Psi-Experiments

The Psi-Experiment prestige class in the *Earth Alliance Fact Book* is used to represent characters who undergo this procedure. A step two character advances normally in the class; a step one character permanently loses 1d4 hit points for every level he takes in the class.

To become a Psi-Experiment, a character must be in excellent standing with the Psi Corps and have proved himself especially loyal and adaptable. He must also be in perfect physical health. A rogue, on the other hand, might simply be selected at random for step one of the experiment if his DNA happens to be compatible.

### Telekinetic Fog

An offshoot of Daedalus' research, telekinetic fog consists of billions of tiny particles made of a special organic plastic. This plastic is especially sensitive to telekinesis and is very easy to manipulate. Even a weak telekinetic can use telekinetic fog to create objects and tools. Telekinetic fog comes in the form of grenades. When thrown, the grenade creates a cloud of fog ten feet in diameter. A telekinetic can make a Telepathy check instead of a Craft check to instantly make items out of the fog. The result of the Telepathy check is used as the item's hardness and hit points, splitting the result as the character wishes (for example, a Telepathy check result of 16 could either create a knife with hardness 10 and 6 hit points or a pole with hardness 8 and 8 hit points). Only simple items may be made using the fog – electronics, moving parts and so on are impossible but knives, walls, manacles and other tools can be made easily.

The cloud of telekinetic fog hangs in the air for 30 seconds before collapsing to the floor and becoming unusable. Objects made of the fog before it collapses are permanent.

As of 2259, there were four distinct forms of this technology in use in the Psi Corps. The first, and simplest, implementation is the creation of Lazarus units (aka cyberzombies) from the bodies of fallen Psi Cops. While these resuscitated corpses lack initiative and their telepathic abilities are curtailed, they are also somewhat more resistant to telepathic assault and are therefore used as guards and interrogation assistants in Re-education Camps.

The second procedure leads to the creation of devices known as brain-lock cylinders. A dying telepath is ordered to activate one of his abilities and at the same time, another telepath 'locks' the dying telepath's mind on the moment of success. This puts the brain into a feedback loop where the telepath is constantly projecting a scan or a jamming field or whatever ability was desired. The brain is then surgically removed and placed in a life-support rig. These cylinders are easily transported and are used to provide psychic backup in situations where a telepath would be put at risk. For example, scientists investigating a telepathic alien artefact can just take a jamming cylinder (i.e. a tube containing a brain that is locked into producing psychic static) instead of bringing a telepath with them.

The third use of the Lazarus technology is the preservation of elder telepaths. They are kept in almost perfect stasis and implanted with cybernetic implants that collect the thoughts that slowly trickle through the telepaths' minds. Essentially, the telepaths can continue to think and communicate even while in stasis, albeit at a vastly reduced rate. These telepaths provide a living bank of wisdom and experience for the Corps to draw on, an archive of the almost dead.



The final use is a development of the third option. Sigma's Project Palimpsest has had some success in creating artificial or sleeper personalities within telepaths, which completely erases their 'primary' mindset. Experiments are underway in synthetic metempsychosis, where a telepath in stasis copies their personality into a blank, formatted new body. Should this procedure be perfected, then the telepaths in stasis could be reactivated and no telepath of sufficient power need ever truly die.

The Lazarus technology is described on page 36 of the *Coming of Shadows* season book.

## Brain-lock Cylinders

A brain-lock cylinder behaves just like a telepath but can only produce one sort of ability. It can be switched on and off manually or telepathically (using the Communication ability). It uses the same statistics as the telepath it was made from but the telepath is assumed to be taking 15 on every roll. All brain-lock cylinders weigh 6 lb., have a hardness of 15 and 10 hit points. The common brain-lock cylinders (made from the brains of 3<sup>rd</sup> level telepaths) are:

**Jamming Cylinders:** Rating P10, telepathy +10 (Ability Focus (jamming)), Will save +5. Any telepaths within 200 feet of the cylinder suffer a -9 penalty to all Telepathy rolls.

**Deep Scan Cylinders:** Rating P5, telepathy +8, Will save +5. This cylinder uses the Deep Scan ability when activated; the Will save against the cylinder is DC 10. The cylinder must be programmed by another telepath (using the Communication ability) to tell it what to look for and must then be scanned using the Surface Scan ability to retrieve whatever it discovers. Unlike a normal telepath, the cylinder suffers no subdual damage for activating its abilities and so can keep scanning until the target's defences are broken.

**Pain Cylinders:** Rating P8, telepathy +10 (Ability Focus (pain)), Will save +5. Unlike the other cylinders, this device uses Pain on up to three targets when activated. It uses Sense Telepathy to distinguish telepaths from non-telepaths within 180 feet. It picks the nearest three non-telepaths to target with Pain unless otherwise instructed. The Will save to resist the Pain is DC 13.

## The Icebank

The elder telepaths kept in stasis function as a sort of slow oracle. Assume that between them, they have a bonus of +16 in any Knowledge skill and can answer one question per day. Questions are posed and answered using Telepathy.

## Personality Transfer

Preparing a telepath for personality transfer uses the same procedure as that used to make sleeper agents. However, instead of constructing a second, hidden personality, the sleeper part of the mind is left blank, to be filled in by the personality of a dead telepath. The new personality may transfer its levels in Telepath and any mental feats or class abilities over but uses the average of the host's Intelligence, Wisdom and P-rating and its own original Intelligence, Wisdom and P-rating.

Just like a normal sleeper agent, a personality transfer can lie dormant until triggered by a codeword. See page 104 of the *Coming of Shadows* season book for details on sleeper agents.

## Project Wellstone

While Lazarus' technology is applied at the point of death, the cybernetics of Project Wellstone are used by active telepaths. Most of the developments produced by this project have been deployed through the Cybernetics section of Science – devices like psionic booster nodes were created in Sigma laboratories.

Wellstone has continued to work with devices based on old Dilgar principles but is running a distant second to the Organic Technologies division of Shadow Science. Its primary goal now is inter-departmental espionage and the acquisition of its own Shadow technology.



## Project Lamarck

A spin-off from Daedelus, Lamarck experiments with creating new versions of the telepath gene sequences. Daedelus concentrates on mixing bloodlines and using drugs to trigger the genes, while Lamarck uses resequencing to create wholly new genes that mimic existing ones. The goal is to produce telepaths who exhibit entirely new abilities.

Most of Lamarck's experiments are failures and are incinerated before coming to term. The few viable subjects are decanted and allowed to grow within a special training centre. Abilities manifested so far include phasing, telekinetic flight, the ability to copy a personality completely and at least one instance of what is suspected to be a jump point opened using the mind alone.

While all the Department Sigma projects are dangerous and have had fatal accidents, Project Lamarck seems to be downright cursed. There have been no less than 23 deaths among researchers and test subjects within the last 20 years. Only three of these deaths were ever solved – one researcher committed suicide after murdering the most recent test subject, a six-year-old girl (named Eve-8) who had yet to exhibit any abilities. The researcher's suicide note insisted that the girl was actually a 'reality shaper', that the universe was beginning to conform to her wishes and that if she was not killed before she gained control of her abilities, it would be the end of the world. The other death that has been solved was the loss of another test subject, a 12 year old boy (John-4) who was capable of phasing through solid matter. He simply vanished into thin air. One Psi Cop investigating the deaths at Project Lamarck suggested that John-4 might still be alive and exists as a sort of hyperspatial ghost at the research facility and is exacting revenge on his creators and siblings.

Few of Lamarck's research subjects live long enough to be decanted and few of those ever grow up. Still, a handful of subjects are approaching adulthood and efforts are underway to take them out of the laboratories and let them live normal lives within the Psi Corps (and to contribute to the breeding programme).

## Project Lotus

Drugs have been the primary route of investigation for Department Sigma since the development of sleepers proved that drugs could cheaply and effectively affect telepathy. When Director Vacit inaugurated the Lotus Project, their initial goal was to produce what amounted to a reverse sleeper, a drug that would boost telepathy just as sleepers suppress it. The product of this research was the now-common drug Psion but this was far less potent than Vacit demanded.

Merely enhancing the brain chemistry was not sufficient – Project Lotus had to become more ambitious. Tests conducted by Daedelus on the human genome showed that even in active telepaths, there were several inactive genes that contributed to telepathy. If these hormones and chemical signals controlled by those genes could be activated by a drug, then the effect should be similar to breeding a telepath born with those genes active. The initial tests were less than promising, as the drug's boosting effect was much weaker than expected. Like Psion before it, the new drug (codenamed Synergis) was about to be declassified and made available to the rest of the Corps through the Science section, when a lab accident involving a normal test subject revealed that Synergis had a much more noticeable effect on mundanes.

The telepathy genes had become so widespread in the current generation of humanity that a dose of Synergis could affect a mundane, temporarily activating his latent telepathic abilities. This experience was an addictive rush for the mundane, as well as letting him perform what amounted to a Deep Scan without the training or discipline required for a telepath to do the same. If the effects of the drug could be made permanent, then all humanity could become telepathic. The Corps administration, especially Social Sciences, suddenly became interested in the potential of Synergis. Could a level of telepathy be engineered into the human race? Could the prejudice and barriers placed on telepaths be removed if *everyone* was turned into a telepath?

The major problem was that the effects of Synergis varied greatly from person to person and that most people lost their temporary powers within minutes. To produce a permanent, universal telepathy drug would require testing on a vast sample base – millions of users. Social Science warned of a massive backlash against telepaths if the Corps publicly announced any plans to turn normals into telepaths. Synergis also had the nasty effect of severely disrupting the brainwaves of telepaths scanned by a Synergis user. The public testing of Synergis as a step towards a permanent telepath-inducing treatment was forbidden and the whole project was buried.

In 2241, a drug named Dust appeared on the Martian black market. This drug gave users a temporary burst of telepathic power. To those who knew about the classified Lotus project, it was obvious that someone within the Corps had deliberately leaked a version of the Synergis drug to the narcotics cartels. Dust differed from Synergis in two important ways – faint but barely detectable signs of it lingered in the body for decades and it had a much higher chance of causing lethal feedback to the user or triggering suicidal impulses. As Dust was obviously a telepath-related matter, the bodies of those who died from a Dust overdose



fell under the jurisdiction of the Psi Corps and could be autopsied by Medical staff. The new drug was a deliberate ploy to test Synergis on a wide sample of mundanes and it was literally killing them to get results.

An internal investigation was launched to discover who had leaked the drug but only a few lab techs (obvious scapegoats) were ever convicted. The genie was out of the bottle. Making the best of a bad situation, Lotus was ordered to continue the Dust research, including the autopsies of overdose victims and continue to refine and improve the formula. Still, the once-bright dream of a universal telepath treatment is now sullied and Dust is another of the Corps' dirty little secrets. The new phase of Dust development began in 2255 and is expected to produce a form of the drug that gives telepathic powers for at least five years per dose within two decades.

Lotus has also continued work on its original purpose of creating drugs to enhance active telepaths. As human pharmacology fails, the Project is turning more and more towards alien technologies. Interplanetary Expeditions has recovered several promising drugs and alien plants that hold promise. Two new drugs are in testing.

**Psirozone** actually increases the user's telepathic abilities somewhat (like Psion) but Psirozone can push the user above the P10 boundary that limits the older drug. The downside of Psirozone is that the brain quickly becomes dependant on the drug's effects, so Psirozone users cannot ever quit using the drug without suffering a significant reduction in their telepathic abilities. Psirozone is exceedingly expensive at the moment, so the only telepaths who can get a lifetime supply of the drug are senior staff and special operatives within Department Sigma itself. Psirozone's design is based on materials brought back by IPX from a dead world near the Vorlon border.

More focus is being placed on **Push**, the most powerful and radical telepathic booster drug yet. Push is a very powerful stimulant that accelerates the entire nervous system, especially the parts of the brain related to telepathy. The drug does soon lead to burnout and internal damage but the sheer effectiveness of the drug in emergencies is driving development and production of the compound. Psi Cop units are testing Push in the field and it will be widely available within the secret sections of the Corps by 2261.

Lotus also works with Daedalus and Lamarck to produce the specialised drugs required for their research.

## Project First Principles

One of the few projects at Sigma that does not involve genetics or drug treatment, First Principles is a scientific investigation into the human mind – specifically, into the *dissection* of the human mind. It currently consists of over 200 test subjects, mostly mundanes who have damaged the Corps in some way. The procedure is quite simple. The mind of each subject is shattered using a psychic assault from a gestalt of twelve P12s. The fragments of the mind that remain are sorted and transferred into the minds of other subjects. Each subject in Project First Principles is a container for one fundamental component of the human mind.

For example, the ability to distinguish up from down is one of these fundamental components, one of the core functions of consciousness. Everything from spatial awareness to morality draws upon it. There is a woman – or, at least, a thing that was a woman – in the Sigma cells, whose mind is now *nothing but that quality*. Whenever another mind is

**Psirozone:** A Psirozone user may increase his P-rating by +2 (+1 for P11s and P12s) for as long as he continues to take the drug. A character may go above P12 but does not gain access to any new abilities for having P-rating above P12. Each dose of Psirozone lasts for 48 hours. If a character misses a dose, his P-rating drops to *half* his current rating and he takes 1d4 points of Intelligence and Wisdom damage. The ability score damage heals normally but the character's P-rating is permanently blighted unless he takes another dose of Psirozone, in which case it returns to its previous, boosted level.

Psirozone cannot be taken in concert with Push or Psion. Psirozone is not available for purchase; each dose costs approximately 2,500 credits to produce.

**Push:** A dose of Push increases the user's P-rating by +1d4 for one hour. If the character ever rolls a natural 1 on a Telepathy check while using Push, he suffers 2d6 points of lethal damage due to strain on his nervous system. Push cannot be taken with Psirozone or Psion. Push is not available for purchase; each dose costs approximately 100 credits to produce.

shattered by the researchers, the fragment which contains that quality of knowing up from down is put into her mind. She has no memory, no personality, no mind at all except 219 mental fragments which tell up from down.

Her vertigo would kill her if she were not kept strapped down and sedated.

The ultimate aim of Project First Principles is to discover the fundamental particles of consciousness, the machine language of the brain. This will allow telepaths to scan and program mundanes with as much ease and precision as they program computers.

The administrators of this project are aware that they will need to break telepathy down in the same way, which will require the use of at least 100 rogues. Plans are also underway to create a similar database of alien mental components but such a project presents almost insurmountable difficulties. The major local races such as the Centauri, Narn and Minbari are the primary targets.

## Project Palimpsest

This is an offshoot of Alexander's 'recycling' initiative, built on research created by First Principles. The purpose of Palimpsest is to create designer personalities for use with telepaths. Some elements of this research have been made available to other sections of Sigma, such as Lazarus, as well as to the wider intelligence community, but most of Palimpsest's techniques are still secret. Rumours of its existence have filtered out as references to a 'sleeper programme' within the Corps.

The process used by Palimpsest is comparatively simple. It builds on two techniques that have been used by telepaths since the earliest years of the Corps – the construction of hidden memory vaults and the implantation of action blocks. A part of the victim's mind is sectioned off and filled with the Corps' commands. When the proper trigger is sent, the vault opens and the commands fly into place across the victim's mind.

Before the trigger is sent, the commands are almost undetectable, hidden inside the vault. The moment the trigger is received, the commands unfold, a terrible

psychic armature of twisted intent. Rewriting a personality would normally take days or months of work but by making the changes into a self-assembling programme within the victim's mind, the Corps have managed to create a method which only requires seconds to take hold and annihilate the victim entirely.

*Lyta's discovery of Talia Winter's sleeper self is known to most rogue telepaths and the secrecy of Palimpsest is hopelessly compromised. They will keep using it, though, as it is a damnably effective weapon against us. We must be ever vigilant.*

They turn people into their own killers.

There are three levels to Palimpsest. The lowest level is described as an 'agent system'. A set of commands are put inside the memory vault and sealed with a code word. It takes no more than three days to install an agent system. When the word is received, the commands attach themselves to the victim's mind. The victim's personality and self-hood remain intact but they are curtailed by the commands.

*This is what happened to Mr Garibaldi.*

The second level is an 'induced personality', also known as the 'russian doll' protocol. It consists of a series of nested memory vaults, each one of which contains another memory vault and another action block. Each vault has its own activation word, or they can be set to activate in sequence over a period of time. When each vault opens, its hidden command takes hold. The remaining commands stay hidden inside their boxes, waiting for their time to come.





## The Strange Case of Talia Winters

From what I have been able to gather, Talia Winters was a subject in Project Palimpsest in 2253–54, while she was working on Mars. Why a mid-ranking Commercial Teep should be chosen for conversion into a sleeper agent is something of a mystery. The Corps may already have been thinking about using Ironheart in the Daedalus experiments (his transformation began in '57) and planned on using Ironheart's old lover to control him. Alternatively, they may simply have created dozens of sleeper units to be assigned wherever they were needed – Talia was sent to Babylon 5, after all, and the Corps doubtless wanted a trustworthy agent there. Lyta admits that she got the posting partly because she had worked with the Psi Cops before and if it were not for her exposure to Kosh in 2257, she would never have left the Corps.

In 2258, Talia was gifted with... something by the evolving Jason Ironheart. Her powers began to develop in similar ways to his; she manifested telekinesis and was able to block Bester's probes. The 'original' Talia was destroyed in '59 when her Control personality was activated. She returns to the Corps, where she was transferred to Sigma after being debriefed. I suspect that her development ceased when the unfolding Control personality interfered with whatever mindseed Ironheart planted within her. Talia is – or was – a strong telekinetic and possibly a PI3 or PI4 telepath but is not – mercifully – an Ironheart-level entity.

Bester intimated that her brain was 'in a jar on his desk', which may have been a lie or a cloaked reference to the brain-lock cylinders. A locked telekinetic brain would be a powerful weapon. The Corps may simply have dissected her, looking for whatever change Ironheart made to her. She may still be held in a Sigma holding cell or could exist as nothing more

time. The Control personality is nothing if not patient, after all.

Lyta tells me that Kosh recorded Talia's personality onto a datacrystal shortly before she was killed by Control. If true, this crystal might have a copy of whatever changes Ironheart made, allowing the process that created Talia (or even Ironheart) to be replicated. It might also be our only way to stop an enhanced Control.

Induced Personalities are insidious because the change is so gradual. The first box might make a rogue slightly more trusting of authority, the next makes him think of coming back to Earth. The third box induces intense nostalgia, bringing back memories of his childhood in Psi Corps. The fourth box contains subliminal memories of loyalty and obedience to the Corps. The fourth sets the telepath up to betray the other rogues in his cell. Now, if another rogue were to scan the telepath at any point, he is only likely to find the smallest amount of telepathic tampering – the

inactive commands are hidden inside the memory vault, while only the most recently active command will show up as tampering. The older active commands will seem to be part of the normal operations of the personality.

The third and most complex level is termed a 'constructed personality'. Where an induced personality *alters* the victim, a constructed personality wholly *replaces* him. The personality is made up of a self-aware series of action blocks and compulsions. It is created in a 'child-like' state and must grow up within the mind – rather like a parasite. It folds back down into its memory vault when the 'original' personality is active but can come out at night or when a command signal is received. Building a constructed personality takes months or years, primarily because it must have time to mature.

## Project Icarus

Daedalus made the wings; Icarus flew too close to the sun and fell. Natasha Alexander recognised that Sigma needed a way to correct its mistakes, so she created Project Icarus. This section draws most of its staff from the Psi Cops and the



Military Department instead of Science. Icarus' troops are trained to deal with unusual telepathic abilities and bizarre situations. They are also deployed to cover up situations like the Dust scandal that might expose Sigma's existence.

Icarus' remit has expanded over the years and now it is used for a variety of covert operations. If Sigma wants to study

a Minbari telepath, then Icarus kidnaps one. If the Lotus project needs to retrieve an alien fungus from quarantine before it rots, then Icarus masquerade as raiders and attack the quarantine station. If a telepath is too talkative and needs to be silenced immediately, Icarus makes him disappear.

## Creating a Sleeper Personality

All three levels of the Palimpsest system are contained inside memory vaults. The rules for creating memory vaults are on page 126 of the *Coming of Shadows* season book.

Creating a Level 1 (agent system) vault is simple. The telepath just uses the Action Block ability (see page 60) as many times as necessary to set up the desired behaviour. He then creates a memory vault around the Action Blocks, which takes one hour per Block. For example, when Bester altered Garibaldi, he introduced the following commands:

- ⑤ Look for dangers to the Psi Corps, probably involving one of the Earth megacorporations.
- ⑤ Take whatever steps are needed to investigate these dangers without raising suspicion.
- ⑤ Accept further updates from Control.
- ⑤ Report back to Control.
- ⑤ Do not harm Bester or, by inaction, allow Bester to come to harm.
- ⑤ Obey Bester, so long as this does not conflict with not harming Bester.

It would have taken six hours to construct a vault around those six commands.

To create a Level 2 or Level 3 Palimpsest vault, the original personality must be overcome. This precise programming uses the Action Block or Reality Fabrication abilities again, but is very time-consuming. Add up the target's Will save bonus, Intelligence modifier and Charisma modifier. If the target is a telepath, add his P-rating and Telepathy skill ranks too. Subtract the creator's Knowledge (telepathy) skill from this total. This is the number of weeks (months for a Level 3 Palimpsest) that construction of the new personality takes. A Level 2 (induced personality) can contain up to 12 changes to the original personality. These changes work like Action Blocks but cannot be removed and the user does not get a Will save to resist.

A Level 3 personality can be whatever the designer desires. An entirely new personality can be made with whatever traits, beliefs and loyalties are required. While the personality must grow over time, Reality Fabrication can be used to give it tailored memories. In essence, an entirely new character is created, albeit one with the same abilities and traits as the previous, overwritten one. At the Gamesmaster's discretion, the new character may swap skill points or feats for more appropriate ones on a one-for-one basis; replacing 'Intimidation' for 'Diplomacy' and so on.



## Department Sigma Characters

Any researchers who deal with telepathy directly will be P10 at least; those who just work with cybernetics, drugs and other technical projects can be of any P-level. A high Intelligence and an utter absence of morality are required for any characters working in Sigma.

**Recommended Telepathic Abilities:** Mind Shield, Communication, Reality Fabrication, Pain.

**Recommended Feats:** Data Access, Mental Fortress.

**Recommended Skills:** Knowledge (telepathy), Medical, Technical, Telepathy.

Most researchers will mix levels in Telepath with levels in Scientist or another research-oriented class. Sigma can find a use for any character, though, from Soldiers to keep spies out and lab experiments in, to Xenoarchaeologists to recover alien telepathic artefacts. The other major role for telepaths in Sigma, of course, is as experimental subjects...

## Scenarios

The classic Sigma scenario is exemplified in the episode *Mind War* – a test subject gets loose and causes havoc with his augmented powers. Sigma staff (and the Psi Corps) have to bring the subject back under control and cover up the whole mess. There is an equal amount of potential in games where nothing goes wrong; the characters might have to bring a new test subject out into the wild and see how his powers work under stress, or recover a needed drug/plant/item/person.

A rogue campaign could start with all the characters escaping from Sigma and slowly finding out what was done to them there. Sigma makes great villains (experimenting on telepaths to turn them into better weapons) or even misguided heroes (Sigma is the original stronghold of the pro-telepath faction, even if they are now more pro-telepathy than pro-telepaths.)

## Shadow Science

*Bester once told me that irony is a fundamental component of the universe. Long before the Psi Corps ever knew of the Shadows, they created a hidden department that would perfectly serve the needs of the aliens. When Morden came to the Corps, Shadow Science fitted the black hand of his allies like a black glove.*

Department Sigma, the Corps' original black projects division, is focussed almost exclusively on improving telepaths. As Sigma grew and more and more technologies and techniques were spun off from this field of research, the Corps administration realised that a second black projects division was required to handle things like research into telepathic intelligence gathering techniques and countering alien telepaths. This would be a more general department than the laser-focus of Sigma, a black projects copy of the existing general Science Department – hence, Shadow Science.

Officially, Shadow Science is not a real department and its head does not sit on the influential Operational Committee. According to the Corps' organisational charts, Shadow Science is jointly run by the real Science Department (which provides the bulk of its staff) and Sigma (who originally provided Shadow Science with a base, funding and administration). Shadow Science was spun off from Sigma during the Dilgar war, to help cope with the influx of new and captured technology.

Shadow Science might have remained a footnote in the Psi Corps, a little section of Science that was slightly more hidden than the rest, were it not for another discovery in the red sands of Mars. Explorers found artefacts buried on Mars during the early, pre-Carter days. The telepathic investigations of these items lead to the initial location of Sigma on Mars but subsequent experiments revealed little useful about them. Mastery of organic technology lay tantalisingly out of reach. The sands threw up hints and promises – but no answers.

In early 2153, an Interplanetary Expeditions team digging in the inner reaches of Syria Planum found a massive sonic anomaly beneath the surface. They began to dig and slowly uncovered a vast black thing, spiny and cold like something from the depths of the sea, black as the space between galaxies, and *old*. Telepaths across Mars heard something when the sunlight touched the black ship, an eerie scream in their minds. For the next four months, first IPX and then the Psi Corps, elements within Earth Alliance Intelligence and EarthForce scanned, dissected, probed and analysed the ship. They were never able to penetrate its secrets but they learned enough to know that this black ship was *millennia* ahead of anything the Minbari had, perhaps even more advanced than the Vorlons. This was, they assumed, a relic from some million-year-old war, buried and forgotten on a dead planet.

After three weeks, another black ship dropped out of the Martian sky, sliced its ancient counterpart out of the ground and flew off with it. The pair slipped into hyperspace as easily and smoothly as they had flown out of the gravity well. The Earth Alliance tracked the hyperspatial wake of the vessels – they were heading towards the unexplored worlds on the Rim. Most of the researchers working at the site were vaporised by the second ship.

As the Psi Corps had research facilities almost on site, had some experience with organic technology and – most

importantly – had demonstrated some ability to control or at least affect the technology with telepathy, Shadow Science was at the forefront of the suddenly desperate research into the Martian Organic Technology.

The Psi Corps has always lurched from budget crisis to crisis. The promise of free education and healthcare for all telepaths, coupled with the inability of the Corps to invest and purchase shares freely, and the politically motivated cuts in Metasensory funding by successive Senates (not to mention the vast sums of money poured into Sigma) means that the Corps is utterly reliant on the efforts of the Commercial Corps to pay the bills. Unlike other organisations of the Corps' size and influence, it lacks any large cash reserve. When Shadow Science took the lead in EarthForce's investigation into the alien ships, it suddenly gained access to the 'Force's vast budget. Shadow Science, theoretically a sub-section of Sigma, abruptly gained a budget six times larger than its parent.

Most of the researchers and artefacts assembled by Department Sigma were transferred to the new Shadow Science division. The original pair of artefacts, the ones touched by Vacit in 2148, vanished without a trace.

*Lyta confirms from my descriptions of them that the original artefacts were probably Vorlon in origin. The ship found on Mars was certainly a Shadow vessel, as were most of the original artefacts scattered around the Martian deserts. I dream of a war of tremendous energy at each other. The war is fought on many levels, with many weapons. One of the ships, a Vorlon by the Vorlons. They catch the Shadow defenders of Mars with their minds and hold them while the warships destroy them utterly.*

*The Vorlons look down upon Mars and see a Shadow base there, a living crown of black spikes and pulsating tentacles. Their Vorlons depart, they sense that the Shadows have planted seeds under the sands, which will one day mature into living ships. Rather than destroy them – perhaps their weapons were exhausted or perhaps the discovery was made by some sort of clean-up crew instead of the initial battlefleet – the Vorlons place artefact seals on the growing ships, holding them in check like demons behind pentagrams.*

*IPX removed the seals in 2148 and a century later the ship has grown enough to fly.*

*The seals were presumably removed by someone in Sigma who worried about Shadow Science's intent. Perhaps they could be used to seal off other lingering weapons of the Shadows, left on other worlds.*

...

*More than any of the other sections, this is largely speculation on my part. I had contacts within Sigma; I saw the Motherships and the camps with my own eyes but Shadow Science was always a mystery to me. I have assembled what I can but the darkness holds its secrets.*



## Shadow of a Shadow

The primary goal of Shadow Science is to produce workable organic technology for EarthGov. The Shadow Destroyers seen in the closing stages of the War of Liberation are only one instance of how this technology is applied. Telepaths were used as handlers and control mechanisms – a literal black box could be awoken using a psychic signal. The technology seemed almost eager to be used, so even when the researchers did not understand how the devices worked, they were able to interface them with human technology.

Sometime in 2257, Shadow agents made contact with EarthGov. The most likely scenario is that they presented themselves as experts on organic technology – unlike the Centauri or the races in the League of Non-Aligned Worlds, there were no Shadow fleets striking at the enemies of Earth. The Shadow corruption of Earth was more subtle. They helped us become more like them.

Telepaths were created as weapons against the Shadows by the Vorlons. The Psi Corps, comprising the vast majority of active human telepaths, must have been a major target for the Shadow agents. Control of the Corps removes the danger of human teeps being used against Shadow vessels. The agents therefore played a dangerous game – they gave EarthGov the knowledge and help needed to develop organic technology, while subtly manipulating Clark's paranoia of telepaths. They presented Shadow Science as a loyal core of telepaths who could be trusted, unlike the dangerously independent-minded majority of the Psi Corps.

EarthGov had Psi Corps Director O'Brien take Shadow Science under his direct control. Shadow's influence began to grow within the Corps, as they recruited more and more telepaths who would be loyal to Shadow Science and

EarthGov instead of the Corps. They sowed dissent between the pro- and anti-teep factions in the Corps, placing more restrictions on telepaths while giving Shadow Science even greater latitude. While some powerful telepaths were busy dealing with these new restrictions or hunting down rogues, others were working in Shadow Science. No Corps telepath capable of being used against the Shadows would ever be allowed into a position where he was a threat.

The ultimate aim of this can only have been the eradication of the dangerous, pro-telepath Corps and its replacement by new order of thought police, run by the Shadow Science elite. It is possible that the Shadows were deliberately setting up a Corps civil war, in accordance with their philosophy of strength through conflict.

## Shadowtech

The Shadow Science division managed to activate numerous alien artefacts and in some cases they were able to replicate the devices. Some of these experiments were conducted in laboratories and research stations that were once run by Department Sigma at Syria Planum; much of Shadow Science research later moved to Ganymede or out of the Sol system entirely.

Shadow technology normally intertwines physically with living beings, becoming *part* of the host organism. Telepaths are able to create a mental connection without having to have a physical one, making them useful as living interfaces.

**Burn Nodes:** These are Shadowtech versions of the telepathic booster nodes pioneered by the Science Department. In addition to boosting telepathic powers (+2 bonus to Telepathy checks), these nodes vastly increase the damage done by a telepath's abilities. Any subdual damage inflicted

by the telepath on others is converted into lethal fire damage. The telepath can even use this damage to attack physical objects.

**Feedback Mice:** The Corps never figured out what these devices were actually for but several were found in the Martian ruins. They are little grey ovoids, small enough to fit in the palm of a hand. They are highly dangerous to telepaths. If a character scans the mouse, he is trapped in a feedback loop. Each round, he must make a Telepathy check (DC 20) to disengage his scan. Each time he fails this check, he takes 1d6 points of temporary Wisdom damage. A character



reduced to 0 Wisdom in this fashion is permanently insane. Furthermore, the mouse grows warmer and warmer each round and explodes (10d6 damage, 20 foot radius) after six rounds.

**Neural Augments:** This is an injection of nanites into the human brain. They reinforce the brain and the nervous system. Users of these augmentations have a dark, purplish-black stain under the skin of their temples and necks. The augments absorb subdual damage as a result of telepathic abilities, either from activating abilities or from attacks such as Pain or Nerve Stimulation. The neural augments can absorb 10 points of subdual damage per day. However,

the user cannot use any telepathy-altering drugs or other implants, nor may he target anyone or anything that has been touched by the Shadows.

**Null-telepaths:** Null-telepaths are living countermeasures against normal teeps, created by overlaying Shadow thought patterns onto human minds. There is no physical change to the subject; the alteration is purely mental. Adding the overlay requires the False Memory Implantation ability. The subject of the overlay has his Charisma permanently reduced by 2 points. Whenever a telepath uses any ability on the null-telepath, the pair must make opposed Will saves. If the null-telepath wins, the telepath suffers one point of

## Shadow Science Characters

Shadow Science characters were mostly employed by Sigma, so the same emphasis on Intelligence, science and lack of conscience applies.

**Recommended Telepathic Abilities:** Mind Shield, Communication, Reality Fabrication, Pain.

**Recommended Feats:** Data Access, Mental Fortress.

**Recommended Skills:** Knowledge (telepathy), Medical, Technical, Telepathy.

Shadow Science characters are likely to fall under Shadow control, becoming agents of the darkness.

## Scenarios

In short, Sigma is the evil nemesis responsible for experimenting on innocent rogues and turning them into insane telekinetics, manipulative empathes, psychotic cyborgs and drug-crazed serial killers, while Shadow Science are the monsters who deal with the Shadows, turn rogues into teepsicles, dig alien warships out of the ground and connive with Clark's government. Even for the Psi Corps, Shadow Science is a rather nasty organisation.

Characters are unlikely to advance to a high level within this division, largely because Shadow Science is a rather lethal place to be. Its two high-profile digs, on Mars and Ganymede, both ended in the researchers getting blasted by the very ships they were trying to recover. Shadow Science is also the enemy of the Vorlons, the Minbari, Sheridan's Conspiracy of Light, the pro-teep faction inside the Corps, the anti-Shadow/Clark factions in EarthGov and anyone with a vested interest in stopping the darkness.

While Shadow Science can be used as the target of an investigative campaign, it can be more fun to drop the characters right in the middle of the darkness and let them try to escape. Imagine a game where the characters are a team of IPX researchers, EarthForce operatives and telepaths. They receive orders telling them to report to a new station on Ganymede, where they are handed picks, shovels and spacesuits and told to start digging. Soon, the characters have unearthed a Shadow vessel – and one of them is ordered to enter the 'breach' that leads to the crew compartment. Suddenly, the *White Star* appears (see Season 3's *Messages from Earth*) to attack Ganymede. Their only hope of survival is for the characters to board the Shadow vessel and try to escape onboard – but who is going to merge with the ship to enable it to fly?



Wisdom damage and cannot move or act in any way. The pair continue making opposed Will saves until either the telepath wins and breaks free, or the telepath is reduced to 0 Wisdom and is driven insane. This requires no action on the part of the null-telepath; it is entirely automatic and passive. The null-telepath is otherwise immune to all mind-affecting abilities.

**Pilot Pods:** These curious devices are artificial versions of the control matrices of Shadow vessels. Essentially, they are temporary replacements for the living beings normally used to control the ships. The Corps first saw these devices in use in 2153, when the Shadow vessel found on Mars was rescued by another ship. The second ship implanted one of these pods in the buried vessel, allowing it to fly without a living being on board. More of these pods were discovered by the Corps on Mars (or possibly obtained through the Shadow allies working with Shadow Science).

When a pilot pod is integrated with a ship's systems through cybernetic grafts, it can replace a large proportion of the crew. Each pod has a Pilot and Technical skill of +10 each, as well as the Spacecraft Proficiency feat. Each pod can replace up to twenty-five pilots, officers or crew. A vessel's control systems must be retrofitted to include control lines for the pod, a process that takes several weeks. Once these control lines are in place, though, the pod can be fitted or removed easily.

**Sensor Blankers:** These are small devices the size of a credit chit. When touched to any computer network, the blanker forces the computer into a loop, preventing it from functioning as long as the blanker is within 250 feet of the computer. The computer does not crash (although systems attached to it may do so) and operates normally when the blanker is removed. The blankers have an effective Computer Use skill of +40 for overcoming defences against this kind of interference. Psi Corps units are sometimes issued with these devices to shut down electronic surveillance while they telepathically shut down physical surveillance.

In addition to these discrete devices, Shadow Science also developed new computing and medical techniques using alien technology. It is likely that Shadow Science could replicate and improve on many of Sigma's projects (especially Daedelus and Lotus)...

**Shadow Telepath Rig:** This cybernetic implant attaches to the user's temples and face, burrowing through the skull into the brain. Once attached, the implant cannot be removed. The telepath gains all the abilities of a 5<sup>th</sup> level cyberpath, as well as a +4 bonus to Telepathy checks and a +2 increase in his effective P-rating. The downside is that the user is almost certain to be driven insane. He must make six Will

saves at DC 20 during the implantation procedure; failing any of these saving throws results in the rig causing madness or catatonia.

*I can only speculate as to the current status of Shadow Science. Their empire within the Corps blossomed briefly. In 2250, they were nothing but a footnote in the Corps' organisation. By 2260, standing on the twin pillars of support from Clark's government and their connections to the Shadows, the division was the single most powerful power bloc in Psi Corps. Director O'Brien was its staunchest ally and the chief beneficiary of its influence.*

*Now Clark is gone and the Shadows are gone, but their effects on the Corps remain. O'Brien is still in power and presumably much of the Shadow Science technology remains in place. Still, the sharks must be circling – Bester and his pro-teep cronies want blood, and there are likely elements in EarthGov and Earth Intelligence who also want O'Brien and Shadow Science gone. The only way O'Brien will stave off the external pressure and avoid a reform of the Corps is by ensuring that the Psi Corps functions perfectly well during the transition to membership of Sheridan's new alliance.*

*The only way he will stave off the internal pressure from Bester is with blood and Shadow Science is already drenched in it.*

## The Ganymede Connection

Shadow Science's investigation of the sonic anomalies that detected the first Shadow vessel led them to contract IPX to scan the rest of the solar system for similar traces. Two likely sites were located – one on Ganymede, one on Pluto. The decision was made to begin excavating the Ganymede site in 2259. Around the same time, the bulk of Shadow Science's operations were moved off Mars, away from the prying eyes of Sigma. Some were moved to Earth; the rest to secret EarthForce bases outside the Sol system.

The Ganymede dig discovered another alien vessel in 2260 and the decision was made by the IPX crew onsite to reactivate it and fly it back to Earth. The results were disastrous – the alien ship awoke and destroyed the surrounding base before falling into Jupiter's gravity and being destroyed. A mysterious alien ship also attacked but arrived *after* IPX had sent their operative inside the ship. The catastrophe forced Shadow Science and EarthForce to re-evaluate their efforts. The next attempt to merge with a similar vessel would have to be much more carefully planned.

I suspect it was about this time that Morden or his associates presented themselves to Shadow Science as experts in organic technology. This may have been the first contact between Earth and the Shadows' agents or Morden may have been in place for some time and only now moved to influence the Corps. However it happened, the result is that within six weeks of the Ganymede incident, Shadow Science was requesting the transfer of rogue telepaths from the re-education camps to its laboratories.

Experimentation on rogues is hardly unknown within Psi Corps but the scale of the Shadow Science effort was startling. Hundreds of rogues were taken from the camps and vanished into the black maw of Science. Even the most grotesque experiments cannot have required so many victims – I conclude that Shadow Science was paying a tax, a tithe to the Shadows by late 2260. Presumably, their devil's bargain was that the Shadows would provide the Corps with technology and help from the Shadows' allies in exchange for a constant supply of telepaths outfitted with Shadow telepath rigs. Perhaps using telepaths as the control matrices in the shadow vessels made them more resistant to telepathic interference.

## Transport

As far as anyone outside the Psi Corps knows, the Corps' spacecraft holdings consist of:

- ⑤ Four freighters converted into covert fighter-carriers and used to intercept rogue transports; the *Alliance*, assigned to the Sol system and based at Luna; the *Balance*, assigned to the Sol system and based at Deimos; the *Clarity*, assigned to Proxima and based at Proxima Transit and the *Diligence*, assigned to Beta 7 and based at Providence.
- ⑤ Six squadrons of 12 Aurora-class Starfuries each. One squadron is carried by each of the four carriers; a training squadron is assigned to Earth and a second military squadron is kept at Io.
- ⑤ Eight standard transport shuttles, two of which have been converted to store prisoners. These are used to ship telepaths from one colony to another, avoiding unpleasant telepathic chatter from other passengers on commercial transports. The converted ships are used by the Psi Corps to bring rogues in.
- ⑤ 20 light shuttles, used for business trips, Psi Corp investigations, couriers and so on.

The Corps has contracts with several shipping and transport corporations and occasionally hires larger vessels for special

projects but lacks anything larger than a freighter and has no jump-capable ships. Its transport needs are overseen by a small office within Administration.

All in all, this is one of the most audacious and successful audit crimes in history.

During the Minbari War, in late 2246, the Earth Alliance deployed four new *Chiron*-class orbital repair facilities to outlying colonies. The intention was to reinforce the front lines by quickly repairing slightly damaged warships near the battle zone, instead of forcing them to fall all the way back to the inner worlds for rebuilding. EarthForce was convinced that they could pull the repair facilities back out of danger well before any Minbari advance threatened them. The facilities were small enough to fit through a standard jumpgate. A team of six tugboats was attached to move the stations if necessary.

Before the repair facility at Cyrus was even operational, a Minbari assault group led by the *Black Star* jumped insystem and wiped out all the defenders in a matter of minutes. The repair facility was not deemed to be a threat, so the Minbari jumped out without destroying it. One of the other ships to survive the attack was an EarthForce intelligence ship piloted by a P12 interrogator named Amy Chen. She rendezvoused with the facility and suggested the tugboats bring the facility to a nearby uninhabited system. Meanwhile, she would take her damaged shuttle and try to slip through the Minbari lines and get help from Earth.

Chen made it back to the Alliance but she reported to Psi Corps instead of telling EarthForce that their *Chiron* facility had survived. The Corps decided to keep the facility a secret, an ace-in-the-hole for the Corps. It is likely that some in the Corps leadership were planning an escape from Earth and intended to use the hidden *Chiron* as a repair and refuelling stop as they fled from the Minbari. However, the war ended at the Battle of the Line soon after Chen made it back.

The Corps resolved that telepaths would never again be so dependent on mundanes for their protection and survival. The Corps needed their own space fleet and the *Chiron* station gave them an assembly base. From 2248 to 2250, they secretly purchased ship parts from suppliers all over the Earth Alliance. It was a buyer's market due to the vast amount of scrapped and damaged ships left after the war. The parts were brought to the *Chiron* station for assembly into the first of the Corps' Motherships. The design was based off the common *Bradbury*-class liners, so construction was surprisingly easy. The Corps also purchased another three *Bradburys* through a shell company and retrofitted them at the *Chiron* station.



## Psi Corps Fighter Carriers

Colossal Spacecraft; hp 200; DV 5 (-8 size, +3 agility), DR 8; Spd -; Acc 1/2; Dec 1/2; Han +1/2; Sensor +0; Stealth 13; Cargo 10,000 lb.; 3 Officers, 12 Pilots, 1 Sensor Operator; 4 Crewmen.

### Weapons

Two Light Pulse Cannon; 1 Front Left, 1 Front Right; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d6; Critical 20; Range 3; Rapid Fire.

Two Particle Beams; Turret; Attack +1 (targeting computer); Damage 5+3d8; Critical 20; Range 1

### Craft

12 Starfuries, 2  
Shuttles



Meanwhile, the Psi Corps began a joint project with Earth Alliance Intelligence to construct a new class of small ships designed to be used for covert insertions and long-range espionage missions. These vessels would also be used by the Psi Cops and Psi Security. The original intent was to use this project as a cover for obtaining parts for the Motherships but the Corps soon found that the new Shadowcloak Escorts were extremely useful in their own right. They also purchased extra Aurora-class Starfuries to augment their six 'official' squadrons. Some were purchased legally as spares; for others, the Corps faked the destruction of fighters and bought 'replacements'. No one outside the Psi Corps knows just how many fighters and ships that the Corps has obtained.

As of 2258, the Corps' hidden fleet consisted of:

Seven Motherships, all of which spend most of their time off the beacon in hyperspace. Each Mothership has space for 24 (two squadrons) Starfuries but only three of the seven carry a full fighter complement. The others have only 12 Starfuries (one squadron) onboard.

- 5 *Isis*, off Earth beacon (full complement)
- 5 *Thoth*, off Earth beacon (full complement)
- 5 *Osiris*, off Arisia beacon (full complement)
- 5 *Anubis*, off Arisia beacon
- 5 *Horus*, off Orion beacon
- 5 *Hekate*, off Deneb beacon
- 5 *Apophis*, off Proxima beacon

Another six converted freighters. These can also carry a squadron of Starfuries each but the Corps' lack of fighters means that several of these fighter transports are running light.

- 5 *Elegance*, based at Arisia (full complement)
- 5 *Forbearance*, based at Arisia
- 5 *Gravitas*, based at Arisia
- 5 *Honesty*, based at Deneb (full complement)
- 5 *Insight*, based at Deneb
- 5 *Justice*, based at Proxima (full complement)

The Corps also has 15 Shadowcloak Escorts, which are numbered rather than named. Most are at Earth or Arisia.

## Arisia

The *Chiron* repair station was moved to Arisia, an unaligned system just beyond the border of human space. It was placed in orbit around Arisia V, a barely habitable planet without any other colonists. Among the higher echelons of the Corps, this world is referred to as the Refuge – if public opinion ever slips from the Corps' grasp and humanity turns on them, then the Corps will retreat to Arisia and rebuild. The Psi Corps has no intention of leaving Earth and sees the planet as its rightful home and inheritance but the Refuge is a necessary precaution and a useful hidden base.

There is a colony of some 20,000 telepaths living on Arisia, along with the largest of the re-education camps holding almost 3,000 rogues. The colony is only slightly above the level of subsistence, producing few useful goods and is mainly made up of prefabricated domes and habitats. Its infrastructure is slowly being expanded but this is hampered by having to hide any purchases of hydroponics equipment, terraforming gear and so on – the secrecy of Arisia is paramount.

Knowledge of the existence of Arisia colony is on a need-to-know basis. In addition to senior Psi Corps officers, the crews of the Motherships, most Psi Cops and most of Department Sigma know about Arisia. It is unclear how much information has filtered through Shadow Science to EarthGov. Director O'Brien does *not* know about Arisia; his predecessor did, but died before he could pass knowledge of it on. The colony has been in place since 2251. Arisia is off the major jump lanes, so other than a few IPX or smuggler ships, the only ship other than Psi Corps to enter the system was a Minbari warship in 2252. It ignored or failed to notice the *Chiron* and has not returned. The *Osirus* Mothership now keeps watch over the Arisia jump gate and sends warning of any approaching vessels, giving time for the *Elegance* and *Forbearance* to intercept any hostiles, with the *Anubis* kept in reserve.

## The Motherships

The Mothership 'class' (if it was an officially recognised Earth Alliance vessel, it would technically be called *Bradbury-lambda*; the engineers working on it privately called it *Bradbury-psi*) is built on the same basic principles as most human liners. The central core of the ship containing the engines, shuttle bays, fusion reactors and other equipment does not rotate. The outer ring spins fast enough to provide 0.8g pseudogravity at the lower deck level.

## Core Section

The prow of the ship contains an advanced communications and sensor bundle. While the Motherships lack ELINT capacity, they can co-ordinate communications on a

planetary scale, as well as intercept tachyon transmissions. These sensors are mostly used to scan for other ships that might detect the Mothership if it failed to make a corrective course change. The bridge is located above and behind the sensor arrays. While it is of conventional design, the use of telepathy to issue orders and co-ordinate efforts means that the Mothership crews are superhumanly quick and efficient. The Corps has a long-term plan to obtain at least one Omega or even Warlock-class vessel and crew it entirely with telepaths.

Like most human vessels, the main hangar is located right on the central axis of the ship. The 'mouth' of the Mothership is rather narrow, so only one shuttle or Starfury can launch at any time under normal circumstances. It is theoretically possible for up to three 'furies to be launched at once but this would give each fighter less than a metre of clearance space between its neighbours and the hangar walls. Normally, the Starfuries are deployed from concealed launch bays around the engines at the rear. The rather cramped hangar has space for six shuttles and 18 fighters – the other six fighters are stored in the launch bays accessible from the back of the hangar.

Sandwiched between the hangar bays and the engines is a small space used for zero-gravity laboratories or manufacturing, although this space has been converted into a repair bay in some variants.

The massive fusion reactors powering the Mothership are located at the rear of the central core. They are of a conventional design (Marathon-Tsubasa Sunfire 2s). The first two Motherships constructed used two reactors; the latter five all have an extra reactor due to power problems and brownouts during the shakedown cruises of the first ships. Three narrow launch bays are located between the reactor pods. The particle beam cannons and Fore/Aft interceptors are also located on the central axis, as is the ship's jump drive.

## Rotation Section, Inner Deck

The innermost section is at slightly less than 0.4g. As the Mothership crews will spend months or even years without touching dirt, the Corps issues drugs to counteract the effects of reduced gravity. Most of the Inner Deck contains laboratories, storerooms, armouries, fuel tanks and other rooms that do not need a constant human presence. Rogues being transported in stasis are also held on this level.

The most notable feature of the inner deck – indeed, the most notable feature of the whole ship – is the set of sixteen long pylons that extend out from the hull. The lower



## Psi Corps Motherships

Colossal III Spacecraft; hp 850; DV 0 (-12 size, +2 agility), DR 21; Spd -; Acc 3; Dec 2; Han +1; Sensor +2; Stealth 10; SQ Jump Point, Long-Ranged, Artificial Gravity (Rotating Section); Cargo 550,000 lb.; 6 Officers, 28 Pilots, 16 Sensor Operators; 95 Crewmen, 200 Passengers.

### Weapons

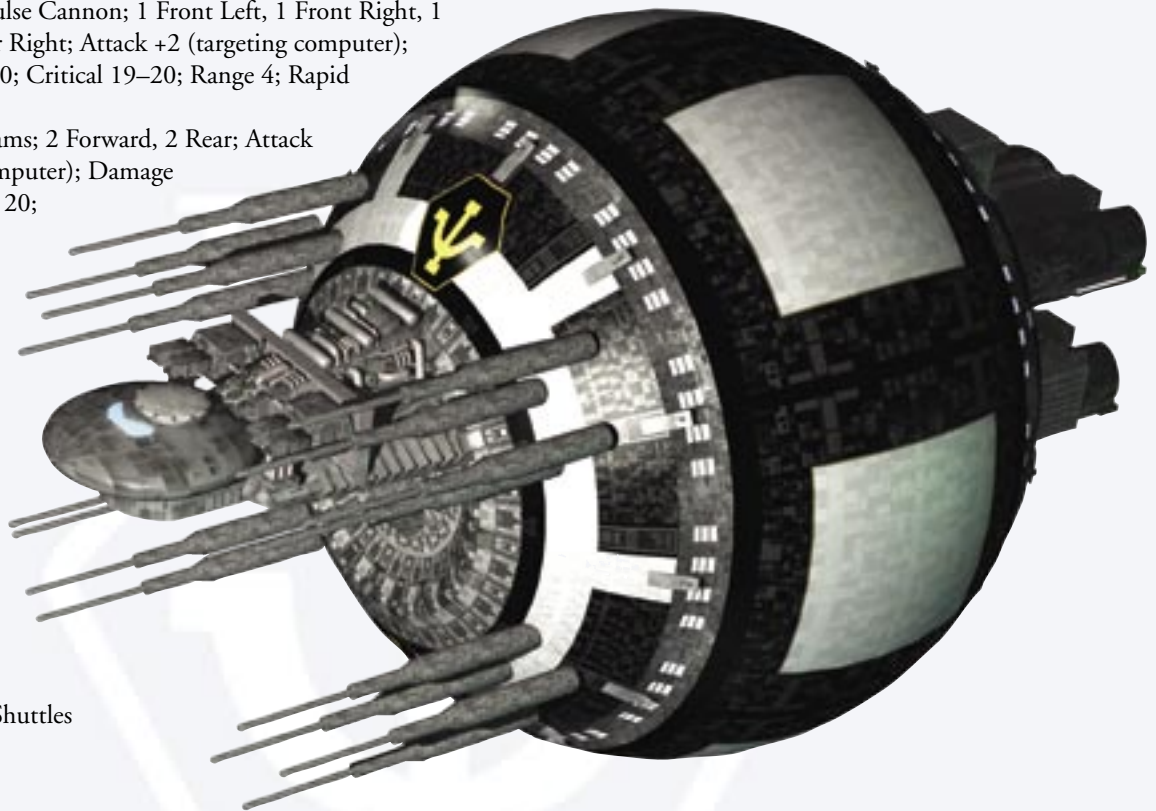
Four Medium Pulse Cannon; 1 Front Left, 1 Front Right, 1 Rear Left, 1 Rear Right; Attack +2 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d10; Critical 19-20; Range 4; Rapid Fire.

Four Particle Beams; 2 Forward, 2 Rear; Attack +1 (targeting computer); Damage 5+2d10; Critical 20; Range 2

Four Mk II Interceptors; 1 Front, 1 Left, 1 Right, 1 Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+3d10; Critical 20; Range 1; Rapid Fire.

### Craft

24 Starfuries, 6 Shuttles



sections of these pylons contain more sensors, but the upper section is almost hollow. There is a long, narrow shaft leading up to a tiny chamber at the very tip of the pylon, containing just enough room for a telepath to float there, all alone with only a few centimetres of plastic separating him from hyperspace.

The enhancing effects of hyperspace on telepathy are well known. The Corps has been researching this phenomenon since humans first went into hyperspace, but the Motherships are a huge step forward in *exploiting* this phenomenon. The telepaths assigned to the pylons are trained to attune to hyperspace and to project their thoughts into the shifting energy fields. They are almost close enough to touch hyperspace, and the effect on their abilities is remarkable.

All seven Motherships are in constant contact with each other. The telepaths in the pylons can send and receive thoughts over hundreds of light-years. This communication is faster than even the near-instantaneous tachyon transmissions used by the Earth Alliance and is far more efficient. The

Motherships act as relay stations for each other and for the Psi Corps' various ground stations. A Psi Cop on the Rim can receive a report from headquarters by entering hyperspace and connecting with the Arisia Motherships, who forward his thoughts to the Motherships stationed at Earth.

This psychic network can be used for more than communication. By triangulating thought transmissions from the other Motherships, they can move off the beacons and take much more direct routes through hyperspace, significantly reducing travel times. Normally, a ship stays close to the beacons between jump gates and risks becoming lost if it moves off the beacon into hyperspaces' eddies and gravitational gradients. A Mothership can plough on into the wilds, navigating by thought alone. In practise, this navigation method is used only when necessary; staying on the verge of the hyperspace beacon is safer and the loss of even one Mothership would be catastrophic. Still, the ability to cut days off a jump route is of huge value to the Corps and plans are underway to retrofit one carrier and several Shadowcloaks with teep pylons.

The Corps is also experimenting with using the telepathy network as a sensing device, a psychic radio-telescope. The whole Earth Alliance is within the scope of this network, so it is conceivable that the collective mind of humanity could be 'read', that the species could be treated as a single entity. So far, the focus of this effort has been on reading and recording information (which is then passed to Social Science for analysis) but Transport hopes to use Shadow Science's cybernetics to enhance the network and insert action blocks in humanity within a generation.

## Rotation Section, Middle Deck

This deck is a honeycomb of cabins and dormitories. The Motherships have a regular crew complement of over 300; when packed to the bulkheads, it can transport almost 900. This section also contains meeting rooms, interrogation chambers, labs, meditation rooms and so on, making it a microcosm of the Corps as a whole. The gravity here is 0.6g.

The air purifiers, water recycling systems and other environmental controls are also located in this deck, along with a set of powerful batteries. In an emergency, the central

core can be jettisoned and the rotation section can survive on its own. It would be unarmed, adrift and only able to survive for a few weeks but it could be rescued by a tug.

## Rotation Section, Outer Deck

This section contains more living space, including mess halls and a gymnasium, all at 0.8g. The outer hull has the remaining Interceptors and Pulse Cannons mounted on it. It also contains the lifepods.

Of the seven Motherships, four – *Isis*, *Thoth*, *Osiris* and *Anubis* – have been upgraded to work with the Shadow pilot pods obtained by Shadow Science. These ships are still fully crewed but are quite capable of functioning on their own. Alarming, the pilot pods appear quite capable of interfacing with every system on the Mothership, including the telepath pylons. The *Isis* maintained its place on the telepath network even when its crew abandoned ship during a coolant leak. The telepaths in the network describe the *Isis* as feeling 'cold and dark' but it was still usable as a thought relay and navigation beacon.

## Department of Transport Characters

Most characters here will be pilots and engineers, so a high Dexterity and Pilot skill are recommended.

**Recommended Telepathic Abilities:** Communication, Warning, Danger Sense.

**Recommended Feats:** Spacecraft Operations, Vehicle Combat, Vehicle Dodge.

**Recommended Skills:** Technical, Pilot.

Transport characters tend to have levels in the Officer or Soldier classes.

## Scenarios

Mostly, Transport exists to facilitate Psi Corps operations but a campaign where the characters just ferry Psi Cops around is not very interesting (*Space Taxi – I had that Bester in the back of my shuttle once...*). Covert operations and dogfights are more fun but Transport is supposed to be as secret as possible.

The ability of the Motherships to fly off the beam opens up new potential for exploration. The characters could be assigned to the crew of the *Anubis*, which is sent off into uncharted hyperspace. As it does not need to stay near a jump gate beacon, it can travel to systems without their own active gates, just like an *Explorer*-class vessel.

Another option is to assign the characters to the Corps' hidden Arisia colony as administrators and security staff. They would have to deal with rogue uprisings, alien incursions, the threat of discovery and the problem of trying to get supplies for a rapidly growing colony that does not officially exist...



## Psi Corps Shadowcloak

Colossal Spacecraft; hp 200; DV 12 (-8 size, +10 agility), DR 9; Spd -; Acc 5; Dec 3; Han +4; Sensor +2 (targeting computer); Stealth 21; Cargo 5,000 lb.; 2 Officers, 2 Pilots, 4 Sensor Operators; 10 Crewmen.

### Weapons

Two Medium Pulse Cannons; 1 Front Left, 1 Front Right; Attack +2 (targeting computer);

Damage 10+2d10; Critical 19-20; Range 4; Rapid Fire.

Two Light Pulse Cannons; 1 Left, 1 Right; Attack +3 (targeting computer);

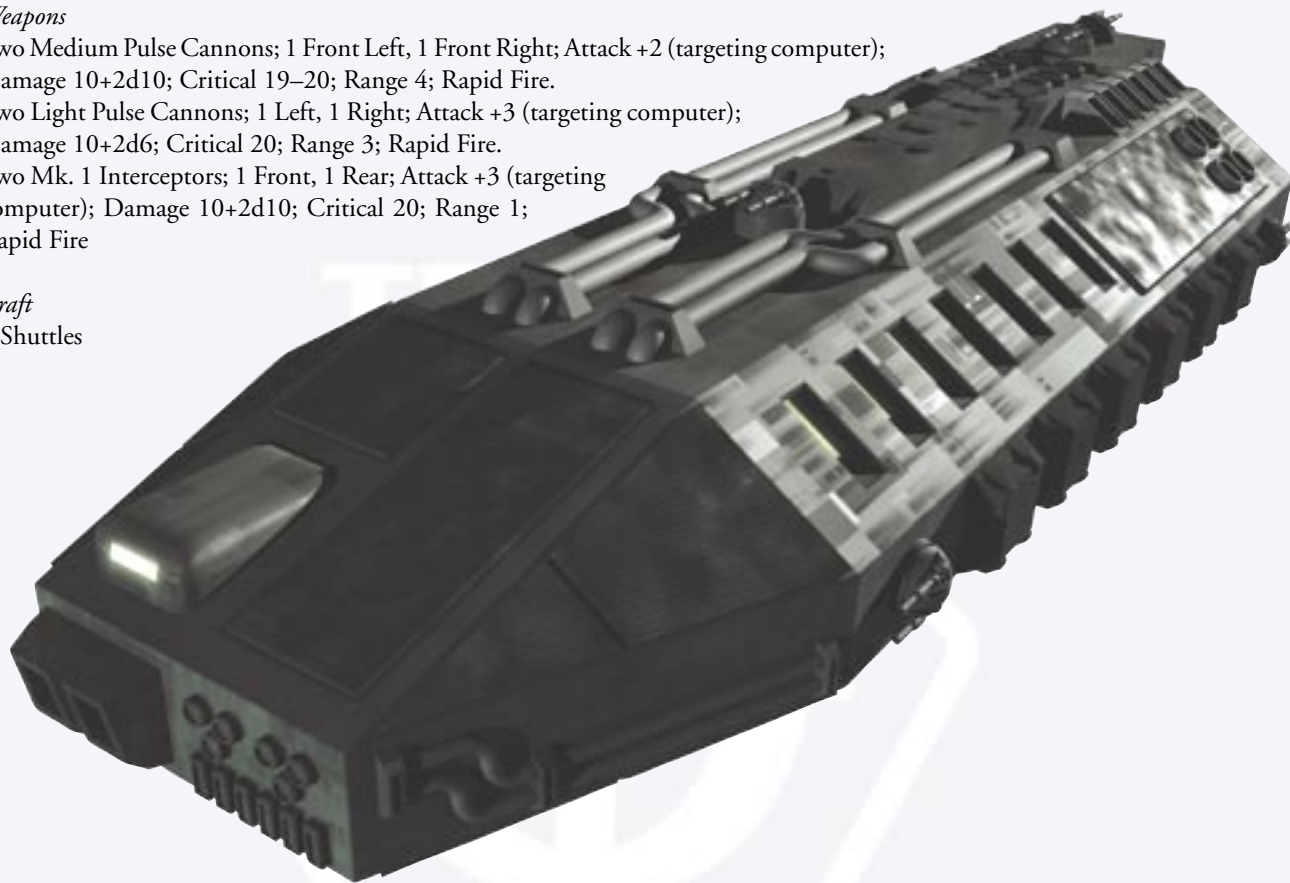
Damage 10+2d6; Critical 20; Range 3; Rapid Fire.

Two Mk. 1 Interceptors; 1 Front, 1 Rear; Attack +3 (targeting computer); Damage 10+2d10; Critical 20; Range 1;

Rapid Fire

### Craft

2 Shuttles



The *Anubis* is an even stranger case. During the transport of a frozen telepath equipped with a telepath rig, the stasis tube malfunctioned and the telepath escaped. She managed to integrate herself with the ship's systems. Unlike other frozen telepaths who were revived, she was somewhat stable and did not immediately attack those around her. The crew were able to calm and sedate her but have been unable to remove her from the *Anubis*' systems. Efforts are now underway to erase her personality entirely and replace it with one utterly loyal to the Corps, giving the Psi Corps its first truly living ship. *Anubis*' greater integration with living systems also makes it a prime candidate for the implantation of bio-armour, in a similar fashion to the Omega-X destroyer programme. Even though the integrated telepath is kept under constant sedation, the crew have reported all manner of equipment glitches, unexplained events and bad dreams.

Currently, the Motherships are used as mobile command centres and transports. The Psi Corps regularly use them to get to their destinations – not only is the Mothership considerably faster than a conventional shuttle or transport but it can also take shortcuts. The Corps also uses the

Motherships as mobile re-education camps and troop transports. They are also used occasionally as high-security research labs. Experiments are sometimes removed from Mars and held on a Mothership if there are fears that the research might be investigated by EarthGov.

## Shadowcloak Escorts

The *Shadowcloak*-class escort was built with the aid of Earth Alliance Intelligence, although the Corps has taken the lion's share of these unique vessels. The Corps has also used telepathic subterfuge to control the dissemination of information about the class, so many in EarthForce who should know about this craft have actually not been informed of its existence. A Shadowcloak visually resembles a *Tethys*-class police cutter from a distance and most Psi Corps Shadowcloaks are equipped with fraudulent IFF transponders allowing them to further masquerade as a police vessel.

The 15 Shadowcloaks are normally used by the Psi Corps or Psi Security, to escort important transports or the

Motherships. More rarely, they are called in to reinforce the fighter-carriers on especially difficult interception missions, or sent as exploratory vessels on long-range missions to track down rogues. The lack of a jump drive makes it more difficult for the Shadowcloak to operate independently; the Corps is planning a refit that would replace one of the vessel's shuttles with jump engines.

The Shadowcloaks are also used for surveillance. While they lack the innovative teep pylons of the Motherships, they do carry a team of telepaths on board who are adept at picking up thoughts over the hyperspace medium. Shadowcloaks regularly shadow EarthGov and EarthForce vessels at a distance, eavesdropping on the thoughts of their crew or passengers.

*Transport makes the Corps very dangerous. The ultimate choke-chain that EarthGov has on the Corps is the threat of destruction, that the army will be sent into TeepTown and Mars and all the other strongholds of the Corps. Having a secret network of ships and refuges means that the Corps' leadership know that they have a place to flee to. It makes Earth... disposable, if needs be.*

*The telepath network is another frightening weapon in the Corps' arsenal. It cannot be blocked and cannot be intercepted. Should a war break out between the Psi Corps and Earth, then the Corps shall strike at the tachyon communications systems, breaking the lines of control and command that holds the fleet together. If Earth is forced to devote its smaller vessels to being 'Pony Express carriers', bringing orders to the Fleet groups at a very slow pace, then the Corps has a significant tactical advantage. More to the point, the Alliance is open to an alien invasion, which the Corps would then exploit.*

## Resources

'Waste Not, Want Not'. The Department of Resources is centred wholly around that maxim. It was originally created to oversee the re-education camps. The first camps were inherited from the old Consortiums; the liberating forces of the MRA found ghastly charnel houses and torture chambers surrounded by barbed wire and filled with poor teeps forced into serving the Consortiums. The MRA should have stripped those places down as soon as they captured them but they had their own rogue problem to deal with. More and more telepaths were being found; feral telepaths, criminals and instinctive mindshredders who would not respond to mere counselling. The MRA had to have somewhere to put them, so it created Resources and used the same camps. It began as a necessary compromise – use the tools of those who hate telepaths to contain those who make them hate telepaths – but quickly became institutionalised. The use of prison camps to hold rogues did not become widespread

until the beginning of the 2200s but it has been a part of Psi Corps since the beginning.

Currently, the Corps operates two 'public' camps – one in South America, the other on Mars. These are sanitised holiday camps compared to the real re-education camps. Of these, six camps are located on Earth; another four are scattered around the Alliance. The camps are secret but their locations are relatively well known within the higher echelons of EarthForce and the Intelligence community. No-one within EarthGov cares very much – the camps are an internal telepath matter, swept under the carpet.

The camps have come a long way from the days of the Consortiums. Once, telepaths were brutally beaten by the guards to keep them from using their abilities to escape. They were starved and tortured to shatter their wills and lobotomised to be turned into malleable tools. Their friends and families were used as leverage against them, killed in front of them. It was a brutal, barbaric, hideous time designed to force compliance.

The Psi Corps has moved far beyond that. These are not torture chambers, they are designed to re-educate telepaths. Rogues are a resource to be reclaimed, not an enemy to be broken.

## Physical Layout

Each of the ten re-education camps follows the same basic lines. They are built using easily available and transportable prefabricated units, plugged into rudimentary utility lines. The rogues are housed in several large dormitories but bed allocations are changed every few days, to prevent friendships or alliances forming. Fraternisation is completely forbidden. Young children (below the age of 12) are sent to a special juvenile section and are normally transferred quickly to the training cadres on Earth.

Each dormitory is separated from the others by an electrified fence or a stun-field wall. The entrances all face away from each other, so anyone trying to move from one dorm to another must take the longest possible route. The camps employ a mix of mundane and teep guards, as well as remote-control drones to maintain order.

At the centre of each camp is the Command Section, a tower that overlooks the entire camp. The Command Section has a state-of-the-art computer security system, which combined with regular telepathic scans of the staff and guards ensures that the section remains inviolate. Among the items stored in the Command Section are sleeper drugs for the rogues, a considerable armoury and an automated alert beacon that activates in the event of a riot.



## Breaking In or Out of a Camp

The average camp contains around 800 telepaths and 300 staff, of which around half are guards. The guards generally include a number of mundanes (usually around 30) but the remainder are trained Psi Security telepaths. The guards are usually 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> level soldiers or soldier/telepaths. The staff are mostly doctors and counsellors, and always include at least one P12 mind-surgeon.

The camps are always surrounded by mine or laser fields. Remote drones and shuttles also run regular patrols around the area. The camps are regularly targeted by rogue terrorists, so security is high. Disarming the security systems manually uses the Technical skill; DCs range from 15 to 25. Surface scans are used as backups to normal electronic passes, so at least one character in a group will be scanned if the characters try to bluff their way in.

Surrounding the dormitories is the outer ring of schoolrooms, medical labs, guard towers and disciplinary stations. Again, these are constructed from smaller prefab units, and are mostly indistinguishable from each other from the outside. The whole camp resembles a small factory town from orbit, only without the factory.

## Guards

The staff at the camp can be divided into six types:

- 3 General Staff
- 3 Mundane Guards
- 3 Teep Guards
- 3 Grins
- 3 Doctors
- 3 Surgeon

The general staff are the administrators and analysts, who are rarely seen by the inmates.

The mundane guards are thugs, recruited from anti-teep gangs. They are paid well and get to beat up on the telepaths. The purpose of having these thugs on staff is to show the inmates that mundanes hate them and that only the Psi Corps can protect them from mundanes. The teep guards, by contrast, are as pleasant and kind to the inmates as possible but are trained in the use of Pain.

The 'Grins' wears the same electronic masks as the 'Grins' who discipline children in the cadres. For a rogue, entering the camp feels like returning to school. They are used as the silent embodiments of authority and indicate which specific inmates require punishment or praise.

The doctors run the Care section, while the surgeon (there is only ever one surgeon at a camp, always a P12) oversees the ultimate expression of Trust and Love.

Rogues and adult blips brought to a re-education camp go through four stages during their time there; Care, Understanding, Trust and Love.

## Care

Most inmates arrive at the camp suffering from malnutrition, sickness, bone cavities due to too long in microgravity and parasites, not to mention a veritable cavalcade of psychological issues and scars. The Care stage is designed to repair this damage and prepare the telepath for the next stages. The subject is tested for P-level if this is not already known and is then tattooed with his P-level and Inmate Code. The subject is placed on a regimen of vitamin supplements, calcium boosters, antibiotics (and disinfectants), sleepers (to relieve the burden of telepathic stress) and sedatives.

This high level of medication is only a temporary measure, as having so many drugs disrupting the subject's metabolism interferes with Understanding. Once, telepaths were beaten to ensure compliance and to keep them under the control of the guards; now, the practise of muscle group clipping is used along with the application of the Pain ability. Special implants are injected into the major muscles of the subjects, which considerably reduce their strength and agility. In a normal prison, this electronic hamstringing would interfere with the prisoner's ability to work; here, the patient's *mind* is the important thing. Any damage done to the patient's health can be corrected later.

Care lasts an average of a week, during which time the new arrivals are kept segregated from the rest of the telepaths in a medical building. Some patients who arrive injured or sick must be kept in Care for months; others are in and out in a few hours.

## Understanding

Understanding is the single longest phase. The telepaths are still kept on sleepers to suppress their abilities (urine tests are regularly taken to ensure that the subject is dosed). They are required to perform simple tasks, such as maintenance and repair, filing, cooking and food preparation, manufacturing basic items and so on, as well as complete numerous evaluations and tests. The inmates are also made to attend classes on the ethics of telepathy, the purpose of the Psi Corps and why they should obey Mother and Father;

they are thought the value of goodthink and crimestop and psicontinence. During this time, the telepaths are constantly monitored by security cameras. The purpose of Understanding is to build up a complete psychological profile of the subject.

During Understanding, the telepath is also subjected to numerous scans. Anyone attempting to resist a scan is punished by Pain. These scans happen randomly to all the inmates, but are also given as punishment for insubordination. High P-rating inmates are the main targets of Understanding. Female telepaths are occasionally inseminated or even raped by approved partners as part of the breeding programme. Pregnant telepaths are segregated from the rest and given better treatment but are not taken into Trust until their child has been delivered and taken by the Corps.

As the camp administrators prioritise high P-rating and highly skilled inmates for Understanding, low-level teeps can be ignored for some time. The average stay in Understanding is one month for a rogue and three months for a blip but there are some who have been in Understanding cycles for years.

## Trust

The Trust stage begins when the telepath is removed from the rest and placed in a solitary cell. The cell contains nothing but a bed, a food dispenser, a water dispenser and a toilet. There is no light and the walls are soundproofed. The telepath remains here for at least a week – the time required for the body to purge itself of sleepers and for the telepath's abilities to return. As the telepath sits in the darkness, he slowly becomes aware of other minds for the first time in weeks. In an utterly dark, utterly silent room, the return of his telepathy is like a shaft of bright light. He can speak mind-to-mind to the other prisoners waiting in the other cells; they can support and comfort each other. In such ghastly conditions, even the slightest human contact feels like a godsend. Strong, desperate emotional bonds between the imprisoned telepaths develop quickly between the telepaths, helping the subject survive in the darkness.

Then, one by one, he feels them being dragged away by faceless Grins. One by one, the other minds are taken away. He feels echoes of their terror and agony, then nothing.

Then, finally, they come for him. The Grins enter and forcibly take the telepath from the cell and strap him to a gurney. He is injected with Jericho, which collapses his mental blocks. The Grins wheel the telepath down a long corridor into another anonymous room, where the Surgeon waits. The Surgeon is a P12 telepath. He has the subject's psychological evaluation, painstakingly assembled during

the Understanding stage, which contains every buried fear and desire hidden in the subject's mind. The dose of Jericho ensures that the Surgeon can work without interference from the subject's blocks or mental defences.

Over what seems like an eternity to the subject, the Surgeon methodically retrieves and destroys every dream and hope. He creates hallucination after hallucination, fuelled by the subject's own fears. The subject sees himself rejected by friends, he dreams of selling his own family out to anti-telepath thugs, of betraying his fellow rogues to the Psi Corps, of having everything he has ever worked for and hoped for destroyed. The Surgeon carefully modulates the intensity of these nightmares, using false memories to undercut the subject's sense of self and using reality fabrication to ramp up the intensity of the horror. Step by step, layer by layer, the Surgeon holds every element of the subject's personality up to the intense glare of scrutiny and destroys it.

In the end, the subject is left with *nothing*. He is then given a choice – the aftermath of all those horrors, or trust in the Psi Corps. It is important to understand this choice; the Surgeon does not say 'if you do not trust the Corps, then all these horrors will come to pass or be visited upon you'. The choice is between the Corps or utter emptiness and despair. A telepath who rejects the Corps is reduced to a broken, hollow vessel who believes that he has lost everything. Slowly, he may manage to recover his true memories but the horror and trauma he experienced here will never be forgotten – at least, not until he is brought back in the next Trust stage. Subjects who reject the Corps begin the cycle again – they are returned to Care to recover from their time in Trust. Such failures are rare, as the Surgeon only brings subjects into Trust when he is sure that their profiles are complete and that he is certain of reaching them.

## Love

The final stage is reserved for those telepaths who, in the depths of sorrow and loss, have learned to turn to the Corps and trust in the Corps. They are removed from the Surgeon's room and swiftly dressed in the uniform of the Psi Corps. Then, as if being reborn, he is thrust into the light. He is enveloped in love, for there waiting for him in the brightly lit room are the other former inmates from the other cells, the ones he bonded with so deeply. They send love and acceptance into his mind.

The emotional impact of this experience cannot be understated (nor can the effect of the receptors planted by the Surgeon in the moment when the subject gives himself up to the Corps). The movement from darkness into light, pain to joy, near-death to life, emptiness to overflowing is inextricably bound up with that decision to trust the Psi Corps.



## Department of Resources Characters

Resources characters are either guards, doctors or specialised telepaths, so a high Intelligence and Charisma are needed.

**Recommended Telepathic Abilities:** Deep Scan, Pain, False Memory Implantation, Reality Fabrication.

**Recommended Feats:** Ability Focus, Mental Fortress

**Recommended Skills:** Bluff, Medical, Telepathy, Sense Motive.

Most Resources characters are single-class Telepaths.

## Scenarios

Characters are unlikely to work for Resources for very long; this is possibly the most blatantly evil and twisted section of the Corps. Military characters could be sent to reinforce the security of a camp, then slowly discover just how horrific the conditions inside are and work to free the prisoners or destroy the camp. Break-ins and break-outs are likely to be the main use of Resources in a campaign.

The former rogue sees himself reflected in their minds. He is dressed in a crisp black uniform, wearing a badge of pride and honour, and surrounded by a loving and accepting family. He has been reborn into the Corps, raised by the Corps, clothed by the Corps. They are his Mother and his Father. He is Psi Corps.

After coming to Love the Corps, the telepath is normally transferred to one of the 'public' re-education camps, where he is given a quick refresher course in his duties and responsibilities, his professional skills, current affairs and Corps policy. He is then assigned to a place in the Training, Commercial or Alliance branches, a trusted and loyal member of Psi Corps.

## Adjustment

The Surgeons of the Department of Resources are experts at adjusting human minds. Recently, the Psi Corps has reassigned several experienced Surgeons to train other telepaths in their methods. These telepaths are in the Commercial and Alliance Corps, where they are used to subtly alter the minds of mundanes. While the Psi Corps has been using these methods on a small scale for decades, the deployment of expert Surgeons is by the request of EarthGov. Political opponents, rabble-rousers, dissidents and other enemies of the state are being co-opted and re-oriented instead of being destroyed. It is much better and more productive to turn an enemy to your side than it is to destroy him. The Adjustment Section is ideal for this task, because they have the most experience in subtle mind alteration and they are already a secret. Soon, everything will be under control.

*I have no idea if the new Earth president will continue Clark's policies — Luchenko may claim to be a reformer but the lure of mind control is hard to resist. A telepath must be trained for years to rein in his impulses and not use his powers for personal gain; a politician in charge of a Corps of mind controllers has no such training. The power is abused because it is unearned. Still, this is EarthGov's problem.*

*The Camps are ours.*

*I do not and will not advocate violence but I do demand freedom for our brethren. We must have these prison camps destroyed. They are the dark mirror of everything we are. All telepaths, all telepaths, even the monsters who run the camps — we are one. We who speak mind to mind, soul to soul, we are one, a special and exalted people. We must never lose sight of that. Even the Psi Corps understands this but they have lost their way. They try to make us all one by forcing us to conform, by demanding that we submit to their control.*

*We shall never submit. We are one and we are free and we shall remain so until we die.*

# Precognition

## The Vorlons

**'Time began May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2055'**

— *High Priest of the temple in the Yucatan*

The Vorlons have been to Earth before (the Vorlons have been everywhere) and when they left they took with them many humans. These, they experimented upon and learned how to alter them into telepaths. They have done this procedure hundreds of times before, on hundreds of worlds. Once they had perfected the addition of telepathy to humans, they returned to Earth around 2050. Their living vessel hid in the ice of Antarctica for several years. They abducted numerous humans and altered them, implanting the ability for telepathy into their genetic structure.

The choice of Antarctica was not a random one. Many nations had established research bases, observation posts or mining and drilling stations on the frozen continent, so the Vorlons had access to a large cross-section of humanity. Furthermore, the humans tended to be intelligent (educated scientists and engineers) and physically fit, ensuring the best possible chances for telepathy to take hold.

Most of those who were abducted saw the Vorlons in their angelic form; this led to religious experiences on the part of the humans. This spawned the creation of numerous cults and religious organisations based around telepathy when the altered humans returned to civilisation.

Few of the humans altered by the Vorlons became telepaths but the trait was passed onto their descendants. Telepathy became a part of the human genome. The Vorlons left Earth; a fragment of one of them remained behind, inhabiting the body of a human woman. That fragment was passed onto her son, a kid who would be raised by Jack O'Hanlon (aka Monkey) and become Kevin Vacit, the first Director of the Psi Corps. He traced the Vorlons to Venus, where they informed him of the purpose of telepaths – to fight the Shadows. He returned to Earth, where he began to turn the Corps into a weapon to serve their purposes.

The Vorlons left, never to return to Earth – but they left someone behind.

The Minbari have had telepaths for thousands of years; the Centauri, for hundreds. While the Minbari might balk at using technological means to augment their telepaths, the Centauri have no such qualms. There are dozens of other races who have both telepaths and the technology to improve them. The Psi Corps has certainly shown, in developments like the process that created Jason Ironheart, that telepathy can be changed using technology. Why have none of the other races discovered and perfected this process, if they have had humanity's level of telepathy and technology for centuries longer?

The simple answer is that the Vorlons do not permit their handiwork to be improved on. A P12 to P15 is the ideal level for fighting a Shadow vessel or uncovering a Shadow agent. Anything more than that is unnecessary and disruptive and risks working against the Vorlons' plans. Therefore, they leave monitors with each race when they seed them with telepaths. These monitors are to watch the telepaths created by the Vorlons and to ensure that they do not become too powerful.

Ironheart, for example, is a random factor in the grand design of the Vorlons. He should not have been allowed to come to pass. If the monitor of Earth had been able to do her job properly, then the Psi Corps would have been dissuaded from following that line of research, or at the very least a Vorlon warship should have jumped out of hyperspace above Mars, blasted the research station into atoms and then vanished again as silently as it came.

The monitor of Earth is a woman named Montessa King. She looks like she is around 25 and she has looked like that since the mid-1980s. She was abducted by the Vorlons as part of the last stage of their preparations to seed humanity with telepaths; they took her to the Vorlon homeworld and





subjected her to the same alterations and improvements as Sebastian. They returned with her a century year later (once they were sure that everyone who might recognise her was dead). Her role is to watch humanity's telepaths. In the 2060s, she pretended to be a student out travelling the world. In the 2080s, she was an Enlightened One in a telepath cult in America. She was a lab tech in 2100; on Senator Crawford's staff in the 2120s; a political lobbyist in the 2140s and a founding member of Psi Corps in 2161.

It all went wrong when the Minbari War began. King knew the Minbari were a race chosen and guided by the Vorlons; that they should turn on humanity with genocidal intent terrified her. Her attempts to communicate with her Vorlon masters met with no response. In the end, her conscience forced to act in defiance of their commands. She abandoned her current identity (that of a mid-level instructor in the Psi Corps), commandeered a vessel and set course for Vorlon space. While she was enroute, the Minbari reached Earth, fought the Battle of the Line – and surrendered. King received news of this bizarre turnaround when she was on the borders of Vorlon space. Assuming that the Vorlons had finally acted, she turned around and headed back towards Earth.

During her voyage home, she ran afoul of a Psi Corps sweep. She had destroyed her old identity, so when her telepathic abilities were picked up by a random DNA check at Proxima, she was treated as a blip and sent to a re-education camp. Fighting this would have just damaged her cover even more; she submitted and went to the camp. She used her Vorlon training to create a second personality and pushed that to the forefront. This personality was broken, brainwashed and rebuilt by the Corps, while the part of her that was touched by the Vorlons survived hidden deep within her mind.

As of 2258, Montessa King is a commercial telepath working for IPX. Her Corps-brainwashed personality is active most of the time but her true self can take control whenever it has to. She is working to discover just how much influence the Shadows have within her Psi Corps and plans to take steps to remove them with or without Vorlon help.

Montessa could be a powerful ally of any characters inside or outside of the Corps who are willing to serve her purposes. She wants to put the Psi Corps back under Vorlon control, or at least turn it directly against the Shadows. She also knows more about Vorlon technology than any living human, so she could be of use to characters investing the artefacts found by Sigma. Montessa's innate power is curtailed by her inability to act directly – if she reveals herself, the Shadows' allies or even the Shadows themselves will hunt her down and destroy her. She can guide the characters and even protect them in an emergency but she cannot use her abilities openly.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> level Human Telepath/7<sup>th</sup> level Vorlon Servant (P13)

**Hit Points:** 25

**Initiative:** +3 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 feet.

**DV:** 18 (+8 Reflex)

**Attacks:** +8 melee or +9 ranged.

**Special Qualities:** Telepathy, Maintain Concentration, Protector (Montessa gains a +2 to attack and damage, DR 3 and +10 ft. base movement while on Earth), Carrier (can sense and carry Vorlon fragments).

**Saves:** Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +10

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 18.

**Skills:** Bluff +23, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +18, Listen +7, Medical +8, Pilot +8, Knowledge (telepathy) +12, Sense Motive +20, Spot +5, Survival +8, Technical +13, Telepathy +20.

**Feats:** Adaptive Mind, Blind-fight, Combat Telepath, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Meditation, Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Sense Motive)

**Telepathic Abilities:** Accidental Scan, Deep Scan, Jamming, Mind Shield, Reality Fabrication, Sense Telepathy, Surface Scan, Warning



## The Telepath War and the Crisis of 2264

The Telepath Crisis is one section of the *Babylon 5* setting that has never been fully detailed, which leaves it open to interpretation and use by Games Masters. Based on information from *Crusade* and the novels, we know:

- 5 In 2262, Byron is killed. He becomes a symbol and a martyr to the rogues.
- 5 Lyta arranges for the rogue movement to be funded by the Narn through G'kar and Garibaldi's connection to the Edgars fortune.
- 5 Various Psi Corps facilities are bombed.
- 5 Lyta departs Babylon 5 with G'kar. She roams the galaxy until 2264, when she returns and removes Garibaldi's mental blocks that stop him harming Bester.



- 5 *The Crisis.* The Psi Corps facility at Syria Planum is nuked. Lyta dies in the attack and Bester only barely escapes.
- 5 The Psi Corps is disestablished by EarthGov. By the time of *Crusade* (2266), a new authority is in place; telepaths can live freely among normal humans but must accept regular scans from a new sort of Psi Cop, the 'Mr Jones'.
- 5 Bester flees Earth in 2264; most of the Psi Corps leadership are tried as criminals. The existence of the re-education camps comes to light. He stays on the run until 2271, when he returns to Earth. He is captured by an obsessed Garibaldi, tried as a war criminal and is imprisoned in TeepTown until his death.

EarthGov presumably purges most of Clark's influence after Sheridan's fleet liberates the planet and Earth joins the Interstellar Alliance. Elements of Clark's beliefs do remain, though; just look at the Season 4 episode *The Deconstruction of Falling Stars*. The Psi Corps is among the most visible and distrusted elements of Clark's government. The combination of the destruction of Syria Planum combined with revelations about illegal experiments, mind control and subversion of ordinary people would have been a crippling blow to the Corps. The unification of the rogue movement under Lyta means that there is a viable alternative to the Corps, giving impetus to reforms.

Then Syria Planum gets nuked and it all goes to hell.

The Telepath Crisis should be a chaotic, terrible time for any characters involved with the Corps or the rogues. Every long-buried hatred, every problem, every plotline should all

come together in one nightmarish week. The Crisis leads to a complete re-evaluation of telepaths in human society. Some possible scenarios for the crisis are:

- 5 In response to the telepath bombing, the Corps' hidden agents like the sleeper personalities and action-blocked politicians and soldiers are activated. The Corps tries to take over EarthGov and turn the army on the rogues. The Player Characters have to get to the compromised officers and undo their telepathic commands before Earth warships bombard the Martian cities to get back at the rogues who nuked Syria Planum.
- 5 The Psi Corps starts using experiments, like the Lazarus troops, to deal with the growing rogue movement. Dead rogues are being brought back to kill their former friends. Lyta sends the characters to gather evidence of the Corps' experiments, and tells them to bring this information to the Rangers, who will then bring it to President Sheridan. The characters manage to break into the Corps labs and get the data they need – but when they make contact with a White Star, they discover that one of the Rangers onboard is, well, dead – his name appears in the Lazarus files. How do the characters deal with an unstoppable killer cyborg with Ranger training?
- 5 The rogues, through Lyta, might discover that telepaths have a built-in expiry date; now that the Shadows are gone, there is no need for the telepathic ability. With typical Vorlon efficiency, they build a failsafe into telepaths. Unless this failsafe is removed, telepaths will simply start dying. The characters have to use Psi Corps resources to track down a cure for this failsafe; perhaps they have to head into Vorlon space, or follow the century-old trail of Kevin Vacit's investigations into Vorlons on Earth, or find Montessa King.



- 5 The Telepath War could be between mundanes and telepaths, forcing the Corps reformers and the rogues to work together. The telepath-killing virus created by Edgars Industries may be gone but there are other megacorporations who are equally opposed to the domination of ordinary humanity by telepaths. Other viruses, assassins, alien artefacts, lethal engines that drive telepaths insane by churning hyperspace, economic discrimination – the corporations have plenty of weapons that could be applied to both telepath factions.

## Other Telepath Organisations

While the Psi Corps is the largest organisation of telepaths in the Earth Alliance, there is scope for smaller splinter groups on outlying planets. As long as these organisations accept the authority of the Corps and obey the Corps' rules, they may be tolerated and used as dumping grounds for unwanted or troublesome telepaths. These organisations include:

- 5 **The Mix:** A Mars-based alternative to the Commercial Corps. The Mix tries to distinguish itself from the Corps by being less formal and sterile but is still little more than artificial competition for commercial contracts to prove that the Corps does not have a complete monopoly on telepathy.
- 5 **Order of Confessors:** This small religious institution on Beta 9 is a retreat run by telepaths. The priests of the order use deep scans to seek out sin; those who seek absolution go to the retreat, knowing that all their wrongdoings will be known to the priests and their souls made clean.
- 5 **Mindworks:** A roving entertainment troupe, Mindworks project their plays and artworks into the minds of the audience. They supported Rebo and Zooty on their famous *The Also Galaxy* tour, which vastly increased Mindwork's profile and they are now quite popular on several worlds.

Not all telepath organisations are approved by the Corps:

- 5 **The McAllisters:** This clan of telepaths moved to the Belt in the 2120s and moved out of the Sol system when hyperspace travel became available. The clan has interbred within itself, producing stronger telepaths with each generation. Their intelligence and culture has not improved with inbreeding. The McAllisters have a family dome on a moon in the Sinzar system.

## Humanity & Telepaths

For the Psi Corps to need to exist, the attitude of mundanes towards telepaths needs to be emphasised. Telepaths are hated and mistrusted just for being what they are. Ordinary people do not understand them; the government just wants to shove them into a black box called Psi Corps and forget about the problem. Telepaths are corralled into their own little society; they socialise with each other, marry each other, only truly know each other. Their interactions with the outside world are formalised and governed by law. Telepath versus mundane, us versus them; the battle-lines were drawn from the start.

Even normally sympathetic characters like Doctor Franklin (who ran the telepath underground railroad) are instinctively mistrustful of telepaths (when talking to Lyta, for example, he continually calls the telepaths 'your people', despite his normal protestations that telepaths are just like every other part of humanity). While all the other members of Sheridan's conspiracy are busy plotting the overthrow of Clark, Lyta gets forgotten and forced to sign back on with the Psi Corps to survive. Mistrust of telepaths is a part of humanity.

To avoid the Psi Corps becoming nothing more than an organisation of pointlessly evil black hats, the Games Master needs to remind Players of why it exists in the first place. While some sections of the Corps are deliberately despicable and need to be wiped out, the organisation as a whole has a reason to exist. Similarly, the rogues should have their dark elements – for every well-meaning and heroic telepath who escaped the domination of the Corps (and even for every irritating angsty space goth with too much conditioner), there should be a rogue who fled the Corps so he can blackmail rich mundanes, telepathically control women and generally abuse his powers.

## Advanced Telepathy Rules

The basic rules in the *Babylon 5* roleplaying game do not take into account the full complexity and flexibility of telepathy in the setting. These advanced rules give greater scope to telepath characters but also make telepathy more powerful.

### Memory Vaults

A telepath of P5 or higher can create a memory vault to store memories out of reach of scans. Creating a vault requires one hour of meditation. The Defensive Value of a vault is



calculated as if the telepath took 20 on a Telepathy check when creating the vault.

To find a vault, another telepath must make a scan while deliberately looking for the vault, and beat the vault's Defensive Value; the telepath can retry the scan if he fails but suffers a cumulative -1 penalty to his rolls. Once a vault is detected, the attacker can try to penetrate it by making a Deep Scan; if the scan is successful, he may read the contents of the vault. However, the owner of the vault can choose, as a last-ditch defence, to destroy the contents of the vault before the attacker sees them.

## Blocks

Every telepath learns the Mind Shield ability, which is a set of basic blocks that keep out casual scans and the 'noise' of mundane thoughts. Telepaths of P5 or higher can keep a full Mind Shield up continuously but even low P-rating telepaths have a constant block up. However, they can choose to drop these barriers to make it easier to scan. A telepath who lowers his blocks completely has a +2 bonus to Telepathy checks to all sorts of Scans. However, while the telepath's blocks are down, any other telepath targeting him gain a +4 bonus to all Telepathy checks targeting him and the telepath does not gain the benefit of his Mind Shield ability.

## Emotions

Any strong emotion can be used to provide easy access into a target's mind. Any Scan conducted on a subject undergoing very strong emotions (hate, rage, fear, love) gains a +4 bonus. If these emotions are focussed wholly towards the telepath, the bonus increases to +6. A character can suppress strong emotions by making a Concentration check (DC 10 in most cases).

Eye contact and having someone's complete attention also makes Telepathy easier. A telepath who has made eye contact with a subject gets a +1 bonus; complete and undivided attention gives a +2 bonus.

## Variant Abilities

There are more powerful variants of the basic abilities listed in the *Babylon 5* rulebook. A telepath who has the basic ability may also attempt any of the variants but the DC of the Telepathy check to activate the ability is increased.

If a variant lists a DC modifier (e.g. DC +4), then it can be combined with the basic form of the ability or another variant. Variants with set DCs

cannot be combined. For example, the Communication abilities of Glyph and Confuse can be combined, as Glyph has a set DC and Confuse is a DC modifier. However, Glyph and Squirt (both set DCs) cannot be combined.

### Accidental Scan

This ability has no variants.

### Communication

- 5 **Glyph** (DC 14): The telepath sends a mental image instead of just words.
- 5 **Squirt** (DC 16): The telepath sends a large amount of text instead of a few words. The telepath must mentally prepare the message before sending, which takes three rounds. He can send 1,000 words for every rank he has in the Concentration skill. The recipient cannot access the transmitted text immediately; he has to mentally 'read' it. Squirt therefore cannot be used for efficient communication but is a quick way to transfer data.
- 5 **Confuse** (DC +4): The message is overlaid onto the recipient's senses, so it seems as though he hears the message through his ears instead of it being sent directly into his mind. Similarly, a glyph is 'seen' by the recipient. The recipient must make a Wisdom check (DC 10) to realise that the message is a telepathic communication, not a real event. He may make this check each round until he succeeds.

### Danger Sense

As Danger Sense is always active, the telepath must choose beforehand which of these variants, if any, are active. A variant stays active until the telepath switches it off.



⑤ **Nature** (DC +2): The telepath knows what sort of danger is threatening him (PPG shot, explosion, poison, physical attack, airlock opening and so on).

⑤ **Direction** (DC +4): The telepath knows the direction and rough distance from which the danger is coming.

⑤ **Target** (DC +8): The telepath may immediately make an attack against the source of the danger. This counts as an attack of opportunity. This is an instinctive action; the telepath does not know where the enemy is before he shoots, nor does he know what the danger is (unless he has the Nature and Direction variants active), he just reacts and fires.

#### Daze

⑤ **Reverie** (DC 18): The subject has no memory of his time in the daze and is unaware anything odd ever happened.

⑤ **Sleepwalk** (DC +6): The telepath may control the subject's gross motor functions – he can make the Dazed target walk, nod, move their arms, open a door and so on. Fine control such as pressing a specific button on a keyboard, aiming a gun or speaking is not possible. Anything that would injure or alarm the target allows the target to make another Will save.

#### Deep Scan

⑤ **Gentle Scan** (DC 20): The telepath carefully protects the subject of the scan from any painful memories or aberrant thoughts, reducing the strain of the scan. Any damage inflicted during the scan is divided evenly between the telepath and the target.

⑤ **Brute Scan** (DC 20): The telepath pushes deeply with the scan, causing much more damage than necessary. This scan deals 1d6 points of damage, ignoring any Damage Reduction, whether or not the target tries to resist the scan.

⑤ **Holistic Scan** (DC +2): Instead of asking specific questions, the telepath simply reads the current state of the target's mind. Each round, the telepath must make a Gather Information check (DC 20); if successful, the telepath learns one useful fact from the subject's mind, assuming the subject knows any facts relevant to the telepath. For example, the telepath might come across a memory of a face in the crowd; the subject does not know this person but the telepath does. Such a fact is useful to the telepath but would not turn up in the course of normal questioning.

⑤ **Extended Range** (DC +3/five feet): The telepath can push the scan outwards, although this is extremely

difficult. For every increase of +3 to the DC, the range is increased by five feet. Note that P12s can use Deep Scan with a range of Line of Sight automatically, and do not need to use Extended Range.

#### False Memory Implantation

⑤ **As You Wish** (DC 25): The telepath merely erases a chosen portion of the subject's memories and the subject fills them in as he wishes to remember events. This can result in more convincing memories (the subject is less likely to 'act out of character', as he is creating the false history instead of the telepath). However, this version of False Memory Implantation can also create more problems, as the subject's history may be contradicted by actual events that the subject was unaware of. The telepath may give a direction to the subject ('you remember a happy event/a routine day/falling asleep') but the telepath does not know the nature of the false memories unless he scans the subject afterwards.

⑤ **Force Implant** (DC +3): For every +3 increase in the DC of the Telepathy check, the subject's Will save is reduced by -1.

⑤ **Chain Memories** (DC 27): This variant lets the telepath leave 'connectors' at the end of each memory period, so if the subject succeeds in his Will save, only the most recent hour of changed memories is lost.

#### Jamming

⑤ **Targeted Jamming** (DC 20): The telepath's jamming field is restricted to a 90-degree arc in front of him, instead of affecting the whole area around him.

⑤ **Individual Jamming** (DC 20): The telepath targets a single other telepath to jam. He must have Line of Sight to the other telepath.

#### Locate Mind

⑤ **Precision** (DC 28): The telepath learns the *exact* location of the target mind, instead of only knowing the area within 30 feet.

⑤ **Sense Minds** (DC 28): The telepath selects a location within range of this ability and instantly knows if there are any sentient minds within 30 feet of that location.

#### Mind Mirror

⑤ **Bland Mind** (DC 25): Instead of creating a psychic void, the telepath projects a false consciousness. This variant has all the benefits of a normal Mind Mirror but also means that the telepath does not stand out in a crowd (a telepath scanning a group and finding six people but

only five minds will raise an alarm but using Bland Mind avoids this problem).

- ⑤ **Reflect Attack** (DC = Result of other telepath's Telepathy check +5): To use this variant, the telepath must ready an action. When he is the target of Daze, Deep Scan, Nerve Stimulation or Pain, he may attempt to reflect the attack back on the telepath who is using the offensive ability. If the Telepathy check succeeds, the attack targets the attacker instead of the defender.

#### Mind Shield

- ⑤ **Shield Others** (DC +1 per person): The telepath splits his Mind Shield bonus among several people, all of whom must be within Close range. The telepath can choose how much of a bonus he gives to each person.

#### Nerve Stimulation

- ⑤ **Force Action** (DC 24): The target takes a single action specified by the telepath instead of stepping back. For example, the target might step to the side, pull a trigger, raise an arm, scream and so on. The action must be a single one; raising a gun and pulling a trigger are two separate actions for example.
- ⑤ **Sphincter Mastery** (DC 25): The telepath seizes control of the target's digestive, excretory or respiratory system. He may induce nausea for one round, sickness for 1d4 rounds or lightheadedness (stunning the target for one round).
- ⑤ **Spark** (DC 24): By randomly scrambling the target's nerves, the telepath forces the target to suffer a -5 circumstance penalty to his next skill check or attack roll.

#### Pain

- ⑤ **Agony** (DC +6): The damage inflicted by this ability is increased by one step (1d6 to 1d8, 1d8 to 2d6, 2d6 to 2d10). The damage dealt by Pain cannot be increased above 2d10 per round.
- ⑤ **Targeted Pain** (DC 20): The target feels the pain in a body part chosen by the telepath, instead of all over. For example, the pain might be concentrated in the target's head or hand. Alternatively, the pain can feel like a particular type of pain (burning, acid, cold, vacuum) instead of generalised agony.

#### Reality Fabrication

- ⑤ **As You Wish** (DC +2): Like the False Memory Implantation variant of the same name, this variant lets the target create a reality instead of the telepath imposing one on him. The target perceives what he wants to perceive. Again, the telepath can vaguely suggest the

nature of the fabricated reality. For example, the telepath could force a target to see the telepath as someone who is allowed through a security check but exactly who he is perceived to be is up to the target.

- ⑤ **Sustained Reality** (DC +2/round): The fabricated reality is sustained after the telepath stops concentrating. The target may make a Will save each round to break out of the reality.

#### Second Sight

- ⑤ **Share Senses** (DC +5): The telepath can share the second sight with a third party, who must be within Close range.
- ⑤ **Telepath Hop** (DC 25): The telepath may use his telepathic abilities as if he was located where the target of Second Sight is standing. He may only use Line of Sight abilities though a Telepath Hop.

#### Sense Telepathy

- ⑤ **Fingerprints** (DC 20): The telepath can detect who created the telepathic echoes that he is sensing. Obviously, he must have met the other telepath and sensed his mind in some fashion. A telepath can hide his fingerprints by increasing the DC of his Telepathy check by +2.

#### Surface Scan

This ability has no variants.

#### Warning

- ⑤ **Flash Glyph** (DC 15): The telepath projects a single simple image through the warning. This glyph cannot be more than a sort of mental sketch, but it can be the telepath's current field of view.

## Advanced Telepathic Combat

The basic rules for telepathy are resolved using dice rolls – Telepathy checks and Will saves – and do not have any scope for the Players to make decisions. These advanced rules add another layer of complexity that is unnecessary in most campaigns but fits well with a game with lots of telepaths.

Whenever a telepath attempts to use a power on another, the attacker chooses an attack mode and the defender chooses a defence mode. These powers are then cross-referenced on the Advanced Telepathic Combat table. If the result is positive, it is added to the DC of the telepathy check; if negative, it is subtracted from the target's Will save.



Half the attack and defence modes are based on other abilities; a character can only choose to use those modes if he has the appropriate abilities.

## Attack Modes

**Basic Probe:** The telepath simply and directly sends a probe into the other's mind. This does not overextend the attacker but it is not an especially powerful or cunning attack.

**Forceful Probe:** The telepath launches an overwhelming series of brutal, bashing probes that crash into the enemy's defences and tries to overwhelm them by sheer force. This sort of assault smashes through weak static defences but does open the attacker up to clever counterattacks.

**Soft Probe:** The telepath slowly projects thin tendrils of psychic force into the target, teasing out weaknesses in his defences. A soft probe can penetrate any defence that has an exploitable weakness but is easily beaten back.

**Shaman Battle:** In a shaman battle, the telepath visualises his mental avatar as whatever will best defeat the enemy's defences. It is a creative and adaptive strategy but is balked by the opponent refusing to engage on an imaginative level and just hiding behind his mental walls.

**Scanning Attack:** (Prerequisite: Deep Scan) The telepath does a quick scan of the enemy's defences, picking out weak points and attacking them. If the initial scan is successful, the attacker can easily find victory but this sort of two-stage assault loses out to adaptive defences.

**Autonomic Probe:** (Prerequisite: Nerve Stimulation) The telepath tries to ride into the opponent's mind by hacking at the most basic parts of the nervous system, moving along nerve paths far below conscious thought. This can bypass complex defences but requires patience and finesse.

**Memory Slip:** (Prerequisite: Reality Fabrication) The telepath hides behind a random memory floating through

the enemy's mind and uses that as a cover or Trojan Horse to enter the mind.

**Recognition of Self:** (Prerequisite: Second Sight) The telepath momentarily merges his mind with that of the target, demolishes the target's defences from the inside, then continues with his attack. This technique is very effective against static defences but leaves the attacker totally open to any mobile ones.

**Basic Block:** The telepath creates a big mental wall between himself and any attacking probes.

**Turtle:** The telepath hides within his own mind, cutting off all channels for outside contact.

**Adaptive Block:** The telepath creates a block and moves it into position when he perceives where the attack is heading.

**Mind Purge:** The telepath sends pulse after pulse of fiery thought out from the centre of his being, incinerating any errant thoughts or probes in his mind.

**Mind Shield:** (Prerequisite: Mind Shield) The telepath creates an elaborate mental fortress that protects against all attacks.

**Mind Mirror:** (Prerequisite: Mind Mirror) The telepath reflects the attack back at the attacker. This defeats low-powered attacks but a forceful strike can shatter the mirror.

**Wall of Thorns:** (Prerequisite: Pain) The telepath sends coruscating waves of agony through all the self-tinged channels of his mind; these waves are harmless to the telepath but make his mind an unpleasant place to be.

**Scramble:** (Prerequisite: Jamming) By scrambling and randomly changing the layout of his mind, the telepath makes it impossible for any attacker to gain a foothold.

## Advanced Telepathic Combat

	Basic Probe	Forceful Probe	Soft Probe	Shaman Battle	Scanning Attack	Autonomic Probe	Memory Slip	Recognition of Self
Basic Block	+0	-2	-2	-4	-4	-4	-4	-4
Turtle	-2	+2	+4	+4	+2	-4	+4	+4
Adaptive Block	+4	-2	-2	-2	+0	+2	-4	+0
Mind Purge	+2	+2	+4	+4	+4	+4	+4	+4
Mind Shield	+4	+4	+2	+8	-4	-2	-4	-4
Mind Mirror	+4	-2	-2	-2	-2	+8	-4	-4
Wall of Thorns	+4	+8	+4	+0	+0	+4	-4	+4
Scramble	-4	+4	+8	+4	+4	+0	+8	+4

## Campaigning

The Psi Corps show up as villains in *Babylon 5* campaigns – that was their role in the series, too, so it fits. The Corps does make a great villain; they are intelligent, powerful and wonderfully irritating for any EarthForce or Earth Alliance personnel. They have plenty of power on Earth and are experienced at making difficulties... disappear.

When using the Corps as villains, they should work within or subvert the system instead of going outside it. For example, if the Corps wants the characters killed, they will not send assassins or bomb them with Black Omegas; they will just have the characters assigned to a warship heading off on a suicide mission or telepathically tweak an engineer to ensure that he overloads the fusion reactors on their ship at the right moment. The Corps work three steps up the chain of command; they are the ones with the lawyers and the money and only bring out the guns as a last resort.

Try to avoid having rogue Psi Corps experiments running into the characters every third session. While mysterious black operations are an easy source of adventures, they should not be overused.

## Psi Corps Characters

A single character from the Psi Corps will fit into most campaigns. They are of course subject to the normal restrictions put on Corps members but a Corps telepath could be found on a human trade vessel, warship, exploration mission, diplomatic team or space station. As long as the character never breaks the telepath laws, his membership of the Corps need not be a big part of the campaign. EarthForce officers, Centauri nobles, Minbari mystics and Rangers of all sorts operate under similar restrictions and oaths.

At some point in the campaign, the character's loyalty to the Corps should be tested. Try to avoid making this an easy decision; emphasise the economic and social drawbacks, the dangers and the problems that will be encountered if the character goes rogue. The test should be of the character's moral fortitude; if being a rogue was easy or obviously right, the Corps would not be half as powerful as it is.

## Psi Corps Campaigns

A campaign can be run using all-Corps characters. The type of the campaign will vary depending on which departments the characters are from. If most of them are from Science and Medical or Sigma/Shadow Science, then the campaign will centre on research, alien artefacts, escaped experiments and making more powerful telepaths. A Psi Corps campaign will be a series of investigations and hunts, a different rogue and a different planet each week.

However, both campaigns share a common focus in the Psi Corps. The social and political structures within the Corps

fulfil the same purpose that the station has in the series; a place where different characters can meet, work together and plot. The Corps is Mother and Father, which means the Corps is *family*, with all the complications, squabbles and soap opera antics that implies. Encourage the characters to get involved with Corps politics and make their superiors in the Corps into major Non-Player Characters.

The Telepath War and the influence of the Shadows should be elements in any telepath campaign, even if they are never centre stage. Never forget the tension between telepaths and mundanes, the constant undercurrent of fear and hostility that makes the Corps necessary. In a campaign where all the characters are in the Corps, a single character cannot go rogue without leaving the game – either all the characters must leave, or none at all. If Players do object to the Corps' nastier policies, they could focus on reforming or undermining the Corps from within.

## A Note on Mysteries

Most Players will have seen the *Babylon 5* series, so it is pointless running games where the aim is to uncover mysteries that were already solved on the show. For example, a game where the ultimate revelation is that *telepaths were made by* – gasp – *the Vorlons* will seem flat to the Players. They already know this, even if their characters do not. Never run a game where the Players have to consciously and deliberately fox their own characters by ignoring things they know out of character.

For example, if the Games Master wants to use the Vorlon connection, he could have the characters find the Vorlon lab in Antarctica, have them encounter Montessa King or have them raid Vorlon space for clues. In such games, the mysteries will be as fresh to the Players as they are to the characters. The revelations about the Shadows are equally problematic; if the Games Master is not careful, he will end up with his Players saying things like 'OK, *that's the fifth time we've seen mysterious black spiny ships that look like evil space spiders. Can we call them Shadow Battlecrabs in character yet, or are there more hoops we have to jump through?*'

## A Note on Telepathy

Telepathy in *Babylon 5* is scary. Even a low-ranking P5 can stroll into another person's mind relatively easily. Garibaldi, one of the toughest and most competent people in the series, gets manipulated and controlled by Bester so easily that it seems effortless. To reflect that in the game, telepathy should be presented as one of the strongest tools to solve problems, the quick and easy path to victory. While the Games Master should never take control of a character completely away from the Player, do not shy away from giving notes like 'you are compelled to help the telepath' or 'your memories are all false; you were never who you think you are'.



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## The Psi Corps

Telepathy is fundamentally communication – a bridging of thoughts, a direct link between minds. Civilisation is built on communication; telepathy is the most recent link in a chain that began with cave paintings, primitive grunts and gestures. Each new medium of communication brings upheaval in society. The printing press, the telephone, tachyon transmission and the rest all wrought change, engendered fear and confusion before they were understood and seen by society as necessary steps in evolution.

The Psi Corps is a bridge to the future. As the past century has shown, the changes needed to assimilate telepathy into human society are difficult and painful. The Psi Corps holds telepathy in trust, protecting it from abuse and finding the best possible path for it. It is a necessary step as we take our place in the galaxy.

*There have been too many lies.*

*The history of the Psi Corps presented here is their fiction of the past. They alter documents as easily as they alter memories and then they argue that since the past is what we remember, then they control reality. It is still a lie, though, as long as one of us remembers.*

*I carried these documents out of Psi Corps when I left and in snatched moments in transit and here on Babylon 5, I have noted the most egregious lies and deceptions. This is my legacy to the telepaths who will come after me – a glimpse of our true heritage, unobfuscated by the lies our 'parents' told us.*

— Byron



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