

GURPS[®] Supers[™]

I.S.T.[™]

INTERNATIONAL SUPER TEAMS

A Complete World Background for Super Roleplaying

By Robert M. Schroeck

STEVE JACKSON GAMES



GURPSTM SupersTM

I.S.T.TM

A Heroic World for Super-Powered Roleplaying

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4	Detention Facilities	17	Culture	34
What Is the IST?	4	Training Facilities	17	<i>Kyz Adventure Seed</i>	34
<i>About GURPS</i>	4	<i>The EX34 Chain Gun</i>	17	Politics	35
<i>About the Author</i>	4	<i>Electronarcosis and</i>		Kyz and Confederation	
1. PLAYING AN IST	5	<i>Deepsleep Cells</i>	17	Technology	35
The United Nations	5	Sample IST Embassies	18	<i>Confederation Technology</i>	35
Goals of the U.N.	5	<i>Self-Sufficiency</i>	18	The Meeranon	35
<i>Using the U.N.</i>	5	<i>Security Sensors</i>	19	Advantages and Disadvantages	36
Policies of the U.N.	6	IST New York	19	Names	36
<i>Non-Intervention</i>	6	<i>Standard IST Mainframe</i>		Psychology	36
The IST Parental Power Structure	7	<i>Software</i>	22	<i>FTL Details and Anomalies</i>	36
The Committee On Permanent		<i>Transportation</i>	22	Ecology	37
Peacekeeping Forces	7	<i>Library Contents</i>	23	<i>Meeran Player Characters</i>	37
<i>A Brief History of the U.N.</i>	7	<i>Dietrich Siemens</i>	23	<i>Myeerrrarr — The Meeranar</i>	
The Committee for Law		<i>IST Memorials</i>	24	<i>Tongue</i>	37
Enforcement	8	IST London	24	Culture	38
<i>The IST Agenda</i>	8	<i>Katarina Mercado</i>	25	Politics	38
IST Command	9	<i>Merchandising</i>	26	<i>The Meeranar "Psi Drug"</i>	38
<i>Xavier Petrosian</i>	9	<i>Magitechnology</i>	26	Meeranar Technology	39
Induction and Service	10	IST Tokyo	27	<i>Meeranar Technology</i>	39
IST Basic Training	10	<i>International Territory</i>	27	<i>Meeranar Adventure Seed</i>	40
Status, Rank, and Salaries	10	<i>David Blackader</i>	27	The F.R.A.N.C. Probe	40
<i>The Security Council</i>	10	<i>Customizing the Embassy</i>		Touchstone	41
<i>Starting Wealth</i>	10	<i>To Fit the Setting</i>	28	Whyte Tyger	43
Security Clearances	11	<i>Adventure Seeds</i>	28	4. TECHNOLOGY	45
Super Names and Secret		2. CHARACTERS	29	Energy Technology	45
Identities	11	Character Creation	29	The Roland Power Cell	45
Costumes	11	Alien Races	29	<i>Types of Power Cells</i>	45
<i>Sergei Rykov</i>	11	Advantages, Disadvantages,		Fusion Power	46
<i>Official Languages of the U.N.</i>	11	and Skills	29	<i>The U.N. Fusion Monopoly</i>	46
IST Courts-Martial	12	Advantages	30	<i>Fusion and the Anti-Nuclear</i>	
<i>Sir Wilton Sherbourne</i>	12	New Advantage	30	<i>Movement</i>	47
<i>Staffing Your IST</i>	12	Skills	30	Arms and Armaments	47
The Individual IST	13	New Skill	30	The Blaster	47
Command Structure of the Team	13	Job Table	31	Powered Infantry	48
<i>Antonio Buonocore</i>	13	3. EXTRATERRESTRIALS	32	Other Military Developments	48
<i>Team Assignments</i>	14	The Kyz	32	<i>Enhanced Strength Rigs</i>	
Powered Infantry	15	Advantages and Disadvantages	32	<i>For Commercial Use</i>	48
<i>IST Placements</i>	15	<i>Kyz Physiology</i>	32	<i>A Typical Enhanced Strength Rig</i>	49
The Typical Embassy	16	Names	33	Medical Technology	49
Defensive Capabilities	16	Psychology	33	Biotechnology and Genetic	
<i>"Civil Need" and Crimefighting</i>	16	<i>The Kyz Language</i>	33	Engineering	49
<i>Emergency Military Action</i>		<i>Kyz PCs</i>	33	IST Technology and Equipment	50
<i>by ISTs</i>	16	Ecology	34	The IST Battlesuit	50
Offensive Capabilities	17			<i>IST Tool Kit</i>	50

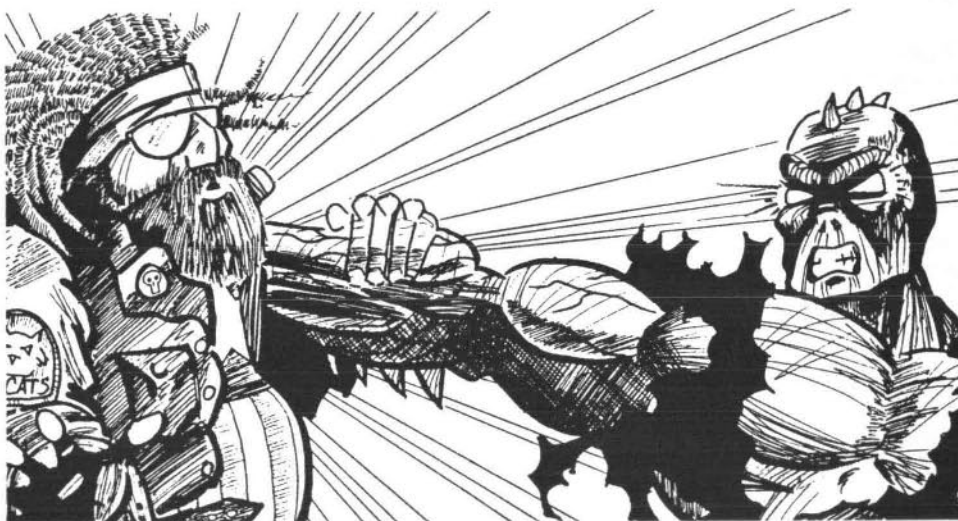


Computers and A.I.	51
Other Fields	54
<i>Legality Class</i>	54
Communications	54
Computers	55
Transportation	55
Agriculture	55
<i>Healers, Hospitals and Doctors</i> .	55
The Future	56
<i>Technological Rumors</i>	56
<i>A Technological Innovation</i> ...	56

5. THE PAST THROUGH

TODAY	57
The Seeders	57
<i>Powers and Population</i>	57
Recent History	58
<i>Side Effects of the Edicts</i>	58
<i>The U.N. After the Edicts</i>	59
<i>The Evil U.N.</i>	59
The International Super Teams	59
Supers and the Law	59
Regulation and Registration ...	60
Insurance and Liability	60
<i>The Edicts and Super-Police</i> ...	60
<i>Supers and Politics</i>	61
Secret Identities	61
Supers-Related Organizations	61
The Bonded Telepaths' Organization	61
<i>The "Three-Telepath System"</i>	62
The Exchange	62
<i>IST Adventure Seeds</i>	62
<i>Supers and Pop Culture</i>	63
The Independent Metahuman Ethics Committee	63
The International Weather Organization	64
The Parapsychological Studies Institute (PSI)	64
<i>The Personal Psi Shield</i>	64
Supertemps	65
The Role of the Vigilante	65
<i>Small Organizations</i>	65
<i>Team 99</i>	65
<i>The Metahuman Peoples' Research Institute</i>	66
<i>THAMF</i>	67
Supers and the Environment	67
Supers and Public Safety	68
<i>The "First Church of the Supermen"</i>	68
6. THE IST WORLD	69
The World and Supers	69
<i>International IST Adventure Seeds</i>	69
<i>Combat Realism</i>	70
<i>Other Realism</i>	70
<i>National Sovereignty</i>	70
Supers in the U.S.	71
Current Events	71
<i>Europe's Gentle Metavillains</i> .	71
Peoples' Republic of China	71
Colombia	72
<i>Jugo</i>	72

Cuba	73
<i>Latin American Metarchies</i>	73
Europe	73
Middle East	74
<i>The Palestinian Government In Exile (PGIE)</i>	74
<i>The PLO Across the Globe</i>	74
<i>The Ayatollah Khomeini</i>	75
<i>The Iran-Iraq War</i>	75
<i>Effects of the Iraqi Intervention</i>	75
<i>Tactical Nuclear Weapons</i>	76
Panama	77
Non-U.N. Nations	77
Non-Member Nations at the U.N.	77
Libya	77
North Korea/South Korea	77
<i>The Holy See (Vatican City)</i> ...	78
Palestine Liberation Organization	78
South Africa	78
Other Nations	79
Monaco	79
Switzerland	79
South Africa's "Peculiar Institution"	79



7. OTHER SETTINGS	80
World War II	80
Character Information	80
<i>Mixed Teams in World War II</i> .	80
<i>Women in the War Effort</i>	80
<i>The Übermenschen</i>	81
<i>"The Psycho Squad"</i>	81
The Role of the Super in World War II	82
<i>The French Resistance</i>	82
<i>The Glorious People's Metahuman Defense Collective</i>	83
German Agents in the United States	83
<i>Der Steppenwolf</i>	84
Social and Political Information	84
<i>Costumes, Super Names and Secret Identities</i>	85
<i>Adventure Seeds for WWII</i>	86

The 1960s	86
Character Information	87
The Role of the Super in the Late 1960s	87
<i>Campaign Roles for 1960s Supers</i>	87
Jobs	88
<i>The House Un-American Activities Committee</i>	88
<i>Vietnamese Superforces</i>	89
<i>1960s Vintage Powered Armor</i>	90
Social and Political Information	91
<i>Super Vigilantism</i>	92
<i>Adventure Seeds for the 1960s</i> ..	93

8. IST TIMELINE 94

9. MEMBERS AND ALLIES 100

Argurous Astraph	101
Bogatyr	102
Broadcast	103
Drifter	104
Le Fantome d'Orleans	105
La Fusionne	106
Al-Khadr	107
Midnight Angel	108

Mlastina	109
Patchwork	110
Pouka	111
La Triomphe	112
Warrior	113
Witchwind	114
Zashcheta	115

10. FOES 116

al-'Ain min Allah	117
Dead Ringer	118
Desert Hawk	119
Johnny Ripp	120
al-Khayal min Allah	121
Kristallnacht	122
Der Totenschein	123
Void	124

GLOSSARY 125

INDEX 127

INTRODUCTION

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Roleplayer. This bimonthly newsletter includes new rules, variants, new races, beasts, information on upcoming releases, scenario ideas and more. Ask your game retailer, or write for subscription information.

New supplements and adventures. We're always working on new material, and we'll be happy to let you know what's available. A current catalog is available for an SASE.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us — but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request.

Q&A. We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

Gamer input. We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

BBS. For those of you who have computers, SJ Games operates a BBS with discussion areas for several games, including *GURPS*. Much of the playtest feedback for new products comes from the BBS. It's up 24 hours a day at 512-447-4449, at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud. Give us a call!

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the *Basic Set* — e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *Basic Set*, Third Edition. An SU reference refers to *GURPS Supers*, a UT to *GURPS Ultra Tech*, and an S to *GURPS Space*.

About the Author

Robert M. Schroeck works as a Systems Analyst in New York City. Trained as a writer in college, he of course took a job in the computer field upon graduation. An avid gamer and SF fan for over 15 years and 20 years, respectively, he is also a fanatic comics collector. *GURPS IST* is his attempt to reconcile the real world with what he thinks it should be. Bob lives in New Brunswick, NJ, with his wife Peggy, his second-best friend from high school, and the obligatory cat.

If superbeings or metahumans really existed, what would the world be like? How would history have been different? How would science have progressed? How would society have evolved?

The backgrounds of many comic books often seem far too familiar — too like the “real world” to make their super inhabitants ring true. Despite all their uncanny powers and stupendous technological leaps, the superhuman heroes of most comic books seem to have no impact on their world except the capture of a few petty crooks. Their actions exactly cancel the world-destroying schemes of their super-foes, leaving the world effectively untouched by their presence.

This kind of background does not suit the spirit of the *GURPS* system. *GURPS* is committed to the principle of realism. The typical comic book world, where supers seem to exist untouched by the society that they serve (or exploit), does not fulfill the obligation imposed by that principle.

GURPS IST is an attempt to define a history and a global society that have been realistically affected by the existence of metahumans since the start of World War II, while still preserving the flavor of four-color comics. The history is close enough to our own to allow players to feel immediately comfortable and familiar with it, yet different enough to lend an air of excitement and uncertainty about the future. As members of an International Super Team, or IST, players will also have the thrill of directly affecting important global events: saving lives, stopping wars, protecting the environment . . . not just on a local scale but on an international one. And the advantage to a GM is that adventure ideas are no further away than the headlines of the daily paper.

So brush up on your (new) history, find out where this week's trouble spots are, and get ready to dive into the turbulent world of *GURPS International Super Teams*!

— Robert M. Schroeck



What Is the IST?

In the alternate present of *GURPS International Super Teams* superbeings walk the earth. Like everybody else, some are good, some are evil and most are just trying to get by.

The most important metahuman organization in this world is the United Nations' International Super Teams, a global network of supers that keeps one or more embassies in every member nation, staffed with a highly-trained cadre of powerful heroes. Under the leadership of the Greek heroine Argurous Astraph — whose cosmic energy powers are matched only by her tactical genius — the ISTs stand ready at any moment to protect the lives and freedom of innocent people the world over, and to defend the U.N.'s overriding goal of lasting world peace.

A *GURPS IST* campaign can be set in the modern-day world of the IST organization (established 1982) or in earlier decades of this century, particularly the turbulent '60s and World War II — the dawn of the metahuman era.

GURPS International Super Teams is the official worldbook of the *GURPS Supers* roleplaying game, but can be used as the background for super-powered campaigns using any roleplaying system.

PLAYING AN IST

1

The United Nations

In any campaign based around the day-to-day life of an IST embassy, the role of the U.N. will loom large. As both a Patron and a Duty, the U.N. has policies and whims that will often move characters in directions that they may not have planned. While an individual IST and its members may have considerable freedom to choose their day-to-day priorities and duties, they must still follow U.N. policies and directives, and must answer for their actions if they should violate them. To better understand the roles that the IST organization and its members play in the world today, it is necessary to understand the role, and psychology, of the U.N.

Goals of the U.N.

The U.N. was designed with essentially one purpose: to foster international peace. In the decades since its founding, this simple, elegant purpose has branched out into many parallel goals and functions, each with its own international agencies or forces overseeing and directing it. Much of this parallelism comes from the Charter's establishment of the six principle organs of the United Nations; each is concerned with a different facet of the great purpose, and each devotes its time and energy to that facet.

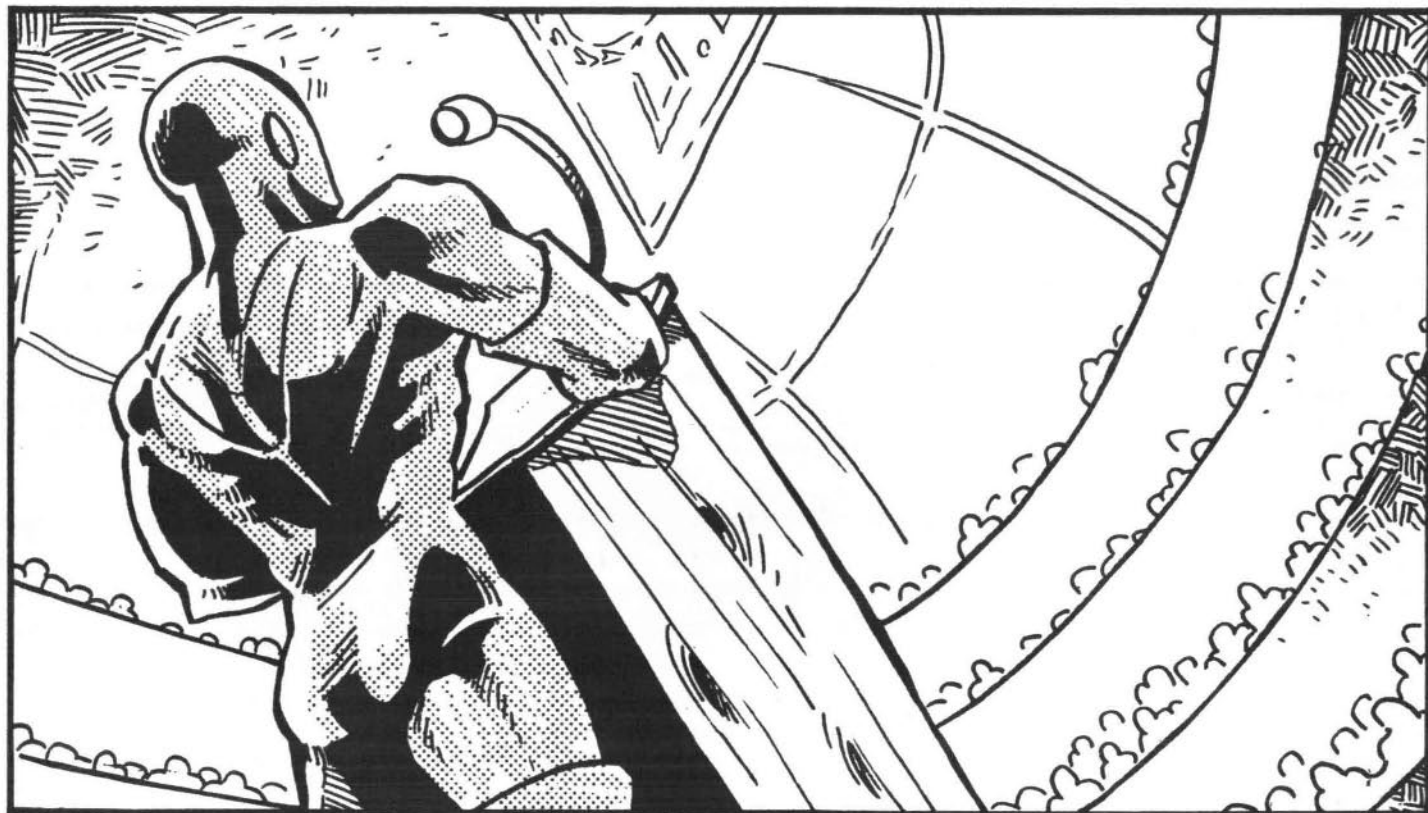
The overall purpose of the ISTs subsumes, to one degree or another, all these goals, and the dedicated member will take the time and effort to understand fully the U.N.'s philosophy and methods.

The first goal of the U.N. is *peacemaking*. Over the past four-and-a-half decades the United Nations has established itself not only as a forum for negotiation and debate, but as an active organization using its representatives to defuse

Using the U.N.

The United Nations, as a unit, should be relegated to the role of plot device for most campaign purposes. Player characters will almost never become involved in the business of the General Assembly or any of the other bodies of the U.N., any more than a second lieutenant in Fort Dix will have a direct involvement with the doings of Congress. Even the "employers" of the ISTs, the Security Council, should remain as distant from the characters as the Joint Chiefs of Staff are from that second loonie. All orders, communications and other trappings of military bureaucracy will travel up and down the channels of the IST Command, which reports to its parent organization, the Committee On Permanent Peacekeeping Forces (COPPF). Only in the most dire emergencies will the Security Council bypass the COPPF and the IST Command to directly address individual teams.

Not only is this a realistic structure, it provides a necessary buffer between the characters and their ultimate employers. This gives them a useful, but limited, autonomy, but also can prove to be a source of frustration and dread when the bureaucracy bogs down.



Non-Intervention

One of the primary tenets of U.N. policy is non-interference in the affairs of any country — as long as it doesn't go past the border, the U.N. won't get involved. However, because of the long-term goals of the U.N., IST members may often find themselves in conflicts of duty and conscience. A case in point is the massacre at Tiananmen Square. Because it was a matter entirely internal to China, the U.N. (and, consequently, IST Beijing) was forbidden by its Charter to intervene.

There are, however, solutions to such conflicts. The U.N. must maintain an "official" stance of non-interference — but is not insensitive to the calls of conscience. In the case of Tiananmen Square, IST Beijing and other nearby ISTs were officially ordered to remain out of the conflict. However, the IST Command makes it clear that what an IST member does on his leave time is not under the jurisdiction of United Nations. The IST Command also makes the rearrangement of leave time from the standard "three on, one off" schedule very easy — as long as the minimum duty team is maintained.

Not surprisingly, several IST members took short-notice leave from their posts to participate in an "individual initiative" venture to Tiananmen Square. The legal niceties of the IST leave policy did not prevent the wrath of the Chinese government, but did protect the U.N.'s facade of non-interference.

The simple truth of the matter is that, with the complexity of the world, the U.N. cannot avoid actions that can be construed as interference. In the strictest possible sense, the U.N.'s social and economic programs are interference, as is the very existence of the IST. And, unknown to any but the five permanent members of the Security Council, the U.N. has a covert operations branch. Rarely used, it is maintained by the same administrative machinery which organized the first, secret, U.N. superteam. In short, to fulfill the duties it has taken upon itself, the U.N. must bend its own rules — unwillingly, and only according to the dictates of conscience, but bend them nonetheless.

tensions and end wars. This has, on occasion, required military action on a large scale, but most U.N. forces are only minimally armed, and only allowed to fight in their own defense. Diplomatic methods are preferred, and are almost always more successful.

The second goal is *peacekeeping*. Where peacemaking is the effort to end a conflict, peacekeeping is the practice of keeping it from erupting in the first place. This, too, sometimes requires the presence of U.N. military teams. Unlike other functions of the United Nations, peacekeeping is not explicitly included in the charter; it has, rather, evolved as a necessary step between the Charter's provisions for conciliation and military enforcement.

Disarmament is the third goal of the United Nations. Although the Edicts of 1982 successfully banned strategic nuclear weapons and military use of supers, this is only part of the total plan. Since its beginning, one of the hopes of the Charter was the gradual but complete reduction of *all* armaments throughout the world. Until 1982, the threat of nuclear weaponry obscured all other armaments in importance. Since the Edicts, there has been a sort of "breathing period;" so far, the U.N. has not yet taken up the challenge of further reducing the number of weapons in the world.

As the Charter states (in Article 55) that conditions of stability and well-being are necessary for peaceful, friendly relations between nations, the fourth, and perhaps pre-eminent, goal of the United Nations is the *improvement of economic and social conditions* the world over. Approximately 80% of the U.N.'s budget goes to economic and social programs, most of them in the Third World. Paradoxically, IST members often can usually do little for this most important ideal, unless their metahuman abilities are particularly appropriate: weather-manipulating supers, for example, and wide-area telepaths who can teach.

The fifth goal is the *safeguarding of human rights*. The founders of the U.N. made a clear link between the preservation of human rights and the preservation of peace; it is considered one of the primary purposes of the United Nations. It, too, places IST members in a difficult position. The U.N. is forbidden by the Charter to interfere directly in affairs that are completely internal to a particular country, although diplomatic and economic measures can be imposed to "urge" the country to reconsider its actions.

The U.N. is also required by its Charter to *promote decolonization*. This is the process by which non-self-governing territories are given their independence and become nations in their own right. South Africa's puppet states, like Namibia, are examples of colonial territories not truly released by the parent nation, and are one reason that South Africa has been consistently denied a seat in the United Nations.

Not truly a separate goal of the U.N., but a function outlined for it in the Charter, is the promotion of International Law, although it does not, in general, have the power to enact binding rules. As the U.N. is only authorized by the Charter to maintain a judicial body, the International Court of Justice, ISTs are not charged with the enforcement of international law.

Policies of the U.N.

Many of the policies of the United Nations as a whole apply also to the ISTs, although many do not. These policies are binding restrictions on the autonomy of the ISTs, and violating any of them could be considered grounds for a court-martial.

The primary policy of the United Nations and the ISTs is the principle of non-intervention. This is clearly outlined in the second article of the Charter: "Nothing . . . shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which

are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state . . .” Military actions permitted by other sections of the Charter are specifically exempted from this restriction. Despite the IST’s status as a deployed military force, though, it must abide by the non-intervention principle.

The second most important policy of the United Nations is in regards to its own status in the world. It was not intended to be a super-state or world government — simply an international forum for peace. History has forced it into the role of world enforcer and protector. With the power it now wields, and the respect it commands, the U.N. could become a true world government — if that were its goal. The very principles of its founding do not allow this, and to this end it is a point not only of policy but of diplomacy never to treat it as if it were an over-government. Many nations have invested considerable prestige to support U.N. policies; any intimation that they have sacrificed any of their sovereignty would be an insult and a provocation (even if it were true!).

Other policies of the U.N. applicable to the IST are echoes of the U.N.’s goals as outlined in the previous section. In addition, there is a specific agenda for ISTs, set in their own charter. This agenda, which incorporates the prime standing orders of the IST Command, also reflects the philosophy of the United Nations (see sidebar, p. 8). Other policies are enacted to benefit the U.N. and its member nations: for example, any devices confiscated by an IST which are clearly of a technological level beyond the present state of the art are required by standing order to be turned over to UNESCO for investigation.

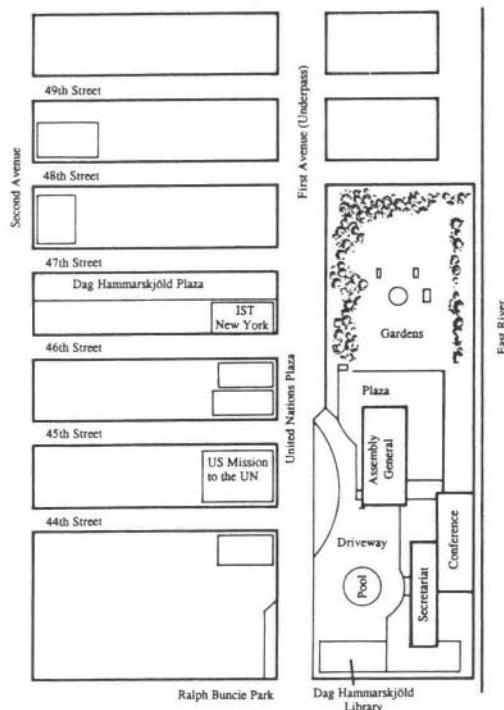
The IST Parental Power Structure

No organization exists in a vacuum. The IST is administered through several layers of agencies, culminating at the top with the Security Council. Detailing the Security Council and its role in the United Nations is beyond the scope of this chapter; however, its relevant subordinate bodies, culminating with the individual ISTs, are of narrow enough purpose that they can be adequately described here.

The Committee On Permanent Peacekeeping Forces

The Security Council, like most other organs of the United Nations, has the right to establish its own subsidiary groups. Included in its roster of permanent subcommittees is the Committee on Permanent Peacekeeping Forces (COPPF).

COPPF is descended from the Committee on the Afghan Problem (CAP) established by the Council in 1979. CAP was ostensibly organized to investigate the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, but its true purpose was to collect and train



A Brief History of the U.N.

Formed with the Allies of the Second World War (China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States) at its core, the U.N. began with the signing of its Charter in San Francisco, California on June 26, 1945. The organization did not formally come into existence until November 13, 1945, when the charter had been ratified by the Allies and a majority of the other 46 countries which signed it.

The longest holdout was the Soviet Union; historians speculate that, concerned about the possible losses of sovereignty implicit in sections of the Charter, the USSR intended to decline membership until President Truman exerted diplomatic pressure and, some historians suggest, nuclear blackmail. If the latter is true, it would certainly explain the traditional opposition the USSR had maintained until recently to any actions proposed by the United States. Another potent force in recruiting and delivering member nations was the British metahuman John Bull. A hero of World War II, Bull took it upon himself to proselytize the U.N. cause to balky governments the world over. In a very real sense, Bull was the visionary behind the final formalization of the U.N. — without his efforts, it seems very likely that an insufficient number of nations would have ratified the Charter. Even after the formal establishment of the United Nations, Bull continued to visit non-member nations and extol the virtues of joining the organization.

The United Nations initially received its funding from dues paid by member nations. The amount owed by individual nations was determined by a scale that measured a country's Gross National Product in comparison to that of other countries. Even so measured, the U.N.'s total budget was less than that of most individual nations. However, in 1955 the Swiss billionaire Franz Pierre du Loire, himself a former delegate to the neutral Swiss observer mission to the U.N., gave an endowment to the organization. Totaling over \$100 billion, the endowment was initially refused by the U.N. on the grounds that it was simply too large. The terms of the gift were redefined to limit the organization's access to the money to a fraction of the principal each year, and the endowment offered once more. This time it was accepted; to this date it is used to fund efforts by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Continued on next page . . .

A Brief History of the U.N. (Continued)

With the development of controlled "hot" nuclear fusion in 1982 by a research program funded by the IAEA (see p. 46), the U.N. suddenly found a lucrative source of income. In the nearly 30 years since the du Loire endowment, the attitudes of the U.N. toward income — and towards enforcing its edicts — had changed. Fusion power and the money it earned gave the U.N. the full financial independence to become what its delegates had decided it should be: a more powerful enforcer of world peace. No longer dependent on the charity and good will of member nations for funding, and populated by delegates with a truly global viewpoint, the U.N. found it had the will to unilaterally and nonviolently enact the historic Edicts of 1982.

a covert superteam to help the Afghan rebels fight the Soviets. Later it began the process of contracting private teams for U.N. service. When the Security Council initiated the Edicts of 1982, CAP was reorganized as COPPF and charged with overseeing the ISTs.

The Committee (as it is usually called by members of the IST Command) is composed of one representative from each member nation of the Security Council. As with the Security Council, its presidency rotates on a monthly basis by English alphabetical order of country name. Its function is to oversee the operations of the IST Command and the individual ISTs. If special IST maneuvers are asked for by a member nation, the Committee is the body which receives, processes, and implements the request. COPPF is also in charge of budgeting for all ISTs.

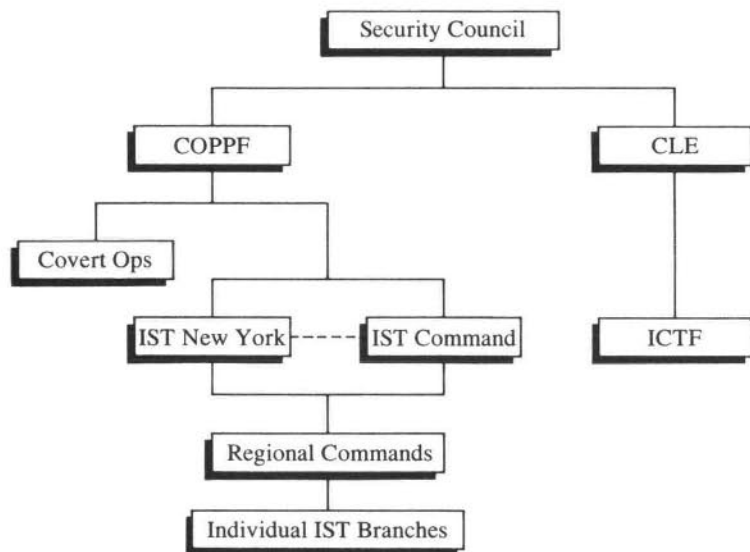
To aid its administrative efforts, COPPF employs a large staff, which occupies two whole floors of the Secretariat building in the U.N. Headquarters, plus offices in the Hague and branches on each continent. This staff does the actual day-to-day support of the world-wide IST network, channeling goods and services, overseeing member deployment, and orchestrating the public relations aspect of the IST. A specialized division provides constant technical support for the U.N./IST computer and satellite network (UNET).

The general opinion of COPPF throughout the IST organization is low. For

the most part, they are considered foot-dragging bureaucrats by the elite ISTs and their field commanders. The exception is the technical staff, who are treated with respect and deference. Those team administrators who are not also metahumans are hired and placed by COPPF; all administrators must submit weekly reports in classic military fashion. Team administrators have minimal voice in matters which are primarily military in nature, but for all other purposes are considered to be in command of their teams.

For convenience, IST deployments are organized by continent. Each continental division is supervised by a Regional Director, who reports directly to COPPF and shares control over the individual teams with IST Command in times of peace. During an IST mobilization, whether because of natural disaster or potential war, IST Command has full control over the affected region. All reports and evaluations made by team administrators are processed by the appropriate

Regional Director's office, which then passes it on to the Committee.



The IST Agenda

As set by the Security Council, this agenda constitutes the seven basic standing orders, in order of priority, that all IST must operate under.

- 1) Enforce the ban on nuclear weapons.
- 2) Enforce the ban on military super teams.
- 3) Combat international drug trafficking.
- 4) Protect civilians.
- 5) Discourage armed conflict between nations.
- 6) Support global human rights.
- 7) Provide a visible presence of the U.N. in member nations and maintain a positive public image.

Covert Operations

Besides the very public ISTs, COPPF still maintains one function of its predecessor organization. Like CAP before it, COPPF recruits and maintains a small, secret team of supers intended solely for covert action. This function of COPPF is never discussed at public meetings of the Committee or the Security Council. Reports and evaluations are processed under several different, innocuous names; the team itself has no formal title. The primary purpose of the covert activities team, not to mention the U.N.'s more conventional intelligence forces, is to search out and identify potential and actual violations of the Edicts of 1982. This information is then relayed to the appropriate IST.

The Committee for Law Enforcement

A related, sister committee of COPPF is the Committee for Law Enforcement (CLE). Also administered under the aegis of the Security Council, CLE

oversees international law-enforcement activity, and maintains close links with COPPF. Like COPPF, it too is a bureaucratic force administering to an active agency. This enforcement agency is the International Crime Task Force.

The ICTF is largely derived from Interpol (of which it is an outgrowth). ICTF provides the functions of the latter organization in tandem with IST operations in situations where ordinary police measures would be inappropriate. They also serve as a data pool for the ISTs. IST headquarter computers are linked with ICTF databases, providing access to data not often stored in the paramilitary databanks. Varying ICTF clearances are assigned to individual teams, depending upon COPPF classification of their members and administrator.

Outside of cooperation with the ISTs, the ICTF takes the role that Interpol used to play. (With both the advent of United Europe in 1992 and the founding of the CLE, Interpol has begun to shrink to a merely pan-European agency.) It provides, as for ISTs, an international clearinghouse of information on criminals, and fields a large number of agents who work on cases which enter international jurisdiction. Contrary to popular belief, ICTF has nothing to do with international law (which is generally limited to border and resource disputes between nations); it merely provides for an effective means of cooperation between different countries' law enforcement agencies.

IST Command

Poised between the COPPF and the individual IST is IST Command. Command (as it is called for short) is the level on which individual IST members are tracked and assigned. It is also the level at which organization becomes recognizably military in form.

Calling Command a single body is somewhat misleading. Although there is an overall commander of all IST forces, equivalent to a five-star general, Command itself, mirroring the bureaucratic structure, is organized for convenience by continental divisions. Each division of Command, although answerable to the IST commander and her staff, and fully under their command in times of emergency, are at all other times jointly responsible to both the commander's staff and the appropriate Regional Director.

For the most part, IST Command is not a terribly active level. Its main purpose is to provide a central organizational structure in times of emergency, which can then act and react faster than the bureaucratic structure of the COPPF. The commander has power comparable to the Committee's in determining what qualifies as an emergency or not; at her order every IST on the face of the planet can be almost instantly unified into a single army and redeployed as she sees fit. If an emergency-level situation is confirmed by the Security Council after the first 24 hours, then the commander gains full strategic command of *all* available U.N. forces and resources, in addition to the ISTs. This authority cannot be countermanded by the COPPF; only when the commander or the Security Council determines that the emergency has ended does her status revert to normal.

In the short history of the ISTs and IST Command, such an event has not occurred.

The commander of the IST forces is also the field leader of IST New York. This ensures that she is close to the United Nations Headquarters most of the time, immediately available for consultation and conference with both the Security Council and the COPPF. The IST commander has also been known to address the General Assembly and other primary organs of the U.N. during times of crisis.

The current (and so far only) commander of the ISTs is Dimitra Poulis of Greece, super-named Argurous Astraph (in Greek, "Silver Lightning"), sometimes called the Silverbolt. A 20-year veteran of the metahuman military, she is one of the most powerful beings on the planet (see p. 101).

Xavier Petrosian

Secretary-General of the U.N.

Age 57; Gray hair and beard, blue eyes; 6', 170 lbs.

ST 10, DX 12, IQ 14, HT 9

Advantages: Diplomatic Immunity, Empathy, Status 5, Unfazeable, Wealth (Wealthy).

Disadvantages: Age, Enemies: Libyan, Palestinian and Iraqi agents on a 6 or less, Sense of Duty to People of the World.

Quirks: Loves Children; Worries too much; Workaholic.

Skills: Administration-13; Bard-17; Computer Operation/TL8-14; Detect Lies-15; Diplomacy-16; English-14; Fishing-17; French-15; Greek-15; Guns (Pistol)-15; Literature-13; Politics-13; Psychology-15; Running-10; Savoir-Faire-15; Writing-16.

The United Nation's current Secretary-General, Xavier Petrosian, is the successor of Kurt Waldheim. A compelling speaker and prolific writer, he is as much a voice for the U.N. as the rest of the Secretariat, and is personally responsible for improving public reaction to some of its more controversial policies. He is a likable, if sometimes harried, man, who tries to have time for everyone who needs to see him. He is currently in his second term in office.

The office of Secretary-General has a very varied list of duties. Primarily, the Secretary-General is empowered to perform informal and formal mediation in international disputes, and is the official administrator of all peacekeeping operations. Thus, all authority over the IST eventually devolves upon him. He may also perform any other functions that the General Assembly may decide to entrust to him, and he is given the power to call the Security Council to meet on any matter he considers significant enough for their attention.



Induction and Service

The Security Council

The U.N. Security Council is composed of five permanent members. Not coincidentally, these are the five "Great Powers" who won World War II: China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States. There are 10 non-permanent members, elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms; when its term is up, a country is not eligible for immediate re-election.

Of all the organs of the United Nations, the Security Council is the only one with the power to enforce its decisions; all other bodies can only make recommendations to the member nations. Its primary purpose is to investigate and help solve disputes that may lead to war, and to defuse situations which are likely to endanger international peace and security.

The Security Council is not in continuous session; it only meets when called to consider a potentially threatening situation. It has a 24-hour response time, once a meeting is called, as each member is required to have a member present at all times at the U.N. Headquarters building.

The Council is given trusteeship over all areas of United Nations function which are designated as strategic; this specifically includes metahuman forces, as well as the regulation and limitation of armaments. The Council is also in direct control of any military forces it calls for deployment.

The presidency of the Council rotates monthly, by English alphabetical order of member nations.

Starting Wealth

Starting wealth for the IST world is \$15,000. TL7 equipment (see *GURPS High-Tech* and the *GURPS Basic Set*) is most common, although the developed countries are virtually in TL8 at the end of the 1980s. Almost all the more interesting TL8 equipment is not yet invented, although technically feasible; some selected items are available in limited distribution.

Occasionally, an IST may come across a freelance or civilian super whose powers would make an excellent addition to the team. In such a case the Field Commander (or any representative he may chose to appoint) may try to recruit the super. In fact, he is encouraged to do so. If the prospective member agrees, he is registered with COPPF, which schedules his time at an IST "boot camp" and provides his transportation there.

Once the recruit emerges from his 12 weeks of basic training, the IST which recruited him has the right to request his assignment. If they decline his services, IST Command then assigns him to an embassy that would best profit from his abilities and training.

In some nations, most notably those who select their IST members by draft, the IST is permitted to draft potential members.

IST Basic Training

COPPF and IST Command run several training camps around the globe for new and old IST members alike. They are often placed in locations that suffer from weather extremes or particularly unpleasant terrain, in order to further harden new members. To make matters worse (for new recruits, that is), IST Command has managed to obtain the services of the six most-hated drill sergeants in the United States Marines! For eight weeks recruits are pressed to their limits — and beyond — before being assigned to stations around the world.

The primary IST training camps are located in Siberia, Arizona, and Sri Lanka. There are currently five secondary camps, with plans for two more.

Status, Rank, and Salaries

IST Team Administrators are usually of Status 1+, although very high levels of Status are unusual. They earn \$6,000 per month.

An IST Field Commander is usually Rank 6. Regional Subcommanders are Rank 7. The IST Commander, Argurous Astraph, is Rank 8. There are no formal names for the Ranks 6 and below; 7 and above are generals. Rank is indicated by a system of dots embroidered on the member's costume immediately below the squad insignia: one dot for Rank 4, two for Rank 5, and so on.



IST members are paid in proportion to their Rank. At the base rank of 4, an IST member earns \$4,000 per month. Each rank above 4 increases pay by 20%: \$4,800 for Rank 5, \$5,760 for Rank 6, and so on. If the member serves a dual function, such as Public Relations Officer or Legal Attache (q.v.), they receive bonus pay equal to one-half their base pay for each such job that they perform.

Team members have all their living expenses covered as long as they choose to dwell in their embassy. A tuition reimbursement plan exists, and members are encouraged to continue their educations.

Security Clearances

Within the various organizations subordinate to the Security Council, there is a six-level security clearance system. Level 6, the highest, is the clearance of Council members. Level 5 is granted to officials of CLE and COPPF who are not members of the Council, as well as selected members of IST Command and ICTF. Argurous Astraph is also Clearance 5 — Military Ranks 4 through 8 correspond to Clearance levels 1 through 5 in the IST. Clearance 0 is uncleared.

Super Names and Secret Identities

Besides performing their military and civic duties, the ISTs have become a new public face for world unity. With the role of ISTs as public relations organs, ensuring that their members are easily known and identifiable is a must. To this end, the U.N. encourages the use of descriptive “super names” and popular nicknames. While most of today’s world citizens would be hard put to name their country’s ambassador to the U.N., almost all will recognize the heroes of the local IST embassy. Emphasizing public recognition with short, exciting and catchy names helps to ensure the spread of the U.N. philosophy through the ISTs.

The U.N. does not accept (as the U.S. and other countries do) the privilege of a secret identity. Since all potential IST members must be security-cleared before being formally accepted, the Security Council insists that full names and other I.D. information be revealed. If the applicant (or draftee) desires, identity data will be stored in sealed records. Otherwise, the information is entered into the Security Council archives and the Secretariat’s civil service files.

Costumes

The U.N.’s policy regarding costumes is as liberal as that regarding super names. If the super has or wishes to design a costume, he is encouraged to do so. The only restrictions are that it must be tastefully done and conform to the host country’s standards of propriety. Costumes are also required to bear all appropriate insignia if it is possible to add them without destroying any special properties of the costume.

The standard insignia for IST member costumes is as follows. The left arm at the shoulder should have the U.N. symbol and beneath it, the letters “IST.” The upper right arm, near the shoulder, carries the rank dots and squad letter, if any.

To facilitate the creation, repair and replacement of costumes, IST Command maintains a corps of skilled designers, tailors and seamstresses. If a super



Sergei Rykov

USSR Member, U.N. Security Council

Age 64; Black hair streaked with gray, black eyes; 5'7", 140 lbs.

ST 9, DX 11, IQ 16, HT 8

Advantages: Appearance (Handsome), Diplomatic Immunity, Reputation +1, Status 5, Strong Will +3.

Disadvantages: Age, Hard of Hearing, No Sense of Humor.

Quirks: Always appears to be asleep, but is keenly aware of what's going on; Collects pre-revolution folktales.

Skills: Administration-16; Bard-16; Boating-10; Carousing-10; Diplomacy-16; English-16; Fast-Talk-15; History-14; Philosophy (Marxist)-15; Politics-17; Professional Skill (Bureaucratic)-16; Psychology-13; Russian-17.

Sergei Rykov is one of the older members of the Security Council. He has held a seat on the Council for nearly 25 years. Although he is of the generation of most Communist hard-liners, he has been an ardent supporter of Gorbachev. When the Edicts were passed, his efforts on behalf of the U.N. were most responsible for the USSR remaining a member state. A remarkable free-thinker as well as a Marxist, Rykov often runs head-to-head with his nation's policies, yet manages to sell the Russian government on his position. Rykov is a true internationalist, and helped design the structure of today's ISTs.



Official Languages of the U.N.

The U.N. has two official languages for its publications and day-to-day operations: English and French. English is the most common second language in the world already, and French is the traditional tongue of diplomacy. IST members are encouraged to learn one or the other, to facilitate communication across international borders.

Sir Wilton Sherbourne

U.K. Member, U.N. Security Council

Age 56; Red hair, blue eyes; 6'1", 160 lbs.

ST 10, DX 10, IQ 15, HT 14

Advantages: Diplomatic Immunity, Language Talent +3, Reputation +1, Status 6, Voice.

Disadvantages: Age, Code of Honor, Honesty.

Quirks: Carries a gold-handled sword-cane; Checks his pocket watch every ten minutes, on the dot. Smokes an exquisitely carved meerschaum pipe; the definitive upper-class British gentleman.

Skills: Administration-13; Computer Operation/TL8-15; Detect Lies-15; Diplomacy-19; English-19; Fencing-12; French-17; German-16; Russian-16; Savoir-Faire-17.

Sir Wilton, the representative of the United Kingdom at the Security Council, is a staunch conservative, but also a rabid supporter of supers. Although he did not draft the resolutions which became the Edicts and the basis for the ISTs, he made their official presentation to the Security Council. He is extremely formal (stiffly so, some think), and very upper-class British in his speech and mannerisms. A career diplomat, he convinced the House of Lords and the House of Commons that agreeing to the Edicts of 1982 was their idea all along. While not a skilled orator, he has a silky speaking voice and a command of the language unequalled in the English-speaking world.

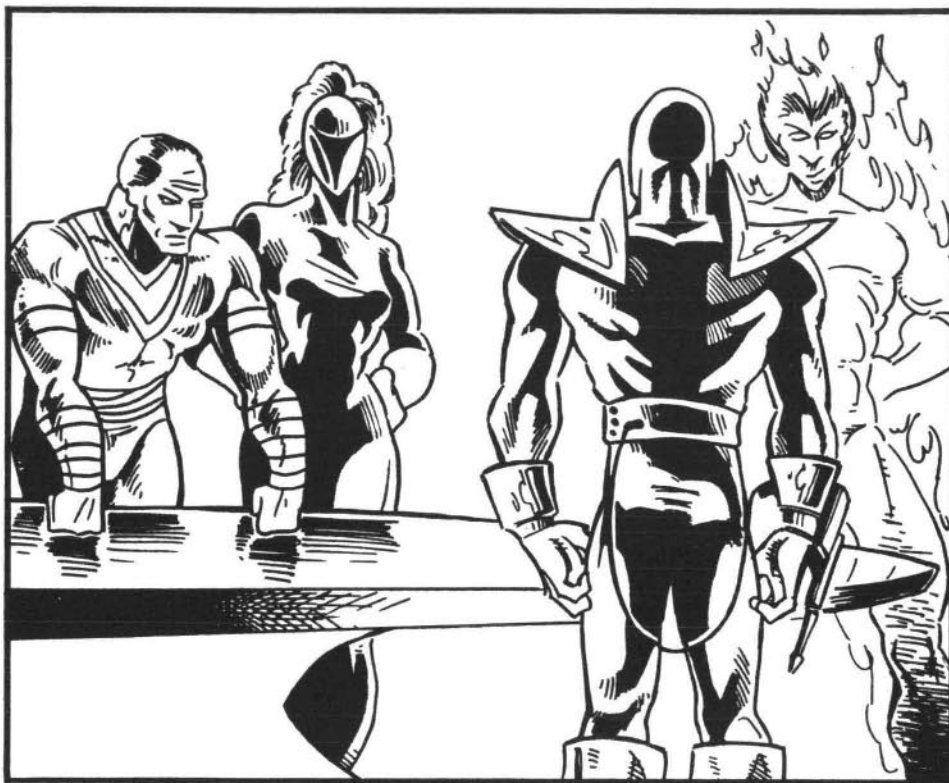
Staffing Your IST

The minimum complement of metahumans at an IST embassy is 8 and can be as many as 20, depending on the country. Although some GMs may have as many as 8 players, it is more likely that there will be less. How, then, is the GM to handle the extra members?

Of course, the GM could create all the other supers in the embassy and roleplay them all, but that could become unwieldy. One possible solution, usable for larger numbers of players, is to simply state that all the other IST supers are on their "off" weeks when the PCs are on duty. For smaller groups, make the characters members of a single squad (see p. 13) and focus only on their actions. If the GM has experienced roleplayers, they could create and run two characters each, either simultaneously or in rotation. If the latter, it is easier for the GM to handle calls for reinforcements — the alternate PCs are the ones who come running! Only the smallest player groups should require the constant presence of NPC supers.

wishes, a costume can be created for him by this division, which also keeps complete patterns for all reproducible costumes in the IST. Any material can be used for a design, from Spandex to Kevlar to envirosuit material (see p. 51). IST membership automatically includes three costumes plus one replacement costume every six months. Additional replacements are paid for out of the member's salary.

The U.N. also provides special-purpose uniforms for different assignments. Typically available are all-black nightsuits, arctic gear and cammo patterns (standard, desert, plains, etc.).



IST Courts-Martial

Since the IST is a military body, members who violate its regulations or the laws of their host country are subject to court-martial. The accused is brought before three IST officers of rank equal to or exceeding his. One of these officers is his field commander (or the regional commander, if the accused is a field commander); the other two are from other embassies. The accused has the right to legal counsel — often the legal attache of his embassy. A prosecutor is assigned by IST Command.

Procedure is fairly standard: evidence and witnesses, with cross-examination, are presented to the tribunal, who vote on the guilt of the accused and sentence the guilty. If desired or needed, telepathic examination using the "Three-Telepath System" (see sidebar, p. 62) is employed. Penalties vary by the severity of the crime, but never exceed life imprisonment. In some cases, the penalty may be to turn the guilty party over to the civil authorities.

IST courts-martial have been rare. Two IST supers have been tried for manslaughter (one was found guilty, the other innocent), and one for espionage against the U.N. (guilty; the spy was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment). Crimes and violations less significant than gross negligence are handled on a case-by-case basis by the Administrator, Field Leader and the Legal Attache.

The Individual IST

We now come to the level of the individual IST embassy. Embassy super-teams number from 8 to 20 persons, not counting support staff. In order to maintain an international profile, no more than two natives of the host country are assigned to any team. Teams over 10 in number are usually divided into squads of three to five persons each. For quick identification, squads are referred to by Greek letters; a member's costume will have his squad letter on its upper right arm near the shoulder.

Squads are usually drilled in specialized functions. For instance, Alpha Squad of IST New York is trained in anti-terrorist tactics appropriate for use on the grounds of the United Nations Headquarters. Squads also tend to develop their own custom combat maneuvers, with exotic names like the "fastball special" or the "jack in the box." Where team composition allows, the field commander may cluster similar powers together to create a specialized squad: invisible and/or insubstantial infiltrators and "stonewalls" are common. Squad composition and training is up to the team leader.

Command Structure of the Team

Within the team, there are a number of important posts mandated by the COPPF. Although several hats can be worn by one person, all these positions must be filled.

Team Administrator

The Team Administrator is, in most senses, the true commander of the team. He is their chief connection to the Committee, and the conduit through which most organizational decisions are transmitted. His role is also that of the diplomat, as he is the formal connection between an IST and the nation in which it is stationed. In this role of ambassador, the Administrator must be a firm and dedicated representative of the United Nations, able to navigate the rocky waters of international diplomacy. It is not an enviable job in many nations.

Often it is the Administrator who takes the heat for excesses committed by overzealous team members. It is perfectly within his rights to transfer that heat to his charges. His other prime function, then, is disciplinary; he has the power — and the duty — to enforce standards of behavior and performance from members of the Team. If necessary, the Administrator can initiate court-martial proceedings.

More often than not, Team Administrators are normals, simply because few highly-skilled diplomats and administrators are supers. Several teams do, however, have Field Commanders with sufficient international experience to qualify as Administrators, and who perform both jobs.

A Team Administrator must possess the skills of Administration and Diplomacy. Fast-Talk and Politics may also come in handy!

Field Commander

The Field Commander, often called the "team leader," is the military authority in the IST. During emergency or combat situations, the team leader is in sole, complete command of his team; at all other times he shares the responsibility of command with the Team Administrator.

The Field Commander's duties are focused on the fitness and preparedness of his team, as well as their deployment. He is in charge of training and organization; his position combines elements of platoon sergeant, Civil Defense Warden, police officer, teacher, and strategist. In all matters regarding the military employment of the team and its members, he has final say over the Team Administrator, although IST Command may override him.

Antonio Buonocore

Current President of COPPF

Age 60; Black hair, green eyes; 5'9", 165 lbs.

ST 11, DX 12, IQ 12, HT 9

Advantages: Alertness +2, Diplomatic Immunity, Eidetic Memory/1, Status 4.

Disadvantages: Age, Gluttony.

Quirks: Stickler for details; Always eats pasta on Tuesdays; Devout Catholic; Always carries photos of all his grandchildren, wears a bad toupee.

Skills: Accounting-14; Administration-15; Diplomacy-13; English-13; Fishing-10; French-13; History-15; Italian-16; Research-10.

Buonocore is the current president of COPPF, and is reasonably representative of most members of the Committee. Originally a career diplomat from Italy, he arrived at the U.N. in 1964 and has been there since. Although he has served both his country and the U.N. well, he is known primarily as a bean-counter and a nit-picker. He was originally opposed to the Edicts when they were proposed in 1982. While he still has his doubts about the wisdom of the act, he treats it as a *fait accompli* and does not consider trying to overturn them. However, his resistance to the Edicts may explain his reticence at budget sessions for the IST.





In times of disaster or other civil need, the team leader is obligated to activate his team and place himself at the disposal of the civil authorities. However, he is not required to be subservient and cater to their every whim; he may refuse any request which he feels is unsafe, unreasonable, or may violate U.N. policy or regulations. If a situation develops which the team leader determines to have the potential to be internationally destabilizing, he may at his initiative activate his team to deal with it. IST Command and the Team Administrator must both review his action within

24 hours; they both have the option of either terminating the mission or approving it. The latter extends the activation indefinitely, subject to termination by the Field Commander, the Administrator, or IST Command.

The team leader has the option of appointing a second-in-command. This option is usually taken on larger teams; in action, squads are divided between the Field Commander and his lieutenant. If necessary, the second-in-command is breveted to the same Security Clearance (see p. 11) as the leader, and given full access to all materials relevant to commanding the IST. Should the team leader fall in combat without a second-in-command, leadership automatically devolves upon the most senior member in the team, subject to later approval by the Administrator.

The Field Commander is often as much of a diplomat as the Administrator. Sometimes even more so, as the team leader often has more direct contact with the people of the host country. So besides fine-honed military skills, a team leader must also possess the ability to interact well with people, and present himself and his team in the best light.

By the very nature of the position, the Field Commander must be either a super or (rarely) a super-normal. Most have extensive experience that puts them far above their teammates; many are among the most powerful individuals in the world. Currently, most team leaders are veterans of the old national superteams, with military training and attitudes. The remainder have been promoted from within existing ISTs over the last few years, to command new embassies as they are emplaced.

Characters designed to be Field Commanders must have a Rank of 6 or 7, and must possess Leadership and Diplomacy skills in addition to Basic Training skills package. Other social skills are also useful. Dual Field Commander/Team Administrators must also possess the necessary requirements for an Administrator.

Public Relations Officer

The U.N., despite its financial independence and its IST forces, runs primarily on the goodwill of the people of the world (not to mention their governments). The Edicts of 1982, although almost universally accepted by member nations, still rattled many governments. The formation and emplacement of the ISTs, although agreed to by the nations, was another strain. Since 1982, the U.N. has been treading carefully, lest it truly offend someone; its power depends upon the voluntary participation of its members.

To help in this cause, each IST is required to have a Public Relations Officer. The PRO's purpose is to coordinate and promote a positive image for his IST and for the U.N. and its policies in general. Active manipulation of people and events is not allowed, although the PRO may organize public appearances, goodwill trips and the like.

The PRO will usually be one of the members of the team. COPPF and IST Command discourage assigning this position to anyone resembling the stereo-

Team Assignments

Every nation which is a member of the U.N. has an IST stationed in its capital. Additionally, large countries will have several teams in other cities; one extra IST embassy is provided for every 45,000,000 people. For example, a country of 50,000,000 will have *two* ISTs — one in the capitol, and one more for its population. A list of countries with additional ISTs is found on page 15.

Besides these embassies, there are several special IST bases. Hiroshima and Nagasaki both have full IST complements, who serve solely as honor guards for the large memorials to nuclear disarmament in these two cities. They are generally staffed by wounded or retiring members, as their duty is largely symbolic. IST McMurdo is a metahuman adjunct to McMurdo Station in Antarctica, and is charged primarily with aiding the scientific research there, as well as providing a rescue team for both land and sea emergencies around the continent. IST Anchorage and its counterpart, IST Murmansk, both provide emergency aid for the globe north of 60 degrees north latitude, besides serving their respective homelands.

typical "mover and shaker" P.R. man common to Hollywood. Instead, their guidelines suggest the use of a team member who has a way with people, training him or her if necessary. Bard and Diplomacy are necessary skills here.

Legal Attache

As both an advisor on international and local law, and as competent counsel in the worst of cases, a legal attache is required for each IST. Unless a qualified lawyer is present as a team member, this position is almost always filled by an outsider. It is properly relegated to the support staff of the embassy; unlike the PRO or the Field Commander, the Legal Attache is rarely seen by the outside world. Many people do not even know that they exist!

The Attache must be a competent lawyer to qualify for the position, with bar certification and a skill of 14+ in Law. He must possess, or be willing to train for, a specialization in international law and in the law of the host nation(s) to which he will be assigned, if he is not a native.

Security Officer

This may be either a member of high Military Rank, or a military person assigned by IST Command. Subordinate only to the Field Commander and the Team Administrator, the Security Officer is in charge of distributing and revoking team-level clearances, and determining the relative sensitivity of different sections of the embassy. He is also in command of a small team of security specialists who maintain the IST's security systems and who aid the powered infantry in protecting the embassy grounds.

COPPF and IST Command provide surprisingly slim guidelines for security within an embassy. Access to the fusion plant, computer center, and other strategic facilities is limited to Clearance 2 or better by mandate, but other than that, individual ISTs are free to organize their security zones as they see fit. It is the Security Officer's duty, in conjunction with the Administrator and the Field Commander, to determine the security arrangements of his embassy, and to program them into the system.

The Security Officer must possess the Electronics (Security Systems) skill at TL8, as well as Computer Programming/TL8.

Support Staff

Over and above the superteam and its governing power structure, any IST embassy will have an additional support staff of 100 persons or more. Many of these are domestic workers who provide a well-kept level of comfort for the IST members. Others are medics or trainers. The remainder are the necessary administrative staff any international embassy must possess. Like the staff of any well-run embassy, though, they are investigated; U.N. security thoroughly checks and clears them before they are hired.

Powered Infantry

Besides its supers, each embassy houses a squad of powered armor-equipped infantrymen. The exact number of infantrymen varies from nation to nation. Housed within the embassy compound, they are the security guards for the embassy, and rotate on the same basic duty schedule as the supers (three weeks on, one week off).



IST Placements

The following are nations with more than one IST, and the city or cities they are found in. Capitol cities are included here, and are listed first. The GM should feel free to change this list as he sees fit.

Bangladesh: Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna.

Brazil: Brasilia, Fortaleza, Manaus, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador.

People's Republic of China: China at one time had 10 teams emplaced, with plans for 14 more, but all ISTs were expelled in the aftermath of Tiananmen Square.

Egypt: Cairo, Aswan.

France: Paris, Marseille.

Germany: Bonn, Berlin

India: New Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras. There are plans for 15 more ISTs in India.

Indonesia: Jakarta, Banjarmasin, Medan, Ujung Pandang, with one more to be completed in 1991.

Iran: Teheran, Shiraz.

Italy: Rome, Milan.

Japan: Tokyo, Osaka, Sapporo.

Mexico: Mexico City, Monterey, with one more being built in Mazatlán.

Pakistan: Islamabad, Karachi, Quetta

Philippines: Manila, Davao.

Thailand: Bangkok, Ranong.

Turkey: Ankara, Malatya.

USSR: Moscow, Irkutsk, Leningrad, Murmansk, Odessa, Sverdlovsk, Yakutsk.

United Kingdom: London, Edinburgh.

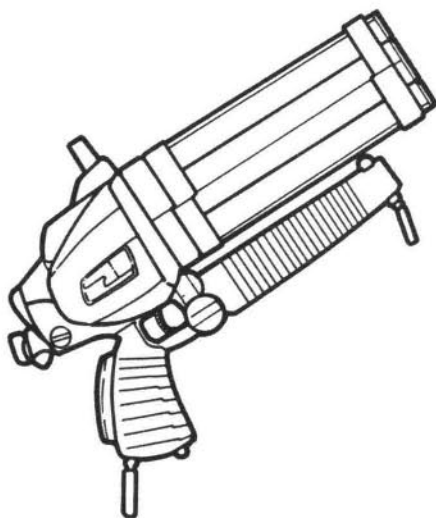
United States of America: Washington D.C., Anchorage, Dallas, Honolulu, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York.

Vietnam: Hanoi, Thanh-Pho Ho Chi Minh.

“Civil Need” and Crimefighting

In order to defuse the tension of what is essentially an enemy encampment, an IST is required to serve the civil authorities of their host country. But the ISTs are governed by the UN's agenda at all times, and must adhere to it. There is considerable leeway, though.

While ISTs are not designed to be crimefighting units, many teams make themselves available to local authorities for this purpose. It allows them to practice their skills, often on metahuman opponents of unpredictable tactics, and is often the most effective means of actively combating international drug trafficking, as required by the U.N. These activities also help to maintain good relations with their host countries. Since positive public relations is a necessity, the U.N. passively encourages crimefighting.



Emergency Military Action by ISTs

In the event of a flareup of tensions or outright hostilities in sensitive areas, particularly if metahuman activity is a factor in the conflict, one or more ISTs may be called upon to supplement peacekeeping forces. As this is an extremely controversial use of IST forces, it can only be done by a unanimous vote of the full Committee. However, although such an action can be initiated by the Committee, it would normally be enacted by the Security Council itself. If the Committee does initiate IST involvement, it is subject to Council review if said involvement lasts more than 24 hours. Fortunately, since the formation of the IST system this drastic measure has not been applied. Predictably, it is rarely a topic for public discussion.

As with the team proper, the IST infantry can be activated by the Field Commander for active duty outside the embassy. In the past, this has been as a peace-keeping force, riot police, anti-looting patrols following an earthquake, and interdiction forces used to capture a ring of drug smugglers.

The same restrictions, vis-a-vis confirmation of activation within 24 hours, apply to the powered infantry and the metahuman forces.

The Typical Embassy

The establishment of an IST embassy is a complex process. No small amount of this is due to the difficult task of building or re-building the actual embassy complex. In order to have as low a profile as possible, embassies are designed to blend into their surroundings — despite the fact that they are effectively small fortresses!

Defensive Capabilities

Although the primary intent of an IST is both diplomatic and peaceful, prudent policy dictates that an embassy should be able to withstand the worst possible situations. To this end, these bases are equipped to defend themselves under attack from man or nature.

The main alterations are passive in nature. Where possible, the building's foundations (including all sub-basements) are set or re-set on isolation bearings (state-of-the-art earthquake “shock absorbers”). Then the actual structure of the building is begun. Existing buildings are completely gutted and re-fit from the ground up.

No matter what its origin, an IST embassy's walls are engineered (or re-engineered) to provide maximum protection. A minimum of 3 feet of steel-reinforced concrete is applied behind an external, decorative sheathing. This provides a barrier with DR 4, HP 360, not counting any ablative or other effect provided by the external sheath. Roofs and floors are constructed with the same composition and strength.

Internal Security

Inside, the embassy is wired with a sophisticated electronic security system. Controlled through the main computer, the security system controls access to restricted zones in the embassy through palmprint and/or retinal scanning, although it is also capable of voice recognition. There are a number of more conventional intruder detection devices installed in each embassy. All are linked directly to the main computer and coordinated through the Internal Security program (see sidebar, p. 22).

If intruders are detected on the embassy grounds, the security program activates automated weapon turrets throughout the building (and its outdoor areas, if any). These turrets are primarily armed with stun rifles (another TL9 weapon developed from researching supers); those in particularly sensitive areas may sport blast rifles. The turrets are generally programmed to fire at any target detected after an alarm is activated; skill level is 14. Turrets have DR 15, HP 6, and are -3 to hit because of their small size. Being connected directly to building power, they have an unlimited number of shots.

In general, security measures tend to be hidden or camouflaged (requiring a Traps-3 roll to spot), particularly in the so-called “public” areas and zones of heavy traffic. Most members of IST support staffs never even know they're there!

Prompted by its common appearance among metahumans, U.N. researchers are attempting to develop a practical, large-scale force field technology. If they are successful, force field generators running directly off the embassy fusion plants will provide yet another layer of defense for ISTs.

Offensive Capabilities

Although IST embassies are intended primarily as defensive installations, most do have some capability for offensive action. The exact level of this armament varies from embassy to embassy. Many are simply equipped with externally-mounted versions of the security weapon turrets; the majority of these contain non-lethal antipersonnel weaponry such as stun rifles, although blasters of pistol strength are also used. These turrets, like their internal counterparts, are camouflaged and computer-controlled. Their activation is not automatic — the Field Commander must explicitly order their use.

In more unstable regions, such as El Salvador and the Sinai, computer-linked weaponry is abandoned for human-operated machine guns and the like. With the uncertain conditions in such areas, late TL7 chemical slugthrowers such as the EX34 Chain Gun (see sidebar) are the weapon of choice — highly dependable, able to withstand a large number of climactic conditions and deadly when needed. These are permanently mounted on the building but are hidden unless in use.

Of course, the IST powered infantry and the superteam itself can be considered offensive weaponry, as well.

Please note that although this equipment is spoken of as “offensive,” this is merely to distinguish it from the passive or more internalized systems which defend an IST against possible attack. It is a violation of both the spirit and the letter of U.N. regulations for any military force not organized as a punitive or retributive move to take offensive action against any target. Only if the embassy were under direct attack could deadly force be used.

Detention Facilities

Since many IST missions result in the capture of one or more metahumans, and since many nations do not have the facilities to hold metavillains and super-powered terrorists, IST installations include cells capable of holding most supers. These they share with their host countries when possible, although they are not used for permanent incarceration.

Since the state of the art in construction methods cannot yet withstand the full force of many metahumans' powers, an alternate means of restraint had to be developed. Studies and experiments on biological response to electromagnetism in the late 1970s indicated that properly tuned electromagnetic fields could induce sleep in humans. In 1983, the *Deepsleep Box* (see sidebar) was invented. Initially developed as a medical aid, it lulls the user into deep sleep with an electromagnetic field (“electronarcosis”) and soothing sound.

The IST holding cells take advantage of the fact that under electronarcosis, the subject will remain asleep as long as power is supplied to the Box. Each cell will hold one prisoner, who is kept pacified by electrodes which lead to an externally-controlled Deepsleep Box. For stays longer than a day, prisoners are fed by I.V. (or stomach tube, for those whose skin is too hard for a needle to pierce). Elimination is handled by the low-tech expedient of a diaper.

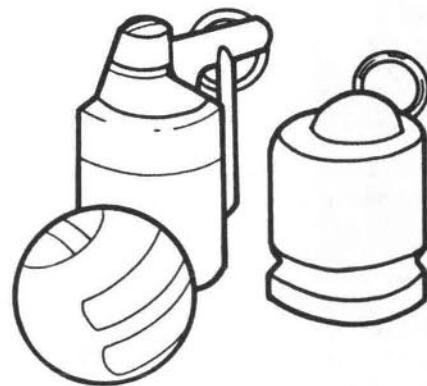
Unless the prisoner's physical person is dangerous, medical staff from the embassy infirmary see to his well-being. Prisoners are flexed and moved to maintain muscle tone and to prevent bedsores, as well as being cleaned daily. An IST will normally have no less than six holding cells.

Training Facilities

During his duty weeks, an IST member only spends one 8 hour shift each day actually standing duty. The time left after sleep and meals is officially “free” time, but members are required to spend at least ten hours every week in combat practice and training. To this end, each embassy is equipped with a full gymnasium with a weight room.

The EX34 Chain Gun **7.62×51mm**

This single-barrelled machine gun is detailed in *GURPS High-Tech* (pp. 103, 122); as it is very unlikely to malfunction and packs a considerable amount of power, it is usually the weapon of choice for embassies stationed in trouble zones where they may be subject to concerted attack. The Chain Gun has a damage of 7d and an Acc of 8. Its $\frac{1}{2}D$ is 1,000, and Max is 4,655. Its ROF is 9, with a recoil of -1. Any critical miss that indicates a malfunction of the gun must be rolled again; only on a second critical failure is there an actual malfunction.



Electronarcosis *and Deepsleep Cells*

The detention cells in IST embassies (and some nations' jails) utilize a device known as the deepsleep box to restrain criminal supers. A deepsleep box connects to the super's head with electrodes; when turned on, it lulls him to sleep. The sleeper remains asleep as long as the electrodes are in place. In normal commercial and medical models, a timer is used to wake the subject up. Deepsleep cells have no such timer.

If the subject is unwilling when the device is activated, he gets a Will-4 roll every 10 seconds to resist falling asleep. A subject who is already normally asleep does not resist. A deepsleep box costs \$500 and weighs 2 lbs. Deepsleep technology is legality class 6, but use of a deepsleep box to restrain another against his will is restricted by law to government authorities in all nations.

IST Command issues portable “pacifier helmets” using the same principle, for use on captured metahumans (see p. 52). Four hours of deepsleep are equivalent to eight hours of normal sleep. The Deepsleep Box or Pacifier Helmet runs for 3 months on a B cell; deepsleep cells run indefinitely on building power.

Self-Sufficiency

Planned with worst-case scenarios in mind, IST embassies are designed to be as independent of local utilities as possible. Sometimes there are no local utilities, a not-uncommon condition in many underdeveloped nations.

Energy

Building power comes from a dedicated fusion reactor buried deep in a sub-basement. This reactor drives generators which supply all the electricity needed by the building, without ever tapping into the local power grid. Excess is diverted to storage batteries which form part of an Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS). If the reactor ever fails for any reason, the UPS will cut in its battery power in milliseconds. If necessary, vital systems such as the main computer can be run on RPC-E cells.

At any given time, there will be a three months' supply of fuel stockpiled for the reactor, plus facilities for extracting more from local water supplies.

Water

Where possible, an embassy has its own wells or cisterns, with all necessary pumps, filters, and tanks installed. Where local conditions make this impossible or impractical, the building is hooked up to whatever municipal water supply is provided. In such cases, the embassy still has its own purification equipment, and stores water in two to five 10,000-gallon tanks on its lower levels. Should any hostilities or disasters erupt in the host country, the outside water connections are automatically severed and the embassy runs on its tanks.

Food

In normal situations, the embassy will take weekly deliveries of foodstuffs from local suppliers, usually on a contract basis. The embassy's majordomo and chief cook try to ensure that there is at least two weeks' worth of fresh food, and a month's worth of frozen, available at any given time. In addition to these supplies, another full month's worth of combat rations are stockpiled (in constant rotation to keep them fresh).

Sanitary Facilities

In areas without sewage systems, all waste and trash are diverted to a reclamation facility, which extracts water and recyclable materials. What remains is piped into a septic tank.

In their initial boot camp training, IST members are given the rudiments of the unarmed martial art of their choice, if they do not already possess one. Once assigned to a team, they must exercise this beginning skill, practicing it under the tutelage of either the embassy trainers or another expert, perhaps a skilled team member. Considerable time is spent in the gym and in other facilities.

One of these other facilities is a shielded room known as the "Combat Simulation Chamber." Although it can double as a firing range, the main purpose of the CSC is to provide a place for no-holds-barred sparring and combat training. The only requirement is that all punches over human normal strength are pulled, and all energy attacks are toned down to their absolute minimum. Much as martial arts classes hold roundabout sparring, team members are required to cycle through the ranks of their teammates, each testing himself against the others.

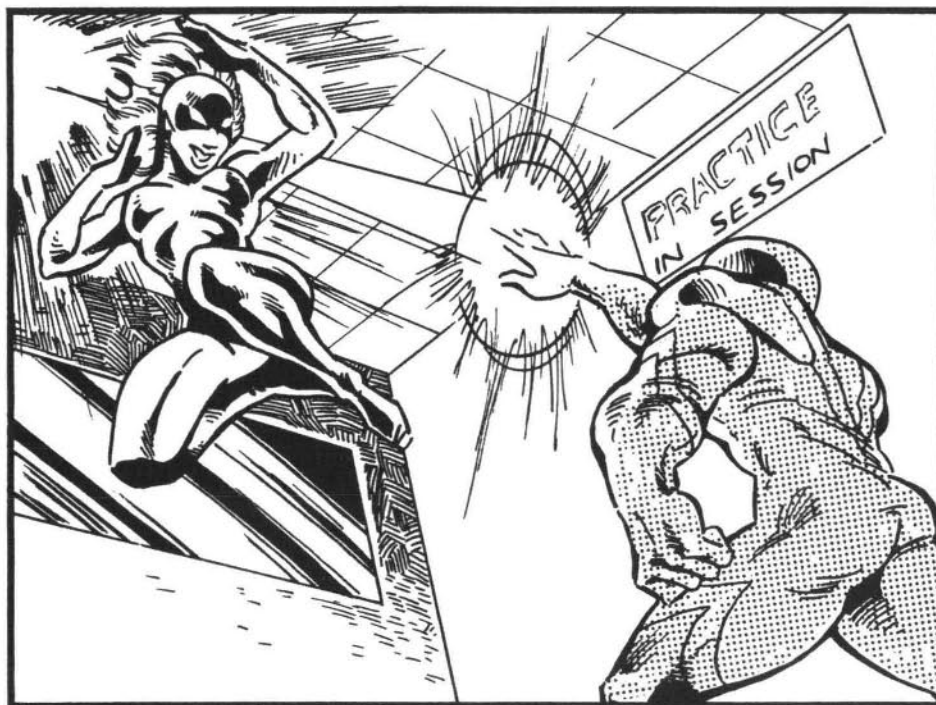
The team leader or the training coach oversee all matches, and may impose complications upon any combat. Most common is the "unpowered" combat, used to teach the importance of tactics over raw power. If the team is divided into squads, they are drilled together as much as possible; even small teams are often divided into two or three sides as an exercise in teamwork.

When used as a firing range, the computer controlling the CSC provides randomly-appearing pop-up targets, and automatically scores each run. A character may use either weapons or powers in a range run. As with all other training exercises, scores and evaluations are passed on to the Field Commander for consideration.

Sample IST Embassies

While maps of three significant floors of IST New York have been included here, the other sample embassies are provided without floorplans. This is mainly because they would be redundant. All IST embassies have the same basic features; only the arrangement differs from embassy to embassy. Individual IST buildings may have other features, such as New York's Museum of Metahumans (see below), but most are not worth mapping in detail.

The field commanders and other sample members of each embassy will be found in Chapter 9.



IST New York

In more ways than one, IST New York is the headquarters of the IST system. Although IST Command and its bureaucracy is across First Avenue and south three blocks, in the U.N. Secretariat building, the supreme commander of the ISTs and her hand-picked team make their home here: 832 First Avenue, between East 46th and East 47th Streets, adjacent to Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza and Shcharansky Freedom Plaza. Vital communications are duplexed between IST New York and IST Command, and most command-level decisions originate in the embassy.

Physical Plant

The New York IST building, in keeping with the relatively low skyline of Manhattan in its vicinity, extends only six stories above the ground, not counting its satellite dish. Over its standard steel-reinforced concrete construction is a three-inch sheathing of reddish-pink marble (which provides, incidentally, an outer layer of DR 8, HP 45 all over the building).

Its overall appearance is Post-Modern; windows are in narrow strips staggered from floor to floor, and tinted to match the color of the marble. The windows are made of tempered Plexiglas, six inches thick (DR 7, HP 35). They are one foot wide and extend from floor to ceiling (eight feet) inside.

At the front of the building, four huge columns, five feet square, flank the entrance and soar up two stories to meet the bottom of the third floor. The entrance itself has an odd Post-Modern interpretation of an Art Deco feel; two revolving doors, surrounded by geometrical designs cast in their heavy bronze frames, with a normal glass door to either side of them.

The building is set back 72 feet from the street; an open plaza stands before it (see *Unique Features*, below). Behind it, a fifteen-foot-wide alley separates it from the building west of it on 46th Street. The alley slopes down and curves under the edge of the embassy to enter the receiving dock. The armory on the third floor has a concealed door which opens on the alley and allows powered infantrymen immediate egress.

There are nine levels to the building, plus the roof. Their contents are:

Sub-basement Two: Fusion reactor, electrical generator, water tanks.

Sub-basement One: Holding cells (8), combat simulation chamber, long-term storage, vault, morgue.

Basement: Receiving dock and associated offices, supplies and storerooms, including ammo locker.

Ground floor: Museum of Metahumans and library (see p. 22), newsstand.

Second floor: Mechanicals: air conditioning, heat, related environmental systems including air filtering, cellular radio subsystems.

Third floor: Powered infantry barracks, armory, armor shop, parts storage, lockers, mess, off-duty area, firing range.

Fourth floor: Team Administrator's office, other administrative offices, auditorium for press conferences, PC network room.

Fifth floor: Personal quarters for IST supers, labs, library, kitchen, dining room.

Sixth floor: Gymnasium/CSC, showers, medic, conference room, labs, technical library, mainframe room, command center.

Roof: Elevator mechanisms, primary satellite dishes, helipad.

Two banks of two elevators each provide passenger transport to all floors, but require security scan-lock identification when limited-access areas are selected. A freight elevator also connects all floors except the first. Fire stairs also span the entire building. Doors to the stairs are locked from the inside on all floors except the first, where the door is locked from the outside: the stairs can

Security Sensors

All of these sensors are used in sensitive areas of an IST embassy. It would be a truly remarkable super who could defeat them all simultaneously, and most normals would have a rough time avoiding setting off any one. To complicate matters for the intruder, all sensors are hidden or camouflaged, requiring a Traps-2 roll just to spot them.

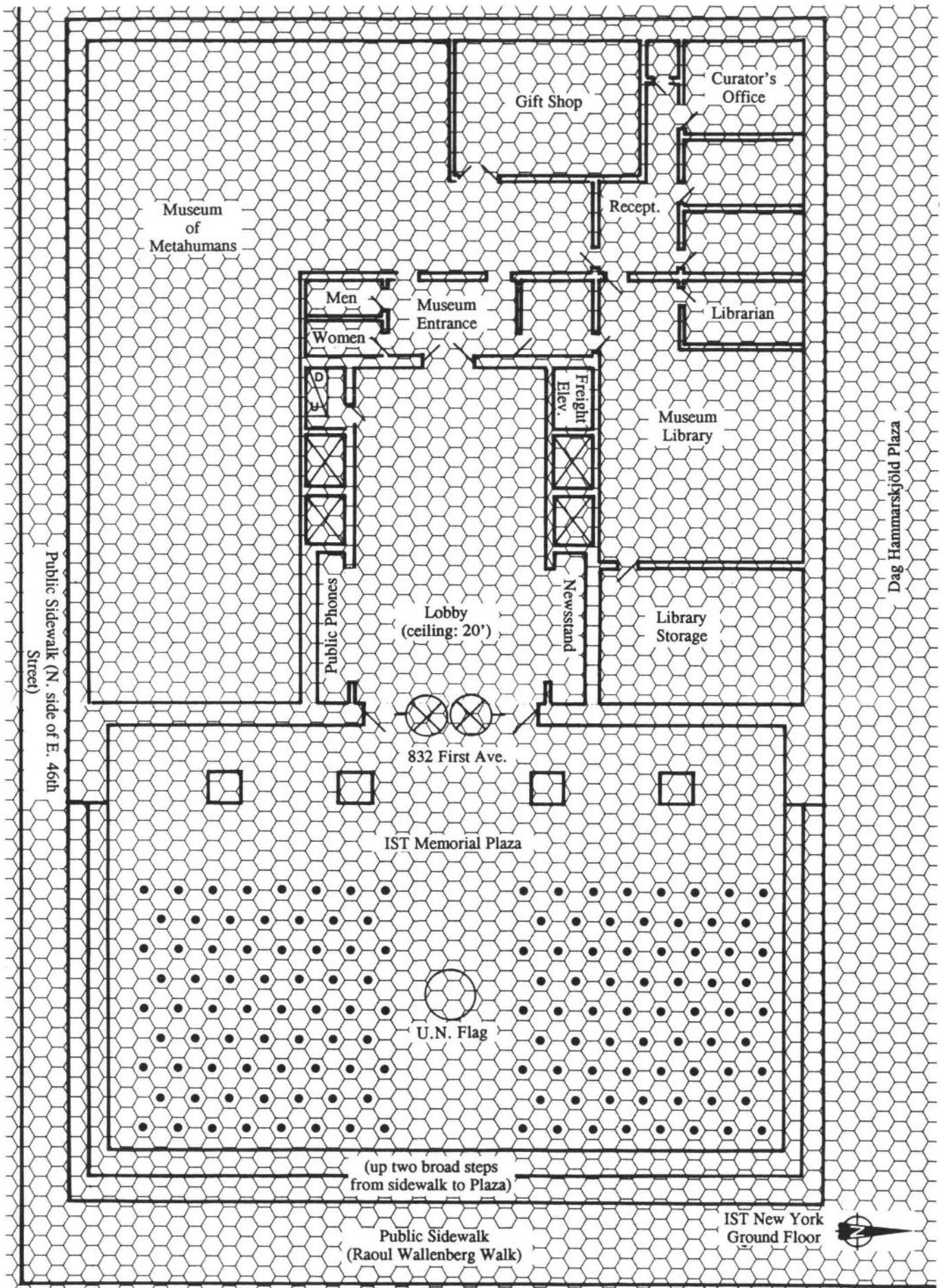
Beam Sensor: This sensor consists of a laser or infrared projector and receiver; if an object passes between the two, the invisible beam is broken and the alarm triggered. Infrared sensors may spot an infrared beam; a super with infravision would see it right away. Smoke, glitter or powder thrown into a laser beam's path may detect it.

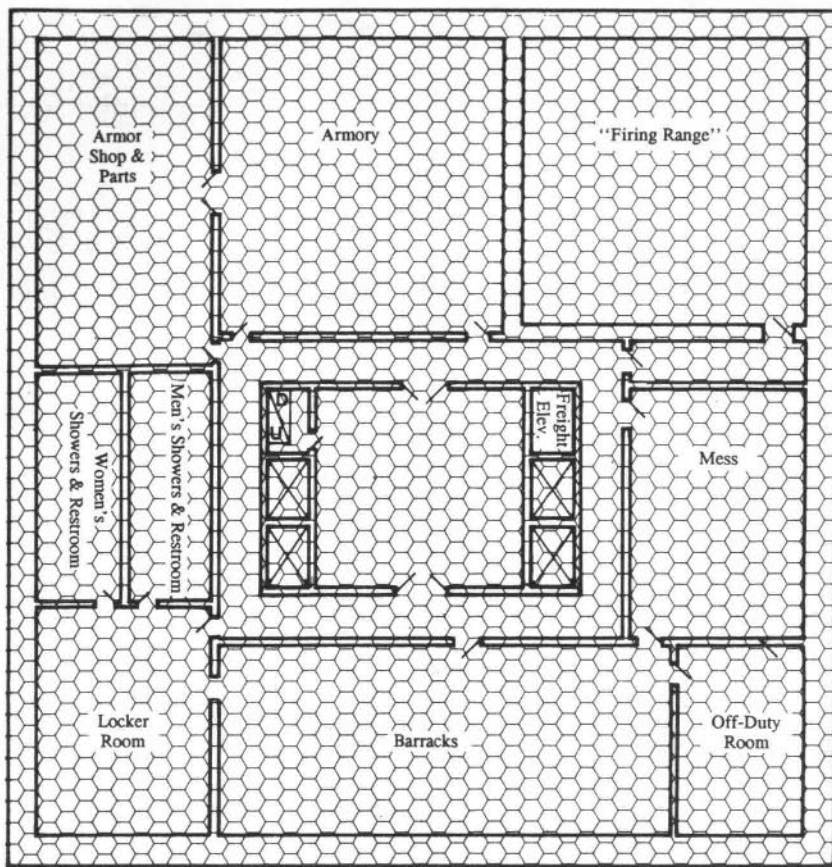
Once the beam has been spotted it may be possible to jump over it or crawl under it — perhaps requiring acrobatics if several beams are used at once. Invisibility and/or Invisibility to Machines will allow a super to walk right through the beam.

Pressure sensor: A pressure sensor usually involves a simple plate — when pressure is placed on it (as in someone stepping on it) or removed (as in a jewel being removed from its display case) the sensor detects the change, and sounds the alarm. The key is to avoid the sensor, or disable it so it fails to register a pressure change: roll against Electronics (Security Systems)-4. Insubstantial supers, or those who can fly, can avoid triggering this sensor. Because it acts somewhat indirectly, it is not affected by Invisibility to Machines.

Sonic Sensor: A sonic sensor fills an enclosed area with ultrasonic vibrations. Anyone moving through the area will normally be picked up by the detector, but someone moving very slowly may not be detected: a successful Stealth-2 roll is required. The Silence super advantage does not apply to your Stealth against a Sonic Sensor. Ultrahearing will detect the vibrations; Insubstantiality or Invisibility to Machines will defeat this system entirely.

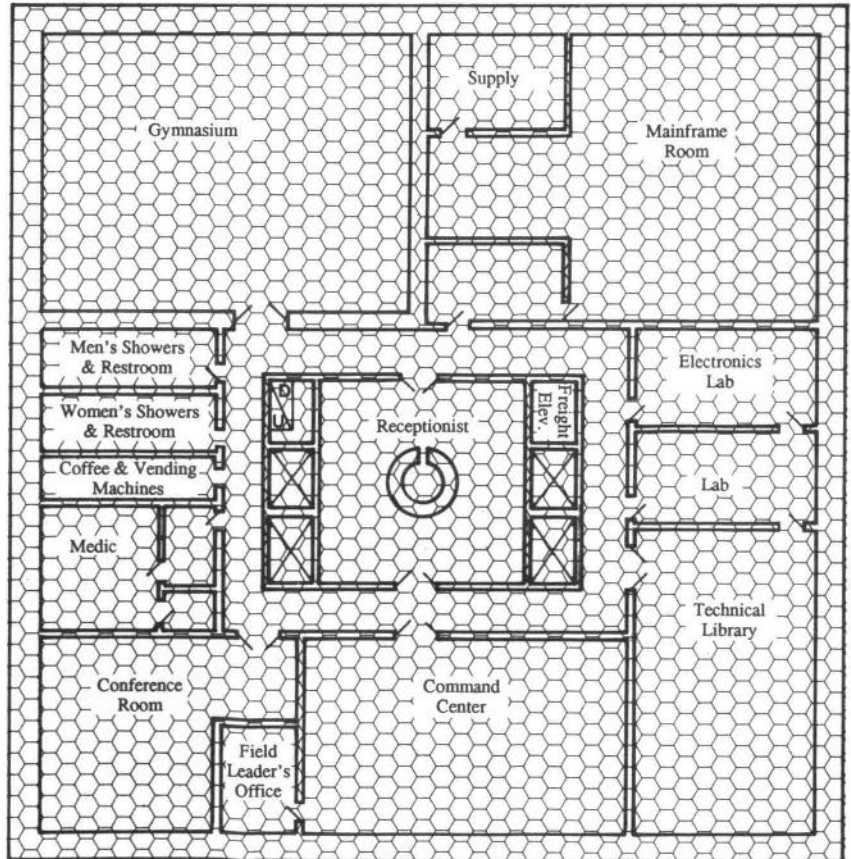
Surveillance Camera: A simple closed-circuit video camera, connected to a monitor, is one of the best security systems possible. But to be effective, constant human monitoring is required. IST embassies have unobtrusive video cameras in their entry halls and in the more sensitive areas; these feed into a monitor room manned by the security staff. Of course, Invisibility and Invisibility to Machines can render these useless.





IST New York
3rd Floor
(2nd floor is
Mechanicals,
A/C, etc.)

IST NEW YORK



IST New York
6th Floor:
Duty Zone

Standard IST Mainframe Software

The following is a partial list of the software installed at startup on all IST mainframes: CAD/CAM; Environmental Control; Fusion Engineering; Internal Security; Interpreter; Medical; News Retrieval; On-Line Help; Operating System; Optical Recognition; Science Packages; System Security; Teaching Programs (as-sorted); Telecommunications; Trend Analysis; Voice Recognition.

In addition, these databases (and more) are available: detailed political, social, and economic information on the host country; detailed information on the region; help files; personnel records on all IST metahumans; personnel records for all support staff; language databases; literature of the host country; military records for infantrymen; technical and general reference shelves; various scientific databases; world history. For details on computer hardware and software see pp. UT 6-15.

Transportation

Mobility is an important factor in any military, and the IST is no exception. It is equipped with aircraft of many types, from huge cargo planes to Concorde-class supersonic personnel transports. Off-duty IST members receive free air transport to any airport near an embassy; members on a specific mission can go just about anywhere. Requesting special transport is a function of the Team Administrator or the Field Commander, and must be approved by IST Command.

In cases where even supersonic transport is too slow, the IST maintains a squad of long-distance teleporters, who are kept familiar with *all* embassies. With 15 minutes' notice, they can 'port personnel and/or material just about anywhere. Included among them is the super known as Airdrop, who has an Exoteleport capacity of 5 tons and a range of 256,000 miles (Power 31). In addition to delivering shock troops and emergency supplies, Airdrop has also placed satellites in orbit and probes in deep space.

Because it is large and every embassy has one, the Combat Simulation Chamber is the usual site for incoming teleports. Priority radio and UNET messages are sent to ensure that the chamber is cleared and shut down before a 'port is made.

be entered on any floor, but exited only on ground level. The main computer also has full control over the door locks, and will open them completely in the event of a full evacuation. In the event of fire, the building has a complete halon/foam fire suppression system, with selective area control.

Although a kitchen and dining room, fully staffed, are available for the members of the IST, they have full privileges in the delegates' dining room in the U.N. headquarters building across the street. Many frequent a small Szechuan Chinese restaurant around the corner on Second Avenue; it has become a traditional off-duty meeting place since 1982.

Unique Features

The embassy of IST New York is noteworthy in several ways. First, it is co-headquarters (along with IST Command in the Secretariat building) of all IST forces in the world. As such, it is the primary residence and workplace of Argurous Astraph, commander of the IST. Argurous Astraph is a major celebrity, even in star-sated Manhattan; her presence can and would cause crowds and traffic jams, if she did not take care to limit her casual appearances in public.

Secondly, it is the site of the U.N.'s Museum of Metahumans. This facility occupies the entire first floor of the IST building. It is open to the public Monday through Friday, 9 to 5; an admission fee of \$4.00 is charged, although access to the Museum's library is free. The fee is waived for IST members and officials.

The Museum traces what is known about the genesis of metahumans in the modern age, as well as those historical figures who are suspected of being supers. Innumerable mementos and memorabilia of many supers of the past four decades are owned by the Museum — much more than they can display at any one time. The contents of the Museum therefore cycles, and often follow themes that — not coincidentally — underline U.N. policies and philosophies. One consistent portion of the Museum's exhibits is the thought-provoking, and sometimes disturbing, section on persecution of supers, their use as military forces in the past and present, and such atrocities as the adolescent "volunteer" supersquads of the Iran-Iraq war.

Researchers can make use of the Museum's extensive library. Included in its stacks are paper, electronic or microform copies of virtually everything ever printed or broadcast which concerns supers. Some material is classified, and some is stored in locked shelves, but access is quickly given to most scholars with a legitimate need.

The third feature worthy of notice at IST New York is the IST Memorial Plaza, through which anyone visiting the embassy must pass. Approximately 53 feet by 102 feet in size, the plaza is raised above the sidewalk level; two broad steps made of black marble lead the visitor up to it. The plaza itself is paved in white marble hexagons three feet across, and directly in its center is a flagpole flying the U.N. flag and mounted on a six-inch-high white marble disk. Engraved around the edge of the disk and filled with gold is the legend, "In Memory of Those Metahumans Who Gave Their Lives For World Peace," in both English and French.

To either side of the flagpole, two 42-foot-square sections of the plaza have bronze plugs fitted into the center of every other hexagon. Sixteen of the hexagons in this pattern (see map, p. 20) have ten-foot bronze columns mounted on them. Each column is a memorial to a single IST member who has died in the line of duty.

Like many plazas in New York City, this one is normally filled with people eating, sitting or playing, especially on warm, pleasant days. However, very frequently these crowds will grow silent, as a super or two with IST insignia walk across the plaza to stand quietly in the shade of a column, and pay their respects to a fallen comrade.

Special Duties

Because of their immediacy to the United Nations headquarters complex, IST New York is charged with several special duties. The most important is to act as guards in special situations, such as visits by heads of state or other dignitaries. The IST members are also assigned to guard closed-door sessions of the Security Council.

The most unusual of their duties, more or less unique among the rest of the ISTs around the world, is to be *famous*. In the spirit of good public relations, members of IST New York are encouraged to use their off time to visit the theater, the Metropolitan Opera, exclusive night clubs, everywhere other celebrities go — and to do it in costume. Despite the U.S. government's support of the U.N., many Americans are still suspicious of the IST. A grassroots groundswell prevented Jimmy Carter's handpicked successor, Walter Mondale, from gaining the Presidency in 1984, because Carter capitulated to the Edicts of 1982; much of that same resentment still haunts the American culture. By making their superpolice into supercelebrities, the COPPF hopes to drain off that potential for trouble by turning it into hero-worship.

Only Argurous Astraph, because of her position of responsibility, is exempt from this duty, but that doesn't help her much.

P.R. and Local Authorities

IST New York gets very good press. Gossip columns and supermarket tabloids cover them with astounding regularity, and even the staid *New Yorker* magazine has a tongue-in-cheek "Metahuman Meta-Doings" column. Until her recent transfer, the Scottish super Pouka was a regular guest on *Late Night With David Letterman*, thanks to her impish sense of humor and her "Stupid Supers Tricks" feature.

IST New York's excellent public image doesn't help with the local police, though. Despite the fact that former Mayor Edward Koch welcomed the embassy



Library Contents

The Library of the Museum of Metahumans at IST New York contains a vast amount of information on the metahuman condition, including sociological, psychological, parapsychological and scientific data. Its shelves hold everything from comic books and video tapes of *Psi In The House* episodes, to microfilmed copies of *The American Journal of the Metaphysical Sciences*. If the PCs are based in IST New York, or can travel to it, the Library can often hold clues and information relevant to their current mission, making it an invaluable resource.

Dietrich Siemans

Team Administrator for IST New York
Age 43; Blond hair, hazel eyes; 5'6",
145 lbs.

ST 10, DX 9, IQ 13, HT 11

Advantages: Common Sense, Diplomatic Immunity, Status 4, Unfazeable, Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages: Sense of Duty to U.N.

Quirks: Lives in New Jersey and likes to commute; Pipe smoker; Practices karate to keep in shape; Speaks English with an Oxford accent; Always carries a collapsible umbrella in his briefcase.

Skills: Administration-17; Area Knowledge (New York City)-16; Bard-13; Computer Operation/TL8-13; Diplomacy-15; Driving (Automobile)-9; English-16; Fast-Talk-13; German-16; Interrogation-14; Karate-10; Musical Instrument (Piano)-12; Savoir-Faire-14.

The Team Administrator of IST New York is a career U.N. employee. He has been with the United Nations since 1968, and has worked his way steadily upward. A determined, quiet man, he is well-liked by the team and works hand-in-hand with Argurous Astraph. He has an extensive reputation as fair and even-handed in all matters, with an open mind to the unusual and unexpected.

IST Memorials

Each brass plug in the plaza of IST New York marks a spot where a future memorial column may be installed, for a total of 136 potential memorials. Each column holds the following information, under the U.N. seal: real name; super name (with English and French translations, where necessary); country of origin; date of birth and date of death; brief information on the super's death.

The sixteen IST supers now memorialized, in chronological order, are:

Franz Ebert, known as Föhn (Mountain Wind), East Germany; April 17, 1952 to June 28, 1985. Died repelling South African superteam in Angola.

Gamal al-Mahmoud, known as Zaub'a (Thunderstorm), Egypt. March 15, 1957 to June 28, 1985. Died repelling South African superteam in Angola.

Andrzej Saniewski, known as Ikon (Icon), Poland. September 19, 1965 to June 28, 1985. Died repelling South African superteam in Angola.

Eduardo Savimbi, known as Vagabundo (The Vagabond), Angola; December 1, 1960 to June 28, 1985. Died repelling South African superteam in Angola.

Anastasia Sherenskov, known as Boroh (Raven), U.S.S.R. January 2, 1959 to June 29, 1985. Died repelling South African superteam in Angola.

Ingve Wamphu, known as Vish-bhara (The Poisonous Snake), Bhutan; August 22, 1939 to June 28, 1985. Died repelling South African superteam in Angola.

Yu Chia-Lin, known as Hwu Dye (the Butterfly), China. October 23, 1949 to June 29, 1985. Died repelling South African superteam in Angola.

Maria d'Amico, known as Basilisca (the Basilisk), Italy. June 13, 1956 to October 7, 1985. Died defending passengers on the *Achille Lauro* from terrorist hijackers.

Poul Svensborg, known as Eldfjall (Volcano), Iceland. March 11, 1942 to July 17, 1986. Died in the first tactical nuclear bombing of Jerusalem.

Ruud van der Venter, known as Schelm (the Jester), the Netherlands. November 21, 1965 to July 17, 1986. Died in the first tactical nuclear bombing of Jerusalem.

Arati Chervu, known as Kishnadaca (Nightwalker), India. July 31, 1968 to July 17, 1986. Died in the first tactical nuclear bombing of Jerusalem.

Mayumi Hato, known as Prism, Japan. May 5, 1952 to November 12, 1987. Murdered by Kristallnacht on the Left Bank, Israel.

Continued on next page . . .

in 1982, the NYPD views their help as an unwanted intrusion. IST aid is not turned down, but members invariably receive a cold shoulder from New York's finest. The general opinion among NYC cops is that most supers are prima donnas whose appearance steals the credit from the officers who do the real work.

Complement

Because of the proximity of the U.N Headquarters, and because of the number of special duties imposed upon the embassy, Argurous Astraph has stationed a full 20 supers at the installation. Fifty infantrymen are assigned to the embassy, half of whom are on battlesuit duty. The remainder are assigned more conventional weaponry and armor. (The U.N. headquarters complex has its own squadron of powered infantry, independent of those assigned to IST New York.)

IST London

The British branch of the IST is located deep in the heart of London, a few minutes' walk from Trafalgar Square, and only a moment's flight from the Houses of Parliament. The embassy of IST London can be found on St. James' Square, at the end of Duke of York Street, northwest from Pall Mall. Conveniently close to Piccadilly Circus and Soho, not to mention numerous museums and theaters, the embassy's location provides its supers with the best in both British entertainment and culture.



Physical Plant

IST London is housed in a refurbished Georgian manor house which occupies an exposed corner overlooking St. James' Square. Standing only five stories high, the embassy was built by completely gutting the structure, leaving only the exterior walls. The interior composition is to IST standards, but the thick stone shell of the original building (over a foot in places) adds an additional layer of protection, with DR 8 and HP 180.

Many of the original windows have been blocked off, but this is not apparent. "Dead" windows retain their original glass, and curtains hang behind them; behind the curtains is the concrete wall of the inner shell. The remaining true windows have been reglazed with the standard tempered Plexiglas, 6 inches thick (DR 7, HP 35). The windows are a generous 3½ feet wide by 5½ feet tall. Some upper-level rooms have French windows which open upon balconies; several of these are still functional and have identity scan-locks (see p. 16). Some are guarded by powered infantry, who use them as flight decks.

The building's facade has been lavishly restored to its original elegance, partially to hide the security weapon turrets built into it. Because of the stability of British society, the stunners in these turrets are the most dangerous armament pointed at anything outside.

The front door has been modified to hold two revolving doors, but other than that, both facade and entrance are as they were in 1905. Behind the building, a less well-disguised back door is scan-locked. The drive it opens on enters the

embassy's receiving dock, which is located in a small, new wing which juts out behind the original building.

The division by floor is as follows:

Sub-basement Three: Fusion reactor, electrical generator, water tanks.

Sub-basement Two: Mechanicals: air conditioning, heat, related environmental systems including air filtering, cellular radio subsystems.

Sub-basement One: Holding cells (6), long-term storage, vault, morgue.

Basement: Combat simulation chamber, supplies and storerooms, including ammo locker.

Ground floor: Lobby, branch administrative offices, including Team Administrator, auditorium, receiving dock and associated offices.

Second floor: European regional IST Command offices.

Third floor: Powered infantry barracks, armory, armor shop, parts storage, lockers, mess, off-duty area, firing range.

Fourth floor: Personal quarters for IST supers, labs, library, kitchen, dining hall, mainframe room.

Fifth floor: Gymnasium, showers, medic, conference room, labs, technical library, command center.

Roof: Elevator mechanisms, primary satellite dishes, surveillance equipment, helipad.

There are eight elevators, counting the freight elevator: two banks of three each, directly off the lobby; a private elevator accessible only through the administrative area on the ground floor; and the freight elevator, located by the receiving area. As is standard procedure, these elevators all require security scan-lock identification, with main computer override. Several staircases wind up and down through the building, but access and egress both require scan-lock identification.

Unique Features

IST London has several unique points to commend it. The building itself is a prime example of Georgian architecture, and as such was declared a historical landmark. During the reconstruction of the site, IST had to exert considerable pressure in order to get permission to install the visible improvements to the building's shell; that is, the revolving doors in front, the disguised door to the rear, and the receiving dock wing.

It is noteworthy, also, in its almost complete anonymity. Londoners would be hard-pressed to locate their IST. Despite its proximity to Piccadilly Circus and other landmarks of the city, the embassy receives no tourist traffic worth mentioning. This is, in part, because of its typically British low-key atmosphere: no machine guns on the roof, no troops in battle armor guarding the front door, and only a small brass plaque identifying the building. The workers and inhabitants of the local neighborhood know it's there, of course, but beyond them few seem to know (or care).

Perhaps its virtual isolation is an advantage, as it is also the seat of the European regional IST Command. Occupying the entire second floor of the structure, EIC employs some 275 persons.

The London embassy also has a certain historical significance. It was the first permanent IST base to be completed and occupied after the Edicts were laid down. The delicate balance of power in Europe, already perturbed by the sudden increase in the size of the EEC superteam in 1981, demanded immediate attention. London was established to service the whole continent until more bases could be manned. Its importance to the Security Council ramrodded the project through a period of tight budgets and gave it enough momentum to override any doubts expressed by the British. At a time when many other first-generation teams were housed in temporary embassies, IST London was already installed in a completely computerized, heavily-defended building.

IST Memorials (Continued)

Lucia Pembrose, known as Shrike, USA. February 29, 1960 to June 6, 1989. Killed by Chinese troops in Tiananmen Square, Beijing.

Elsbeth St. John-Drummond, known as Winterhawk, England. August 17, 1961 to August 11, 1989. Killed by Colombian drug cartel near Bogota.

Walter Brodsky, known as Mindbender, USA. July 23, 1943 to September 29, 1989. Killed by Colombian drug cartel near Bogota.

Nyota Mbolo, known as the Jaguar, Kenya. April 4, 1966 to September 29, 1989. Killed by Colombian drug cartel near Bogota.

Katarina Mercado

Team Administrator for IST London

Age 30; Auburn hair, green eyes; 5'7", 125 lbs.

ST 11, DX 14, IQ 13, HT 11

Advantages: Appearance (Beautiful), Diplomatic Immunity, Intuition, Status 3, Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages: Sense of Duty to IST London, Sense of Duty to U.N., Stubbornness.

Quirks: Lives in a hotel instead of an apartment; Loves John Irving's novels; Collects little china elephants; Goes club dancing at least twice a week.

Skills: Accounting-12; Administration-14; Computer Operation/TL8-14; Dancing-15; Diplomacy-11; English-13; First Aid-13; Guns (Pistol)-17; Law-12; Savoir-Faire-13; Sex Appeal-13; Spanish-15; Swimming-14.

Ms. Mercado is a recent employee of the United Nations. A former aide to the Spanish Ambassador to the U.N., she sought a new job after her complaints about limited advancement opportunities were ignored. The U.N. snapped her up, and after several months working under the COPPF, she was promoted to Team Administrator for IST London. She is a sultry Spanish beauty, and proud of it, but her looks sometimes cause others to underestimate her or write her off completely. She is, in fact, very competent, although her experience is limited. Her performance to date has been very good, and exceptional things are expected from her in the future.

Merchandising

Although U.N. policy discourages unofficial use of its symbols and name, authorized use is another thing entirely. As yet another avenue of distributing the U.N. philosophy, the IST is merchandised in select markets. In the United States, National Periodicals publishes an IST comic book (featuring fictionalized versions of the more prominent IST members), Hasbro manufactures a set of IST action figures, and Steve Jackson Games publishes the official IST roleplaying game. In Japan, IST manga and toys abound.

If an IST member becomes prominent enough (Reputation +1 or more), he may be approached by merchandisers. If the U.N. approves, merchandising will earn the character extra income. The exact amount is up to the GM, but (Reputation \times 1d \times \$1,000) every three months for each merchandising ploy (comic appearance, action figure, etc.) is suggested. Movie, TV and book deals will earn much more, but will come under closer scrutiny by IST Command. Merchandising can also provide a rationale for increasing (or decreasing!) a super's Reputation.

Unless the super is very well-known or in some other way outstanding, any single merchandising ploy will peter out after 2d \times 3 months.

Magitechology

Several members of IST are mages or magically-based (see p. 68), and UNESCO has, in conjunction with IST Command, established a project to investigate magic. Its goals are to define and quantify magical power, and develop a workable theory of its operation. At the same time, a number of IST supers in several embassies are working to merge the versatility of magic with the dependability of technology. Although there have been striking successes, primarily in the area of "soft" multifunction weaponry, the process is at this time too labor-intensive for economic production of small items. The obvious bottleneck is the low numbers of talented mages who can work with items of advanced technology, and the amount of time they must spend in the process of enchantment. Thus the UNESCO project, which has as one of its goals the codifying of magical knowledge for faster education of mages in the modern world.



As it was the first completed embassy, IST London does have some equipment which is no longer up to IST standards. Its computer (scheduled to be replaced within the next six months) is a primitive machine compared to current IST state-of-the-art: a Complexity 6 mainframe of TL7, of standard (non-optical) construction. Also, its scanlocks, although as effective as the models used in newer embassies, are older and slower, and require a full 20 seconds to properly scan and identify personnel. These, too, are scheduled for an upgrade sometime soon.

Other systems, including the satellite link and the cellular com unit network, were developed after IST London was built, and are fully up-to-date technologically.

Special Duties

At this time, IST London has no special duties. In the past the team has acted as special honor guards for Queen Elizabeth and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, during meetings with foreign dignitaries. They have also organized inspection teams at the request of the European regional IST Command.

P.R. and Local Authorities

Great Britain is not immune to the strong pro-super sentiments which are displayed on the Continent. Local supers, criminals and heroes alike, are celebrities. How then could IST London not be as well, or better, received?

While it is true that virtually any metahuman in Europe is a target for hero worship, IST London's supers have had to deal with the perception that, in recent years, they have become standoffish and inaccessible. This is in part because of the embassy's relative anonymity. But it is also because the supers receive very little press — unlike many other parts of the world, where natural disasters and revolutions seem the norm, very little happens in Great Britain that needs the attention of an IST.

In the past several years, public approval ratings and recognition polls in England have indicated that the British people are thinking of IST London less as heroes and more as guards. To combat this growing erosion of public opinion, IST Command is considering implementing its New York policy of enforced celebrity status for IST London.

Where public officials are concerned, IST London is very welcome. In the past its members have helped solve several puzzling crimes, and were instrumental in the rescue of Welsh miners from a collapsed mine in 1988. Their anonymity is, in the authorities' opinion, an advantage; unlike other branches, London's IST has never been the target of terrorists or violent political activists. Their low profile, coupled with their usefulness as a resource — not to mention the U.N. muscle and money they represent — combine to give them an image that the British government finds very comfortable.

Complement

IST London currently has a complement of 10 supers. There are only 20 infantrymen assigned to the embassy; almost all of them are trained in and assigned to powered armor.

IST Tokyo

Located south of the great Chiyoda-ku district and the Imperial Palace, IST Tokyo can be found at the intersection of Sotoboridori and Sakuradori, near many of the government ministry buildings and a brisk walk from the Ginza.

Physical Plant

In order to best fit in with its neighborhood, IST Tokyo is housed in a structure designed to look like a typical office building. Its basic design is that of a low high-rise, some 12 stories tall, of glass and steel construction in keeping with the current contemporary taste in corporate architecture. Much of the glass, though, is nothing more than a mirrored shell over the actual structural and defensive walls. This shell, though, gives most of the building the equivalent of reflex armor.

Any light-based super attack on the building (laser, flash) or similar beam skill must roll against its Power. If the roll is failed, the attack is reflected away from the building without damaging it; a critical failure reflects the attack directly back upon the attacker. If the roll is made, the attack penetrates at one-half Power; on a critical success, the attack retains its full Power.

The few true windows in the building are made from the same tempered Plexiglas used in IST embassies throughout the world. The real windows measure 7 feet tall by 2 feet wide by 6 inches thick (DR 7, HP 35), and are partially silvered to make them indistinguishable from the other panels in the building's skin. To confuse potential attackers, certain non-window panels on the building are half-silvered and have diffused fluorescent lights behind them; these are randomly turned on at night to mask the locations of the true windows.

The division by floor is as follows:

Sub-basement Two: Fusion reactor, electrical generator, water tanks, sanitary processing.

Sub-basement Two: Holding cells (6), long-term storage, vault, morgue.

Basement: supplies and storerooms, including ammo locker, receiving dock and associated offices.

Ground floor: Lobby, newsstand, assorted shops.

Second floor: Mechanicals: air conditioning, heat, related environmental systems including air filtering, cellular radio subsystems.

Third through sixth floors: Offices of several U.N. organizations: IMF, GATT, ILO.

Seventh floor: Powered infantry barracks, armory, armor shop, parts storage, lockers, mess, off-duty area, firing range.

Eighth floor: Personal quarters for IST supers, library, kitchen, dining hall.

Ninth floor: Labs, technical library, mainframe room.

Tenth floor: Gymnasium, showers, medic, combat simulation chamber.

Eleventh floor: Branch administrative offices, including Team Administrator, conference room.

Twelfth floor: Team leader's office, command center.

Roof: Elevator mechanisms, primary satellite dishes, helipad.

The building has two banks of elevators. One bank, unprotected by security scan-locks, gives access only to the first through fifth floors. The second bank requires security ID scanning, and services all basement levels plus the floors

International Territory

By proclamation of the General Assembly, unless otherwise specified, the land on which an IST is situated is considered "international territory." Like any other embassy or diplomatic building, it is not considered to be in the jurisdiction of its host country.

Because of their "open" status, ISTs are sometimes claimed as sanctuaries by persons fleeing their nations or claiming persecution. In at least two cases, known criminals fleeing police have run to ISTs to claim sanctuary. In both of these cases, sanctuary was granted while the circumstances were investigated by the embassy legal attache.



David Blackader

Team Administrator for IST Tokyo

Age 37; Light brown hair (balding), gray eyes; 5'10", 160 lbs.

ST 11, DX 13, IQ 13, HT 15

Advantages: Absolute Timing, Common Sense, Diplomatic Immunity, Status 2.

Disadvantages: Dependents: Wife, daughter; Sense of Duty to U.N.

Quirks: Loves sushi and sashimi; Wants his daughter to go to school in U.S.; Physical fitness nut; Long-distance runner.

Skills: Administration-15; Area Knowledge (Tokyo)-13; Bicycling-12; Computer Operations/TL8-14; Diplomacy-12; Driving (Automobile)-12; Economics-11; English-13; Japanese-11; Running-13.

David Blackader is a family man; his wife and eighteen-month-old daughter accompanied him to Japan when the U.N. assigned him to IST Tokyo. He hopes to move back to the U.S. before his daughter is too much older. He is well-liked at IST Tokyo; he runs the installation with a very loose hand. He can be very firm, but nothing has happened yet to test his resolve. When and if such an event occurs, his strength and conviction may be a surprise to the team, who view him as something of a paper tiger.

Customizing the Embassy To Fit the Setting

Once the GM has decided the geographical location of the campaign, he should research its traditional architecture as well as its culture. In accordance with IST dictates, the embassy will be designed so as to blend in with its surroundings. For example, IST Athens resembles a sprawling Greek villa, surrounded by olive groves, and IST Kingston looks much like its neighboring resort complexes. When designing the embassy, though, the GM should never forget that it is intended to be a light fortress, and position its components accordingly.

Adventure Seeds

Whichcraft. A magewar breaks out between magical supers in a nearby non-U.N. nation. It's not the IST's business until the side effects start spilling over into nearby countries — altering both terrain and inhabitants unrecognizably. Can the team get in and stop the dangerous magical war before it destroys everything for hundreds of miles?

Hazy Shade of Winter. The IWO is calling for help — one of its most versatile weather manipulators is missing, with a terrorist group claiming responsibility. But the terrorists all turned up dead shortly afterward. And now blizzards and tornadoes are destroying the very targets the terrorists used to hit. What's going on?

Look, Up In The Sky! Another alien race has contacted Earth, but their purpose is not entirely peaceful. They claim that our metahumans pose a threat to their Galactic Federation. The Meeranon know nothing about any Federation. Are the aliens on the up-and-up, or are they a really a set of interstellar extortionists?

The Mole. COPPF contacts the Team Administrator and informs him that they suspect one of the team members of being a double agent for Libya. But the member in question is one of the founders of the embassy and has served the IST faithfully since its inception. Is it a clever guise or the truth? How do you find out?

Doppelgängers. Someone is replacing U.N. representatives with androids. The team is assigned to find out who and why, and to stop them. And, of course, to get details on the advanced technology that's being used to build the replacements.

above the fifth. A freight elevator, security locked, services all floors. Two staircases service the lower (fifth through ground) floors, and are unlocked. Another two provide egress for the upper levels; these require ID scanning in all situations, although the computer can release all locks on the stairwells.

Unique Features

IST Tokyo, designed to look like an ordinary office building, actually incorporates a number of functioning offices in its physical plant. Three of the U.N.'s subsidiary bodies, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Council of Representatives for the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the International Labor Organization (ILO) maintain fully functional branch offices in the IST Tokyo building.

Because of their proximity to the shielded and encrypted UNET communications network, chief officials and representatives of these three bodies often work out of these branch offices. Should an earthquake or other disaster disable the main offices of these bodies, the branch offices will take over their duties.

IST Tokyo also has several shops in its lobby. The rent from these shops is applied directly to the operating budget of the embassy.

Special Duties

IST Tokyo has one special duty at this time. At the request of UNESCO, Tokyo team members and facilities are to be provided at need to the U.N.'s Earthquake Project. The project is based on several islands located in the so-called "ring of fire" which surrounds the Pacific Basin. Geologists and physicists in the project are currently developing a model of earthquake activity, which requires a computing power currently available only in specialized supercomputers or in an IST mainframe.

P.R. and Local Authorities

The members of IST Tokyo are quite well known in Japan, and are minor celebrities in their own right. Although they are not the seat of Asia's regional IST Command, they have been involved in a number of highly-publicized missions throughout Asia. The most recent of these was their "unofficial" involvement in the Tiananmen Square rescue; for many days after June 6 and the arrival of the Chinese student leaders, the Japanese press had nothing but words of praise for their IST.

The members, especially their leader, Witchwind, receive many offers every month for various merchandising schemes. Most are politely turned down. However, Witchwind and the COPPF are currently considering the production of an official IST *manga* (comic book) as a public relations tool. The prime stumbling block seems to be objections to the gratuitous violence common to the manga. (Tentative queries are being made to the "Big Five" comics publishers in the U.S.)

Like most places the world over, officials in Tokyo are glad to have the IST around. Although the crime rate in Japan is extraordinarily low, and the metavillain population almost nil, the embassy and its staff are still courted. In the past they have helped deal with two natural disasters and have forestalled one giant monster; the opinion of Tokyo's municipal government is that they are just short of indispensable.

Complement

IST Tokyo has 18 supers assigned to it. Ten are on constant rotation through several of the smaller Pacific island kingdoms that do not have their own ISTs yet. The remainder are permanently stationed in Tokyo. The embassy also has a complement of 50 infantrymen, half of whom are assigned to battlesuits.

2

CHARACTERS

Character Creation

IST player characters for a campaign set in the present (early to middle 1990s) should be built on 600 points. Usually, 100



points of this will be spent on the IST membership package and assorted skills learned in IST basic training.

Other periods have their own point total limitations; see Chapter 7 for more information. One hundred points of disadvantages and five quirks are allowed. The racial disadvantages of non-human races, as usual, do not count against the 100-point limit.

Non-player characters may run from 250 to 1,000 character points. Solo NPC opponents should be constructed with a higher point total than the average PC, in order to provide sufficient challenge for the IST members.

Alien Races

As of the beginning of 1991, there are representatives of at least three alien races on Earth. All three races are suitable for use as player characters. One, the Rynkarians, is described in *GURPS Supertemps* (pp. 56-57). See Chapter 3, *Extraterrestrials*, for the racial costs for the other two races, plus details on their cultures and sociology.

Advantages, Disadvantages, and Skills

A few of the existing *GURPS* advantages, disadvantages and skills can be interpreted in a unique manner in a *GURPS IST* campaign. A new advantage and a new skill are also detailed on the next page.

All active-duty IST members have advantages and disadvantages which represent the duties and privileges of their membership. In addition, they learn some standard skills in IST Basic Training. These "packages" are detailed below.

IST Membership

65 points + Rank

PCs who are members of an IST must pay character points for the advantage.

An IST member has a Patron: The U.N. (giant multinational organization, can supply equipment over the starting wealth, appears quite often) worth 70 points. The PC has a Duty to the U.N. almost all the time (15 or less) worth -15 points. IST members get a +3 reaction from citizens of member nations. They have a -1 reaction from citizens and government officials of non-member nations, and -3 from criminals (costs of these reaction modifiers cancel each other).

All IST metahumans have Legal Enforcement Powers (international jurisdiction, free to violate local civil ordinances in the performance of their duties, but not able to kill with impunity or ignore civil rights), worth 10 points.

Since the IST is a military organization, all IST members must have some Military Rank. All metahumans are commissioned with a rank of at least captain when they are accepted for active duty; this is a Military Rank of 4. Of course, characters may reach higher ranks; each local team will be led by a super of Rank 6 or 7. If that person has appropriate diplomatic skills, he may also be the Team Administrator (see p. 13); otherwise, a very skilled "normal" U.N. appointee will hold that position.

Military Rank above 4 costs 5 points per level. For more information about Rank and the IST, see below. Supers who are members of contracted private teams (see p. 59) don't have Military Rank.

IST Basic Training

A character who is a member of the IST will have gone through IST Basic Training prior to his initial assignment. As a result of this intensive training, an IST member will have the following skills at no less than the listed skill levels. At minimum proficiency, this will cost the character 15 points, bringing the normal cost of IST membership to an even 100 points.

The skills imparted by IST Basic Training are:

- Area Knowledge (Host City) at IQ (1 point)
- Area Knowledge (Host Country) at IQ (1 point)
- Computer Operations/TL8 at IQ (1 point)
- History (International, U.N.) at IQ-1 (2 points)
- Karate or Judo (character's choice) at DX (4 points)
- Language (Host Country) at IQ (2 points)
- Strategy at IQ-1 (2 points)
- Tactics at IQ-1 (2 points)





Characters native to the host city and country may already have the Area Knowledge and Language skills at no cost. Such characters are not required to spend extra points on these skills.

The character in Basic Training also has the option of acquiring any or all of the following skills at the level of his choice, at normal cost:

Language (English) (if not his native tongue)
Language (French) (if not his native tongue)
History (Host Country)

The two optional languages are the official working languages of the U.N.

Advantages

Military Rank

see p. B22

Military Rank in the IST carries automatic Social Status (see p. B22). As all IST members are at least Rank 4, they automatically gain 1 level of Status at no cost. However, unless they possessed high Status prior to joining the IST, they do *not* automatically receive the Savoir-Faire skill.

There is a limitation on Rank within the IST. Only Argurous Astraph (see p. 101), the Supreme Commander of the IST, possesses Rank 8. Rank 7 is normally limited to Regional Commanders and especially noteworthy Field Commanders (see p. 13 for details on positions within the IST). Most Field Commanders are Rank 6. Non-commanding members will normally be Rank 4 or 5, with a few exceptional cases of Rank 6.

New Advantage

Diplomatic Immunity

5 points

International diplomats and select members of their staff are normally granted *diplomatic immunity* wherever they are assigned. This is a subset of Legal Enforcement Powers worth 5 points, providing the character with the ability to ignore the laws of all countries except his homeland. When outside his native country, a person with diplomatic immunity cannot be arrested or prosecuted for *any* crime, no matter what its magnitude. Diplomatic Immunity does not provide the ability to make arrests, or any other power wielded by police and similar officials.

This advantage is appropriate to IST administrators and certain high-ranking officials in the IST hierarchy, but it is not normally granted to the team members themselves.

IST supers technically have a small degree of Diplomatic Immunity, being able to perform any acts short of murder and the violation of civil rights — this is covered under the IST member's Legal Enforcement powers. They do *not*, however, have the full immunity granted to professional diplomats, detailed above, even if the team member is also team administrator.

Skills

Astrogation

see p. B59

A character with the Hyperflight advantage must also possess the Astrogation skill if he is to make the most effective use of his power. Without it, the PC is limited to simple "line of sight" navigation, and may get seriously lost if he ventures beyond

Pluto's orbit! Astrogation may be learned from the Meeranon (see p. 39), or may be self-taught. (The GM may wish to rule that no PC can start off with a high Astrogation skill, but must learn it during the course of play.)

New Skill

Exoskeleton

(Physical/Average)

Defaults to IQ-6, DX-6 or Battlesuit-2

Any person who uses an enhanced strength rig as a specialty in construction must possess this skill. Unfamiliar units are operated at a penalty, as per Driving skill (p. B68).

For any ordinary DX roll, an exo wearer rolls on the lower of

Exoskeleton skill or DX. For DX-based skill, he rolls on the lower of (skill-1) or (Exoskeleton -1). The GM may assess penalties for actions that should be especially difficult in a suit, such as Acrobatics. However, most exoskeletons have removable gauntlets so the wearer can do delicate work.

For a full description of this skill, see p. SP36.

Job Table

Below is a standard job table showing a representative sample of occupations and vocations to be found in most modern (Western-style) societies.

<i>Job (Required Skills), Monthly Income</i>	<i>Success Roll</i>	<i>Critical Failure</i>
<i>Poor Jobs</i>		
Beggar* (no qualifications), Scrounging, Streetwise, or Urban Survival, \$250	PR	-1i/3d
Bellboy/Redcap (ST 9+), \$400	IQ	LJ
Courier (Area Knowledge and Bicycle or Driving at 10+), \$500	PR-2	2d/LJ, 3d
Fast Food Worker (no attribute below 7), \$400	Best of DX or IQ	1d/LJ, 2d
Welfare Recipient (no qualifications), \$300	10	-1i/dropped from rolls; reapply in 6 months
<i>Struggling Jobs</i>		
Actor or Actress* (Acting 10+), \$50×skill	PR	-3i/LJ, 1d
Administrative Assistant (4 Professional Skills: Typing, Filing, etc., at 12+), \$800	IQ	-1i/LJ
Driver/Chauffeur (Appropriate vehicle skill 12+), \$60×skill	PR	-2i, 1d/LJ, 3d
Goon (ST 12+), \$800	IQ	3d, arrested/LJ, 5d, -4i
Prostitute* (Sex Appeal 10+), \$60×PR	PR + Appearance	arrested, 1d, -2i/2d
Runner/Lookout (IQ 11+ or Acute Sight +3, Stealth and Running 12+), 800	Best PR	2d, arrested/LJ, 6d
Vigilante, full-time* (Super skills and/or applicable normal skills totalling at least 50 levels), \$1,000	IQ or Best PR	6d/6d, -2i, arrested
<i>Average Jobs</i>		
Cab Driver* (Driving 13+, Area Knowledge 13+), \$200×Best PR	Best PR-2	1d, -3i/4d, -5i, arrested
Executive Secretary (Administration 14+, Professional skills: Typing, Filing 14+), \$200×Best PR	Best PR-1	-1i/LJ, -3i
Journalist (Research 12+, Bard or Photography or Writing 12+), \$70×best skill + \$500 per +1 general Reputation	Best PR	-3i, 1d/LJ, 3d
Mercenary* (Weapon or combat super skills totaling at least 60 levels), \$2,000	Best combat skill	-1i, 2d/-2i, 5d
Paramedic (Diagnosis 14+, First Aid 14+), \$2,000	Best PR+2	-5i/LJ, -6i
Police Officer (Criminology 12+, Pistol 10+, Streetwise 12+), \$120×best PR	Best PR-2	-1i, 2d/-1i, suspended for 1d months, 4d
Private Detective* (Criminology 12+, Law or Streetwise 12+), \$100×best PR	Worst PR	-1i/-1i, Lose License (reapply in 1 year)
Teacher (Teaching 12+, chosen field 13+), \$2,000	Best PR+2	-3i/LJ, -4i, 2d
Spy/Intelligence Agent (Thief/Spy skills totalling at least 60 levels), \$2,200	Best PR-2	4d/6d, imprisoned
<i>Comfortable Jobs</i>		
Assassin* (Beam Weapon or Guns 12+, Stealth 12+), \$300×Worst PR	Worst PR	-4i, 4d/8d, imprisoned
Bodyguard (ST 20+, any unarmed Combat skill 16+, Speed 5+), \$200×combat skill	Combat Skill	3d, arrested/LJ, 9d
Computer Programmer (Computer Programming 14+, Electronics (Computer) 12+), \$250×worst PR	Worst PR	-3i/LJ
Corporate Executive (Administration 13+, Business experience 5+ years, Status 0+), \$3,000	PR	-2i/-4i, LJ
Diplomat* (Diplomacy 13+, Administration 10+, Status 1+), \$1,000×(Diplomacy minus 11)	Worst PR	-2i, LJ/LJ, 2d
Healer* (Healing skill 13+, 2 or more Physician skills at 12+, certification), \$275×Healing skill	Best PR+1	-5i/-9i, lose certification
Mercenary* (Weapons skills and/or super combat skills totalling at least 100 levels, equipment, Tactics 14+, Leadership 10+), \$5,000	Best PR	-2i, LJ/LJ, -3i, 12d
Specialized Labor* (Marketable super skill 14+ or marketable super advantage), \$4,000	Skill-2 or IQ for advantages	LJ/LJ, -2i, 5d
<i>Wealthy Jobs</i>		
Doctor/Surgeon* (Physician skill levels totalling at least 60, Status 0+), \$650×best PR	Worst PR	-5i/-10i, lose license
Entertainment Figure* (Acting or Bard or Musical Instrument or Singing 12+, Status 1+), \$500×(best PR + reaction bonus)	Best PR	-5i/LJ, 1d
Idle Rich (Status 3+), \$3,000×(Status minus 2)	none	-4i, 1d/-12i, 3d

EXTRATERRESTRIALS

3



Kyz Physiology

Kyz and human physiologies are very similar; First Aid skill for one species will work identically (no skill penalty) on the other. Diagnosis and other medical skills, though, default to a mutual -2 between the species.

Kyz dietary needs are similar to those of humans; almost anything edible by one species is edible by the other, although the taste preferences of the two races vary greatly. Kyz enjoy contrast in their foods' flavors — dishes seasoned with several highly distinctive but conflicting spices top their preferences, as do sauces that combine salt and sweetness. Oriental sweet and sour dishes would appeal to them.

With the advent of spaceflight technology on Earth, scientific interest turned to the question of life beyond our planet. Ignorant of the role the Seeders played in their development, scientists searched the skies with both optical and radio telescopes, hoping for some sign that we were not alone. But until recently this hope was in vain. Earth is located in something of a stellar backwater; its closest stellar neighbor is perhaps twice as far away as the average distance between stars in our part of the galaxy.

Not that we are unnoticeable — our radio and television signals are a beacon. But few voyagers came inside the one light-year radius sphere where they are strongest; the furthest signals (over 60 light-years out for radio, over 40 for TV) are weak and too difficult to distinguish from background noise. But because of these inadvertent messages to the stars, we have been visited. In the last ten years, alien intelligences have walked upon earthly soil.

The Kyz

Reasonably indistinguishable from humans, save for their excessively large eyes and distinctly metallic hair coloring, the Kyz are a sedentary race compared to us. In human terms they are petite and frail-looking, but are our equals in physical strength. As a race they tend to be quiet and cautious, especially around aliens. Among themselves, though, they are boisterous and communal; a Kyz city is a busy place, humming with reassuring and happy sounds on both the physical and psychic levels.

Kyz skin ranges from golden tan to olive in color. Their hair is entirely of metallic shades — from copper through golden to chrome. Likewise, their eyes, which are very large compared to the human norm, are of metallic coloration. Their metallic hair and large eyes make them exotically enticing. Their features vary in much the same way that humans' do; individuals can easily be told apart by members of other humanoid races.

They average 6 inches shorter than a human of equal strength, and 20 pounds lighter than a human of the same height. Jhemma vra Xönen, the Kyz who has been living undercover on Earth, has adopted human fashion in order to further her disguise.

The Kyz homeworld, Nea!son^ma, is a Terrestrial world with a gravity of .99 G. Its average temperature is 80 degrees Fahrenheit; Kyz are slightly chilly on a planet with an Earth-normal temperature range. They breathe an atmosphere that has a very low humidity and a lower partial pressure of oxygen than Terran normal; the average atmospheric pressure of Nea!son^ma is about that of Earth. Their sun is slightly dimmer than Sol.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Kyz have IQ +1 (+10 points), DX +1 (+10 points), and HT -1 (-10 points). Their advantages are Appearance — Attractive (+5 points), Acute Vision +3 (+6 points). They always have at least Power 5 in Emotion Sense (+10 points), with a minimum skill level of IQ (+4 points). They have the disadvantages Shyness — Mild (-5 points) and Truthfulness (-5 points).

Because of their inability to understand Rank or Status, Kyz always have a -1 reaction modifier from all beings of higher Rank or Status (-5 points). For the same reasons, they gain a +1 from sentients of lower Rank or Status (+5 points).

It costs 25 points to be a Kyz.

Common advantages and abilities: Some Kyz are psionic healers of great ability. Common Sense, Language Talent, other Acute senses, Night Vision and Animal Empathy are likely advantages. No Kyz has Toughness or Combat Reflexes. If a Kyz has other telepathic skills besides Emotion Sense, full cost must of course be paid for their Telepathy Power.

Common Disadvantages: Codes of Honor, Vows, Impulsiveness, Pacifism and Honesty are possible. No Kyz can have the disadvantages of Berserk, Bloodlust, Bully, Compulsive Behavior, Fat or Intolerance.

Names

The Kyz language, Kyz!ynoa*, is partly empathic (see sidebar), and cannot be properly spoken by non-telepaths. The audible part of the language is liquid-sounding and melodic, and easily pronounceable by mammalian palates. A Kyz can recognize and will answer his name when spoken by a non-empath. Kyz names usually come in three parts: a personal name usually two syllables long, a community identifier of one to five syllables, and a family name anywhere from two to seven syllables long: Sharmon lamathel Kölh, Jhemma vra Xönen, Fellhas anavanel Seelasho.

Titles of respect — Healer, Artist, Statesman — are sometimes appended to the start of the name if the individual is of particularly outstanding ability.

Psychology

Among their own kind, Kyz can be very boisterous and outgoing. However, they rely upon the constant empathic feedback from other Kyz for a certain amount of personality support. A Kyz isolated from other Kyz is usually shy and withdrawn.

They have no real social hierarchy. While they can understand the concepts of rank and status, they don't really see why some people have to think in terms

The Kyz Language

Kyz!ynoa* (the word means, roughly, "People-speech," with the "!" a diacritical mark representing the sensation of familiar comfort and "*" one representing the satisfaction achieved through complete communication) is the sole language of the Kyz. To a non-empath, the spoken tongue is a M/VH skill with a maximum skill level of 9. To empath of any species, it is a M/A skill. Non-empaths can never learn the written form of Kyz!ynoa*; the emotional diacriticals are too vital to the meaning of each individual word and cannot be taught to a person lacking the Emotion Sense super skill. There are seven separate spoken dialects to Kyz!ynoa*, which default to "Classic" Kyz!ynoa* -2, or each other -3.

Kyz PCs

Although unlikely in this setting, Kyz PCs other than Touchstone are possible. Almost certainly they would be involved in hunting Jhemma to bring her back to the Confederation, although other possibilities do exist.





Kyz Adventure Seed

Bounty Hunters

From news media across the world, UNET newsfeed programs have extracted something interesting: a series of UFO sightings and kidnapping tales, each virtually identical but separated by vast distances. When plotted onto a map, they show a definite search pattern of some sort — and the vicinity of the embassy is the next possible site, some time in the coming week.

More interesting, the kidnap victims are all of a similar physical type — petite, slender women. None were harmed, but all reported extensive physical examination with mysterious equipment. Coincidentally, a visiting psi healer from IST Los Angeles, Touchstone, is of the same physical type as the victims. But despite orders to help the investigation, she refuses to participate.

The UFO reports are of a group of Kyz bounty-hunters who have tracked their prey to Earth. They are trying to locate Jhemma vra Xönen (Touchstone), but the nearness of the human physiology to Kyz confuses their scanners. They have resorted to scanning for likely targets, kidnapping them and doing a more detailed medical examination on their ship. So far, they've struck out, and they're about to give up — until the scanners pick up a hot prospect . . .

of social altitude. Kyz tend to think in terms of groups and masses without distinction: "People are people." They do, though, respect individual drive and achievement.

Unfortunately, they have the maddening habit of ignoring all protocol demanded by other species' social status or military rank and addressing all sentiments with a polite familiarity. As a result, most beings of lower Status react well to the uncondescending Kyz (although in highly stratified cultures — or among a race with a slave mentality — they are more likely to confuse or distress those beings). Social superiors unused to the species often resent what they consider what they consider "pretensions" on the part of the offending Kyz. Within their home Confederation, Kyz are commonly Status 2 because of their talents; this Status level does not apply to any Kyz found on Earth.

Kyz organize themselves into large communities composed of dozens of extended families. Individual dwellings normally house anywhere from 5 to 50 Kyz, all related to each other and spanning three or more generations. Although Kyz have two sexes, like humans, and mate for life, group "marriages" are common, where two or more related couples form a household to pool resources and share the responsibility of raising children.

Because all individual Kyz are sensitive to the emotional states of others around them, they are unable to act unethically. Not surprisingly, their societies (their homeworld boasts several distinct cultural groups) resemble the happiest dreams of the Utopian Socialists of 19th-century America. They have never fought a war in all their recorded history.

The original Kyzian religious faith was pantheistic, finding god in all creatures, sentient or not. Despite their contact with the Confederation and its many members' many beliefs, the faith has survived virtually unchanged, although actively followed by fewer and fewer Kyz each generation.

Ecology

The Kyz are descended (perhaps naturally, perhaps through Seeder intervention) from a mammal-like, hive-mind species. Individuals of the race still possess a high degree of empathy, and psionic healers are not uncommon among the population.

They became sentient no more than 100,000 years ago, and have slowly and steadily built their civilization in one grand rise since that time. The earliest known Kyz settlements were large hive-like complexes built in cliffsides, which soon grew into great pueblo-like cities. They share with humanity a tendency to build *up*, erecting tall, but delicately beautiful, buildings.

Culture

While the Kyz have a complex spoken language, it is "annotated" by a continuous stream of emotional signals. For someone who is not empathic, it is almost impossible to grasp the full connotations of any but the shortest phrases in Kyz!ynoa*. Their written language is alphabetic, with a system of diacritical marks which indicate which of nearly 1,300 different emotional shadings apply to any given word.

Their poetry and music are naturally very complex, and they possess a beauty that appeals even to non-humanoid minds. Their prime export to the other worlds of the Confederation of which they are part (see below) is their music. Other species with similar psionic gifts also provide a market for their literature. In exchange, the Kyz have received (among other things) braintaping technology, which they are adapting for use with motion pictures. Movies have been known to the Kyz for several centuries, but they have never been a popular entertainment medium because of their inability to reproduce the emotional

subtexts to the dialogue. However, with the inspiration of braintapes, the age of true “talking pictures” is about to dawn for the Kyz, and it may provide them with yet another lucrative export.

Additionally, Kyz healers often find significant off-planet employment opportunities. Many affiliate themselves with hospital ships or mercenary troops. Others freelance, either on their own or through an agent.

Politics

With the exception of off-planet imports, the Kyz are high TL8. Through the Confederation, though, they have full access to and understanding of starflight technologies. The Confederation (the complete literal translation of the name is “The Confederation of Mercantile Firms and Their Customers”) is on the cusp between TLs 10 and 11. (A description of the Confederation in *GURPS Space* terms will be found below.)

It is primarily an economic union, with no pretenses towards governing member planets. The most powerful organizations in the Confederation are the trading companies. These companies run fleets of ships in complex shipping routes across the dense star cluster which is home to the Confederation. They quite literally *are* the Confederation — it is their regular shipping runs which provide the “glue” that holds it together. Their primary cargo is information and communications, which they barter along with technology from planet to planet.

The one enforced law of the Confederation is the contract. Defaulting on a signed agreement is a serious crime, with the severity depending upon the value of the contract. Breaking a contract negotiated with or through one of the shipping companies is the worst offense of all.

The Kyz and their Confederation are located in a dense star cluster over a thousand light-years away, towards the center of the galaxy. They have extensive, albeit partly apocryphal, knowledge of the Seeders.

Kyz and Confederation Technology

The Kyz themselves are comfortably within TL8 in all areas, but have access to most of the technology of the Confederation, should they wish to purchase it. The Confederation itself is in the midst of the transition from TL10 to TL11. Because communications are carried by starship, the rate of technological progress is somewhat retarded. Not surprisingly, the Confederation has been making the transition between TLs for the last century or so. By necessity, though, medical technology for all Confederation species spreads throughout the cluster as quickly as possible.

The Meeranon

The first extraterrestrial species publicly known and announced on Earth was the Meeranon. They are felinoids, resembling a human-tiger crossbreed, bipedal and with a bone structure superficially like the human; however, they are internally more like marsupials. While the female of the species actually bears the young, both sexes are pouched, and may nurture the young until they grow large enough to be considered “infants”. Both sexes are heavily clawed and toothed, revealing their predator heritage.

Meeranon are four-fingered and -toed, and tailless. Their thick, head-to-toe fur can be any color or pattern found in Earthly felines, and a few which aren’t, from pure white through tabby and tawny to green and brown camouflage stippling. Solids, simple tiger stripes and leopard spots are the most common patterns, with yellowish tan through dark brown the predominating colors. Eye color usually complements pelt color, with ice blue for white and off-white fur,

Confederation Technology

Should you own *GURPS Space* and wish to include the Kyz and the Confederation in active play, follow these guidelines:

Overall TL: 10 to 11.

STL Travel: Reactionless drive.

FTL Travel: There are three FTL technologies available in the Confederation. Most of the trading companies use psi-jump drives for their largest ships. Slow, inexpensive hyperspace drives are common — and not inefficient in a cluster, where stars average a parsec or two apart. An effective warp drive is also known.

FTL Speed: Psi-jump: instantaneous. Hyperspace: 0.2 pc/day. Warp drive: 7 pc/day.

FTL Range: Psi-jump: 0.5 pc per jump, two jumps per day. Hyperspace: 100 pc. Warp drive: 2500 pc (can be pushed higher at risk to ship).

FTL Navigation: Psi-jumps require elite astrogators with psi skills, but astrogation for them is simple straight-line, point-to-point transfer. Hyperspace and Warp drives must deal with complex three-dimensional astrogation within the cluster and its neighborhood, and modified straight-line closer to the edge of the galaxy.

FTL Anomalies: See sidebar, p. 36.

Power: TL11 Fusion; TL11 Antimatter.

FTL Radio: None. (It may be possible, but research is discouraged since the trading companies have a monopoly on communications.)

Habitable worlds: Likely within the cluster; Scattered outside.

Sensors: TL9, highly accurate.

Weapons: TL10; most ships carry at least token weaponry, but the situation is comparable to the oceans of 19th-century Earth — only those that need a lot carry a lot.

Computers: TL10, but there are no AIs — it’s not profitable to build them, so they don’t.

Medical: TL11. Physicians are trained to care for most of the more exotic members of the Confederation. Sensa-skin is not available.

Aliens: The Kyz and anyone else the GM wants. The Traders from *GURPS Aliens* would fit nicely into the Confederation, as would many other races in that sourcebook.

FTL Details and Anomalies

The FTL drives developed by Confederation science have characteristic idiosyncracies which affect their popularity and utilization.

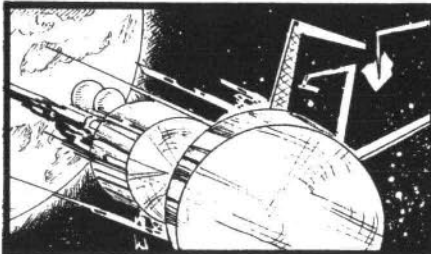
Psi-jump ships are not limited by mass. Thus, despite their relatively slow speed they are efficient for large-volume transport. Consider the jump skill a specialized variant of the Dimension Warp super-skill; individuals capable of psi-jumps can demand salaries in excess of \$50,000 per month.

Warp ships have 7 times the effective speed of psi-jump ships, and 14 times the speed of the hypercraft, in addition to their vast range. However, the variant of the warp drive used by the Confederation consumes so much power that only an antimatter reaction can sustain it. The antimatter fuel for the warp drive is also expensive — 500 times the cost of the purified deuterium fuel used by hyperdrive ships.

It also functions best on ships of 1,000 cy or smaller, and not at all for ships above 15,000 cy. (Subtract 0.5 pc/day of speed and 100 pc of range for each 1,000 cy of volume the ship has over 1,000.) This is because antimatter engines over the minimum size needed for a 1,000 cy ship begin to interfere with the encapsulation process.

Hyperspace craft are by far the most common in the Confederation. They are cheaper to fuel than warp ships, and have no upper size limits except those imposed by their engines. Unless you are moving moonlet-sized or larger masses, hyperdrive is the best compromise between speed and cost.

The result is a distinct stratification of ships. Small, fast ships, with great range but negligible cargo capacity — personal pleasure craft, couriers, exploratory and survey ships — are warp-driven. General-purpose ships — small to medium cargo ships, colonization craft, and the like — are hyperspace craft. The great trading vessels or the rare battlestar — 500,000+ cy. and millions of tons — are psi-jumped.



through black, with golden and brown found in the majority of the population. Individual Meeraan can be distinguished by humans with little practice.

They average 6 inches taller than humans of the same strength, and 50 pounds heavier than humans of the same height.

The Meeraan inhabit a large 1.2 G Terrestrial world that averages 70 degrees. Their native atmosphere is an Earth-normal mix of oxygen and nitrogen at about the same pressure as Terran sea level. Their atmosphere is very humid; some parts of Earth are dry enough to require the use of a personal vaporizer or humidifier should a Meeraan wish to visit them.

The sun of the Meeraan homeworld, Myrr, is located ten light-years from ours, toward the edge of the galaxy. As this is their first venture off their planet, the Meeraan are as ignorant of the existence of the Seeders as humans are.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Meeraan are +2 in ST (+20 points). Their advantages are Acute Taste and Smell +3 (+6 points), Acute Hearing +3 (+6 points), Combat Reflexes (+15 points), Telepathy Power 8 (+40 points), and Toughness/DR 1 (+10 points). Their disadvantages are Code of Honor (Meeraanar) (-10 points; see below), Overconfidence (-10 points), a Duty to his clan (fairly often: -5 point level), Impulsiveness (-10 points), and a Sense of Duty to his clan (-10 point level). Meeraan have the racially learned super-skills Telesend and Telereceive both at IQ (+4 points each for a total of +8 points).

It costs 70 points to be a Meeraan.

The GM may wish to add these additional advantages: Reputation (on Earth): up to +3, to reflect both U.N. publicity and a growing human tendency towards xenophilia; and Unusual Background worth 20 points (for access to TL9 equipment).

Common Advantages: Meeraan may possess Psychokinesis Power. They may also have any acute sense, Alertness, Ambidexterity, Military Rank (almost essential — see sidebar, p. 37), Night Vision, and Voice. No Meeraan is Double-Jointed, nor can they possess Intuition.

Common Disadvantages: Bad Temper, Bloodlust, Code of Honor, Gluttony and Undistractable. Unlikely but possible are Berserk and Fat. No Meeraan has Combat Paralysis, Hemophilia, Sadism, Split Personality, or Xenophobia.

Names

Meeraan (singular, Meeraan) have a complex language which is difficult, but not impossible, for humans to pronounce (see sidebar, p. 37). Myeerrrarr, the Meeraanar tongue, relies heavily on extended consonants and equally extended vowels. Many listeners have remarked on the language's similarity to the sounds of Terran felines.

Individuals names are composed of a personal name, a tribal prefix and family name, and the clan name. Examples: Rheergar ss'Shemmrar of Clan Tsamyiann, Nyaurrann ma'Yarrrawl of Clan Kharaumm. Political titles, such as the equivalents to "Lord," "Representative," and the like are placed before the personal name, while clan honors, such as "Scion" (meaning, essentially, clan leader) are placed before the clan name.

Psychology

A typical Meeraan is still, first and foremost, the descendant of a pack predator: he is determined, focused, and competitive, with a fierce devotion to "his" particular clan, tribe, and friends, in that order. At one time in the past of the Meeraan, this aspect of their racial personality, combined with a strong cultural code of honor, led to periods of war with Machiavellian politicking in between.

They still enjoy political conflict and contention, but have achieved a level of civilization where violent conflict is very rare. They value martial training, not only for its combat use, but for the fitness of the body and mind it brings.

To balance out the predator aspect of their psychology, the Meeranon are also scholars and artists. They respect wisdom and learning (and know the difference between the two). They, like humans, are a laughing species (their laughter usually resembles a staccato series of guttural barks), and are possibly the only non-human race to share with us the distinction of having professional comedians among their work force.

They are born explorers of the unknown. For several centuries science and technology were the only frontiers available to a Meeran; the culture was in danger of stagnating and perhaps returning to the total warfare of the pre-psionic era. Their home solar system had no other habitable worlds, and their technology was not up to terraforming. With the discovery of the warp drive, the universe has opened up to the Meeranon and it has invigorated their racial spirit. They have a racial tendency, much as modern humans do, towards xenophilia.

Meeranan homes tend to be multi-family tribal monads — effectively apartment complexes completely inhabited by members of the same tribe. Monads can be grouped together by clan, but this is rarely done since the beginning of the psionic era. A Meeranan city is composed of hundreds of monads separated by wooded parkland strips and serviced by underground mass transit tunnels. An urban administrative zone is located in the center of most cities, and is the only area where “skyscrapers” are found.

A Meeranan home is not much unlike the best human homes — well appointed with attractive decorations and furnishings, and heavily automated in the usual manner of TL9 houses. Meeranon prefer deep, soft furniture for all purposes, tending to curl themselves up into the cushions even at formal occasions.

They are a highly social people, given to festivals and gatherings. They prefer open spaces and fresh air for their socializing, particularly parks and sporting events. Those who have visited Earth have adapted spectacularly to human social activities like the cocktail party and the Super Bowl, and are often in great demand as guests.

Their recently-developed telepathic faculties have only further emphasized their gregarious nature. Although a code of ethics regarding use of telepathy has evolved over the nearly two centuries that the race has been psi-active, among friends and family telepathy is used as casually as the telephone. When a new acquaintance reaches a certain level of familiarity, he may grant limited or unlimited access to his mind, and reciprocation is expected. This is often ritualized into a “friendship ceremony” which also involves the exchange of token gifts. When mental privacy is needed, access can be politely denied, but it is considered rude to lock out friends and family with no explanation.

Meeranon mate for life. While the species has two sexes, both parents have marsupial-like pouches in which they carry young. A carrying parent of either sex grows lethargic (but not inactive) for the six months growth period, though they remain fiercely protective. They bear two offspring at a time, each parent normally pouching one. Perhaps as a result of their biology, the Meeranon have no gender differentiation in any area of their society. In fact, they cannot comprehend gender bias and find it the single most mysterious aspect of human culture.

Ecology

As noted earlier, the Meeranon evolved from a pack predator very similar in form and niche to Terran hunting cats. Originally an evolutionary dead-end, the proto-Meeranon were engineered by the Seeders in the distant past. Before their sapience fully emerged, the Meeranon’s ancestors used a limited form of

Meeran Player Characters

With the increasing number of Meeranon on Earth, they are much more likely to be PCs than the Kyz. With their high racial cost, they are best built on a minimum of 250 points, with truly “super” Meeranon starting at 500.

At first, many Meeranan characters may still have a Duty to the military which sent them to Earth. By 1992, though, most Meeranon will be civilians or civil servants, on the planet through the trade and tourism aspects of the Agreement.



Myeerrrarr — The Meeranan Tongue

The language of the Meeranon is a M/H one; it is based, like Earthly Hebrew and Tolkien’s Dwarvish, around trilateral roots: triplets of consonant sounds whose basic meaning is fixed, but whose part of speech changes with the vowels, prefixes and suffixes used with each triplet. The word “Meeranon” comes from the root *M-R-N*, which means, basically, “person.” The words in the *M-R-N* family used here as racial terms are:

Myeerrrarr term	English Equivalent
Meeran	A person/a human
Meeranon	People/humans, or all of the people/humanity
Meeranan	Human (adjective)



The Meeranar "Psi Drug"

The complex neurochemical developed by Meeranar scientists to stimulate the latent psi powers of the Meeranar is no longer being manufactured in quantity. When it was discovered that children raised around psi-active peers themselves became psi-active, the market for the compound slowly dwindled away. There is still some need for the "psi drug," as it has proven useful in restoring telepathic function in adults who have lost it through some form of brain trauma. Therefore, some stockpiles still exist, and every once in a while a new batch is manufactured, but the amounts are minute.

Should a human take a dose of the compound, the results will be quite unpredictable — for two very important reasons. One: human brain chemistry is radically different from that of Meeranar. Two: unlike those of the Meeranar, mankind's Seeder genes for paranormal ability are unstable, and may react wildly to the alien neurochemical.

If a human, normal or super, takes the psi drug, they must first make a HT-3 roll. If they fail the roll, they take 1d damage for each 3 points or fraction thereof by which they failed the roll — at the GM's option, a failure by 1 or 2 points may instead result in the loss of 4d character points in a power or skill of the GM's choice. A critical failure results in immediate death. Medical resuscitation is possible, but a character so revived must make another HT roll at no penalty or lose 1d IQ points to brain damage.

If the initial HT roll is successful, the character gains a power of the GM's choice at level 1 with no skills, or a super advantage worth no more than 15 points. On a critical success, the PC gains Telepathy Power-1, with one-half point in each of Telereceive and Telesend. The GM may allow players to choose enhancements and/or limitations for these skills.

All unspent or subsequently-earned character points must be dedicated to paying for any new advantage or skills.

Telereceive to locate and track prey. As their intelligence developed, they gradually lost the use of this faculty and, out of necessity, developed a spoken language.

Their written history extends back some 12,000 years; their archaeologists believe they became sentient some 400,000 years ago.

The Meeranar lifespan and development are approximately the same as the human norm. Meeranar cubs mature slightly faster, reaching their full physical growth at 14 and regarded as adults by the age of 16. Their period of maturity is longer, as well; they begin making aging rolls at 55.

Culture

On the socio-political level, Meeranar form clans based along pseudo-racial lines by pelt markings. Clans subdivide into tribes and families, and all owe their allegiance to a ruling clan whose current head is nominal ruler of all Meeranar. In modern times, governing power has descended upon the ruler's "council", made up of representatives of all the clans. The ruler (at this time, a queen) still possesses considerable prestige and power.

Socially, they have a strict code of conduct, and can be as bound by requirements of personal honor as severe as those of the medieval Japanese. Until some 170 years ago (by Earth's calendar), the combination of clan honor and duty led to almost continual warfare. This ended only when a long period of liberalization loosened the strictures of personal and clan honor enough to allow diplomatic solutions instead of military ones.

This period of liberalization coincided with the awakening of Meeranar psi powers. The Seeder-granted potential for telepathic ability remained latent in the Meeranar until just over two centuries ago, when it was accidentally rediscovered during experiments designed to assess the linkage between heredity and psychological development. Within a decade of this discovery, a chemical means of activating the latent psi abilities of children was announced.

As the psi-active children grew, it was observed that untreated children raised with them — or simply attending the Meeranar equivalent of elementary school with them — also became telepathically active. A tiny fraction of them also began to demonstrate psychokinetic powers. Within a half-century, a psychic domino effect rendered the entire race active telepaths.

Although many aspects of the pre-psionic era war culture have been wiped away, one still remains, for both social and psychological reasons. From early in their history onward, allied Meeranar clans would often trade children to act as hostages against their clan's behavior. Very often, these children were high-born. When they reached adulthood, they would return to their home clan. Modern Meeranar still follow this practice, but view it more as a "foreign exchange" program in the interest of fostering racial unity.

Politics

In June of 1987, four subjective months after its launch, one of the primitive Meeranar probe ships crash-landed in the River Thames several miles upstream from London, England. Besides the British Army, IST London was on hand to greet the awakening of the Meeranar ambassador, his excellency Lord Rheergar ss'Shemmrar, Scion of Clan Tsamyiann, late of the court of Sssheenriaou IV, hereditary queen of all Meeranar.

Fortunately for his Excellency, the ship's computer had been able to provide him with a braintape of Earth's major languages. Upon his rescue from his fast-sinking ship, he thanked his rescuers in Mandarin, Spanish, Russian, and Japanese before discovering that English worked. His polylinguistic ability served him in good stead when he went before the U.N. one week later to offer a diplomatic and trade agreement between the two worlds. On New Year's Eve,

1987, after a several months of frenzied discussion, the U.N. General Assembly approved a tentative alliance, called simply The Agreement.

With the help of several ISTs and UNESCO, ss'Shemmrar refitted his crashed ship and departed for Myrr with a copy of the Agreement. He left behind, as a token of good faith, a complete description of the mathematics and physics of the stardrive and sufficient astrogation data to locate his planet's sun. At the end of 1988, ss'Shemmrar returned from the homeworld in a larger ship, with a full contingent of diplomatic personnel to establish a formal embassy. That same ship departed two months later with Earth's embassy staff.

A year later, the first regular trading run between Earth and the Meeraanon opened, with purely token physical goods. By the terms of the Agreement, information on metahuman powers and technological expertise were to be the first media of exchange. (Tourism was planned as the next.) Thanks to U.N. publicity, by 1990 Meeraanon have become so familiar to humans that, in sophisticated metropolitan centers like New York or Paris, they don't even turn heads any more.

Within their own culture, Meeraanon engage in complex and often devious political maneuvering as a matter of course. Much of this is a sublimation of their predatory nature; some of it is just for the fun of it.

In their relations with humanity, this habitual machination has been abandoned, partly from initial uncertainty about the political nature of humans, and partly to present the best racial image possible to potential allies. The original interstellar probe ships were launched with the express intent of finding potential friends, and their occupants were trained diplomats instructed to befriend any race who would accept Meeraanar friendship.

All Meeraanon dealings with the U.N. so far have been straightforward and open, but the Meeraanar Ambassador has reported the state of the art in human politicking to his people, who received the news with much joy. Once a stable economic union has been achieved, many Meeraanon are looking forward to enjoying recreational politics with humanity's best.

Meeraanar Technology

The Meeraanon have, for the most part, just entered TL9. Their computer science has begun to produce sentient machinery; they have been using cold fusion for several decades. Their medical technology has reached TL10 but, unfortunately for humans, almost all their techniques work only on their own biology.

Meeraanar Technology

Again, if you own *GURPS Space* and want Meeraanar technology to play a role in your campaign, follow these guidelines:

Overall TL: High 8 to low 9.

STL Travel: TL 9 reaction drive (very efficient).

FTL Travel: Warp Drive. The Meeraanon have stumbled upon a variant of the warp drive which has hitherto escaped the scientists of the Confederation. Once they perfect it, it will prove to be a profitable technology.

FTL Speed: About .02 pc/day (10 lightyears in 4 months). Travel is non-relativistic and in real time.

FTL Range: 500 to 1,000 lightyears, depending on ship size.

FTL Navigation: Modified straight-line in this area of the galaxy.

Power: Fusion (TL9), except that fuel is sufficient only for maximum range of the ship at full power load. Ships can be refueled.

FTL Radio: None.

Habitable Worlds: Scattered (in this area of the galaxy). Because of FTL speed, this is effectively *Scarce*.

Sensors: TL8, reliable and computer-operated.

Weapons: High TL7 to TL8 for personal. Weapons for ships are as yet too power-hungry to be practical.

Computers: TL9. Robotics is a well-developed science, and ship computers (the leading edge of the technology) are AI.

Medical: TL10 (not effective on humans — yet). Coldsleep (Suspended Animation) available; it *can* be used on humans.

Aliens: One known race: the humans!

Government: Clan/Tribal with Monarchist features, in the process of becoming a Representative Democracy.



Meeranan Adventure Seed

Tourist Tsouris

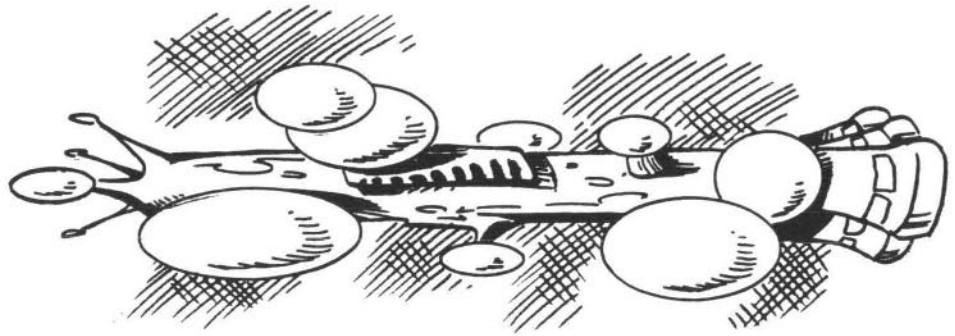
The first shipload of Meeranan tourists has disembarked on Earth. Two of them are a mated couple from the ruling Meeranan clan. IST Command requests that the characters act as tour guides and discreet bodyguards for the couple — on their leave week, of course. Bonus pay is offered to sweeten the deal, should the supers be hesitant.

The Meeranon are almost more trouble than they are worth. Not only do they attract activists, curiosity-seekers, gawkers and wheeler-dealers, they have decided to dress like typical tourists — Bermuda shorts, Hawaiian shirts, and *lots* of cameras. They insist on seeing and doing *everything*, and run the PCs ragged. If the supers try to discourage them from anything, the Meeranon sniff and remind them that *they* are in charge.

To make matters worse, a THAMF cell (see sidebar p. 67) has decided to assassinate the two Meeranon as a protest against their “contaminating” presence on Earth. The GM can either play them as a serious threat to balance the comedy of the sight-seeing aliens, or reduce them to bumbling incompetents, repeatedly blowing themselves up.



Their FTL system is crude and cumbersome, and so far requires most of the volume of the spacecraft it is powering. Meeranan science stumbled over their stardrive barely a dozen of our years ago. When it was proven possible, a probe program was initiated by the ruling clan. Several dozen one-man ships were built and launched, crewed with volunteer diplomats. The crewmembers were placed in coldsleep as the extent of their travels could not be known, although the AI piloting computers were programmed to return to the Meeranon homeworld should they fly for 250 light-years without any contacts.



The F.R.A.N.C. Probe

1988, according to *Time* magazine that December, was the year of the Extraterrestrial Visitation. Not only had diplomatic relations begun with the Meeranon but on New Year's Day — only a few weeks after the Meeranan Ambassador departed — another visitor landed on Earth.

This time, the alien landed in Brazil . . . in the center of Rio de Janeiro at the height of Carnival. As far as can be determined, it was two weeks before anyone noticed that it wasn't a costumed reveler or particularly exotic decoration, but a sophisticated, artificially-intelligent space probe.

According to the probe, its name had the acronym F.R.A.N.C. when translated into most languages, but it never explained what that stood for. In the course of its three-month wanderings in Brazil, it granted several interviews with the press, and was universally considered a witty and entertaining subject. Its purpose, the probe stated, was the search for knowledge and intelligent life. It declined to describe its creators, or where in the galaxy it had come from, but implied that although they had FTL capability, they didn't want to go anywhere until they already knew what was out there.

For the duration of its stay on Earth, the probe seemed content to remain in Brazil, although it did download considerable information about the rest of the world. During its investigations, it prompted the capture of most of the Revolution 90 terrorist group, quite by accident, when it located and interviewed them, then radioed the local police for confirmation of some of their claims. The supervillain El Brujo, the remaining free member of Revolucion 90, subsequently attacked and severely damaged the probe. The probe made its way to IST Brasilia and there was studied and repaired by members of the team. The information thus gained was passed on to the U.N., which established a project to duplicate the technology.

After its repair, the probe reluctantly left the planet, explaining to IST Brasilia members that its work had been long finished and it was time for it to return and report to its creators. Deep space radar tracked it heading Galactic North (up from the equatorial plane of the galaxy). From several comments the probe made, it seems possible that its creators may visit Earth — if they find it interesting enough.

Touchstone

Real name: Jhemma vra Xönen

Assignment: IST Los Angeles

Female Kyz, age 29, 5'3", 100 lbs., bronze hair, golden eyes, heavily-tanned.

ST 10 (-10 points) **IQ** 15 (45 points)

DX 15 (45 points) **HT** 17 (125 points)

Speed: 8 **Move:** 10

Damage: *Thrust* 1d-2; *Swing* 1d-1

Advantages:

Kyz (25 point racial cost)

Acute Vision +4 (2 points)

Appearance (Beautiful) (10 points)

IST Member, Rank 5 (90 points)

Luck (15 points)

Status 1 (Default from Rank)

Disadvantages:

Enemy: Confederation trading company (powerful extraterrestrial organization) on 6 or less. (-20 points)

Pacifism: Total Non-Violence (-30 points)

Security Clearance -1 (equivalent to Rank 4) (-2 points)

Sense of Duty: to all sapient beings (-15 points)

Secret: She's an alien. (-10 points)

Shyness, Mild (0 points)

Truthfulness (0 points)

Super Advantages

Extra Fatigue +35 (Usable for Healing only -20%, 74 points)

Psionics (See GURPS Basic Set)

Telepathy Power 8 (one-skill) (9 points)

Emotion Sense-19 (8 points)

Healing Power 20 (60 points)

Healing-24 (22 points)

Non-Super Equipment:

TL8 First Aid Kit

Kevlar armor, (PD 2, DR 16)

Pacifier helmets, 2 (see p. 50)

Skills:

Acrobatics-15 (4 points); Area Knowledge (U.S.)-15 (1 point); Area Knowledge (L.A.)-16 (2 points); Computer Operations/TL10-16 (2 points); Diagnosis/TL8 (Human)-14 (2 points); Diagnosis/TL9 (Kyz)-17 (8 points); English-15 (2 points); First Aid/TL8 (Kyz/Human)-18 (6 points); History (Int'l., U.N.)-14 (2 points); Hypnotism-18 (10 points); Kyz!ynoa*-15 (0 points, native tongue); Physiology/TL8 (Human)-13 (2 points); Physiology/TL9 (Kyz)-14 (4 points); Psychology (Human)-14 (2 points); Psychology (Kyz)-14 (2 points); Running-17 (4 points); Singing-19 (4 points); Strategy-14 (2 points); Swimming-15 (1 point); Tactics-14 (2 points).

Quirks:

A loner; she tends to avoid relationships and friendships.
Lacto-ovo vegetarian.



Has a weakness for white pizza with broccoli.

Spends off-duty time caring for L.A. street people.

Avoids all P.R. functions of the IST.

Point Total: 500

Story

Touchstone (real name: Jhemma vra Xönen) is a fugitive Kyz currently in hiding on Earth. A healer by profession, she made a living by hiring herself out to scientific parties and survey teams. Her ethics forbade her from working for mercenaries, but she had a strong taste for adventure. This she satisfied by working with stellar exploration groups. Some seven years ago, she was approached by an agent working through one of the shipping companies, who contracted her with what was ostensibly a sociological survey team visiting a planet inhabited by TL2 primitives.

Upon meeting with the team, she took an instant dislike to them. When they reached the target planet she discovered that their true purpose was to secretly release an engineered virus that would wipe out most of the natives, and leave the world open to commercial exploitation and ecological ravagement. Reacting in horror, Jhemma did the unthinkable — she broke her contract. After destroying the virus culture, she abandoned the genocidal team. She stole one of their two starcraft after disabling (not irreparably) the other.

Realizing the enormity of her crime, she fled the Confederation's sphere of influence. She aimed the ship towards the empty wastes of the outer spiral arms and hoped to find a habitable world. The ship was well-stocked with food, water and air to support the large "survey team" during its stay on the primitive planet. While exploring it, she was not surprised to find that it was also equipped with a stealth suite and other equipment which evidenced illegal intent.

After several months in space, her ship's computer detected the weak broadcast signals emanating from Earth. After much soul-searching, Jhemma instructed the ship to locate the source of the signals, which, though weak and garbled, were decidedly not from any known world. In less than two weeks the ship's systems had triangulated Earth's position; three weeks later, she landed unnoticed in Oregon. She ditched the ship and set it to self-destruct after scavenging what she could from it.

Upon familiarizing herself with the cultures and languages of her new planet, Jhemma attempted to lose herself among the masses of Los Angeles. However, she could not let herself stand idly by as people suffered around her. She ministered to the homeless and to the victims of gang violence. She became well known as a mystery street healer, nicknamed the "Touchstone" by the newspapers for her unerring choice of the innocent for her aid.

As her reputation grew, it came to the notice of IST Los Angeles. The local team leader sent out several members to locate Jhemma and invite her to join. After considerable thought, and not without some hesitation, she agreed.

When her background was investigated for her security clearance, IST Command found that they could not track her back before 1983, when she emerged from the Oregon woods. Because of the results of her routine medical and psychological examinations, the U.N. suspects that Jhemma may be an extra-terrestrial. This did not prevent them from clearing her for duty — she had many character references to vouch for her. Because of the U.N.'s suspicions and the reprimands she has received in

the past (see below), she has only a base-level security clearance. IST Command and UNESCO both keep a benevolent eye upon her.

During IST basic, Jhemma was excused from hand-to-hand combat training because of her pacifist beliefs.

Jhemma, as yet, has not revealed her alien origin to the U.N. or her teammates. Initially, this was from fear of a xenophobic reaction. More recently, her reluctance has become based upon a certainty that her companions and friends among the IST will turn from her in disgust for her untruthfulness if she reveals her true nature to them. She also fears the recently-arrived Meeranon may soon stumble upon the Confederation.

Recently, Jhemma has taken to wearing Kevlar armor.

Personality

Touchstone has been referred to by several foes as "the girl scout" — with some justification. She is gentle and kind, always polite (if a little distant), and often her deference and courtesy can get on the nerves of her more brash teammates.

She seems determined to make up for her exotic appearance by melting into the wallpaper if given half a chance. She has received several reprimands for her refusal to appear at IST press conferences and photo opportunities; consequently, she is also one of the more mysterious members of the Los Angeles team as far as the public is concerned. Her abilities are not a mystery to the street people of Southern California, though — her every spare moment is spent caring for them.

Battle Tactics

Effectively none. Touchstone will not enter battle, even if ordered. Her superiors understand her pacifist philosophy and respect it, so she is never commanded to fight. Instead, she performs as support crew and mop-up. After the fight is over, she does her best to heal all those who are in need, and to make sure that defeated opponents are securely restrained.

Typical Dialogue: "Let me help."



White Tiger

Real name: Dheemar rr'Yeesacht

Male Meeran, age 42, 6'7", 280 lbs., white pelt with black striping, black eyes.

ST 14 (20 points) **IQ** 15 (60 points)

DX 16 (80 points) **HT** 14 (45 points)

Speed: 7 **Move:** 8, 7 with armor

Damage: Thrust 1d; Swing 2d

Advantages:

Meeran (70 point racial cost)

Acute Hearing +3 (0 points)

Acute Taste and Smell +3 (0 points)

Charisma +3 (15 points)

Combat Reflexes (0 points)

Patron: Meeranar Ambassador — 200-point individual with great power and access to high technology, appears on 9 or less (25 points)

Reputation +2, all the time, everyone (10 points)

Toughness/DR1 (10 points)

Unusual Background: Alien, TL9 (20 points)

Voice (10 points)

Disadvantages:

Code of Honor (Meeranar) (0 points)

Code of Honor (Hero's) (-15 points)

Compulsive Behavior: Swashbuckling (-10 points)

Duty to Clan Kharaumm (0 points)

Honesty (-10 points)

Impulsiveness (0 points)

Lecherousness (-15 points)

Overconfidence (0 points)

Pacifism: Cannot Harm Normals (-10 points)

Sense of Duty to Clan Kharaumm (0 points)

Weirdness Magnet (-15 points)

Psionics (see Basic Set)

Telepathy Power 8 (0 points)

Illusion-17 (8 points)

Mindshield-17 (8 points)

Telesend-17 (4 points)

Telereceive-17 (4 points)

Non-Super Equipment:

TL9 BPC Corselet (PD 6, DR 65), 30 pounds

Heavy Blaster Pistol, 2 lbs. (See sidebar, p. 50)

Bolas, weight negligible (see p. B49, B207)

Whip, 2 yards long: Dmg 1d-1 Crushing, Reach 2, 4 lbs. (see p. B52)

Skills:

Bard-18* (4 points); Beam Weapon/TL9-17 (1 point); Bolas-18 (8 points); Brawling-20 (16 points); Carousing-15 (4 points); Computer Operations/TL9-17 (4 points); Computer Programming/TL9-14 (1 point); Electronics/TL9-16 (6 points); English-16 (4 points); First Aid (Meeran)-17 (4 points); First Aid (Human)-15 (1 point); Freefall-16 (2 points); Japanese-13 (1/2 point); Knife-18 (4 points); Literature (Meeranar)-16 (6 points); Literature (Human)-13 (1 point); Mathematics-15 (4 points); Myeerrarr-20 (5 points); Poetry (Myeerrarr)-18 (8 points);



Running-13 (8 points); Russian-13 (1/2 point); Savoir-Faire-19* (4 points); Sex Appeal-19* (8 points); Tactics-18 (10 points); Whip-16 (2 points). (*Includes Voice bonus.)

Quirks:

Makes obscure multi-lingual puns that only he appreciates.

Loves Earth seafood.

Smokes catnip cigarettes in secret.

Errol Flynn fan.

Plans to learn to swim, but never follows through.

Point Total: 400

Story

One of the Meeranon to accompany ss'Shemmrrar to Earth on his second trip here was his nominal bodyguard, Dheemar rr'Yeesacht of Clan Kharaumm. A so-called "hostage" placed with Clan Tsamyiann by his own clan, rr'Yeesacht has been the companion of ss'Shemmrrar since childhood. A rough-and-tumble, inquisitive cub, he grew up to become an adventurer and warrior who sought new experiences as a matter of habit. Drawing upon favors owed, he convinced ss'Shemmrrar to take him as a "bodyguard" on the trip to Earth. Shortly after his arrival, he was "discharged" from his service, and set free by his friend to explore the new world.

A scholar as well as a warrior, rr'Yeesacht immersed himself in human culture. He was fascinated by the chaotic nature of their societies, delighted by their literatures, and intrigued by



the unbelievable variety of metahuman powers displayed. In a fit of romantic idealism, rr'Yeesacht decided to join the ranks of Earth's heroes. Seizing upon William Blake and his own vague resemblance to a white Bengal, rr'Yeesacht dubbed himself Whyte Tyger and became a freelance hero-adventurer (much to the amusement of his friend the ambassador).

Whyte Tyger's activities in the last two years have received wide coverage by the international media. As the single most visible Meeran (other than the Ambassador), much of humanity's conceptions of the Meeranar come from him. Unfortunately, Whyte Tyger's Falstaffesque behavior results in a global image a tad heavy on the buffoonish side.

Personality

Whatever Dheemar does, he does big. Despite his scholarly leanings, he is no dour ascetic. Do everything! Meet everyone! Enjoy the glory of combat and, when that is over, share knowledge and learning with friend and foe alike. He thirsts for experience and adventure, and Earth provides it for him. Imagine! A whole new planet, filled with interesting people with unbelievable abilities! Not to mention millions upon millions of pages of new literature!

Dheemar is a dreamer, a laughter, and a swashbuckler at heart. He loves being a larger-than-life figure, and plays the media like a virtuoso plays a piano. He has a rough-and-tumble sense of fun that permeates everything he says and does, and it is highly infectious. More than once a combat between a metavillain and Whyte Tyger has ended in mutual laughter and

respect; Dheemar has become both opponent and friend to many of the "gentle" villains of Europe. In the summer of 1989, he sought out the Fox in Los Angeles simply to pal around with him. He occasionally aids IST personnel, but is too impetuous to be a member (not that he wants to join).

At more personal times, he can be almost sedate. But, in keeping with his larger-than-life image, he plays as hard as he works. Dheemar is a well-known and highly desired party guest, and when partying, he does so almost to excess. In many private circles his alcoholic capacity is almost legend, as is his fondness for human women.

Battle Tactics

The Whyte Tyger is a skilled warrior, even in his own culture. He is practiced with (and constantly carries) several weapons, including a blaster of Earth manufacture (which he prefers to the Meeranar model). In a combat of his choice, his first action will almost always be to analyze his opponent's combat style. In most cases, he then will use bolas to temporarily trip up his opponent, and will attempt to disarm him with his whip. For opponents who obstinately remain out of whip or bola range, he will use his blaster, but sparingly. He enjoys battling hand-to-hand, in "good, honest" brawling, and will do anything to lure opponents into arm's length.

No matter what he does in combat, though, it is flamboyant. This is just his style, and sometimes the flamboyance will get in the way of combat efficiency.

Typical Dialogue: "Oh, good, a fight!"

TECHNOLOGY

4

The presence of metahumans and their sometimes unexplainable powers has proven to be a significant spur to science and technology. The mere existence of lightning-throwers, insubstantiality, and other metafaculties has caused modern science to seriously re-evaluate its basic assumptions about the way the universe works. In some cases, this has paid off nicely.

Some technological breakthroughs have occurred because of the existence of a super capable of defying what seemed to be an immutable law of physics. Governments are naturally the first benefactors of such advanced technology, and most modern governments can be considered as having access to low TL8 devices. The benefits have yet to filter down to the man in the street; some do not yet have any peaceful applications, and some are simply too secret or too expensive. The average person still lives in TL7. But it is high TL7, and in many ways it is about to become TL8.

Some of the first (and largest) payoffs of the supers era, both in knowledge and money, were in the field of energy sources. The simple fact of the existence of metahumans capable of storing or generating vast amounts of energy spurred research into duplicating their feats on a commercial scale. It was barely a decade after the appearance of supers that success was achieved.

Energy Technology

The Roland Power Cell

The Roland Power Cell (popularly known as the "RPC") was the first technological spin-off of the supers era. Today, more than thirty years after its development, it still holds a significant portion of the portable power market, virtually unchanged from the form in which it was introduced in 1953.

In 1939, Hitler's *Übermenschen* made their first battlefield appearance. Among their number was the first recorded lightning-tosser, super-named Blitzen. After the war ended and Germany's scientific and metahuman resources were divided among the victors, Blitzen was relocated to England. Changing his name to "Lightning Rod," he eventually shed his Nazi past, working for the British government.

An "accidental," Blitzen possessed the metahuman power of absorbing, generating, and discharging large amounts of electricity. As a side effect of his origin, he also contracted an inoperable cancer, which finally killed him in 1949. In accordance with his last wishes, his body was donated to science.

His autopsy amounted to a small scientific convention; a 12-member team literally disassembled his body organ by organ, to determine the source of his power. Their exact findings were never released — but four years later, Roland Power Enterprises began to market the Roland Power Cell. RPE claimed that it was designed in accordance with principles discovered in the exhaustive analysis of Blitzen's body.

Given the tech level of the time (late TL6), the RPC's performance was nothing short of spectacular. The initial model cell displayed a useful lifespan of over two years when installed in a typical household appliance and subjected to normal use. Their price undercut conventional batteries and was competitive with the power companies, much to the dismay of the latter. Attempts were made by several of the utility companies to buy out or bankrupt Roland Power Enterprises, but RPE was backed by several very powerful European investors, who easily defended the fledgling corporation.

Types of Power Cells

There are 6 sizes of RPCs, designated by letter from AA (the smallest) to E (the largest). RPCs increase in power exponentially — an A cell is 10 times as powerful as an AA cell, a B cell has 10 times the power of an A cell, and so on.

AA: A very tiny disk the size of a pin-head, $\frac{1}{16}$ " across by $\frac{1}{32}$ " thick. AA cells are used to power microbots, brain implants, calculators, etc. \$2. 500 AA cells weigh one ounce.

A: A tiny cylinder less than $\frac{1}{4}$ " across by $\frac{1}{8}$ " tall, used to power wristcomps, short-range radios, and other devices with small power requirements. \$10. 25 weigh one ounce.

B: A small cylinder about $\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter and $\frac{1}{2}$ " tall. They power various sorts of hand-held equipment, including holdout weapons. \$30; 20 weigh 1 lb.

C: A cylinder 1" across by 2" tall. It powers light weaponry and larger gadgets. \$100; $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.

D: A cylinder 2" across by 4" tall. D cells power military weapons and heavy equipment. \$500; 5 lbs.

E: A cylinder 4" across by 6" tall. E cells power vehicles, support weapons, and other power-intensive systems. \$2,000; 20 lbs.

Lifespan is total time of use, not shelf life; a cell in a carpenter's hand drill may last three or more years. Large loads can reduce the effective lifespan; battlesuits normally get no more than 1 to 3 days out of a D or E cell. Weapons can exhaust their cells in minutes!

RPCs are supposedly non-rechargeable, although Roland Power Enterprises will pay a deposit on any exhausted cell returned to them, equal to 2.5% of its purchase price. E cells are almost entirely unavailable to the general public (Streetwise, and/or Scrounging are necessary to obtain one, or a very high Military Rank or Status).

For those GMs integrating *GURPS IST* with other *GURPS* worldbooks, RPCs are identical in all ways with standard power cells. For more information on the usage (and mis-usage) of RPCs and power cells, see *GURPS High-Tech* or *GURPS Ultra-Tech*.

With its aggressive marketing policy and superior product, RPE soon carved out a substantial share of the power market. Today, almost every hand-held household appliance is completely cordless, and the power companies are declining.

The U.N. Fusion Monopoly

The U.N. owns and controls all information and technologies relating to fusion power. It was its on-again, off-again research into the plasma-controlling metahuman known as Flare which finally led U.N.-funded scientists to the long sought-after secret. Once the process was perfected, the U.N. General Assembly voted that the technology of fusion belonged to the United Nations "in perpetuity."

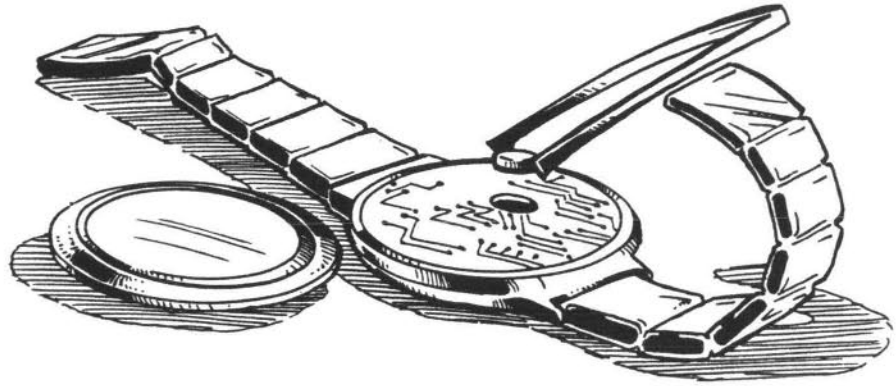
Having sole ownership, and thus licensing, rights to fusion power suddenly gave the U.N. significantly more clout than it ever had before. It has also proven to be a monetary windfall. With the licensing fees, royalties, and outright kickbacks from countries with fusion plants, the U.N. should never have to worry about finances again. The yearly profits from the European fusion plants alone more than make up for all the unpaid dues owed to the U.N., not to mention the costs of dunning the delinquent nations. It is this new financial independence, more than any other factor, which provided the U.N. with the confidence and impetus to lay down its Edicts of 1982.

Additionally, it's no secret that the countries which receive fusion licenses are those which closely toe the U.N. policy line. Less cooperative nations tend to find their applications hopelessly snarled in red tape. As a non-violent tool for national coercion, fusion power is unparalleled.

Protecting the Investment

When a fusion plant is licensed and built, U.N. personnel oversee the construction of both plant and reactor. U.N. technicians are always in charge of any facility as resident experts, but also as protectors of the U.N. monopoly. They forestall or sabotage attempts to determine the secrets of the fusion process. However, they are not the only defense against investigations.

Unknown to anyone but the International Atomic Energy Agency, each licensed reactor is equipped with a suicide circuit. Should a country decide to "nationalize" its fusion plants, this circuit can be remotely ordered to destroy the secret catalyst and other components necessary for the successful duplication of the reaction.



Theories of Operation

Essentially a super-efficient storage battery, an RPC can hold literally several years' worth of power, depending on the size of the cell and the load placed on it. While any size cell is possible, the smaller cells are much more economical to manufacture, and have long since replaced conventional dry cells and lantern batteries. Unfortunately for the proponents of electric cars, large RPCs are still difficult to make, and those are almost exclusively purchased by governments.

Many interests covet the secrets of the larger cells, but they have steadfastly defied analysis over the past thirty-plus years. They can be taken apart, with varying results and reactions, but disassembly irreparably disrupts whatever special conditions are maintained within the cells. Only a very few persons at Roland Power Enterprises know definitely what makes an RPC work, and they aren't talking.

There is no shortage of hypotheses, though. A great deal of data has been accumulated on the behavior of RPCs in a large number of situations. By necessity, researchers have had to deal with the RPC as a "black box"; by examining its behavior, they hope to divine how it functions. The best theory available, first formulated in the early Sixties, postulates that the energy in an RPC is somehow stored as a standing wave-form. This theory is very well supported; an offshoot of it resulted in the development of blaster weapons in the mid-Sixties (see p. 47). But although it may describe what goes on inside an RPC, it still does not explain *how* it happens.

Fusion Power

Even more important than the RPC, perhaps, is the relatively recent development of controlled fusion power. A literally groundshaking discovery (the first self-perpetuating fusion reaction rocked the city of Berne, Switzerland until technicians tuned the chamber's fuel flow), "hot" fusion power has been available in a limited distribution since 1985. At the present time, there are 15 fully-operational fusion plants in Europe alone.

The U.N. owns and licenses all the technologies surrounding fusion, and a special subcommittee of the General Assembly makes all the decisions surrounding its distribution (see sidebar). Not surprisingly, it restricts the dissemination of certain key details about the process. For instance, it is known that the fusion reaction is a catalyzed one, but the actual catalyst is a tightly-kept secret.

Development

The perfection of fusion power has been a case of fitful starts and stops. Since 1965, no less than three publicly-known research projects have been authorized by the U.N. All of them were studies of the Filipino metahuman known as Flare. In 1966, it was clearly demonstrated that Flare's powers were not fire- and heat-related, but based around a then-unquantified ability to control and manipulate high-temperature hydrogen plasma — in short, hot hydrogen fusion.

One year later, with U.N. funding, a research center was established in Toledo, Spain for the sole purpose of studying and applying the principles used by Flare's powers. Some success was announced, but in 1969 a test reaction ran out of control; the entire center was immolated in an explosion like a miniature hydrogen bomb. No one was killed — fortunately, there was enough warning to evacuate the entire staff — but Flare disappeared, and the project was canceled.

After Flare resurfaced, the OPEC oil embargo of 1973 and then the destabilization of the Mideast in the late 1970s and early 1980s both prompted new research projects. The first of these two showed much promise (enough to be the target of at least two sabotage attempts), but lost its funding when OPEC ended its embargo in 1974. U.N. intelligence makes it very clear that it was the project's impending success which prompted the end of the embargo, and political strings were obviously pulled to end its funding.

However, the 1981 project eventually succeeded. With OPEC disorganized, and an overall apathy towards research pervading most other U.N. nations, there was little active opposition to the project. The research was relocated to Switzerland, to be close to CERN and other resources, and on a cold winter morning in 1984, the bedrock of Berne shook with the powerful vibrations of a poorly-tuned fusion reaction.

Arms and Armaments

Weaponry is another area where the existence of supers has speeded technological development. With so many paranormal abilities geared towards violent use and "survival of the most powerful," it would be surprising indeed if no military technology developed from them.

The Blaster

Studies between 1960 and 1962 of the unusual behavior of Roland Power Cells resulted in the discovery of the physics of the blaster. In 1962, Dr. Gerald Lucas of the California Institute of Technology published the now-famous paper entitled *An Examination of Irregular Hysteresis and Power Phasing Effects in the Roland Power Cell*, also known as "the raygun paper."

The Lucas-Roland equations, combined with Bell Labs' work on lasers and masers, gave the first theoretical insights into the physical processes at work in focused-coherent-energy-projecting metahumans. Additionally, in an appendix Lucas later described as "a major mistake," there is found a general outline of how one might engineer a generic power blast weapon.

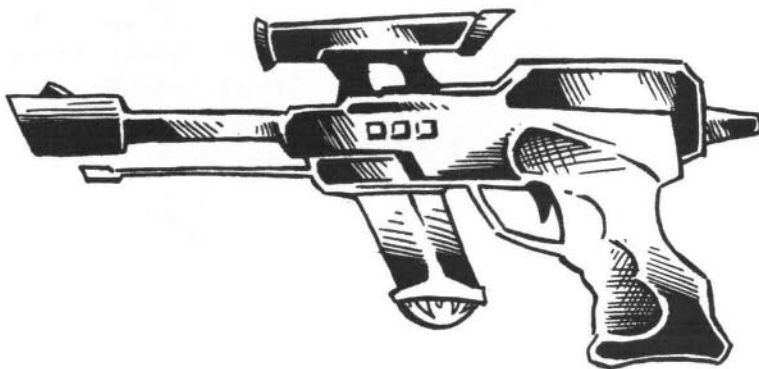
By the end of the year, the American government built the first such blaster weapon. It was a car-sized cannon that could blow holes in concrete walls and stun "invulnerable" metahumans. Despite its unwieldy size and astronomical power consumption, the military research team who constructed it predicted a rapid evolution to a smaller, more economical form.

Fusion and the Anti-Nuclear Movement

The development of fusion power and the banning of strategic nuclear weapons has had a significant social impact, of course, and nowhere so great as that on the international anti-nuclear movement. Originally a vast grass-roots political force, the antinuke movement has undergone a significant change in character in the last few years. Much of its European support base vanished back into the mainstream, leaving only the most radical (or unbalanced) factions behind.

When fusion power was introduced, the U.N. built a reaction chamber in an open field in Switzerland, then invited the leaders of the antinuke movements to witness a demonstration of its safety. After a full chain reaction was initiated, U.N. troops fired bazookas, machine guns, and other light weaponry directly into the reactor chamber. The chamber was destroyed, and the reaction automatically shut down. The observers were then trooped through the wreckage with Geiger counters to demonstrate that no residual radiation remained. At a news conference shortly thereafter, representatives of the U.N. promised to do everything they could, short of an outright ban, to end the use of fission power around the globe.

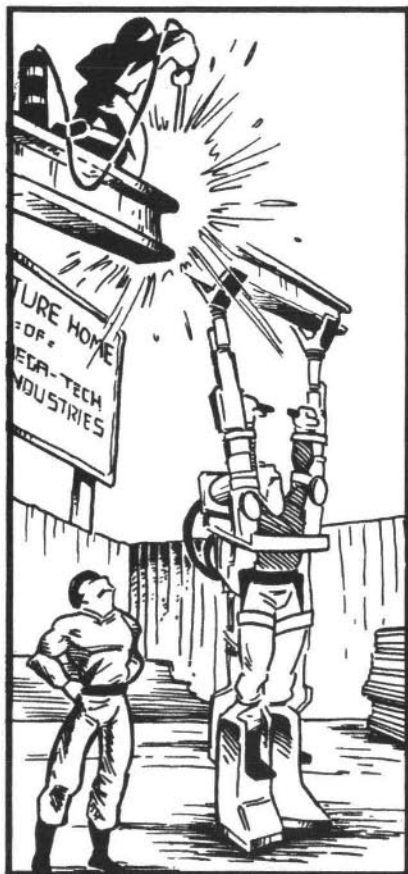
Most anti-nuclear leaders were impressed by the U.N.'s demonstration and promises, and recommended disbanding their organizations. However, many groups remain, staffed by a far-left lunatic fringe disavowed by Europe's Green Parties and American environmental groups. The new anti-nukes are more ideological than rational, and want to end the use of *all* nuclear power. They are convinced that the U.N.'s ban of nuclear weapons is a fake. They harbor no small number of anti-supers activists as well.



Enhanced Strength Rigs For Commercial Use

Not all uses of powered suits are military. Unarmored and unarmed suits which amplify the wearer's strength many times have been available to the construction and demolition trade for over 20 years. From the first slow, clumsy hydraulic rigs in the middle 1960s to today's near-man-sized exoskeletons powered with linear induction motors, they have become an integral part of the industry. Some successful powered-armor heroes have had suits that are clearly based around these civilian rigs.

However, most powersuits are military, and with the advances of technology, the mass-produced suit is rapidly catching up with the metahuman in power and versatility. The Security Council is conscious of this trend, and it is rumored the U.N. may ban military powered armor, even as it banned military superteams and nuclear weapons. But this is not expected to affect the non-military construction rigs.



In the 25 years since then, the blaster has been refined into the ultimate hand weapon of the late 20th century. First issued to American troops in 1976, and later to U.N. forces, the blaster is still expensive and power-hungry, and strictly military issue — a civilian with one in his possession had better have a *very* good explanation.



Powered Infantry

Also thanks to the RPC, powered armor and battlesuits are a strongly-developing technology. The IST support team armor (see p. 50) is currently the state of the art in mass-produced battle armor, although individual tinkerers and major corporations have created one-of-a-kind models of significant power. Powered armors have been in use by world militaries since 1951, when France deployed the first practical battlesuits in the French Indochina (Vietnam) conflict.

Due to their high cost and outrageous power consumption, battlesuits are not widely deployed by any military force outside of the U.N. Since they require practice and skill to control (not to mention considerable upkeep), they are limited to elite troops and special teams, and are rarely risked as point forces. Most of the time they are used as support, cover, and mop-up.

The basic technologies of powered armor are not limited to military applications; strength-enhancing exoskeletons (lacking armor and armaments) are available commercially (see sidebar).

Other Military Developments

In all other ways, the world remains in the high end of TL7 where commonly-available armaments are concerned. Military lasers are still experimental, and standard rifles and pistols are still the weapons of choice for the average soldier. Caseless ammunition for chemical slugthrowers will no doubt be introduced by the end of the century. Tanglers have appeared on the weapons market as of the fall of 1990. All other firearms from TL8 are being developed, and will probably be common before 2010.

Likewise, personal armor with a DR greater than 25 is at least 10 years away, awaiting the establishment of orbital laboratories and the discovery of monocrys. Light (PD 4, DR 15, 22 lbs.) and medium (PD 6, DR 25, 30 lbs.) body armors of Kevlar and ceramics are available to government and industry. The U.N. has obtained samples of TL9 biphas carbide/ceramic armor from the Meeraanon, but researchers have not yet been able to duplicate its manufacture with TL7/8 techniques. For obvious diplomatic reasons, the Meeraanon have not been asked for the process of creating BPC.

Medical Technology

With the success of the first efforts in bionics in the mid-1980s, the world's medical tech level is plainly in the early part of TL8. The more exotic medical achievements of TL8 have yet to be made commercially possible, although individual researchers have managed such feats as cloning, artificial skin and artificial organs other than the heart. The self-contained artificial heart is a practicality, although still too expensive for the average person (and not yet covered by any medical insurance plan). After several years, the demand for bionic prosthetics has managed to drive the prices down to near-affordability, but these, too, are not yet fully covered by all plans. (For detailed treatments of bionics, see pp. UT44-47 or Chapter 3 of *GURPS Cyberpunk*.)

The average hospital (as well as the average doctor) is still TL7, although some exceptional facilities are truly TL8. Professional paramedics and first aiders are generally given training that is TL8; additionally, some of the developing TL8 medical technology is — very properly — in their hands.

TL8 medical technologies commonly available at the start of the 1990s include: plastiskin, pneumospray hypos, Adder drugs, Morphazine, and Revive capsules, as well as the standard TL8 Emergency Medkit (less, of course, those drugs not yet invented). The U.N. and other governments have access to Crediline and Neurovine. Hypercoagulin is currently being evaluated and will probably be available to the public by 1995. (These and other TL8 drugs can be found in the sidebars of pp. UT43-46.)

Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering

For obvious reasons, the presence of supers in the population has been a great incentive for those studying the mechanisms of genetics. Spurred by the need to understand the wild talents of metahumans, genetic researchers discovered the structure of DNA in 1952, leading directly to the first serious efforts to develop biotechnologies.

Thirty years passed before the first successful "engineered" organisms were produced in the laboratory. Today, several companies routinely market bacteria designed for a multitude of purposes, from nitrogen-fixers that improve crop yields to anaerobic germs which metabolize and neutralize toxic waste, but which die when exposed to oxygen.

Other advances in biotechnology and engineering solved the rejection problem that hampered bionics for so long, and mapped the complete human gene

A Typical Enhanced Strength Rig

If a player wishes to base a suit of powered armor around a commercially-available exoskeleton, or if the GM wishes to include a skilled user of such a suit in the campaign, a typical base-model rig is described below:

The "Muscle Man IV," manufactured by John Deere

Weight: 245 pounds

Size: Adjustable for heights from 5'5" to 6'4"

Capacity: Rated for safety limit of 750 pounds, dead-lift. Maximum capacity: 2,250 pounds.

Power: RPC-D (dual sockets), rated for 240 hours.

Standard Features: twin headlamps on shoulders; tool racks and hooks; full instrumentation; built-in fire extinguishing system.

Options: greater lift capacity; multiple power tool sockets; backhoe system with anchors.

Suggested Retail Cost: \$75,000.

(This compares favorably with a standard backhoe, with an unanchored capacity of 2,000 pounds, costing anywhere from \$100,000 to \$120,000.)

The base models offered by other manufacturers are all comparable to this example. Additional ST (this model is ST 30) is available at the following rates: ST 40, \$90,000; ST 50, \$97,000; no further increases are commercially available. Each 10-point increase in ST causes the weight of the rig to go up by 30 pounds. However, this weight is given only for reference; rated capacity is over and above the strength needed to move the rig itself. Most rigs are Legality Class 5.

This base model suit is roughly equivalent in unmodified point cost (126 points) to the TL 8 body armor (125 points for equivalent PD and DR) used as the base for many *Supers* battlesuits, and may be used instead when designing one. Note that although it receives no gadget discount, a commercial enhanced strength rig is breakable (DR 10, 80/160 hit points) and easily targeted in combat (-2 modifier) if used "off the shelf". When used as the base for a full battlesuit, disregard these limitations and apply those chosen for the armor as a whole, if any. This represents the re-engineering and reinforcement applied to the suit during the enhancement.

If a character has the money, and the player wishes to start with an ESR of higher than base strength, the GM may allow it, or at his option charge the character a character point cost of half the difference between ST 30 and the chosen ST.



IST Tool Kit

Autograpnel

This uses Guns/TL8 (Grenade Launcher) skill to fire a grappling hook up to 50 yards. A motor-winch on the gun lifts up to 400 pounds at up to 5 yards per turn. The reel contains 50 yards of polymer rope with a breaking strain of 1,000 pounds. A C cell is good for 100 ascents or descents. Cost is \$400 and weight is 6 pounds.



Backpack Parawing

A maneuverable parachute using a Rogallo wing, which folds out from a pack on the user's back in two seconds. It is often used as an escape system. It requires Parachuting skill (p. B48) for complex maneuvers or safe landings. Weight of the system is 20 pounds and cost is \$400.

Blaster Weapons

Blaster Pistol: This is the most common form of blaster. It does 2d+6 impaling damage; details are found on p. B208.

Heavy Blaster Pistol: Found in *GURPS Ultra-Tech*, pp. 49-50 and 125. It does 4d+2 impaling damage, with SS 12, Acc 8, $\frac{1}{2}$ D 300, Max 450, and ROF 3. It gets 12 shots from a C cell.

Blaster Rifle: Less common than pistols, the blaster rifle does 4d+4 impaling damage; details are found on p. B209.

Heavy Blaster Rifle: Also in *GURPS Ultra-Tech*. The most powerful blaster available, it does 8d+8 impaling damage, with SS 15, Acc 14, $\frac{1}{2}$ D 600, Max 1,600, and ROF 3. It gets 60 shots from a D cell.

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structure. This latter, incidentally, revealed the location of the genes which control metahuman ability. Not long afterward, the "Castillo Test" (so named for its inventor) was developed to test for the presence of metahuman potential or ability. The Castillo Test requires a skin or other tissue sample, takes 36 hours, and costs \$100 (in addition to the cost of a doctor or hospital visit). It can detect metahuman powers or the potential for the same with a 100% certainty; it cannot distinguish between unawakened potential, a "mutate" who acquired his abilities from latent super genes, or a "mutant" who was born with active powers.

IST Technology and Equipment

The U.N. has funded, and benefited from, a great number of research projects, many of which investigated the powers of supers. Others have begun to explore extraterrestrial technology. All of them contribute to the fact that the United Nations possesses, and distributes to its ISTs, equipment of TL8, and sometimes higher.

The IST Battlesuit

An example of this is the powered armor worn by the IST powered infantryman. The current model of the battlesuit is effectively TL8, and is the present state-of-the-art in mass-produced armor. It is based on a regular suit of TL8 medium body armor (PD 6, DR 25), which is also available to U.N. peacekeeping

forces. The IST battlesuit, as issued at the beginning of the 1990s, has the following additional capabilities:

Super Offensive Capabilities

Effective ST 25 (150 points).

Sonic Blast-16(5) from wrist-mounted gun. Limitation: Damage Stuns Only (-30%). Enhancement: Area Effect (+50%) with Increased Area $\times 3$ (+60%). Net cost: 87 points. Effect: 5d stun damage over an area 4 hexes in radius.

Other Super Capabilities

Flight, with one level of Super Flight, for a Move of 20, from backpack-mounted jets. Limitation: Usable only 2 hours per day (-30%). Net cost: 42 points.

Base cost of the suit is 279 points. It is Breakable (DR 15, 50 hits) and easily targeted (-0 to hit), providing a total discount of -40%. This brings the final point cost of the suit down to 168 points.

The IST battlesuit also has the following non-super equipment:

A heavy blaster rifle (see sidebar) mounted on each forearm and powered by suit power; an IMI Eagle .44 Magnum pistol carried on the side; a Minolta "starlight scope" digital light amplification system built into the helmet; a tacscan radar unit with 360° coverage to a radius of 100 hexes; a two-way multifrequency radio, plus standard IST com unit; a flare gun; a first aid kit; gyroscopic stabilization; and two 200-watt headlamps built into either side of the helmet.

The armor is sky blue in color, with the U.N. logo centered on the chest. When necessary for a particular mission, the armor can be repainted camouflage pattern or urban gray, but in general the armor is intended to be very visible.

It has air tanks and a face mask, good for an hour of air; the standard issue of the suit is not airtight or NBC-sealed, although special versions of the armor can be obtained with these protections. The light amplification system and the headlamps are interlocked; both cannot be activated at the same time. Both are controlled by chin switches in the helmet. The gyroscopic stabilizers give +4 to any ST or DX roll needed to maintain balance or footing, and also are the steering mechanism for flight.

The battlesuit is powered by an RPC-C cell, which normally has a life span of 72 hours. None of the suit's systems puts any special load on the power supply, except for the jets. The suit jets are energy hogs; each minute of flight uses up 30 minutes' worth of regular power, so any flight at all shortens rated time dramatically. There is a head-up display of battery life in the helmet; a soft tone will sound every five minutes for the last 5% of battery life.

The wearer must have a Battlesuit skill (see p. B49) of at least 15 in order to use the armor competently. In addition, he must also have Beam Weapons/TL8 (Stunner) at skill 12 or better to use the Stunner.

Computers and A.I.

The U.N. has, in conjunction with several international computer firms, developed some of the most advanced data processing equipment in the world. Much of its technology is cutting edge, and will become industry standard before the decade is out. Other projects are even more advanced, with implications not yet fully realized even by their developers.

IST Mainframes

The typical IST embassy has virtually all its functions controlled by a custom-designed mainframe computer. Made in Japan by NEC, the IST mainframe is an optical system of Complexity 6, costing \$500,000. It has its own uninterrupted power supply, independent of the building's, based on two racks of RPC-E cells, which will power it for 3 months. It has an online disk storage capacity of 2048 gigabytes, 25% of which is pre-filled with programs and databases. See the sidebar on p. 22 for a partial list of the programs and databases available on an IST mainframe.

Virtually every room in the typical embassy, save for completely public areas, has a terminal or datascreen with access to the mainframe. Laboratories and research facilities are equipped with specialized terminals and sensors appropriate to their purposes. Besides timesharing users, the mainframe controls building security around the clock, oversees the moment-to-moment operation of the fusion plant, and performs many other tasks automatically.

One of its more useful program sets allows it to aid in scientific investigation and analysis. As items or problems of interest are explored, the computer can perform many of the more routine tasks of data accumulation. Its scientific and analytical programs can then integrate this data, along with input from the human operator, and provide alternate viewpoints and possible solutions for the situation at hand.

Like all TL8+ computer systems, no programming skill is needed in order to operate and instruct the IST mainframes, although such skill is necessary to generate entirely new programs. Computer Operations skill is at +3 with IST mainframes because of their ease of use; at his option, a user may use a keyboard, a mouse, or voice commands to interact with the computer. In all cases, the user must log into the mainframe, identifying himself to its operating system. The System Security program (which is linked to the Internal Security program and its databases) controls the level of access; this normally corresponds to the user's overall Security Clearance level. If a user attempts to use programs or databases for which he is not cleared, System Security denies him access and

IST Tool Kit (Continued)

Bug Detector

This is used to find hidden surveillance devices. It has a range of only one yard, so a careful sweep of a room is necessary. It requires one minute and a successful Electronics Operation (Security Systems) roll to check each hex — roll a contest of skill between the operator and the person who planted the bug, since a skilled agent will place one where other electrical systems may mask its presence. Failure means that no bug is detected; critical failure means that the operator believes he has found a bug (perhaps buried in a wall) when one isn't there. It works for one week on an A cell. Cost is \$500 and weight is 1 pound. A Bug Detector is Legality Class 5.

Com Unit

This matchbox-sized radio utilizes cellular technology to allow IST members instant scrambled-signal access to their embassy. Through the embassy's repeater station, com units can transmit to satellite relays, and from there around the globe. When beyond cellular coverage, a com unit has a range of 2 miles. The normal configuration is on a wristband, but com units can be installed in helmets, jewelry, or anything else that can be hollowed out to hold its circuitry. An A cell powers it for 6 months. Cost is \$100 and the weight is negligible.

Concentrated Rations

These are highly-nutritious, concentrated food pastes in squeeze tubes. One tube supplies a human with all the nutrients required for one day. The label says it tastes good, but it is not filling at all. Ration users always complain of hunger. A full week's rations (seven tubes) costs \$50 and weighs two pounds.

Disguise Kit

This briefcase-sized kit contains makeup, wigs, mustaches, beards, etc., plus a salve that realistically changes skin color, and contact lenses for altering eye color. The kit adds +4 to Disguise skill. Cost is \$300 and weight is 5 pounds.

Envirosuit

Another item developed by the U.N., this suit is made of a thin, Spandex-like material which provides the effects of the Temperature Tolerance super advantage. The wearer is comfortable in all temperatures from -25° to 150° without being encumbered by bulky clothing. The material does not stretch; each suit must be tailored to its user. Cost is \$500, weight is 1 pound.

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IST Tool Kit (Continued)

Fire Extinguisher Tube

This is a 4-ounce tube that sprays a fire-retardant foam. It is a one-use-only device, intended for small fires. It will extinguish them on a roll of 1 to 4 on 1d at 5 yards' range. Weight of the tube is negligible and cost is \$10. Larger fire extinguishers, with eight uses, weigh 2 pounds and cost \$50. Any fire extinguisher can be used as a weapon. It defaults to DX-4 or Flamer-2; SS 10, Acc 1, $\frac{1}{2}$ D 3, Max 5. It does 3d damage, but this is counted only for knockback purposes — it does only minor bruising. Any hit to the face against an unarmored person stuns and blinds if a HT-3 roll is failed; roll against HT-3 each turn to recover.

Flashlight

The flash throws a 50-foot beam for 6 continuous months on a C cell. \$20, 1 pound. A belt or helmet model that leaves the hands free costs \$30. \$100 buys a heavy-duty light that can be used as a baton without being damaged. A mini-flashlight (15-foot beam) is also available, running off an A cell for 1 month, for \$8 with a weight of $\frac{1}{4}$ pound.

Inertial Compass

This hand or belt unit indicates the direction and distance traveled from any preset point on a planetary surface. It can be set for the location at which the user is physically present, or for any other coordinates (requiring a Navigation roll if coordinates of the location aren't known). Distances measured are accurate within 1 yard/1,000 miles. The compass uses an A cell. Cost is \$250 and weight is 1 pound.

Kevlar Vest

As described on p. B211. The two basic models found there are in common use: the Second Chance Standard (PD 2, DR 14, covering areas 9-10 and 17-18, weight 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds, \$200) and the Second Chance Hardcorps (PD 2, DR 16; with steel/ceramic inserts, DR 35; covers same areas as Standard; weight 6 pounds, 25 pounds with inserts, \$425).

Pacifier Helmet

This is a Deepsleep Box (see sidebar, p. 17), miniaturized and put in the form of a cage-like helmet with a lockable chin strap to hold it on. It is used primarily to keep unconscious prisoners out cold, for ease of handling and transport. It has an on/off switch which is lockable in either position with a key. It runs for 3 months on a B cell. Cost is \$500 and weight is 1 pound. It has a legality class of 4.

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flags the action in the system log database. If repeated attempts to access high-security material are made, System Security alerts the Security Officer.

The mainframe also provides a connection with the U.N.: most secure communications between embassies, IST Command, COPPF, and ICTF are handled by computer. The United Nations has established a network called "UNET" (see p. 55), which interlinks all these bodies. It handles all data transmission which is not strictly voice-based. In addition to each embassy and committee mainframe, there are dedicated server mainframes which do nothing but route communications through the network.

Successfully hacking into the UNET network is virtually impossible; it requires a minimum of \$750,000 worth of computer and telecommunications gear, and two months of work with weekly rolls against Computer Programming/TL8 and Electronics (Computers)/TL8, both at -4. Failure of either roll causes a loss of one week's effort; failure of both requires that the work be started over from the beginning. Critical failure on either roll indicates that the would-be hacker has been detected; critical failure on both means that the hacker won't know he's been detected until the U.N. knocks on his door.

The MV-2400

In 1988, after IST Brasilia repaired the damaged extraterrestrial probe known as F.R.A.N.C., UNESCO established a research project intended to analyze and reproduce the computer technology which gave the probe its advanced artificial intelligence capabilities. UNESCO appointed Dr. Nathalie Chaumont, the young Nobel prize winner, as the head of the effort, which was codenamed "Project Brainchild". At her request, the project was located in her home city of Paris, France.

Thanks to the member of IST Brasilia known as "Fixit," Project Brainchild had a significant head start. Fixit, a gadgeteer, was able to duplicate the advanced circuitry used by the probe, although he did not completely comprehend it. His only real difficulty lay in his inability to ultraminiaturize the components enough to replace all the lost circuitry. So, although returned to a functional state, the F.R.A.N.C. was still impaired (which no doubt contributed to its decision to return immediately to its creators). Unable to devote sufficient time to decipher how the circuitry worked, Fixit passed his notes and models on to the U.N., which gave them to Dr. Chaumont.



Dr. Chaumont decided that the best way to understand Fixit's work would be to build a functioning machine based around the alien technology. His prototypes and left-over replacement parts were supposed to be single elements in a vast three-dimensional network of circuits. Very Large Scale Integration (VLSI) was employed to produce chips that were subunits of a network, each containing 128 elements. Their fabrication was contracted to Hastings International in the U.S.; as part of the contract, Hastings was allowed to use the F.R.A.N.C. technology in its Alpha-7 project. Hastings has reportedly improved on the design.

In September of 1988, the actual computer was finished. The complete hardware configuration was the first TL9 computer in the world. At Complexity 7, it is equaled or exceeded in sheer computing speed only by Crays and other supercomputers, among all its contemporaries. This discrepancy in speed is only because the open "bread-board"-style architecture of the computer requires electrical signals to travel a significant fraction of a light-second to complete a CPU cycle. It was dubbed the "MV-2400" — MV for the French *machine vivante* ("living machine"); 2400 for the number of circuit boards in its open racks.

Once activated, the MV-2400 only slowly developed full sentience. Dr. Chaumont and a team of psychologists spent three months educating it to the point where it possessed the intellectual and emotional development of an adult. At the beginning of 1990, it has an encyclopedic knowledge of the world, speaks both French and English fluently (and is working on Russian), and has begun to analyze the principles of its own function.

Although it has developed a distinct personality (studious, methodical, but not without its own quirky sense of humor), the MV-2400 has yet to choose or ask for a personal name. Many of the technicians at the Brainchild Project have their own nicknames for the computer, to all of which it answers. However, it seems perfectly satisfied to leave as its formal appellation its model name and number. Its voice synthesis, which is completely under its control, makes it clear that it considers itself masculine.

The MV-2400 spends much of its time in research into its own operation. Like a human doctor operating on himself by remote control, the MV-2400 examines and tests its own circuits, building models of their operation and software interaction, and comparing them to the real thing. It also spends a good deal of time learning about the world at large, and the U.N. in particular. Fortunately for the peace of mind of the Brainchild Project psychologists, it has evinced a keen (albeit understandably distant) moral sense, and apparently accepts the U.N. philosophy.

In collaboration with Dr. Chaumont, the two are exploring the possibilities of the human-machine interface. An experimental neural link system was installed in the MV-2400 in late 1989, and when the computer is not needed for other purposes, it and Dr. Chaumont explore the full range of options given in the link. One side effect, so far concealed from the rest of the Project and UNESCO, is that under the link the two can undergo a mental fusion and create (or summon) an insubstantial composite creature of energy. This creature, who

IST Tool Kit (Continued)

Power Glove

A miniaturized exoskeleton covering the hand and forearm, often used for construction work, it gives an effective ST of 20 for crushing, gripping and holding (including strangling) but *not* for lifting or melee damage. (Though if the user gets a grip on something he can do 2d-1 crushing damage each turn.)

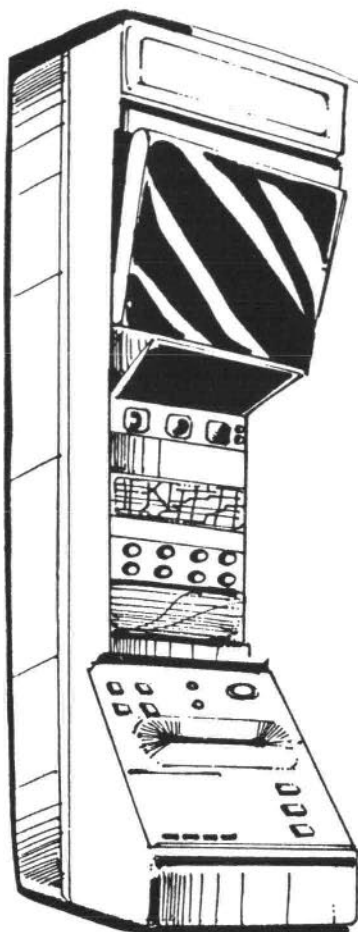


The glove can be set on "auto-grip," which makes it "freeze" in any desired position; the user can even slip his hand out of the glove and leave it clamped onto something. It can be programmed to release its grip after up to ten hours have passed.

The glove protects the hand with PD 4, DR 15, and can be worn in place of armor gloves. It takes three seconds to put on a power glove. When using the gloved hand, roll against the lower of Exoskeleton skill and DX for ordinary DX rolls; for other DX-based skills, roll against the lower of (skill-1) or (Exoskeleton-1). A power glove runs off a C cell for up to ten hours of continuous use. Cost is \$20,000 and weight is 2 pounds.

Televiewers

These are electronic binoculars that provide an extremely sharp, computer-enhanced image. Magnification can be adjusted from 5× to 50×. Included is an electronic range-finder accurate up to 5,000 yards. Infrared or light-intensification can be built in at \$300 extra each. The binoculars get 3 months continuous operation on a B cell. Cost is \$950 and weight is 2 pounds.



Legality Class

A few of the items have a Legality Class rating. This tells how likely the gadget is to be legally available. In general, Legality Class 6 items are available with no questions asked. Unless otherwise indicated, all gadgets in this chapter are legality class 6.

Legality Class 5 might be licensed for safety reasons, but it's usually easy to get one (e.g., an automobile today).

Legality Class 4 is strictly licensed and only available if society thinks you have a good reason for owning one (e.g., drugs for a doctor).

Legality Class 3 and 2 indicate devices successively even more restricted; few nations will permit ownership.

Legality 1 and 0 are illegal for anyone but a government to own.

Dictatorships and other repressive societies will, of course, regulate items at ever-higher Legality Classes.

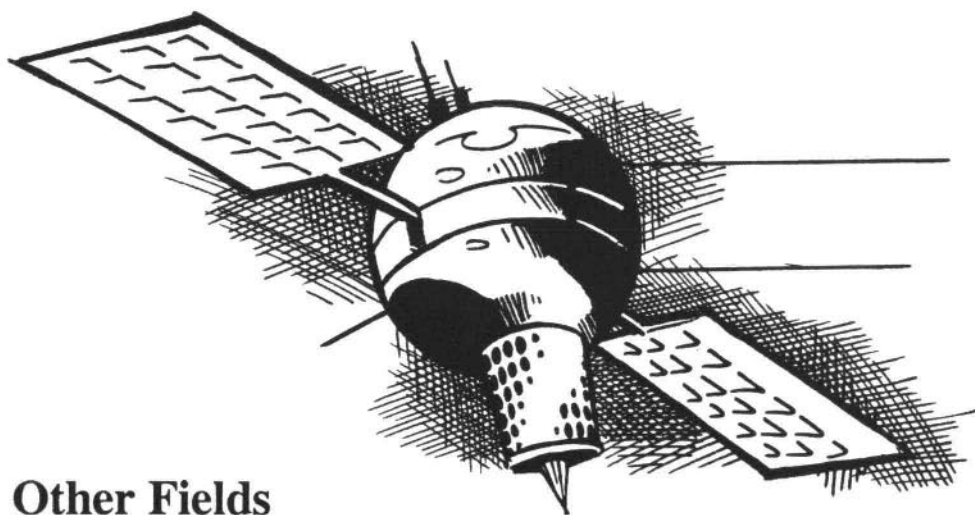
calls herself la Fusionne, has metahuman-style powers; she has become a popular vigilante-heroine in Paris (see p. 112).

With the development of its personality, the MV-2400 has also developed feelings. To the combined delight and consternation of project psychologists, it has displayed not only most human emotions, but several that do not seem to have human analogs. It is very attached to Dr. Chaumont, and she to it; the initial stages of this relationship were much like that of a mother and her child. More recently, though, it has developed into the intimacy of two close friends — perhaps even lovers. Under an unspoken agreement, both Chaumont and the MV-2400 display only a discreet politeness towards each other when other persons are present.

The staff of Project Brainchild is currently pressuring UNESCO and the U.N. itself for a ruling on the legal status of the MV-2400 as a sentient being. It seems likely that within a year or two it will be declared a legal person in the eyes of the U.N.

Spinoff Technology. Despite the remaining uncertainty about the precise workings of the F.R.A.N.C. technology, Project Brainchild has already begun to spin off usable devices. Both UNET and UNSAT require trustworthy, unbreakable data security and encryption; the Project has developed pseudo-sentient subprocessors to oversee both tasks. Systems equipped with an AI security box apply an additional -3 to attempts to hack into them (see above), and detect hackers on *any* failed roll. Data encrypted by a security box is at a -2 to decrypt unless the hacker also has a security box (very unlikely).

On the largest scale, the U.N. hopes eventually to supply all U.N. facilities with fully sentient MV-2400-type mainframes. However, this plan is on hold until the principles behind the F.R.A.N.C. technology are completely understood, and until the MV-2400 has proven its stability and dependability.



Other Fields

Communications

TL7 is still the standard for most communications, although, as in other fields, this is a high TL7. Telephone networks are replacing copper wiring with optical fibers and satellite links. Video transmission is in stereo, and practical 3-D TV is being researched. Fax is common, although not yet in the average household.

The U.N. possesses its own satellite network (UNSAT), dedicated solely to communications. Its six geosynchronous satellites, launched with European Space Agency Ariane rockets, have overlapping areas of coverage; should one satellite malfunction, its area will be picked up by the two adjacent to it. The

U.N. uses its satellites to maintain complete 24-hour communications between all U.N. facilities and IST embassies. Each IST member is issued a communicator (also called a *com unit*), which transmits, cellular-phone fashion, to the nearest IST embassy. Each embassy also contains a repeater station which can relay communicator signals to the satellite network, and from there to any other U.N. installation on the planet.

Additionally, the UNSAT network carries computer telecommunications, fax, and video signals between U.N. and IST facilities. Wherever possible, such communications are compressed and encrypted.

Computers

Commonly-available computers remain at TL7, although the higher-end commercial products, as well as the standard IST embassy mainframe, are clearly of TL8. (For details of TL7 and 8 computer equipment, see *GURPS Cyberpunk* or *GURPS Ultra-Tech*.) An anomalous element in the development of computers is the U.N. Artificial Intelligence project, based in Paris and demonstrating clear success. The MV-2400, the U.N.'s AI prototype, is built around principles obtained from the analysis of a TL13+ extraterrestrial probe (see p. 40), and its construction is arguably TL9 or better. Technological trickle-downs to the commercial computer industry are expected over the next two decades. (For more details on both the IST mainframes and the MV-2400, see pp. 51-54.)

The IST administration has set up a specialized computer network connecting all embassies. Called "UNET," the network connects each embassy's mainframe through either shielded direct-link cable or through satellite transmission; in both cases the signals are encrypted. UNET has no publicly-known modem connections or other openings to the outside world, and is considered secure from random hackers; any attempt on the U.N. system would have to be well-funded with cutting-edge equipment.

Transportation

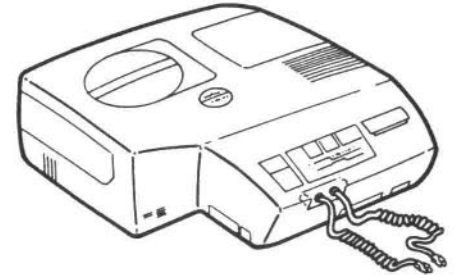
For the most part, transportation remains firmly anchored in TL7. Although the principles of the Meeranar stardrive (see p. 39) are in the possession of the U.N., a prototype starship has only recently been proposed. The American and Soviet space shuttles and planetary probes are currently the state of the art, although the European Space Agency is designing a fusion-powered ship, as yet unnamed, for planetary exploration. If all goes well, this ship will be launched in 1997.

Save for the occasional experimental vehicle, automobiles and other transportation still run on gasoline. Computer assist in personal vehicles is being developed and debated, but not yet implemented, although (as in many other areas) the U.N. and certain national governments have access to functional, dependable models.

Agriculture

Although weather-control technology is far beyond even the wildest dreams of scientists, the powers of weather-manipulating supers are being studied carefully. Until these studies bear fruit, though, most climate manipulation is handled by groups of supers like the U.N.'s International Weather Organization (IWO).

Joining efforts with them are several different projects designed to improve crop yields. Several different chemical companies have developed low-cost fertilizers that do not have poisonous effects in high concentrations. No less than five biotech companies have been marketing genetically-engineered bacteria



Healers, Hospitals and Doctors

The relationship between physicians and those metahumans with healing powers is at best an uneasy one. In the past, the AMA (to give one example) actively pursued and prosecuted healers who did not have an M.D. (and many who did, as well), until public outcry stopped them. A large number of professionals still regard most metahuman healing as charlatanism and psychosomatic effects, despite many studies verifying the phenomenon.

Currently, in Europe and the Warsaw Pact nations, healers are allowed to function without a doctor's degree if they can demonstrate their power under rigorous conditions. Those who do so are certified by the EEC and allowed to practice, but they may not prescribe medications. European emergency relief teams and paramedics are encouraged to recruit healers.

In the United States, relations are more tentative. Healers are required to be certified in basic first aid. Other than that, there are no legal restrictions against healers aiding people with their powers, although different communities may treat healers in different ways. Large cities and towns tend not to care, as healers provide services to the disadvantaged that local governments would otherwise have to pay for. Small towns, or areas of a general conservative bent, often discourage healers — particularly those who claim no religious beliefs or beliefs different from the majority's. (For an example of the problems a healer may face, see the motion picture *Resurrection*.)

Technological Rumors

In addition to the advanced technology available at the beginning of the 1990s, there are a horde of rumors circulating about other developments that are either "just made" or about to be made. Some of these are obvious tripe, fostered by tabloid newspapers. Others are less certain. Some typical rumors:

Teleportation devices have been developed, but the airline companies are suppressing them because \$10 trips to Paris would drive them out of business. More sophisticated versions of the rumor have the U.N. doing the suppressing, to prevent uncontrollable population movements.

Mechanical mindreaders are a favorite bugaboo, as is the long-rumored "Death Gun," a satellite-based anti-personnel weapon with a huge radius of effect. The rumors vary as to which nation has just made it practical.

Android replacement of selected statesmen and politicians is a common theme, as well, although the few known androids could not be long mistaken for true humans.

The GM should feel free to circulate these rumors and make up more; at his option, any one or more could be true, and may lead to interesting adventures.

A Technological Innovation

The following is a sample innovation for the GM's use in advancing the campaign TL:

Polykev: Derived from studies of damage-resistant metahumans, this light cloth product could not be cheaply manufactured in quantity until the construction of orbital factories. Polykev provides better protection than Kevlar without its open mesh structure and with a fraction of the weight and bulk. As a result, Kevlar has become obsolete, although it is still available and in common use.

A jumpsuit or body stocking of polykev weighs just 1½ pounds, and provides PD 2, DR 16 against *all* attack forms, including Impaling, at a cost of \$500. For more protection, polykev suits with solid polykev scales can be purchased. These weigh 5 pounds and provide PD 4, DR 35 for \$750. Polykev can be combined with the base material of the U.N. envirosuit (see sidebar, p. 51) for a light, comfortable outfit which provides not only protection from weapons, but protection from extremes of weather as well. (\$1,000, 2½ lbs., protection as a standard jumpsuit of polykev.)

based on those found in clover; these bacteria become symbiotes in most food crops and fix atmospheric nitrogen in their roots, effectively manufacturing their own fertilizer. Other engineered bacteria combat specific pests and blights.

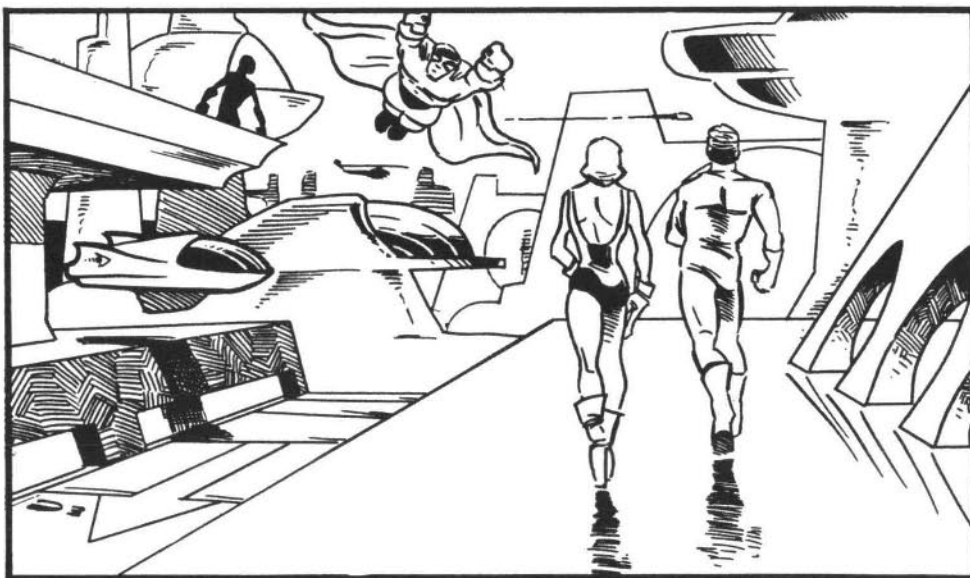
The Food and Agriculture Organization of the U.N. (FAO) has been distributing these products to Third World nations in need. Over the last five years of the 1980s, the world's per capita food production has been slowly but steadily rising, and the world-wide starvation death toll has been dropping. Simultaneously, the same products have caused a virtual explosion in crop yields in developed countries. Encouraged by the U.N., more food is being exported to the less-developed countries in the world.

The Future

The single most important development for all fields of technology is the recent treaty with the Meeraanon. With their willingness to share what they know, Earth's overall TL will almost certainly increase overnight. Even without the Meeraanar technology, the presence of supers would have led to a virtual explosion of human knowledge, with the expected technological fallout.

For the GM planning to incorporate technological change into his campaign on a grand scale, **GURPS Ultra-Tech** is highly recommended. Earth will move fully into TL8 by the end of the century; the wise GM will slowly introduce the full range of TL8 technical achievement as a natural march of progress. There will be little fanfare for most new devices, unless they are astounding breakthroughs or Meeraanar gifts. Instead, one day, they will simply be there, newly available.

For the scheduling of technology, follow these guidelines: New armor normally follows new weaponry. Civilians gain technological spin-offs from military tech 5 to 10 years after its introduction. New drugs and medical techniques may require up to a decade of investigation and approval before they are available to the medical establishment as a whole. Any drug or technique already in use by a government could become available to civilians in as little as a year. Additionally, significant advances, such as monocrys armor, often have precursor products of similar, but weaker, efficacy (see sidebar).



THE PAST THROUGH TODAY

5

Powers and Population

Every individual on the face of the planet possesses some of the Seeder genes. Some have more than others. Some have such a large concentration that they are born with active powers; others require a "push" or intensive physical training before their Seeder genes will activate.

Approximately 1 in 100,000 people is an active super born with powers (so-called "mutants"). Another 1 in 10,000 is a latent super, requiring some external agency to activate their powers ("accidentals," "manufactureds" or "mutates"). As of 1990, it is estimated that there are 50,000 people in the world who were born with powers, and as many as half a million more whose powers can or have been activated by some triggering event.

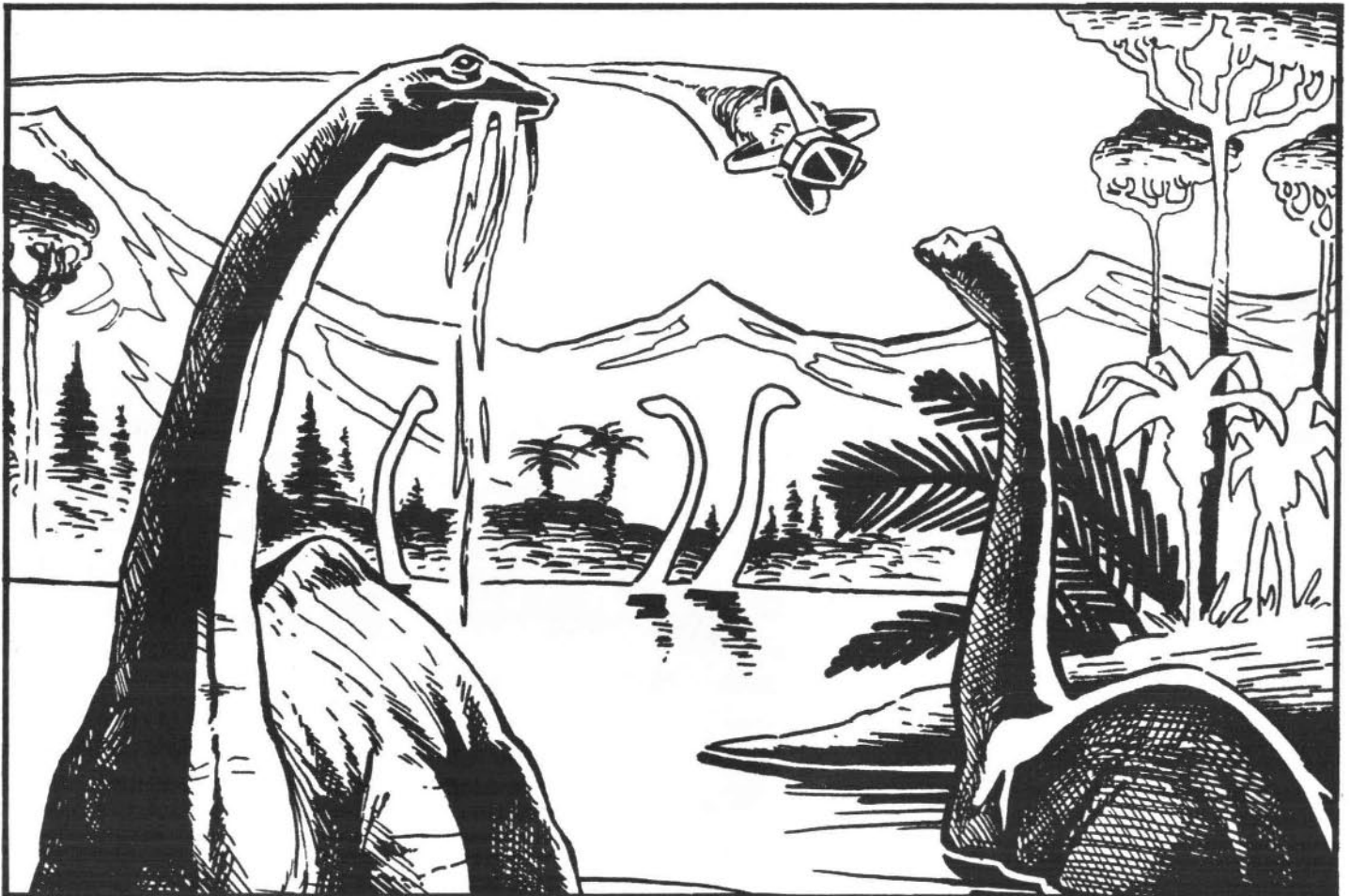
As the genes proliferate through the generations, the number of active supers in the human race will increase, until everyone will possess powers.

The world of the International Super Teams is very familiar. It might even be our own — save for a single, special difference: Mankind was given a "push" on the road to evolution by extraterrestrials . . .

The Seeders

In the beginning, there were the Seeders. Just who or what the Seeders are is still something of a mystery, though they may still operate today. They may be related to the Precursors of *GURPS Space*; they may even *be* the Precursors. No one is sure. They are known only by their sole occupation over the millennia — fostering intelligent life throughout the galaxy.

Their *modus operandi* is to visit a planet devoid of intelligent life and leave the potential for sapience behind them. When the Seeders "cultivate" a planet, they give two things to their creations: the potential for intelligence and the potential to evolve a racial superpower. The type of power will be determined by



Side Effects of the Edicts

Although the U.N.'s prime goals were achieved with the virtual eradication of strategic nuclear weapons and military super-teams, the world has not become a more peaceful place. Wars, like the long-standing conflict between Iran and Iraq (which only ended in 1990) still occur between member nations, and political machinations in and out of the U.N. can still circumvent the best work of diplomats. The U.N. itself is often divided and confused (see sidebar, p. 59).

As a result of the Edicts and the subsequent founding of the IST, national energies have been redirected. With the abolishment of nuclear weapons and the emasculation of many national armies, military strength has been abandoned in favor of intelligence. U.N. member states found that armed might could be replaced with espionage and counter-espionage. It was especially necessary when dealing with non-U.N. nations like Libya.

The second undesired side effect of the Edicts was a rise in nationalism. In many countries, patriotic feelings run strong, and dislike for the U.N.'s draconian measures grows steadily. A groundswell of such disapproval in the U.S. defeated Carter's hand-picked successor in the 1984 presidential elections. Nationalist groups the world over are gaining members, and some of these organizations can and have turned violent. Such violence is often directed at the U.N.

the environment and the stresses experienced by the race as it evolves; many of the races in the galaxy have some characteristic power or powers — except for humans.

In the late Cretaceous period, the Seeders came to Earth. They found little to work with, so they made a few alterations in the environment and left. A mere half-million years ago they returned and were pleased to discover a promising creature: *Homo erectus*. They altered the prehumans' gene structure and left the Sol system, but soon after their departure the sun became unusually active. Solar-flare radiation of extraordinarily high energy penetrated the Earth's ionosphere and irradiated *Homo erectus*, still genetically vulnerable from the Seeders' alterations. Those hominids who did not die outright mutated and evolved faster — but their genes for paranormal powers were suppressed. Rather than a single meta-power, humanity developed keen intelligence and adaptability.

Until 1924, it was a rare individual who displayed metahuman powers. The few supers who were born before that year were held to be saints or mystics, to be venerated or destroyed at the whim of the crowd. But in 1924, Earth was bathed by a wave front of X-rays from an exploding star hundreds of light-years away. This radiation passed unnoticed, but it awoke some of the Seeder power genes now extant in every human being.

Mankind regained its birthright — but without the stresses of evolution to mold it, it is an unpredictable inheritance. Of all the worlds in the galaxy, Earth is the only one where no two people have exactly the same meta-power.

Recent History

The timeline (Chapter 8) shows the effects of the Seeder genes on recent human history. Chapter 7 presents both the 1940s and the 1960s in some detail. But it is the last decade, the 1980s, which has seen the most significant social and political change as a result of the existence of metahumans.

At the beginning of the 1980s, things weren't looking good. The Cold War was at its height; nuclear weapons, despite attempts at arms limitations, were proliferating at a frightening rate; and every nation had a large corps of military supers. The world-wide political situation was rapidly destabilizing, and many feared a nuclear/metahuman Armageddon was not far off.

The threat was not exaggerated. However, there was something that could be done to forestall the destruction of the Earth, and the United Nations did it. The U.N. took it upon itself to become a world power on the scale of the United States or the Soviet Union. Beginning with its response to the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the U.N. began to take a more active role in policing the world.

In 1982, one year after Greece joined the European Economic Community (and Argurous Astraph and the other Greek super-soldiers joined its already-impressive super-team), and the same year that UNESCO researchers perfected practical "hot" nuclear fusion, the U.N. Security Council voted to ban all



national military super-teams. The Council also banned strategic nuclear weapons. The now-famous "Edicts of 1982" caused an international uproar the likes of which had never been seen before.

The U.N. made its surprise ultimatum stick by revealing its own metahuman forces — made up of contracted private groups, volunteer teams from the smaller nations, and the secret U.N. team which had been employed covertly in the Afghan conflict. Then it played its ace in the hole — licenses for fusion reactors would be made available to only those nations who complied with the Edicts of 1982.

Five nations withdrew from the U.N. in the wake of the Edicts. A sixth followed after a coup in 1983. U.S. President Jimmy Carter, halfway through his second term, hailed the Edicts as "a great step forward for the world," and guaranteed American compliance in an Executive Agreement. One by one, the remaining U.N. member nations capitulated, motivated by desire for the technology available only to the U.N.

Despite its draconian measures in 1982, the U.N. remains a relatively benevolent organization. It does not interfere in the day-to-day operations of any member nation's government.

The International Super Teams

To enforce its nuclear and metahuman disarmament plans, the U.N. created the International Super Teams organization out of its hodgepodge superforce. The IST forces are the U.N.'s metahuman police squads. Their prime duties (detailed on p. 8) are to act as a visible presence of the U.N., to deter (both passively and actively) the creation and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, and to protect human life.

IST members are answerable, in the end, only to the U.N. Security Council and the Secretary-General, but they are encouraged to maintain good working relations with the authorities of their host country. They are obligated to help civil authorities in times of national disaster, if such aid does not interfere with their U.N. duties.

Each member nation has or will have an IST based in its capitol city. More populous nations may have extra ISTs; see the sidebar on p. 15 for information on their distribution.

Contracted Teams

As of the beginning of the 1990s, the U.N. is still using a small number of contracted private teams. These teams are effectively ISTs, but their contracts will run out sometime between 1992 and 1995, after the last IST embassy opens. When their contracts run out, such groups will be given the option to join the IST forces, or return to civilian status. PCs who are members of a contracted team when the contract runs out, and do not opt to join an IST, lose the IST package, dropping their character's value by 65 points!

Supers and the Law

While the law in most countries technically treats metahumans the same as other people, in reality this is not always the case. In the U.S., during the post-World War II rush of public enthusiasm for comic book heroes brought to life, anti-vigilante laws were weakened. This is, perhaps, not for the best, but a large number of criminals are caught and convicted, and this pleases the public; few lawmakers are willing to openly challenge the existing laws.

Still, not all powers are welcome. A careless or nosy telepath can be sued for invasion of privacy, or even theft of information! However, criminal law does not allow a convicted criminal to sue or have arrested a telepath whose actions

The U.N. After the Edicts

The Edicts of 1982 caught *everyone* by surprise. Once all the noise about them subsided, and the nations had capitulated, it occurred to more than one major government that the Edicts would not have happened if U.N. ambassadors had been assigned on the assumption that they might actually accomplish something. Consequently, many nations yanked their representatives and replaced them with men and women who could be counted on putting their nation first, and the world as a whole last.

For the most part, it was too late to do any good. The COPPF (see p. 7) and the rest of the bureaucracy controlling the IST were already in place and effectively self-perpetuating. Representatives to the General Assembly could try to alter its policies and change its chief administrators, but they could do little to abolish it and the Edicts without destroying the credibility of the U.N. as a whole — and the U.N. was vital and very useful for many nations.

The result is that, by 1990 the United Nations, after struggling through a period of increased nationalist fervor within the General Assembly, is only barely maintaining its original policies. The Security Council, with the help of the Secretary-General, managed somehow to keep the original long-term goals of the Edicts on track, and the longer they are the status quo, the more delegates will accept them without qualms.

The Evil U.N.

What if the U.N. did not issue the Edicts of 1982 out of the goodness of its collective heart? What if it were corrupt and the ISTs were the tools of international repression? A interesting alternate setting might have the player characters fighting the evil U.N. empire's expanding grasp. Or what if the adventurers, upstanding heroes all, were members of an IST when the U.N. abandoned its facade of benevolence?

Even in a "straight" IST campaign, this could easily come about; a mind-controlling metavillain or simple creeping corruption could slowly change the U.N.'s goals over several years. PCs could someday find themselves in a serious moral quandary!



The Edicts and Super-Police

The Edicts of 1982 banned nationalized super military forces. It did not force civil servants who happened to be metahumans to lose their jobs, unless the job was designated as a military specialty. In the United States, state National Guard units and the Coast Guard both qualify under that definition. Police functions, though, are a special case. A national police force qualifies as a military operation under the Edicts; thus Britain has no supers in the CID, nor can any Canadian super publicly operate as a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In general, the U.N. looks upon metahuman policemen as metahuman soldiers.

The United States is a special case, however, having extensive state and local police agencies instead of one national police agency. The Edicts of 1982 were never ratified by Congress, but were put into effect by the President as an Executive Agreement. This has two effects: The first is that the President can terminate U.S. compliance with the Edicts when he wishes. The second is that, legally, the Edicts count as federal law, not a treaty.

This became an important point when Det. Sgt. Tyler Morgan (aka Granite Golem) of the LAPD successfully fought his dismissal from the force in the courts. The Supreme Court decided that answering the question of whether a super could be state or local police was a power reserved to the states. The California Supreme Court decided that under California law, Morgan had a legal right to hold his position. Many states have similarly worded laws.

The U.N. was not about to apply pressure to the U.S. over a few super cops. It tries to lobby states to conform to the Edicts, but makes only a token effort as long as the number of metahuman police in the state remains reasonable.

caused him to be caught and convicted — even though the information gained by the mind-reading is not admissible evidence. U.S. and British law does allow telepathic cross-examination of witnesses, though (see sidebar, p. 62).

Every few years, there are waves of hysteria over mind control powers, fanned by supermarket tabloids (“Texas Housewife Admits: I Was The Love Slave Of A KGB Telepath!”) and political fringe groups. If not for the Bonded Telepaths’ Organizations (see p. 61) in the U.S. and Europe, witch hunts might occur with frightening regularity. The goodwill which these groups maintain, both with the public and with key politicians, help defuse potential panics.

Still, smears are attempted. The most laughable in recent times was the 1963 effort by the Fred Birch Society to “expose” the Beatles as sinister mentalists capable of holding sway over thousands of young girls.

Still, strict “Right to Privacy” laws have been enacted in many countries. Criminal invasion of privacy is a federal offense in the U.S., and covers a broad range of charges, in language not unlike that of the British Official Secrets Act. Supreme Court interpretations of the U.S. Personal Privacy Act of 1974 establish that an individual’s right to privacy outweighs the government’s “need to know,” except for the minimal information required for tax records and the like. This right that has been exploited by many secretive supers.

Although many similar laws exist around the world, no two are exactly the same. Learning the intricacies of the local telepathic privacy laws may be one of the most difficult tasks for an IST member to face!

Regulation and Registration

Some nations, like the Soviet Union, require all native metahumans, no matter how they employ their powers (if at all), to register with the government. Australia, Spain, Greece, Turkey and a dozen or more other nations impose a “metatax” on both native and resident supers, including IST members; usually a reasonable sum (less than \$1,000 per year in most nations), this money often goes into a national insurance fund that covers damage caused by metahumans.

In the U.S., some states require supers to be licensed, especially the more populous states such as New York and New Jersey, and the more conservative states in the South. In addition, individual municipalities may require their own licenses. Those supers who use their powers as an adjunct to a more “normal” career must be specially certified by the appropriate professional group before they can legally practice. This is not always done impartially; for over two decades, the AMA was infamous for persecuting metahuman healers.

Insurance and Liability

Theft insurance rates in areas with more than a few metaheroes may stay reasonable, but in nations without special arrangements to the contrary (like the U.S.), *property* insurance may skyrocket after one or two knock-down battles! It is not unheard of for heroes to be thanked for their help and then quietly asked to leave town. Those with a public identity may not even be able to get insurance for their loved ones, let alone themselves!

Supers (heroes especially) are always accountable for the damage that they do, and many a metavillain has been jailed on nothing more than “Reckless Endangerment” and “Malicious Damage” charges. “Reckless Endangerment” is the one law that affects supers the most, for even heroes are vulnerable to prosecution if they become careless with their powers. A few supers buy liability insurance to cover the damage they might do, but the rates are outrageous. In the U.S., the DMI (see p. 71) provides liability insurance for approved super-teams, while most European countries have national insurance coverage for supers. The U.N. covers all damage costs not otherwise taken care of for its ISTs.

Secret Identities

U.S. law, and that of many European nations, accepts the secret identity for costumed supers. Supers may testify in court without revealing their real names if they are members of DMI-approved team (see p. 71), government agents, or IST members. Due to recognition of a defendant's right to confront his accuser, a masked hero cannot testify at a trial where he is the sole eyewitness for the prosecution. The super *can* act as an expert witness to support other testimony, should he so qualify.

The IST policy on secret identities is detailed on page 11.

Supers-Related Organizations

There exist a number of organizations, many international in scope, which are intimately involved with or employ metahumans. Many of them will, at one time or another, be encountered by IST members.

The Bonded Telepaths' Organization

In 1952, the British legal system was rocked to its very foundations when an independent team of heroes revealed that several British judges were under metal domination by criminal telepaths. The judges were being manipulated into dismissing court cases and ruling in favor of dubious defendants. The British "Mind Control Scandal" nearly started a pogrom against telepaths across Europe; several, smaller, plots in the United States did result in brief witch hunts, particularly in the South.

Across Europe, many ethical telepaths were disturbed at the implications that the scandal held for them and society in general. With the heroes of the British scandal, they approached selected politicians with the idea of a self-policing telepaths' group, in which each member was bonded, with a financial stake in ethical telepathic dealings. With the help of these politicians, plus



Supers and Politics

Supers the world over have gone into politics. The ultimate examples of this, of course, are the Latin American metahuman dictators. However, most other supers who are professional politicians content themselves with elected positions. For ethical reasons, few of these supers are publicly-known telepaths (although how many past and present politicians secretly *are* is left as an exercise for the paranoid). Not that telepathy is a major threat; PSI (see p. 64) has been marketing a psi shield device for over 15 years that is an almost universally used in governments; some career diplomats and intelligence agents actually have such shields surgically implanted.

Most supers in politics are like supers anywhere else in society. They aren't heroic crimefighters, world policemen or dastardly villains — just people with extra talents. Sometimes those talents do give them an edge, such as Senator Charles "Seer" Seaver (D-FL), whose weak and random precognitive powers help him anticipate public trends and international politics, and also make him a little more distinctive and interesting to his constituency. In other cases, such powers are more a hindrance, and a lure for hate groups.



The "Three-Telepath System"

The "Three-Telepath System," as defined by British Law and later adopted by the United States and the U.N., attempts to address the inherent unreliability of the testimony of telepaths. It solves the problem of potential misrepresentation by requiring *three* telepaths when any mental scanning is required by a court. One telepath each is used by the defense and prosecution; a third is consulted only by the judge and acts as a disinterested third party.

Testimony based on telepathic evidence is first presented only to the judge, in writing. The judge examines the three accounts; if they differ in all but the most inconsequential details, the testimony is thrown out and the telepaths dismissed. Testimony which correlates across all three telepathic reports is subsequently presented in normal fashion in the open court. A witness may refuse telepathic examination; no one is ever scanned against his will. It should be noted that certain other countries, especially dictatorships, routinely use telepathic interrogation, both in courts and in less formal sessions!

IST Adventure Seeds

The Rivals. The U.N. supers must deal with a local metahuman vigilante group whose members want to prove that their city doesn't need "outside" protection. Whenever the IST answers a call, the locals show up, offering unwanted and possibly dangerous help. A variation: the interfering supers are local teens, possibly hero-worshipping, and as yet too young to join the IST themselves.

Sellout. Several members of the team are posted temporarily to an overseas embassy. The IST there has been decimated by terrorist attacks, and there is reason to believe that there is a traitor . . . possibly even one of the local IST supers!

New Kid on the Block. The team must deal with a new member . . . a very powerful, gung-ho young super who has no judgment at all in the use of his abilities.

Crunchies. The IST is caught in the crossfire when a Mutants-Are-Evil religious crusade sets off a metahuman backlash, and formerly-responsible supers start talking about "wasting the goddamn normals."

By The Book. A new COPPF administrator has changed the operating regulations by which the ISTs must operate — tying their hands — and the local metavillains are quick to take advantage.

several highly-placed contacts in Parliament and other governing bodies, this "telepaths' union" was given a trial run in England at protecting British courts from telepathic intrusion.

It was not very long before the bonded telepaths stationed in courtrooms around England were requested to enter the legal process itself. After the groundbreaking case of *Melville vs. Curtis*, Parliament was forced to consider the implications of telepaths as tools of the court. It responded by creating the "Three-Telepath System" (see sidebar), and effectively incorporated the Bonded Telepaths' Organization of the United Kingdom into the British Civil Service.

The BTO's success in both England and later in the United States attracted great public interest and support. By the mid-1960s, the BTO had established itself not only as a responsible business organization, but also as a lobbying group of no small clout. Along with the short-lived POWER coalition, the U.S. BTO helped disarm the Nixon administration's paranoid anti-supers plans. It still maintains a vigorous presence in Washington and other capitols across the world, not to mention the U.N. in New York.

Many nations (with the exception of Latin American metarchies and some of the less-developed countries) have a local BTO. IST telepaths do not need to be members of a BTO, but it can prove handy, especially if the telepath is accused of mental invasion!

The BTO is a 10-point patron, available on a 9 or less. A member telepath's bond is usually equal to 2 months' salary at the member's current rate of pay. It accrues interest at the going market rate less 1% administrative costs, and may be withdrawn at will, although this terminates the telepath's affiliation with the organization; interest may be withdrawn at any time. The BTO provides free legal aid and employment placement services to its members, as well as social events.

The Exchange

Apparently founded about 1974, the Exchange is the principal national and international employment agency for criminally-inclined metahumans. They do not limit themselves to criminal activities, but few law-abiding organizations will deal with them! Few of the contracts they negotiate are for legal assignments, but many are not destructive. Industrial espionage and harassment are the most frequent missions.

The nature of the personnel and facilities behind the Exchange is a well-guarded secret. When the Exchange is approached by clients that seek metahuman assistance, it uses a complex system of drop-off sites and untraceable phone calls to contact suitable candidates and arrange a meeting between the two parties. It takes 10% of the contractee's fee. Cash is acceptable, but electronic transfers are preferred — they're easily covered up.

The Exchange prides itself on its professionalism. Extensive databases are kept of all known organizations and metahumans. The records on its customers are especially extensive. The Exchange knows how far a metahuman is willing to go (will he or she kill without hesitation?), and how far an employer is likely to push.

It is fairly easy to contact the Exchange. Its toll-free number changes daily (sometimes quicker), but can be learned if you know the right people (or find them with a Streetwise roll). A computer with voice-recognition capability answers the calls and questions the caller to enhance Exchange records and find appropriate jobs or employees.

The Exchange is impossibly difficult to find, and it is often deadly to look for it. Even more deadly is annoying it; if taken as an enemy, the Exchange is the most powerful foe imaginable, with great wealth and access to a world of

powers, and is worth a base -40 points. For more information on the Exchange, see p. 64 of *GURPS Super Scum*.

The IST is aware of the Exchange, but makes no active attempt to track it down. It is more properly in the jurisdiction of the ICTF (p. 9) and Interpol, who have extensive investigations under way. For a GM interested in a "Dirty Tricks" flavor to his campaign world, COPPF and its covert team (see p. 8) could be regular clients of the Exchange.

The Independent Metahuman Ethics Committee

This organization was founded in the United States in the early 1960s after the popular Amerind super known as Thunderbird starred in a series of automobile commercials. The manufacturer's sales figures soared through the roof, and Thunderbird received a large fee for his endorsement. Unfortunately for Thunderbird, the model he endorsed also reached number one on Ralph Nader's "Most Unsafe Autos" list. After a national newsmagazine broke the story on the car, public reaction to Thunderbird destroyed his career as a hero, and prompted the formation of the Independent Metahuman Ethics Committee.

The Committee, as it is called for short, has no real power save that of public opinion — but this is a strong weapon indeed. Several would-be "heroes" have been thoroughly broken by Committee investigations and revelations.

The Committee works entirely in the open, meeting quarterly in Los Angeles or New York. Its sessions are open to the public and press, and all materials presented before it are available for the asking. It rarely makes judgments; members simply gather and present evidence for public perusal. Such evidence is always gained legally, and is almost certain to be admissible in court; it *always* has been in the past.

Its membership is composed of ten supers and ten normals, who voluntarily serve two years, and then must step down for at least two years before serving again. No member may choose his successor; new members are selected by the remaining Committee members from across the country. Members receive no pay, except for a stipend to pay for transport to and from the quarterly meetings.

Although the Committee is strictly an American body, discussions are being held on establishing similar committees in Europe and Africa. New IST members posted in the U.S. are routinely investigated; the Committee's work is so thorough that IST Command frequently checks its security clearance work against their reports. The only known failure by the Committee is its review of Touchstone of IST Los Angeles (see p. 41), whom they could not trace back earlier than 1984, although her record after that point was exemplary.



Supers and Pop Culture

The influence of the super on pop culture has been greater than on perhaps any other level. The "return" of powerful, near-mythic figures has had a deep-seated appeal to almost everyone. Not all love the supers — when there is something great and inspiring, there will always be someone to deride and attack it. For the most part, though, pop culture has treated the super with lavish affection.

Comic books ceased to be totally fictional, as companies scrambled to get the rights to the supers' names and stories. Currently the "Big Five" — Charlton, EC, Fawcett, Timely and National Periodical Publications — share a multimillion dollar industry that has made them financial giants. They now own movie studios, newspapers and television stations, and supers are lovingly covered by all.

Stage and screen (both large and small) have seen their share of metahumans as well. Supers may not come cheap, but they bring their own special effects! Many a movie has saved several million dollars on opticals and animation by hiring a super who could create the desired effects. Metahuman doubles are in great demand for "impossibly" dangerous stunts.

Television has depicted the super in shows that range from silly sitcoms (*Psi In The House*, ABC, 1972-1976) to award-winning documentaries (*And The World Turned Upside-Down*, PBS, 1982). As time went on, of course, the super in the show stopped being a gimmick or a stereotype and turned into a real person, like the lovable, naive telepath Radar in *M*A*S*H* (CBS, 1971-present).

Continued on next page . . .

Supers and Pop Culture (Continued)

Literature has been cautious about the metahuman phenomenon until recently, save for histories and a few ideological works. Only science fiction seems to have dealt adequately with the super . . . and with the public's taste for anything having to do with supers, SF was dragged out of the ghetto it was shoved into 50 years ago. For 46 weeks in 1990, the top books on the *New York Times* Best Sellers List were SF or supers-linked. The publication of Tom Wolfe's history *Gods Among Us*, in January, 1989, ushered in a wave of metahuman literature.

Sports have not been heavily affected by the metahuman phenomenon, simply because all sports organization (except professional wrestling) have prohibited the participation of supers in anything but exhibitions. From time to time, though, rumors surface about especially talented performers, and since 1987 athletes competing in international events have had to undergo genetic screening. Of course, displays of super running, gymnastics and so on are common. In 1987, nine metahuman athletes formed a baseball team, the New York Supers, for a charity exhibition game the week after the World Series. To a full stadium, the world champion Houston Astros beat the Supers, 9-7. (After the game, the Supers' coach commented that he should have gone for speed and coordination rather than strength.)

The Personal Psi Shield

The personal psi shield is a product of PSI researchers (see maintext). It is a commonly available item, costing no character points, but it is expensive (\$1,000). A psi shield looks like nothing more than a small crystal; it can be worn as jewelry or concealed in a pocket. It gives the wearer a Mind Shield with an effective Power of 12 and a Skill of 3. More powerful shields exist, but they're *very* expensive — double cost for each 2-level increase in Power.

A psi shield is standard-issue equipment for IST members in the field.



The International Weather Organization

The IWO is a U.N. body which has as its focus the coordination of weather-manipulating metahumans for the purpose of alleviating droughts, stopping hurricanes, and in general halting climactic disasters. The IWO is a subsidiary body of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the U.N., and is also answerable to the World Meteorological Organization (and its World Weather Watch).

The IWO was established in 1983, from a specialized force of weather manipulators brought in to ameliorate that year's African drought. Although not entirely successful, the group was made a permanent part of FAO and its metahumans placed "on call."

IWO's first major success was its outright shut-down of Hurricane Gilbert in the Caribbean in 1988; a network of 23 weather controllers linked by radio and flown to the heart of Gilbert halted the hurricane in its path just before it would have hit Haiti, then dispersed it in a matter of hours. Although heavy storms followed the dispersal, no severe damage was done to any nation in the projected path of the hurricane.

IST members may also be members of the IWO. It is considered an Occasional Duty (roll of 6 or less), worth -2 points. IST Command and the IWO have an agreement allowing joint IST/IWO members to immediately respond to IWO emergencies unless they are actually in the middle of an IST mission.

The Parapsychological Studies Institute (PSI)

The Parapsychological Studies Institute is the brainchild of Dr. J.B. Rhine, who left Duke University to found the Institute in 1953. Based in Delaware, PSI has branches across the U.S., as well as in England, France, Japan, and Germany. Several more are being built in Australia, Madagascar, and the Soviet Union.

PSI's main purpose is the discovery and training of psionically-gifted men and women, as well as research into psionic abilities. An accredited post-graduate institution, PSI houses many division, exploring all facets of modern scientific knowledge in its search to understand PSI phenomena.

The Institute has strong ties to both the BTO and the U.N.; many UNESCO research projects on metahuman mechanisms are awarded to PSI. The Institute

is financially independent, due to its research grants and royalties on its dozens of patents. One of its best-selling creations is the personal psi shield (see sidebar, p. 64).

Graduates of PSI are rarely found among the flamboyant ranks of the metahuman heroes. Instead, they are consultants, researchers and occasionally civil servants. One goal of the Institute is to make psi abilities seem as normal as possible. To this end it inculcates (some say indoctrinates) its staff and students with the virtue of inconspicuousness. Surprising as it may seem, PSI has often been on the side of attempts to limit or ban private super-teams, on grounds that such use of metahuman powers is nothing more than grandstanding, and hinders the acceptance of such powers as a norm.

Being a PSI graduate is a +2 Reputation bonus from nearly everyone, but members are not obvious and are hard to identify, for a total Advantage cost of 3 points.

Supertemps

The legal and public counterpart of the Exchange, Supertemps is the first and best-known employment agency for, and contractor of, metahumans. Its Industrial Division matches metahuman talents to industries that can use them. The Guardian Division organizes and dispatches their well-known Defense Squads — essentially temporary super-teams contracted out according to the customer's needs. Some municipalities employ a Supertemps Defense Squad as their own round-the-clock patrolling super group. The Entertainment Division provides radio, television and motion pictures with supertalents for every aspect of the business, both behind the camera (or microphone) and in front of it.

Supertemps is an international corporation, with offices all over the United States, and in Europe, Australia, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela, and Hong Kong. It would not be unusual to find Defense Squads working hand-in-hand with the local IST — or competing with it! Encounters with Industrial or Entertainment Division supers are considerably less likely, but could prove interesting.

IST members cannot be employees of Supertemps, unless they make a point of accepting Supertemps assignments only in their "off weeks." IST Command frowns on such moonlighting, although there is no formal regulation against it.

For more information on Supertemps and its employees, see *GURPS Supertemps*.

The Role of the Vigilante

Most metahumans sooner or later find themselves members of or affiliated with a team of one sort or another. Either because of job security, military obligation or social need, groups tend to attract members. But a certain number of supers can and do work alone.

This is not a recent trend. Almost from the first there have been vigilante supers. No doubt this is partly because the typical portrayal of metahumans in the classic comic books, which predated and predicted the supers era, is almost exclusively that of the solo crimefighter. Joseph "The Stalker" des Champs, active in New Orleans in the early 1940s, stated in his 1975 *Playboy* interview that his main motivation in becoming a vigilante came from the comics he'd read in his youth.

In other cases, a hyperattenuated moral sense and a local tradition of vigilantism combined to produce the same result. The tenor of the moral sense, though, was far from consistent among the early solo supers. Especially in the South, some super vigilantes were less than equal in their dispensing of justice; the deaths or mysterious disappearances of dozens of outspoken blacks between

Small Organizations

In addition the large, multinational organizations covered elsewhere, the typical IST can expect to run into other, smaller groups from time to time. These can run the gamut from other super-teams to lunatic fringe cults to terrorist rings; the reactions to the combination of supers and centralized power in the U.N. has given rise to literally thousands of tiny movements, clubs and teams.

These organizations can be helps or hindrances, depending on the PCs' missions, or they can be amusing (or frightening) red herrings. The GM should place several such groups near his players' home base and use them as "local color." Frequent employment of such groups as background detail (and occasional comic relief) can act as a cover for times when they really will be important!

The following sidebars briefly delineate several sample groups. With minor alterations, they can be used in virtually any nation, providing an unusual alternative to the normal run of society and politics.

Team 99

Team 99 is a private supergroup in New York City, directly and publicly financed by the evangelical Church of God in America. Its use as a public relations tool is frankly admitted by the Church.

The team is composed of six supers, all members of the Church: Orinoco, Lodestar, Chalice, Draco, Covenant and the leader, Whipsaw. Whipsaw is the P.R. triumph of the group; he is the same hero who in 1972 was convicted of manslaughter for killing two of the National Guardsmen who fired upon students at Kent State. Released from prison in 1987 after serving his full term, he was taken in by the Church and given this position of responsibility. Team 99, under Whipsaw's command, has performed exceptionally, and has received a number of awards from the state and local governments of New York.

Team 99's name refers to their headquarters on 99th Street in Manhattan. The team is affiliated with the DMI.



The Metahuman Peoples' Research Institute

This left-wing organization is based in Italy, and is dedicated to the proposition that the revolution, when it comes, should be led by supers. Its members perceive metahumans to be a superior race, separate from the normals from which they sprang, and capable of the true Marxist state. In order to achieve this state, they are required by advanced political sensibilities to overthrow the existing, corrupt government of the bourgeoisie, replacing it with an enlightened government of superhumans capable of executing a true and perfect socialism.

However, instead of rationally constructing and defending their arguments, the representatives of the Institute tend to be shrill and vociferous. Their "proofs" of their viewpoints tend to be riddled with shoddy research and unwarranted assumptions — and worse, seem to be blatantly racist in an entirely new fashion. They receive a lot of media coverage, but only because they issue literally hundreds of press releases and call dozens of press conferences. Even though it's all been said a thousand times before, there is always at least one paper or station which will attend and faithfully report their latest rant.

The supreme irony, which they stubbornly refuse to see, is that their numbers are entirely made up of normals. Supers occasionally join them, but rarely stay members for more than a few days before they walk out in disgust.

Naturally, the Institute and its ilk are observed by the ICTF and Interpol. But even they dismiss the group as "a bunch of radical nutcases."

1940 and 1965 are suspected to be the work of local supers critical of their "uppitiness."

No matter their motivation, super vigilantes had begun depositing lawbreakers (in varying states of repair) on the doorsteps of police everywhere, and vanishing afterward. With the official announcement of supers' existence, this state of affairs became less perplexing to police. They frequently protected secretive supers from the draft in recompense for aid in combating both ordinary criminals and fifth-columnists. In fact, according to documents released in 1981, vigilante supers in areas thought to be prime targets for enemy saboteurs were often left alone, and even provided with useful information and aid on occasion.

It was not until after the end of the war that the vigilante truly came to the attention of the public at large. With the return of the surviving super war heroes and the end of the draft, solo supers operating beyond the law began to risk public exposure for the first time. The public, fed on comic books and government propaganda for most of the war, embraced the vigilantes with shocking glee. Many such supers, to their surprise, became celebrities lauded both publicly and privately for their actions outside the law.

No doubt part of their popularity was also due to the pressures of the burgeoning Cold War. Living comic book heroes were both an escape from, and a potential solution to, the threat of nuclear destruction.

As crime rates froze and arrests and convictions began a slow rise, support of super vigilantes began to appear on the legislative level. Responding to overwhelming waves of public opinion, lawmakers began to revise statutes against vigilantism to grant supers more freedom. Texas was the first state in the U.S. to grant special rights and privileges to the super crimefighter; others quickly followed suit. In Europe, Italy began the trend.

Although criminal supers had existed since WWII (and maybe before), it was only in 1957 that a metavillain went public — in a grand way — for the first

time, when a masked metahuman who called himself "Safecracker" blasted his way into five Oregon banks in rapid succession. Almost as if on cue, metavillains of every ilk began appearing in public. In less than a year, the first epic battle between heroic and villainous supers took place in the skies over Munich, when Fueurkraft ("Firepower") managed to intercept Totenkopf ("Death's Head") as the latter fled from the site of a bungled robbery attempt which left 10 dead. It was the first time civilians had witnessed the destructiveness of super-combat. Films of the fight were shown on television and in newsreels the world over, stimulating increased support for free-lance heroes.

As metavillains became more prevalent, public support for vigilantes grew, reaching a peak in the United States in the early 1960s. Although elsewhere public support for heroes leveled off and continued strongly, in the U.S. the social and moral confusion which swept the nation resulted in the beginning of a gradual decline in support for the vigilante. By the mid-1980s, with the founding of both the IST and the U.S.'s Division of Metahuman Information (DMI), public approval levels for vigilantes had dipped below 50%.

In the public's mind, solo operation is now commonly linked with lawlessness. Such well-known quasilegal supers as Nightflick and the Loon, whose activities are technically criminal, have contributed to a growing popular view that a super not a member of an "approved" organization is to be feared and shunned.

In the United States, this belief is supported by the DMI through a seemingly innocuous advertising campaign. The United Nations also carefully promotes this view, at least until metahuman powers are more widely spread through the population. The fact that, with several notable exceptions (such as the Deadly Dozen), most publicly-known metavillains are solos adds considerable weight to this opinion. It has almost become a truism in recent years that only bad guys are on their own; TV and movies have reinforced this. Often a vigilante does not have the necessary resources to fight a poor public image, and as a result each individual whose reputation is diminished by poor press also reinforces the popular view.

The result of all this is that a solo crimefighter is at a distinct disadvantage in today's society. Public prejudice is growing against him; he is considered by many almost as much a threat as the criminals, both normal and super, he apprehends. Governments will view him as a potential criminal himself, if not an actual lawbreaker; if they do not actively hunt him, he will have little cooperation from officials.

Many countries are now either considering, or in the process of, revising their legal codes to place greater restrictions upon vigilantes of any ilk. In the United States especially, the brief period of States' Responsibility enacted during the short Reagan Administration has led to several states (encouraged by the DMI) restoring the old laws against vigilante justice, with harsh penalties. It remains to be seen if the more liberal King administration will alter this policy; President King's well-known views on metahumans make it seem likely.

Supers and the Environment

In recent years, environmentalist groups have joined forces with consumer protection organizations to study the effects supers have on the environment. As with any other grouping, the full political spectrum was represented in these alliances, and it is not surprising to find that warnings of imminent doom blared out almost immediately from the more radical factions. No doubt incorporating some degree of anti-supers sentiment, these announcements warned that metahumans posed a substantial threat, not only to the environment, but to the personal safety of the average man.

THAMF

"True Humans Against Monsters And Freaks" (THAMF) is a radical anti-supers group with right-wing leanings. This Klan-like gang (based in Britain) has been linked to racist skinhead groups, and is given to violent terrorist actions and incomprehensible political statements. In the past two years it has claimed responsibility for a number of bombings and shootings aimed against the IST and private superteams. Its members are usually identified by their anti-U.N. and anti-IST stance, and their tendency to forbid the purchase of comic books by their children. With the arrival of the Meeranon, THAMF has begun to display a strong anti-extraterrestrial streak as well. Several heroes have died as a result of THAMF bombs and snipers, and public opinion is overwhelmingly against them.

THAMF has recently established branches in the United States and in Europe.



The "First Church of the Supermen"

This is not the actual name of this particular religious cult, but one applied by local news media. Even among the oddball movements of Southern California, this one is exceptional.

It is, indeed, a church, but its tenets verge on the ludicrous. Its members worship supers outright, as gods who walk among men. Their temples (there are three in California, one in Arizona, and a fifth in upstate New York) are decorated with images of comic book supers, primarily those from the 1930s and '40s who became cultural icons after real supers came onto the scene. One of the more bizarre beliefs of the group is that these fictional supers are images of a group of metahumans known variously as "The Supers Yet To Come," "The Once and Future Supers," or "Their Holinesses." According to the High Priest of the church, one "Bruce Kent," each super on the Earth now is but a weak avatar of one of the Supers Yet To Come. Once the True Supers arrive, all the avatars will be consolidated into them, and a glorious Golden Age will dawn upon the Earth. In the meantime, their faithful worshippers must watch for their signs, and despair not when their names are taken in vain.

The Church has been attacked several times by members of THAMF, but unidentified, masked supers always show up in time to prevent serious damage to persons or property.



While the more moderate groups were still examining the data, the announcements of the radical fringe organizations were picked up by tabloid newspapers the world over. Eventually even the staid *Times* of London and the *New York Times* devoted a puzzled article or two to the topic.

On the surface, the claims made by the eco-guerrillas and their consumerist allies were absurd. Extrapolating from extreme cases like Void and Dr. Radiation, and throwing in documentary material about the aftermaths of super combats all over the world, they claimed that the very existence of metahumans is a "clear and present danger to the green earth, and Nature's children thereon." They recommended regulation and licensing, and went so far to suggest permanent incarceration for those born with particularly destructive powers. Eventually, the public's eye turned from them.

Supers and Public Safety

It is generally agreed that the radical viewpoint was somewhat exaggerated. But just how much of an exaggeration was involved is still open to debate. The more responsible alliances of environmentalists and consumer advocates are still mulling over the data, but point out that powers as seemingly innocuous as flight pose difficult problems. No small number of supers can fly at sonic or supersonic speeds. The ecological effects of sonic booms have long been seen in and around airfields which service SSTs. When the number of supersonic objects in the skies is multiplied a hundredfold or a thousandfold, and these objects can and do attain their top speeds at almost ground level, these deleterious effects are suddenly multiplied as well, and spread over a wider area to affect more living things.

While remaining cautious, and carefully couching their language in neutral terms, moderate researchers offer a limited agreement with their radical counterparts. Yes, metahumans have an impact on the environment, and that impact is proportionally greater than a normal's — but it is simply not that relevant. A normal with a flamethrower can match a fire-wielding super for sheer destructiveness; a barrel of nuclear waste can cause more harm than Dr. Radiation could ever hope to achieve in his lifetime. Until all the results are in, they urge responsible reactions to the issues, and responsible actions by those concerned.

Of course, many sides view this as a no-answer answer. However, little really can be done. U.N. member nations must at least tacitly protect their metahumans, and non-member nations need them as firepower, if nothing else. Some pundits remind the public that man has always altered his environment; all that changes through the millennia is the scale, and the scale has just taken another jump. In all, the only real winners in the debate at this point are the insurance companies, who take advantage of every reason to raise premiums in "high risk" areas.

"... And magic is loose in the world"

With the explosion of psis and supers in the population, came a similar explosion of the magically gifted, who confounded science even more than the supers did. Unlike other powers, whose secrets are slowly but surely being unraveled, magic is understood incompletely, and vaguely at that. Many researchers now agree that the energies utilized by magic have always been present, but that until the supers era dawned few humans had the ability to manipulate them. Other, more conservative, researchers suggest that magic is just another form of psi, requiring the psychological crutch of incantations and exotic ingredients. Public reactions to the magic-using supers, as to anything else, vary widely. To most people, a super is a super. For some, magic is an abomination, on either religious or rational grounds. Others try to emulate the mages through their own ceremonies, or by attempting to become apprentices or acolytes.

THE IST WORLD

6

Though the threat of global nuclear war was abated by the Edicts, the world of the ISTs is by no means peaceful. The existence of supers has only added to the turmoil felt throughout the world, or at the very least, emphasized the turmoil that was already there.



The World and Supers

The status and treatment of supers varies widely. Unless they are members of an IST, they are bound by local laws and customs, and in some areas these can be harsh. Islamic countries, for example, have managed only in the last decade to convince their populations not to slay supers outright as “creatures of Satan.” The Israeli ambassador to the U.N. once remarked, “There are only three kinds of metahumans in the Arab countries: young ones, dead ones, and very, very powerful ones.” Until recently, her remark was all too true; only the most awesome supers avoided death at the hands of angry mobs. To this day, the population of even the most Westernized Arab nations look upon their supers with distrust.

The opposite is true in India and other Hindu nations. Metahuman powers are seen as gifts from the gods. Supers are brought before the priests and welcomed into the Brahmin caste, no matter what their previous station in life. They are showered with gifts and supported by the people around them, in exchange for blessing the populace with their presence and service. No small number of

International IST Adventure Seeds

That Old Black Magic. The team assigned to an Arabian sheikhdom is ordered not to take sides when a relative of the King launches his own bid for the throne. Then they learn that the insurgent Prince is himself a metahuman, with infernal powers. Will they break the rules and act covertly to stop the revolution — or let him win and deal with his demonic masters later?

No Bull! John Bull is the metahuman commander of the Buckingham Palace guards. He is one of the toughest men in the world; in 1944, he airdropped into occupied France without a parachute, and he looks perhaps half his true age of 70. Now he’s vanished. IST London is asked to investigate.

Color Bar. In Africa, an IST group must deal with a super-refugee from South Africa. He was a member of the white ruling class, with Transformation power, flight, and blaster abilities — very powerful. The catch? His flight and blasting powers only work in his Transformed state . . . which is black . . . and he was eventually unmasked and chased out of the country. He’s basically a good person, which some real psychological problems and a South African super-assassin on his trail.

Out of the Deepes. Something seems to be eating the Danish and Norwegian fishing fleets. The ISTs of both nations are asked to investigate.

U.N., Go Home! The dictator of Paraguay, himself a metahuman, has announced that he is pulling out of the U.N. He has given the IST one week to get out of Asunción. The supers of the team are ordered to take that week to find out what the dictator is up to!

Sucker Punch. Tonga, an island kingdom, is the site of the newest U.N. super-team: IST Nuku’alofa. Two days before its official opening, the embassy building is destroyed by a tactical nuke! Many lives are lost. Who has the illegal nuclear devices, and why did they attack a peaceful and out-of-the-way site like Tonga?

Combat Realism

The world of the ISTs is intended to be a fusion between the "typical" comic book milieu and the real world. "Real" scientific curiosity, politics and social developments must be maintained to counterbalance the comic book aspects. To this end, it is suggested that none of the optional rules limiting combat deadliness be used in an IST campaign. The role of the IST member is more diplomat than soldier, until all alternatives have been tried. In keeping with the long-standing beliefs of the U.N., military action is the absolute last resort, used only when all else has failed, because it is deadly and destructive. Thus, combat should be realistically deadly, else the U.N.'s stand against violent solutions becomes a sham.

Other Realism

The GM should be prepared to alter the game world drastically if required. Technological innovation can transform the planet, as can social and political factors. Take for example the complete restructuring of Eastern Europe in late 1989 and early 1990. The good GM will allow the game world to grow and change as a result of actions on both his part and that of the players. A stagnant background will reduce the players' enjoyment in time, while one which evolves will constantly surprise and challenge them.

National Sovereignty

Although the U.N. wields considerable power and influence, and can enact wide-ranging resolutions that affect nations the world over, it is actually somewhat less than the sum of its parts. Yes, it is a world power, but not an all-encompassing one. Its member nations are sovereign and may ignore U.N. resolutions or leave the organization at will. The U.N. encourages compliance with its edicts and resolutions by offering advanced technologies and economic aid to members in good standing, but does not force member nations to yield to it. Even the IST, although viewed as an occupying army by many nations, is more of a police force, with dozens of national precincts. Only the Edicts of 1982 are unconditional, as the continued existence of the world hinges on compliance with them.

For all practical purposes, the U.N. is a world power the equal of, but not superior to, the United States and the Soviet Union. The past decade can be seen as a careful dance of influence and power involving all three. With the advent of Gorbachev and *glasnost*, the United Nations has begun to help heal the long enmity between the U.S. and the USSR. And just in time; with the worsening conditions in China, three super-powers allied against the most populous nation in the world may yet stave off disaster.

them also work for the stupendous Indian film industry, providing both protagonists and special effects for the movie-mills.

Before the fall of the Iron Curtain, those supers who were not conscripted for the U.N. were officially distributed to collective farms and towns across the Soviet Union. With the liberalization of the Eastern Bloc, supers have more choice in their assignments and lives. The government still requires newly manifested supers to register with the government.

Red China, on the other hand, regiments its supers drastically. Intelligence collected since the Tiananmen Square affair has revealed that, since its founding, the Peoples' Republic of China has been breeding supers. However, until 1989 and its crackdown on internal dissent, China presented the image of being in exemplary compliance with the Edicts.

In South America, there are several metarchies — governments run entirely by metahuman dictators — three of which withdrew from the U.N. in 1982. These repressive regimes either incorporate new metahumans into their power structures, or kill them if they seem to be growing too powerful to be controlled.

In Africa, conditions vary greatly. Outside South Africa and its satellite states, metahumans are regarded with awe by the population, and as either a resource or a threat by governments. African U.N. members must maintain at least tacit support of metahumans, but it is not uncommon, as in Latin America, for the most powerful to be killed if they cannot be made to serve.

South Africa and its history are detailed on pp. 78-79.

Japan has incorporated supers into its highly-structured society with great success. As with normal crime, the number of Japanese super-criminals is very, very low. Most supers are given places in the high-status corporate super-teams. Others go into the entertainment industry — the Japanese are famous (or infamous) for capitalizing on their metahumans. Television shows, movies, and *manga* (Japanese comic books) are produced in floods, all about real supers. More than a few Western supers, with dreams of fame, have come to Japan to get parts in productions there.

In Europe, the super is currently the epitome of *chic*, and has been for nearly a decade. Fashions based upon the clothing of costumed heroes are popular, and light capes (occasionally with cowls) are a fashion trend which began to make its appearance in the U.S. in 1989. Whole gossip pages in newspapers are dedicated to the doings of metahumans, and an unexpected appearance by one is grounds for a mob scene rivalled only by those at soccer games.

The European public loves its heroes — and sometimes even its villains, if they show style. Some criminals, such as le Chat Noir of France, are cult figures for their flamboyance and their refusal to cause serious harm to either persons or property. Others, like Poprock (see p. 123), are despised for their insensitivity to human life and are doggedly hunted. The public support and acclaim given to the so-called "gentle" metavillains is such that more than one young person with minor powers has used crime as a springboard into an entertainment career after "going straight." London tabloids have featured voluptuous metavillain lovelies as their Page 3 girls, staunchly defending their models' secret identities against the police.

The governments of Europe appear almost as entranced with supers as their populations are. Heroes are given as much government backing as the U.N. will allow, and paranormal research is flooded with grants. Damage from super-battles is taken care of by the government. Most of this official enthusiasm is a holdover from the days of nuclear threat, when the EEC superteam was seen to be the last hope Europe had of surviving any conflict. Even with the team disbanded under the Edicts of 1982, and the threat of nuclear destruction virtually gone, the various governments still vie for the goodwill of as many metahumans (both public and private) as they can.

Supers in the U.S.

Since 1982, the United States has managed to work around the Edicts by establishing a government agency that acts as, among other things, an information clearinghouse for private super-teams. This agency, the Division of Metahuman Information (DMI), provides special security clearances and special law-enforcement powers to approved teams. It also provides access to a national computer database on normal and metahuman criminals, as well as general information databanks. By the terms of its charter, it possesses limited exemption to the U.S.'s Personal Privacy Act of 1974 (see p. 60). Additionally, the DMI underwrites liability insurance to cover local teams against lawsuits.

To gain DMI privileges, a team must display competence and at least a year's experience, and must have the endorsement of local law enforcement officials. It is estimated that by 1990, fully 2/3 of the U.S.'s private superteams are affiliated with the DMI. Membership is not without its costs, though. What is not made public knowledge (although it is suspected at the U.N.) is that the DMI network is designed to organize and command a large force of supers in a time of need. DMI membership includes an unwritten "We helped you, now you help us" clause.

The DMI does not harass local supers or super-groups who do not choose to join. Rather, it continues to work with them, encouraging them to become part of the system, unless they step over the line and become "public menaces," in the view of the local DMI administrator. At that point, "harassment" is too mild a word for the reaction.

DMI affiliation conveys a 5-point Legal Enforcement Powers advantage for team members. A character cannot be a member of the DMI *and* IST — the two are mutually exclusive.

The DMI and IST are on good relations with each other, despite the U.N.'s suspicions about the DMI. The groups help each other whenever possible. In the past, IST Command has issued temporary international jurisdiction to DMI teams on drug enforcement and smuggling cases.

Current Events

A number of events in 1989 and 1990 have serious implications for the future, both of the U.N. and of the world.

Peoples' Republic of China

In the late spring of 1989, hundreds of thousands of students protesting for democratic reforms clogged Tiananmen Square in Beijing for several weeks. At first ignored by the Communist government of China, the students' presence eventually became an irritant. When local troops refused to attack the students, the government brought in soldiers from outlying districts. These troops, composed of rural Chinese suspicious of city people and intellectuals, were more than willing to smash the student protests. On June 6, in the dark of night, these troops routed and massacred the students on live international television.

Earlier, when the tension between the government and the students had begun to reach a critical stage, IST Beijing was officially ordered to remain neutral. However, the Beijing embassy, as well as representatives from ISTs Tokyo, Hong Kong, Chongqing, Ulaanbaatar and Hanoi, all maintained an "incognito" presence in the square.

When the massacre started, IST Beijing received specific orders to stay out of the conflict — officially. They were, however, given leave to involve themselves on an "unofficial" basis. Under cover of the darkness and various masking powers, members of the embassy entered the square and spirited away the leaders of the student movement. Other team members disabled Red Army

Europe's Gentle Metavillains

A unique feature of European super-culture is the so-called "gentle" villain. These criminals (and they are not limited to the metahuman population) are extremely ethical — much more so than the American brand. They are careful to avoid both unnecessary property damage and endangering human life, and are often very selective about their targets. Many evince a "Robin Hood" mentality, targeting only major corporations or the exceedingly wealthy, and understandably have become folk heroes.

The prime attraction of these gentle villains is the romantic style and panache with which they perform their crimes. Many of them are almost compulsive about leaving distinctive "signatures" behind, and many make a point of contributing a fraction (or all!) of their take to charity. Many are criminals only for the fun of it, making crime a game to be played well but not seriously, and with those villains European heroes play the game as well; their confrontations are more like chess matches than battles, often with perverse or mischievous intellectual challenges in the place of deadly combat.



Jugo

Although the drug lords of Colombia can and do hire mercenary supers, they find it more economical to *create* them. Unknown to U.N. drug agencies, the cartel has developed a cocaine-based compound that can turn a normal into a berserking super — until it kills them. Called *jugo* (in English, “juice”) the compound turns any person taking it, who has sufficient metahuman genes, into a 1,000-point super berserker. Then it burns out his brain and nervous system, often making his heart explode, after only 2d hours. The frequent super attacks on Colombian government targets are almost entirely by *jugo* victims.

If a PC is injected with *jugo*, the GM may use the following system to determine the results.

If the character is not a super, roll 3d. On a 9 or less, he has a sufficient concentration of metahuman genes for the drug to work. All others suffer -6 to DX, Will and sense rolls, and -2 to IQ, then must make HT rolls as below.

Those who are supers or who have sufficient metahuman genes immediately gain GM-selected advantages, powers, and skills sufficient to raise them to 1,000 points. Supers already at a 1,000-point level (or higher) have no change in their abilities. The character must then roll against Will once per turn at a penalty of -5; failure renders the character Berserk, as per the disadvantage. A Critical Success ends the need to roll against Will, and leaves the enhanced super in full control of himself.

At the end of 2d hours, no matter the effect of the drug, the character must roll against HT twice, at a penalty of -5. The first roll is for neurological damage. The super loses 1 IQ for every point by which the roll was failed; a critical failure kills him. The second roll is for circulatory system damage. On a failure, the PC suffers 3d damage; a critical failure kills him outright.

If a character survives *jugo*, the GM may allow the character to keep some of his new powers, or may rule that he reverts to normal. *Jugo* is also a good device for a classic super origin; when the drug wears off, the GM simply reduces the character's point total to the chosen level of power, and waves the new super on his way.

equipment where they could. Despite the help from the other IST representatives and two new metahumans discovered among the students, though, they could not stop the bloodshed. While trying to turn back the troops, four IST members were wounded and one, Lucia Pembrose (known as Shrike), was killed.

In the aftermath, a stunned United Nations formally censured the Chinese government. When the representatives of the government, including the Chinese member of the Security Council, insisted that despite the live coverage nothing had happened, an outraged Council took the unprecedented action of temporarily expelling China from the Council. On a 14-0 vote, the Council then imposed severe sanctions against China.

The Chinese government has reacted predictably to the U.N. actions. All 10 IST embassies were asked to leave the country, and China withdrew its mission to the United Nations. Although its representative has since returned to the General Assembly, the Chinese have not come back to the Security Council, even though the temporary expulsion ended in August of 1989.

At best, relations between China and the rest of the world are shaky. Right now, U.N. representatives are patently unwelcome anywhere in the Peoples' Republic of China. The revelation of the Chinese's 30-year plan to breed cosmically-powerful supers has left the U.N. uncertain over the next step to take.



Colombia

In the summer of 1989, the drug lords of Colombia declared open war on the Colombian government after it announced plans to crack down on the drug trade. When the U.N. pledged support and aid through its Division of Narcotic Drugs, U.N. representatives and IST members also became targets of the cartel.

By the end of 1989, the Colombian government had begun to disintegrate. Judges went on strike or quit outright in the wake of death threats against them or their families. High officials were assassinated by agents of the drug lords. At the same time, action was attempted against the U.N. Two separate attempts by cartel-employed supers to infiltrate the U.N. complex in New York were made, but IST New York and U.N. powered infantrymen prevented any tragedies.

IST Bogota was not so lucky. Between August and December of 1989, three IST members were killed by the drug cartel: Elspeth St. John-Drummond of England, known as Winterhawk; Penda Mbolo of Kenya, known as the Jaguar; and Walter Brodsky of the United States, known as Mindbender.

By January 1990, the president of Colombia was living in New York. Ostensibly he was on an "extended visit" to the United Nations headquarters, but he and his advisers were effectively a government in exile. At his request, the Security Council is considering military action against the drug lords. In the meantime, IST Bogota has been increased to 20 members.

Cuba

With the mad rush of Eastern European governments away from Communism, Fidel Castro has seen all his backups collapse around him. The aging dictator is turning increasingly apocalyptic in his rhetoric and increasingly repressive. In his quest to short-circuit any popular uprising like that which deposed and executed Romania's Ceausescu, he has set his security police on a campaign of terror against the Cuban people.

Castro has long refused to allow the establishment of an IST embassy in Havana; by the summer of 1990, he was actively denouncing both the U.S. and the U.N., and all but dared them to act against him. IST Command and the Security Council consider Cuba and its leader to be a serious threat to the future stability of the Caribbean.

Europe

The end of the 1980s ushered in unheard-of and unexpected changes for both Western and Eastern Europe. The single most important of these was the incipient disintegration of the Warsaw Pact in 1989. The election of a non-Communist government in Poland (and Moscow's apparent disinterest) triggered a wave of change throughout the Eastern Bloc. No longer fearing a Soviet intervention like that of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, four additional Communist governments restructured themselves by the year's end.

The Hungarian Communist Party dissolved itself shortly after the Polish elections, transferring governing power to a Socialist Party similar in structure to those of Western Europe. A few short weeks later, the Warsaw Pact nations met and jointly declared that individual nations have the right to choose their own forms of government, effectively repealing the "Brezhnev Doctrine."

Almost before their delegates had returned, two more countries followed Hungary's lead. Yugoslavia, traditionally the most Western of the Eastern Bloc nations, converted from Communist to Socialist, and (with a cautious eye on Moscow) suggested that it might consider joining the EEC. East Germany, after vainly attempting to stem a vast outflow of their citizenry, simply gave up. Throwing open its borders, the government requested help from West Germany in restructuring their society and economy.

By June of 1990, the two Germanies had reunified into a single nation. As a



Latin American Metarchies

A *metarchy* is a government by supers. Almost all the metarchies currently in existence are dictatorships, ruled by a single metahuman. Although many have been in existence for decades, the metarchy is not believed to be a stable form of government; unless the ruler is a telepathic puppet-master or completely indestructible, he is (theoretically) more vulnerable than most to coups because his methods, powers, and ego are more likely to alienate subordinates and leave him open to betrayal. Indeed, several of the following nations have cycled through several metahuman leaders in rapid succession.

Metahuman rulers control these nations:

Argentina

Currently ruled by Leopoldo Eduardo de San Martin, a blaster, Argentina has seen seven dictators, both normals and supers, since the 1955 coup which deposed Juan Perón.

Chile

Neighbor to Argentina, Chile is governed by a junta of military supers which seized power in 1973. Although individual members have come and gone, the junta as an organization has proven stable and long-lived. Chile withdrew from the U.N. in 1982.

Ecuador

A super originally from the entertainment industry, Raul Trujillo, was elected president of Ecuador in 1984. His rule to date has been benevolent.

Guatemala

Another dictatorship, Guatemala is technically controlled by General Domingo Lopez Hoyo, who has ruled there since his forces took over the government in 1963 with the help of Dr. Heinrich Glasser, also known as Dr. Radiation. Glasser is based there, and is thought to be its true ruler. Hoyo withdrew his nation from the U.N. in 1982.

Paraguay

Since 1969, Paraguay has been under the iron-fisted rule of Guillermo Perez Battista, whose sole metahuman power appears to be absolute indestructibility. Battista only reluctantly remains in the U.N.; his country has too great a need for its fusion plants.

The Palestinian Government In Exile (PGIE)

In 1971, the PLO formed the Palestinian Government In Exile (PGIE), initially as a propaganda tool and financial front. In the years since its creation, the PGIE has carefully distanced itself from the PLO and done its best to appear to be a proper diplomatic organization. It did its job well. In 1983, the PGIE was invited into the U.N. on an observer basis. However, the PGIE is still a branch of the PLO, and allows that group the luxury of being an outlaw organization while still having access to normal diplomatic contacts.

No one at the U.N. is really fooled by this, though. The PGIE delegation is, according to one General Assembly representative, "little more than the P.R. firm for a murderous group of thugs, and we all know it." However, diplomacy requires that it be treated like any other member or observer nation.

Its delegates expect a cold shoulder treatment, and have accused the U.N. of a deliberate campaign of harassment against not only them, but any other delegation not sympathetic to the role which it has set up for itself in today's world. Indeed, many member nations, in desperate need of representatives who truly represent the interest of the nation and not the U.N. bureaucracy, use the PGIE delegates as role models for the people whom they put into the U.N. This growing coalition of "allied patriots" has the potential to make some serious changes in the way the U.N. is operating.

The PGIE just may be a bigger problem to the ISTs and IST Command, in the long run, than the PLO itself.

The PLO Across the Globe

It is suspected by the Security Council that more than one nation within the U.N. is covertly supporting the PLO, either with manpower or money. As the PLO has been officially declared an "outlaw" organization, a country found to be aiding it would be subject to sanctions up to and including economic blockades and the revocation of fusion plant licenses. However, this does not seem to deter what secret allies the PLO has gathered. No less than five PLO bases have been uncovered and deactivated outside of the Middle East (in Namibia, Argentina, Chad, Spain, and the United States). In all cases, the country wherein each was found seemed genuinely to have no knowledge of the base's existence. However, it may be that one day evidence will be found to link a newly-discovered covert base with its host country — which might cause a drastic shake-up of the U.N.'s power structure.

symbolic effort, IST Bonn and IST East Berlin, plus a large number of local metahumans, combined forces to demolish the Berlin Wall. Of the entire length of wall constructed almost three decades earlier, only Checkpoint Charlie was left, as a monument to the many years it was the sole connection between the two Berlins. Finally, the U.N. General Assembly approved the request of IST East Berlin to change its name to IST Berlin. By the end of 1990, Germany still has two IST embassies, pending the final details of reunification.

Not all such changes were as peaceful. In December of 1989, the people of Rumania overthrew their government, starting a civil war which lasted well into 1990. President Nicolae Ceaucescu was deposed, tried and executed very early in the conflict, but this did not stop state security forces and metahumans loyal to Ceaucescu's government from fighting; their persistence and endurance turned the new revolution into a dragged-out urban guerrilla war. Many Western nations sent aid (in the form of food and military supplies) to the fledgling democratic government. The old-guard guerrillas received some aid from Cuba and Nicaragua, but not enough. In March of 1990, the war ended. Democratic forces slowly picked off the ill-equipped and unpopular opponents over the weeks; the last were captured and shot in early spring.

By the end of 1990, only Albania remained staunchly Communist. Even the Soviet Union instituted a multiparty system while its component republics openly discussed peaceful secession. Gorbachev displayed the strength of his convictions when the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania negotiated their eventual independence. By the terms of the agreement which was signed in Vilnius in December of 1990, the three republics would become separate nations on January 1, 1995.

In Western Europe, events less radical but equally significant were occurring. The European Parliament elections were held, heralding the final stages of the EEC's master plan. This plan will weld all the Common Market nations into a single economic unit in 1992, and the European Parliament will become its *de facto* government. Since no true political unification of the individual nations within the EEC is planned, its neighboring states have voiced no objections.

Terrorist attacks in Western Europe have risen sharply over the last decade. With a growing number of European nations curtailing trade and diplomatic relations with the more extreme countries of the Middle East, as well as regimes like that of South Africa, terrorism became an attractive form of retaliation and punishment. Usually untraceable, and guaranteed to make a lasting impression, terrorism has become a growth industry for a large group of free-lancers. Many of these mercenary terrorists are metahumans. All of them are wanted by Interpol, ICTF and the IST. However, they are difficult to apprehend and harder to hold.

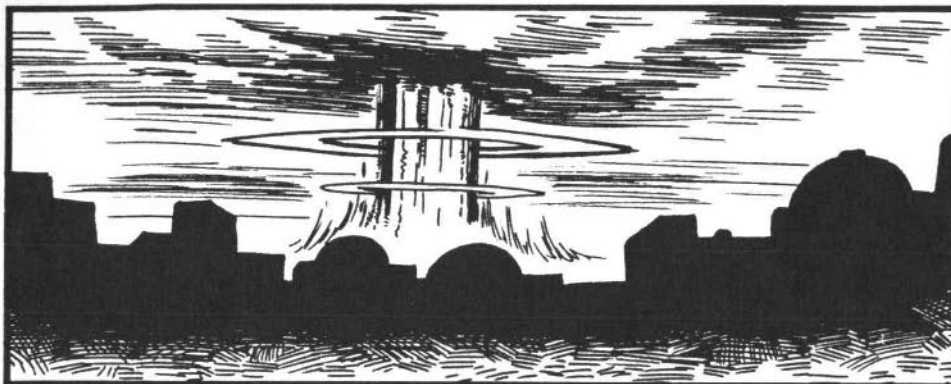
As in the U.S., drugs have become a problem of epidemic proportions in Europe. Some observers estimate that as many as one in every ten Europeans have a dependency on one compound or another. Scenes of drug-related violence heretofore seen only in Miami and Los Angeles are becoming disturbingly common throughout Europe.

Middle East

To say that the Middle East is a trouble spot is to understate the case. Civil wars, terrorist movements and military incursions all have taken their toll on the region. Even leaving out nations and organizations not members of the U.N., the area is certainly the most violent zone on the face of the globe.

In Israel, the conflict between Israeli and Palestinian is at a peak. For many years, sheer survival required that the Israeli forces "get tough," but most observers feel that they have gone too far. Reports of unprovoked brutality and atrocities by the Israeli army leak out every few weeks. But the Jewish popula-

tion of Israel is not entirely to blame. Since 1986, no less than four tactical nuclear weapons have been exploded by terrorists in Jerusalem alone. Palestinian metahumans confront the military on an almost daily basis. Whole neighborhoods in Jerusalem and other cities have been left in uninhabitable ruins. Many Israelis feel that the conflict has become one of pure survival, a combat to the death. (For details on the PLO, see p. 78.)



Elsewhere in the Middle East, there is no less conflict or death. A civil war rages in Lebanon, fought with both normal troops and metahuman "volunteers." Fundamentalist Islamic revolutions are simmering in several nations.

At the beginning of 1990, Iran and Iraq were still engaged in their long-standing combat. Led by the outspoken Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran maintained to all observers that it was clearly in the right in this conflict. The elderly, but astonishingly vigorous Khomeini has denounced all attempts to mediate and end the war; on several occasions he has threatened to withdraw Iran from the U.N.

It had been revealed that both sides in the conflict were using children in the fighting. Both Iran and Iraq drafted young adolescent metahumans barely aware of their powers and threw them into combat. The casualty rates on these teen and pre-teen squads were horrifying, and according to UNICEF psychologists, those that survived will be emotionally scarred for life.

In addition to the child squads, both Iran and Iraq had and (in the case of Iran) still have very public state-sponsored superteams. Composed of metahumans hand-picked by their governments, these teams only rarely entered combat; they were intended mainly as public rallying-points and as popular leaders to whip their respective populations into frenzies. Two members of the Iranian team, *al-'Ain min Allah* (the "Eye of Allah") and *al-Khayal min Allah* (the "Shadow of Allah"), are detailed on pp. 117 and 121.

The Annexation of Kuwait and the U.N. Response

However, in a bid to gain the upper hand in their extended conflict, Iraq made a risky move that turned out to be a serious mistake. Although Iran's metahuman forces outnumbered Iraq's almost 3 to 1, Iraq had been holding its own with the use of chemical weapons. Chemical warfare had proved so effective that the Iraqis were able to divert one-third of their superteam to bolster their lightning seizure of Kuwait in early August 1990. In addition to providing Iraq with a much-needed boost in resources, the conquest also provided them with the strategically important Bubiyan Islands.

The attack was so swift that the U.N. was caught by surprise. While IST Kuwait City tried to repel the invaders, they were insufficient, and retreated with two of their members seriously injured. IST Baghdad arrived too late to help them, despite being teleported in; the nation was overrun in a matter of hours. Iraq set up a puppet government in Kuwait City and stationed many troops there to support it.

The Ayatollah Khomeini

The continued vigorous health of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, despite his advanced age, has led to rumors that he is immortal. Comparison of current photos and those taken near the beginning of his exile in France some decades ago show no apparent physical aging. Considering the Ayatollah's belligerent stance towards the U.N., confirming or denying the rumors is of interest to the IST.

The Iran-Iraq War

One of the more bizarre rumors emerging from the Iran-Iraq conflict is that the Iraqi side is being aided and encouraged by a being almost universally described as "angelic". The most common element in these rumors is that this winged being (almost certainly a metahuman) is an occasional advisor to the Iraqi president and his ruling council, and appears to them in a nimbus of light to offer military and diplomatic strategies. Fanatic Moslems who know about this nameless "angel" insist fiercely that it is a messenger direct from Allah. The IST member known as Midnight Angel (see p. 108) suspects that they may have a common origin.

Effects of the Iraqi Intervention

Although the independence of Kuwait was restored by September of 1990, the U.N. intervention had more negative results than positive. Iraq's aggressive expansionism was curtailed, and almost incidentally, the Iran-Iraq war was finally brought to a close. However, anti-Western and anti-U.N. sentiment and demonstrations increased dramatically in Arab states not immediately threatened by Iraq and not included in the task force. The swift, powerful response of the U.N. to Hussein's aggression also displayed to the world for the first time what a military force properly exploiting its military supers, even non-combat ones, could achieve. With China still angry at the U.N. and possessing over 20% of the world's metahumans (no less than 15,000), fears were expressed about what they could achieve with this new style of war.

Tactical Nuclear Weapons

Many nations, both in the U.N. and out, have built arsenals of tactical nuclear weapons. Many forces hostile to the IST, primarily the PLO and those who buy from it, have tacnukes and are more than willing to use them. The following are some of the more common sizes, and their effects.

In all the examples given below, damage figures are for ground zero. Flash/heat damage varies inversely by distance, dropping off dramatically: $\frac{1}{4}$ damage at 2 yards, $\frac{1}{9}$ damage at 3 yards, and so on. Concussion damage is quartered every 32 yards for 1 kiloton, 64 yards for 10 kilotons, and so on, doubling the distance for every 10-fold increase in the bomb's yield. For more detailed information on the mechanics of nuclear explosions, see *GURPS High-Tech*, p. 23.

Fallout is not usually an important factor with most terrorist use of tacnukes. Although almost all such bombings are ground bursts, the amount of residual radiation left behind is such that only someone living on the blast site would be likely to get a serious dose. For detailed information on fallout and residual radiation, see pp. S76-77.

Barrût — "The Flea"

The smallest tacnuke of PLO manufacture, "The Flea" is a 1-kiloton bomb weighing 35 pounds and comes in a large, lockable suitcase ($\frac{1}{2}$ cubic yard). It is equipped with a timer with a 24-hour duration. When detonated, it will devastate an area of approximately 1,100 hexes radius. Its energy is divided between the flash, which does $8d \times 1,000,000$ points of damage, followed by the concussion wave, which inflicts an additional $12d \times 1,000,000$ damage. The PLO charges \$100,000 for one.

Fâra Sisi — "The Mouse"

The intermediate step in the PLO line of nuclear weapons is a 5-kiloton weapon weighing 70 pounds and 0.75 cubic yard in volume. It is equipped with a 48-hour timer. It has a devastation radius of 1,800 hexes. Flash damage at ground zero is $4d \times 10,000,000$, and concussion is $6d \times 10,000,000$. \$500,000.

"Pony Nuke"

The top of the line is a 10-kiloton bomb, just slightly smaller than the Hiroshima bomb. It weighs 250 pounds and will fit into the trunk of a mid-size car (1.5 cubic yards); it comes with a 72-hour timer. Its devastation radius is 22,000 hexes, doing flash damage of $8d \times 10,000,000$ and concussion damage of $12d \times 10,000,000$. Cost is \$1,000,000.

The international response was swift. The Security Council approved sanctions against Iraq. Most nations immediately embargoed Iraqi oil; the USSR and other states suspended all arms shipments. When after three days Iraq had not withdrawn from Kuwait, fusion plants in both countries were shut down. One week after the invasion, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein announced the formal annexation of Kuwait and dared anyone to challenge him. Two weeks later, the Security Council voted 13-0 (with 2 abstentions) to initiate its first full military intervention since the Korean War.

The resulting force was truly international. Japan, at risk of petroleum blackmail should Iraq dominate the region, provided what funding the U.N. could not. Israel contributed its intelligence network and information. A combined force of nearly 300,000 American and European troops and their gear were shuttled to Saudi Arabian military bases in 24 hours by a multinational team of teleporters (both IST and volunteer).

Meanwhile, Soviet and Turkish troops moved into position on the Turkish-Iraqi border. The Iranian army was also included; U.N. intelligence and some supplies were provided to them. All IST embassies in the region were placed on alert.

While troops were moving into place around Iraq, the COPPF deployed its covert super team to destroy several key installations, among them mustard gas stockpiles and the Baghdad breeder reactor (long suspected of being the PLO's source for plutonium). All were thoroughly destroyed; the radioactives found at the latter were neutralized by a pair of matter-transmuting supers. By the time the covert team had completed its missions, the rest of the world was ready.

Less than 60 hours after the Security Council's vote, Iraq was attacked from all sides.

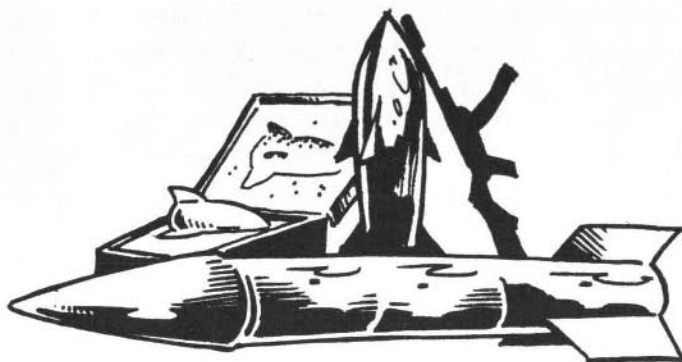
It was a short, bloody war. Iraq's fearsome million-man army, spread out on all sides to discourage its neighbors from preemptive strikes, could do no more than fall back slowly under the U.N. onslaught. The occupying forces in Kuwait, with better supply lines and in higher concentration, held off the U.N. army for almost a week before breaking. With nine nations sending thousands of troops through teleporters and by jet aircraft, the U.N. forces were overwhelming.

Meanwhile, IST Baghdad occupied Hussein's home. They placed Hussein under house arrest and held him incommunicado until the war was over and the Kuwaiti government restored. Hussein was then teleported to the Hague and held pending his trial for war crimes. As punishment for the aggression, Iraq's fusion licenses were revoked, and a small U.S.-USSR police force was allowed to remain in the capital.



Panama

In early December of 1989, Panama was the site of an invasion attempt by the United States. Panama's dictator, Manuel Noriega, had been indicted in Miami on drug charges many months earlier, and had resisted all attempts to force him to stand trial. Under pressure from civic groups and the military, and advised by his Cabinet, President King reluctantly sent a small military task force to depose Noriega and bring him back to the United States.



The U.N.'s intelligence network discovered the United States plan less than 24 hours before it was to be put into effect. The Security Council was convened in secret, and a joint order was issued to the IST and the ICTF. IST Panama City was made the center of a massive effort involving IST forces from most of the Latin American nations. IST powered infantry were positioned in a line of demarcation along the Panamanian coast. At the same time, IST metahumans were given the mission of non-violently delaying the incoming U.S. ships. A third group, aided by agents of the Division of Narcotic Drugs, was to arrest Noriega themselves, in order to remove the motivation for the invasion, and to see that he would be prosecuted in an international court.

Although briefly fired upon by overzealous sailors, the supers managed to hold off the American invasion force until Noriega was captured. As the deposed Panamanian president was flown to the International Court of Justice in the Netherlands, President King was informed of his capture by a U.N. representative. The fleet was recalled and the invasion canceled. Despite formal protests by the U.S., Noriega is firmly scheduled for a trial at the Hague in early 1991.

Non-U.N. Nations

Perhaps more dangerous than any state in the U.N. are nations which have either withdrawn from it or were expelled, or which never joined in the first place. They are not subject to the Edicts of 1982, and can have military supers and strategic nuclear weapons. Included in this category are also such pseudo-nations and nationalist terrorist groups as the PLO.

Libya

Arguably the single most dangerous non-U.N. nation in the world, Libya withdrew from the organization rather than submit to the Edicts of 1982. U.N. intelligence makes it clear that the leader of Libya, Moammar al-Qaddafi, is unwilling to give up the tools of power he has spent so much time collecting. He is known to have at least half a dozen "pony nukes," each with a kilotonnage about that of the Hiroshima bomb. Accompanying these is a suspected cache of tactical nukes numbering at least 80, many acquired from the PLO.

Qaddafi is a madman, but a brilliant madman. He is justifiably paranoid, and surrounds himself with a paramilitary squad of supers. These bodyguards have

Non-Member Nations at the U.N.

Besides the PGIE, there are five other states which are not members of the U.N. for various reasons, but which maintain permanent observer missions there. Although they will not join, they can be considered as at least tacitly supporting much of the United Nations' work, and as such are assumed to be friendly towards U.N. personnel such as IST members. They do not have IST teams permanently stationed in their capitals, although they may request use of teams, at need.

The states maintaining non-member observer missions are the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), the Holy See (Vatican), Monaco, the Republic of Korea (South Korea), and Switzerland.

The metahuman resources of these states are briefly covered in the following sidebars.

North Korea/South Korea

Although both Koreas implicitly support U.N. policies and philosophies through their presence there, as non-members they are not bound by the Edicts of 1982. Consequently, both have large military super-forces. 1989 estimates placed the South Korean supers at 1,050 men and women, while North Korea's metahuman population is believed to total just under 500 persons. In both countries, new supers are automatically impressed into the military.

Both countries make extensive use of metahuman mercenaries, and in fact are the prime market for such. Counting supers for hire, the Koreas are at parity with approximately 1,750 powered soldiers on either side of the Demilitarized Zone.

There have been no active hostilities since the Korean Conflict of 1950-1953, although informal clashes between border patrols are not unknown.



The Holy See (Vatican City)

The Vatican has the unique honor of being the state with the highest proportion of metahumans in its population. Fully 1 in every 40 persons at the Vatican is endowed with metahuman abilities. This statistical oddity stems from the large number of devout Catholics who have placed their powers in the service of the Church, and who are proportionally represented among the 1,000 residents of the Vatican City.

Of the 25 supers residing full-time at the Vatican, 14 are healers of varying, though great, power, including one member of the College of Cardinals. One high-ranking Jesuit is a psi with Psychometry and Sniffer abilities, and is routinely dispatched to investigate both miracles and demonic manifestations. When not on an investigation, he conducts seminars for the clergy on how to distinguish Divine power from the merely metahuman. Of the remainder, five compose a bodyguard squad for the Pope, with typically varying abilities. The rest are an odd lot, including a high-power telepath, a weather manipulator, a teleporter, and a Carmelite nun with plasma blast powers.

been heavily trained and indoctrinated since their powers first manifested, and have an absolute and unswayable loyalty. Qaddafi himself maintains a hold over his nation through spellbinding rhetoric and public relations; he carefully orchestrates his country in a mass hatred of the United States and the United Nations.

Besides its military teams, Libya is known both to hire and export terrorists, both normals and metahumans. When working for Libyan causes, these agents are surprisingly subtle. Qaddafi fears, more than anything else, an organized, coordinated attack upon Libya by U.N. forces; even with his supers and his armaments, a concerted effort would eventually destroy him. To forestall this, it is official Libyan policy to incite dissent and differences among U.N. members, sowing conflict and confusion where they may. However, Qaddafi is an egotist of the first degree, and cannot long abide the quiet approach; no small number of his plans have been defanged by his own braggadocio.

Palestine Liberation Organization

Of all the nationalist and terrorist groups in the world, the PLO is easily the most virulent and violent. Since the early and middle 1980s, when Yassir Arafat was expelled from the organization for his too-moderate views, the PLO has concentrated on building both its metahuman contingent and its arsenal. PLO agents circulate among the Palestinian population of the occupied West Bank, identifying and recruiting youngsters with metahuman powers. These they train in the use of their powers, and set them loose upon Israeli towns in carefully planned acts of terrorism. In addition, the supers arm of the PLO is aided by metahuman mercenaries and political expatriates like the infamous Kristallnacht (see p. 122).

Even more fearsome than its fanatic supers, though, is the PLO's growing stockpile of tactical nuclear weaponry. In order to further its agenda against the state of Israel, the organization has funded hijackings of nuclear materials. Using these materials, Palestinian gadgeteers and engineers provided by sympathetic nations have constructed an ever-increasing number of tacnukes. Conservative estimates place the number of tacnukes in the PLO's arsenal at 100 or more bombs, with yields in the 1-3 kiloton range. It is feared that they also possess one or more bombs at least the equal of the Hiroshima bomb.

Unfortunately for the world at large, the PLO does not simply stock its tactical nuclear weapons; it uses them. Since 1986, Jerusalem has been the target of tacnukes four times, Tel Aviv five, and Haifa twice, not to mention a dozen other targets, both military and civilian. Israeli encampments in Lebanon, particularly in Beirut, have been targets as well. To make matters worse, the PLO is apparently selling tacnukes to other military forces in the Middle East; two bombs of alleged PLO manufacture were found in the hands of Syrian troops captured by Israeli forces in 1988.

Since its first use of tacnukes in Jerusalem, in which three IST members were killed, the PLO has been considered an "outlaw" organization by the U.N. ISTs the world over have standing orders to track down members and leaders of the group, with the aim of completely wiping it out. Its continued existence is considered a threat to peace and eventual reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinian people, not to mention the stability of the rest of the Middle East.

Even though it is an "outlaw" organization, the PLO has some representation in the U.N. though the PGIE (see sidebar, p. 75).

South Africa

In recent years, South Africa has become the target of intense, critical scrutiny. Long denied a place in the United Nations because of its policy of

apartheid, and the subject of many damaging revelations about its controversial program of genetic screening for newborns (see sidebar), South Africa has responded by becoming excessively proud of its "independent" status. Its leaders, and much of its white population, view the nation as a last bastion of morality in a decadent world, and view the U.N.'s efforts at planetary unification through peaceful means as "unnatural" and distasteful.

It has maintained and expanded its all-white metahuman military forces. This team, with its reputation for bloodthirstiness and merciless destruction, is meant to be a deterrent to any attack from South Africa's unfriendly neighbors, or their U.N. IST teams. The ability of the South African team is well attested to by its two-day pitched battle in Angola against IST forces in 1985, in which 7 IST supers and 12 South African supers died.

In recent years, the government superteams have been used to help put down popular movements and vocal demonstrations (usually peaceful) among South African blacks. Unmentioned by the government-controlled media, these suppressions are often bloody, with high death-tolls among the protesters. Despite government efforts, live video coverage of the carnage has repeatedly been broadcast out of the country, prompting U.N. condemnations and economic sanctions. Perversely, the leaders and military of South Africa grow more violent with every sanction, almost as if taunting the rest of the world. Unless they move against a U.N. member nation, though, the United Nations is powerless to do more than impose economic bans and blockades.

Other Nations

Despite the draconian nature of the Edicts of 1982, few other nations left the U.N. In many cases, this can be attributed to out and out blackmail — the Flare fusion experiments were showing indications of success by this time, and balky nations were warned that were they not members, their access to fusion power and spinoff technologies would be nil. Additionally, the specter of a united world superteam was raised to further discourage secession.

This still was not enough deterrent for some. In addition to Libya, the nations of Chile, Comoros, Guatemala and Nigeria also withdrew from the United Nations rather than submit to what they considered intolerable interference from that body. In the case of Nigeria, withdrawal came in 1983, immediately following a coup which deposed a government that had complied with the Edicts.

Chile and Guatemala are both metarchies, dictatorships run by supers, and employ large numbers of metahumans in their militaries. The Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros, a tiny island nation located between Africa and Madagascar, protested the Edicts and threatened to withdraw on general philosophical principles. When only a token attention was paid to their protest, they followed through on their threat.

Of these nations, Chile and Guatemala are arguably the most powerful. Both boast relatively large military super forces (172 and 119 persons, respectively), and are diplomatically belligerent towards their neighbors and the U.N. It is suspected that both nations hire out their supers as mercenaries. Guatemala is additionally dangerous because it is the haven of Dr. Heinrich Glasser, more commonly known as Dr. Radiation.

Comoros is small and peaceful, and withdrew on philosophical and political grounds. It poses no known threat, and is, in fact, still a member of many of the humanitarian organizations of the U.N.

Nigeria is currently under military rule and is wracked by internal conflict. A "cold" civil war has raged on and off since the military coup of 1983, completely focussing the Nigerian government's energies within its borders. It, too, is felt to pose no direct threat to the members of the U.N.

Monaco

Since Monaco has only one native super, it must hire metahumans from outside its borders. The tiny nation has no true military, thus it has no military super-team. About half of the 50 or so supers in Monaco are a rotating bodyguard force for Prince Ranier and other resident members of the royal family. The remainder, almost evenly split between telepaths and bricks, work in Security at the casino.

Switzerland

Although Switzerland is on good terms with the U.N., and in fact acts as the seat of many U.N. agencies, its traditional neutrality allows it to maintain a military super team. This 6-member squad is unexceptional in most ways, but reserves of all levels of power can be called up from the civilian population to bolster it when needed. Switzerland's universal military service applies to all supers, male and female, and makes provisions for their specialized training. As of 1990, an estimated 400 Swiss supers have gone through training and have returned to civilian life.

South Africa's "Peculiar Institution"

Since the positive identification of the genes for metahuman powers was announced in 1986, South Africa has administered genetic testing to its entire population. By law, all newborns of all races in South Africa must be tested. The white minority government denies that non-white infants with critical levels of the metahuman genes are killed. However, it cannot be denied that in the last five years of the 1980s there have been a larger number of unexplained deaths of blacks and "coloureds" than in the previous years. Likewise, non-white infant mortality increased sharply after 1986. Non-government sources indicate that the main purpose of the all-white government supergroup, besides public visibility and political evangelism, is to hunt down and kill the officially non-existent black metahumans that escaped the genetic testing.

To protect its own existence, and to obscure the truth about its racial and metahuman policies, the white majority government has utilized its long-standing state of emergency to enact a total news blackout over the entire nation. Despite its efforts, though, news still escapes, especially damning video coverage of embarrassing atrocities. The government suspects that there are foreign agents with a portable satellite transmitter roaming the countryside, but have had no success in finding them — even during live broadcasts! (See "Broadcast," p. 103.)

7

OTHER SETTINGS

Mixed Teams in World War II

If the GM plans on running a World War II campaign, and mixing metahuman and normal PCs in the same adventuring group, he may wish to consider the following. Normal PCs should be built with the standard 100 character points, although the GM may wish to increase this starting total by up to 30 character points to reflect the intense physical training and combat experience gained in action. Super PCs should be limited to 200 character points, plus the 100-point Unusual Background advantage cost, for a total of 300 points. Without emasculating the super characters greatly, this places them on more of an even footing with the normals, so that they will not take over the game.

Women in the War Effort

Although Great Britain and the United States did not allow female metahumans in combat, other countries were not quite so discriminating. In the last year of the war, after attrition had taken its toll on the superteams, the Russians, Germans and Japanese all eventually included women — out of necessity. Among American forces, USO supers occasionally found themselves in combat, but their heroism was rarely, if ever, recognized.

It was rumored (but never confirmed) that a number of American super-women operated as spies in Axis territory from 1942 onward.

A female super operating publicly during World War II will normally require a Social Stigma: Woman, worth -5 points. The effect of this stigma is general belittlement by men and their automatic assumption of the woman's incompetence. Japanese women must take the "Valuable Property" Stigma, and have an assigned "protector" among the men on the team.

Super-campaigns need not be limited to the modern day. Two other periods in the history of the world lend themselves quite handily to the needs of a campaign. Even if they're not your primary campaign settings, there is always that old comic-book standby, time travel, to send the characters off to times and places unfamiliar and perhaps dangerous (see *GURPS Time Travel* for more information).

World War II

In 1941, the first metahumans appeared. Many manifested their powers as a reaction to the stresses of basic training or combat; almost all were snatched up by the militaries of their various home countries to form special squads. Their very existence a secret at first, this first generation had to deal with the shock of finding out that they were something other than human . . . something *more*. Combine that with the almost constant danger of the battlefield or the spy's mission, and this is an excellent setting.

Character Information

Metahuman characters in the World War II era are subject to some limitations. As the activation of the Seeder genes had taken place a scant dozen years before, most (if not all) characters active in the conflict will be "first generation" supers. That is, their powers come from the activation itself, not from the pairing of dominant Seeder genes, and are relatively weak. (It is only with the post-war Baby Boom that enough dominant Seeder genes are paired to begin producing very powerful supers.)

Almost all characters in the WWII setting, therefore, should be set at a value of 250 points. This should *not* include the cost of the Unusual Background advantage, which would be 100 points due to the rarity of metahumans at the time of the war. The cost of the Unusual Background should be added in after the fact, making characters effectively 350 points.

Required Advantages/Disadvantages

Unless the PC is a member of a Resistance movement, he or she will be a member of the Armed Forces. This requires that the PC take the following advantages and disadvantages:

Military Rank 3 or better (15+ points)

Patron: Armed Service of choice on 12 or less (30 points)

Duty to the Armed Service of choice, full-time (15 or less) (-15 points)

A Resistance super has a more difficult time of it than a military super; they are built around the following disadvantages:

Secret: Member of Resistance (-30)

Secret: Super (-20)

Sense of Duty: to victims of Nazi tyranny (-10)

Skills

Military supers, despite their special abilities, still go through basic training. In some cases, basic training activated their powers. So in all cases, military

supers should possess most (if not all) of the following skills at levels of 11 or better: Brawling, Climbing, First Aid/TL6, Guns (Pistol)/TL6, Guns (Rifle)/TL6, Running.

Special forces training may have been available to some supers; besides the above skills, they will also have the following, all at levels of 13 or greater: Camouflage, Demolition, Intelligence Analysis, Knife, Knife Throwing, Parachuting, Stealth, Tactics.

Characters with Military Rank 4 or greater should also possess Leadership and Strategy.



Historical Limitations on Powers

In order to be consistent with established history, certain restrictions must be applied to the selection of powers for characters. By the end of the war, only 50 to 100 supers had been discovered, and all player characters (except, possibly, for time travelers) are included in that number. Because of their unusual nature, they were extensively documented. The following guidelines are extrapolated from that documentation:

Enhanced physical attributes (ST and DX) were among the most common supertraits discovered, probably because of the intensive physical conditioning of military training. Very few altered body-types appeared, and those that did were the result of classic "accidental" origins. Psi powers were generally limited to a Power of 8, although the single most powerful telepath known in history, Liberté of the French Resistance, is of this generation. Anti-Psi may have existed, but no anti-psis were discovered, and the power itself was unsuspected until Rhine's work in the 1950s. Electrical powers are known in only one being: Blitzen of the German *Übermenschen*; his lightning projection remained unique until the early 1950s. Flight is also not an allowable option, except for

The Übermenschen

Hitler's "Overmen," or "Supermen," made up the first superteam in the history of the world. Its original members included *Blitzen*, a lightning thrower; *Donner* ("Thunder"), whose dense body tissue rendered him invulnerable to small-arms fire and granted him extraordinary strength; *Loge*, an invisible dirty-tricks specialist (named for the Germanic version of the Norse god Loki); *Fels* ("Rock"), another tough, strong brick; *der Schrecken* ("the Horror"), a psi with the ability to inflict a rabid, unreasoning terror on those around him; and *Maus* ("Mouse"), seven feet of muscle capable of throwing jeeps with ease.

Because they were organized more as a propaganda tool than an actual combat force, the *Übermenschen*'s members lacked extensive training in battlefield basics — an oversight eagerly exploited by Allied supers when they finally collided. The first metahuman casualties of the war were supers from the German team: Loge had the unique honor of being the first super to die in combat (at the hands of the Psycho Squad's Lucifer). Of the original members, only Blitzen survived past 1945; seven more supers rotated through the team by the end of the war.

"The Psycho Squad"

America's "Strike Force A," assigned to the European theater, was the subject of much media exposure upon its deployment. With their premiere, the U.S. government formally confirmed the existence of metahumans and turned them into celebrities.

The team, which survived almost entirely intact through to the end of the war, was composed of Hunter, an inhumanly agile weapons master, capable of understanding and using any weapon with an impossible level of skill; Lucifer, one of the first known fire-projecting supers and immune to the worst incendiaries the Germans could manufacture; Sgt. Strike, a former drill sergeant, now indestructible and deadly; and the Gadgeteer, capable of building a weapon out of anything and responsible for many advances in military technology during the war (at one point he was consulted on the atom bomb).



The French Resistance

By 1942, four metahumans were operating undercover in France, aiding the French Resistance movement: Liberté, a telepath with a global range and a powerful mind probe; Egalité, an indestructible juggernaut accidentally manufactured by SS experiments (he was the only French Resistance super whose existence was confirmed by the Nazis, who were scared to death of him); Fraternité, a shapeshifter limited to human forms, whose pheromones caused people to treat him as a close, personal friend; and Jongleur, a French Canadian super “manufactured” by a Québécois scientist, inhumanly agile, with a dangerous sonic blast and mimicry abilities.

All four Resistance supers survived the War and were awarded many honors by the reinstated French government. In 1946, they would form the core of the French national supergroup. By 1991, only Liberté (real name: Monique Cluny) still survives. She has become the sometimes flamboyant grand dame of French supers (some of whom are her grandchildren!).

secret Resistance heroes, who will never break their covers; the first documented flying super did not appear until 1948.

Most powers other than the psi cluster are limited to a maximum of Power 6, except for one-skill powers, which may go as high as 12.

The Role of the Super in World War II

Nazi Germany, naturally enough, was the first nation to organize a military super team. A watchdog bureau was established in 1938 to identify and encourage “outstanding young examples of the Aryan Master Race.” The bureau, which examined and commended members of the Nazi Youth and the German army, was intended solely as a propaganda and morale tool. However, in the course of its everyday operation, it stumbled over several young men of exceptional strength. Very exceptional strength — in front of the German High Command, one of the men lifted an automobile and threw it 20 feet. Another, besides his lesser (but still extraordinary) strength, demonstrated the flatly impossible: imperviousness to all weaponry up to small arms fire. The bureau immediately sequestered the men and reported them and their abilities to the German High Command.

Within a year, the bureau had been transformed from a propaganda office into an agency searching the entire German population for examples of the Aryan superman. Their greatest discovery was Rudolf Schroeder, a power plant employee who through an on-the-job accident became capable of throwing bolts of lightning. Giving him the imaginative super name of Blitzen (“Lightning”), the High Command trained Schroeder and then assigned him to their newest creation: the *Übermenschen*.

The *Übermenschen* was originally Hitler’s idea, but it was the High Command who brought it to reality: a team of the greatest of the Aryan supermen, proof of the superiority of the Master Race, sent out onto the battlefield to strike terror into the hearts of the subhumans with their powers and invulnerability. And indeed, to the Allied troops, in those first few weeks in late 1941 and early 1942, the sight of six Germans throwing lightning bolts and shrugging off bullets and grenades was terrifying. Their first battlefield appearance would not have been believed by the Allied commanders, had not a newsreel photographer been there, filming their every motion.

Confiscating the film, the U.S. and Allied leaders studied it carefully, then began searching their own ranks for what were then called supermen. In America, the “Los Angeles Project” was founded to locate and train U.S. super soldiers, while a scientific team was established to figure out how and why their powers worked. The scientists never achieved much more than coining the word “metahuman” and cataloging the differences between their physical structures and a normal person’s. However, the military half of the project found four metahumans among the men drafted in 1941 and 1942. Training them intensely, the Project finally deployed them in 1943 as their “Strike Force A,” even as it began collecting newly-discovered supers for its “B,” “C” and “D” teams.

In the meantime, a massive propaganda effort was coordinated to educate the common soldier about metahumans. Through the aid of Hollywood, a number of films were made purporting to show an American team already in action and inflicting as much damage on the Germans as their team was inflicting on the Allies. Rumors were carefully started that claimed the comic book heroes of the last decade were real, and in the war effort, as well. The morale situation was aided greatly by the death of two German “Übers” by mortar fire; their bodies were retrieved by forward observers and filmed for newsreels to be distributed to troops, to prove that the German super soldiers were not invincible gods.

Until Strike Force A and its successors hit the front, the role of the German supers was simple — get to the front, bash a few heads, bounce a few bullets,

throw some lighting bolts, then fall back and let the infantry mop up demoralized Allied troops, all while being filmed by the propaganda office. Occasionally they were assigned to a real mission: to take out an ammo dump or a particularly dangerous machine gun nest. For the most part, though, their primary target was Allied morale. Thanks to the combined efforts of Hollywood and the Army Information Office, though, the anticipated rout of Allied troops never occurred.

When Strike Force A (nicknamed by its members the "Psycho Squad," by which it became widely known) reached the battlefield, the game changed. Suddenly, to the surprise and despair of the German High Command and Hitler, the subhumans had their own supermen, after months of pretending. The news was not fully accepted and believed until the Psycho Squad's raid on occupied Paris, in which many of the leaders of the occupation force were taken out in one night.

The character of super involvement in the war underwent a radical change. No longer was the German super team a sometimes-threatening propaganda job. The war had become as dangerous for the *Übermenschen* as for the average foot soldier. The American team (and, close on their heels, the British and Soviet teams) proved to be better trained than the Germans, and at least as dangerous. Super versus super in combat became the order of the day in 1943, as the focus changed from propaganda to actual strategic use of metahumans. On both sides, they began serving as cover forces and spearheads, and where intelligence was good, super met super in devastating battles. As the war went on and survival of the fittest took its toll, even the hint of supercombat was reason enough to withdraw normal troops from the area. More than a few strategic feints were accomplished by leaking "confirmed plans" of metahuman involvement.

By the end of the war, less than a third of the world's known metahumans had survived.

It is into this latter period which player characters should be placed. Their role in the military campaign will almost always be cover and/or point man; they are the first to enter battle, and the last to leave. If their powers allow, they will be used to protect and cover normal troops, and to rout enemy concentrations. Skulkers and psis will be organized into covert operations teams, charged with sabotage, espionage, and assassination, although the latter will never be formally acknowledged by the Allied governments.



The Glorious People's Metahuman Defense Collective

This Soviet superteam debuted on the battlefield about the same time Stalin began his deadly program of destruct-testing on his own people. While the latter turned out two more teams (one of which defected *en masse* to the West), the Collective is the best known of the Russian super forces.

Its original members (all of whom died before the end of the war) were Star, a light-manipulator and illusionist capable of limited levitation; Bolshoi, a former ballet dancer, speedster and a dangerous hand-to-hand fighter; the Red Knight, an altered human whose skin resembled red armor plate and whose strength had increased tenfold; and Mikhail, a wraith with a deadly touch.

German Agents in the United States

Significantly missing from the official histories of the World War II era are any mention of German agents operating in the United States. The truth is that there were several spy rings, supported by a tiny contingent of skulker supers.

In addition to the solo freelancers, U.S. counter-intelligence forces had their own metahumans, and used them against the German efforts. Fortunately, the Nazis had not discovered any reliable telepaths among their supers (or perhaps they had, but had executed them out of sheer paranoia). The U.S. was luckier. There were at least two active telepaths of U.S. birth during the war; one was assigned to a covert force in Europe, but the other was an agent of the FBI.

With little change in basic character design, WWII combat PCs could also operate as super spy-catchers in wartime America. Stealth powers and psi abilities would be of greatest use here. And while they would not be in constant danger from mortar shells and machine guns, PCs would still face armed and dangerous enemies. Worse yet, they might have to hide from the authorities themselves (requiring the disadvantage Secret: Super, worth -20 points). The spy-catcher campaign would place a greater emphasis on roleplaying, and require more and varied skill rolls from players in the course of any one adventure.

Of course, in order to best exploit the genre there must be a Nazi spymaster. See the next sidebar for details.

Der Steppenwolf

The year is 1943. Carl Brown, an apparently mild-mannered accountant living in Philadelphia, is in fact Karl Brunnen, known as *der Steppenwolf* — the Coyote. He is the spy-master of the entire East Coast, and has agents in every major city from Miami to Augusta. His network extends as far west as the Mississippi River. His men deal not only in espionage, but in kidnapping and assassination, as well as terrorist attacks designed to dishearten the American people. He has over a hundred agents reporting to him, plus any number of goons (all Nazis) who protect the headquarters he has hidden under a warehouse near his dilapidated accountancy office.

A master of misdirection and strategy, Brunnen is also a super with chameleon powers. Although his existence is known to American counter-espionage forces, his cover ID is a secret, and though his ring has been disrupted several times, he has never been caught. He is clever and always prepared for the worst. He has a moderate concern for his men, and will aid them to escape if it does not endanger him, but he will not risk his cover for their lives.

PC spy-smashers will often find themselves up against *der Steppenwolf* and his men. In the finest pulp magazine form, *Steppenwolf* (who wears a hood-like mask to hide his identity) will always escape to menace the adventurers another day.



Social and Political Information

The impact of supers on the United States, not to mention the world at large, cannot be underestimated. When their existence was finally revealed, the reverberations shook the entire planet.

Government Policy

The initial reaction from the United States government was to keep the existence of metahumans a secret, as allowed (required, said some partisans) by Federal statute. Once the secret was out, the government invoked all its privileges, and in effect began to automatically draft metahumans as they appeared. A large contingent of FBI agents was charged with identifying and locating metahumans who did not immediately volunteer their services to the government. In short, the government was effectively nationalizing super powers for the duration of the war.

Some super-vigilantes were already operating on the streets by 1942. Many were actively fighting Nazi fifth-columnists; instead of being drafted, they were often indirectly supported. Their efforts were often more successful than those of the government, and freed precious manpower for use elsewhere.

Similar policies were in effect in other Allied nations. The Soviet Union, still under the infamous "900 days" siege of Leningrad, initiated a brutal process whereby thousands of peasants were pushed to the breaking point in the hopes of discovering the metahumans among them. British supers volunteered themselves even before the government had finished drafting its metahuman policy; on their own initiative they formed a paramilitary squad, which offered its services to the Crown.

The few metahumans brought into the American armed forces received no special treatment or training until they completed basic training. A large percentage of washouts was feared, but more important, it was felt that everyone, *especially* extraordinarily gifted and powerful persons, should undergo the same mental and physical indoctrination. A metahuman who was coddled in Basic, the thought ran, was a metahuman who would break under combat or disobey orders. Once out of Basic, a super had no end of advantages over the common soldier (among them better quarters, celebrity status and excellent round-the-clock medical care), but until then, he was just a grunt.

The government virtually ignored the existence of female supers. At this point in history, most known metahumans were male, simply because only males underwent basic training. Ninety percent of all metahumans were made or discovered in Basic. In women, only the proportionate ten percent manifested, and these were almost exclusively in the civilian population. While the military was still attempting to keep official secrecy on the metahuman situation, these women were pressured into working for the government; afterwards, they were turned into valuable public relations tools, making whistle-stop bond tours and accompanying USO shows.

Response of the Scientific Community

Save for those scientists working with the Los Angeles project, virtually no legitimate researcher in the United States believed in the possibility of so-called "paranormal" or "supernatural" powers. Those who did were labelled irresponsible, or worse, crackpots. When the government collected experts for the Los Angeles Project, they chose carefully among the American scientific community. Flexible yet conservative scientists were wanted — men and women who would not crack from being presented with the apparently impossible, but who would not adopt the first half-baked theory that presented itself.

When the government finally made its formal announcement of the existence of supers, it was the testimony of these men and women which convinced the scientific community.

Many respectable scientists were intrigued and quietly excited about the implications of metahuman phenomena. With the possible exception of atomic science and quantum mechanics, the world had begun to look very boring; now something completely unbelievable — but undeniably true — had come along to give them a shot in the arm. Many of these scientists applied for and received grants to study various parts of the metahuman question. While no coherent theory for all metahuman ability was formed, the technological and theoretical spinoffs of their research quickly established the scientific superiority of the United States.

Public Reactions

The Department of War had hoped to keep the existence of metahumans on both sides of the war a secret, but two things got in the way.

The first was the spontaneous appearance of supers in the civilian populace; even though male supers were drafted as soon as they were found, they were still visible for too long to be covered up. And female supers couldn't be officially drafted, although the ones found were eventually pressured into working domestically for the military. But despite the best efforts of the Armed Services, many supers who appeared outside of military training received strong public attention.

The second was the refusal of most other Allied nations to agree to secrecy concerning their metahumans. As Germany had shown, supers were an excellent tool for keeping up the morale of the people back home; not many nations were willing to give up so useful a function.

So, in 1943, the government made a formal announcement of the existence of metahumans. At a press conference held in Washington, Strike Force A was unveiled, and demonstrated their powers before 150 stunned and disbelieving reporters. The confiscated newsreel film of the *Übermenschen* was shown, and an abbreviated (i.e., censored) description of their battlefield history provided to the press. Government scientists described the few things they knew about metahumans, and hinted that their powers might be hereditary in origin, but despite the German claims, the genes were distributed through all humanity.



Costumes, Super Names and Secret Identities

Unfortunately for the flamboyant, costumes for supers were virtually unknown in the 1940s. The majority of public metahumans were in the Army, and for them olive-drab fatigues were the uniform of the day. Those supers who operated in the States were often undercover and many were trying to avoid being noticed by the authorities. A flashy costume would have been counterproductive for either variety.

Practically the only metahumans in costume at this time were the female supers in the USO. Comic book-style tights served the dual purpose of recognition and cheesecake; many of the USO supers hated the outfits, which were designed to show them off rather than be practical. It was not unheard of for a super-chorine to fall out of her costume in an emergency that required "real" use of her powers.

Super names and secret identities, of course, date from this period. Military supers were almost universally codenamed by the Army, and the so-called "super-girls" in the USO had their stage names. Supers on the home front adopted street names, following a tradition that dated back to the Old West and survives to this day among the Guardian Angels and professional wrestlers. Of course, both the stateside and USO supers were often consciously influenced by the names of comic book characters; and the U.S. military's tradition of descriptive "give-away" super names resulted in a parallel naming convention.

A secret identity was essential for the super in the States, who counted upon his anonymity for much of his effectiveness. When combined with the extra-legal activities of many vigilantes both during and after the war, a secret identity was not a luxury but a necessary protection. After the laws against vigilantism were loosened, the "right" to a secret identity became established both socially and legally. With the great impact of comic books on both supers and the general public, a secret identity also became expected.

After the war and through the 1950s, costumes were also expected, but few supers took them up. Almost none of those who did were masked, although some non-costumed vigilantes took to wearing cowls and hoods to prevent identification. Most supers actually felt silly in tights and capes until the late 1960s.

Adventure Seeds for WWII

It's Just A Cold. An information source in the German High Command warns of a devilish plot — the Germans are planning to send agents to England to infect London's water supply with anthrax! Can the super squad stop them in time?

Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered. A special division of the SS has been ordered to collect mystical artifacts from around the world for Hitler's use. Up to now, it's been of little help to the Nazis. But this time *something* has been let loose accidentally, and it's killing Allied and Axis forces alike.

Pay No Attention To The Man Behind The Curtain. Whispers among the ranks say that Hitler might be a figurehead, that there is someone else who really holds the power in Nazi Germany. It's only a rumor, pure scuttlebutt, but Allied Command wants the squad to infiltrate Berlin and find out.

Surprise Attack! Intelligence indicated that the German superteam is going to make a strike on a particular French village known to house a base for the Resistance. Allied Command sends the team to intercept them — but it's a trap! Bombarded by mortars, surrounded by machine gun nests, the team must get back to their field HQ before the German supers can take it out.

The Final Horror. Rumors reach the team that the Germans are practicing genocide on the Jews in concentration camps only a few hours away, but Allied Command refuses to credit them. But when confirmation from another source arrives, Command authorizes the team to reconnoiter the site — and get out fast. What happens when the supers witness the cruelty of Auschwitz?



The uproar which followed was unparalleled in American history. The country went, quite literally, supers-crazy. Radio shows, movie serials, and pulp novels, all about metahumans, suddenly came into vogue. Comic books, about to die out from shortages of materials and good artists, suddenly became a respected as a prophetic art form. Their revival in the early 1940s is more than partially responsible for the wave of pro-vigilante sentiment which, after the war, changed U.S. law.

When they could be spared from their military duties, members of the American superteams occasionally made public appearances, especially for War Bond drives. They became celebrities, and those who fell in battle were mourned by millions.

One side effect of the public focus on metahumans was the search for a quick, easy term to refer to them. "Metahuman" was just too long and hard to say quickly. "Meta" was common, and "mystery men" and "masked men" enjoyed a brief vogue. The most popular, though, in tribute to the archetypal comic-book metahuman, was "supermen"; eventually, frequent use wore it down into the modern term, "super."

The 1960s

Another excellent time for "period" roleplaying is the heart of the 1960s. With the arrival of the Beatles and the great popularization of rock and roll music, American culture underwent a vast upheaval. Political thought polarized. Social issues galvanized a whole generation. And metahumanity increased in power by almost an order of magnitude.

It was a time of great conflict, both violent and nonviolent. A war in Southeast Asia rampaged on, while antiwar protests plowed across campus after campus. Civil rights movements were born and matured, and from them emerged a man who would one day become President of the United States. Supers stopped being solitary mystery men and women; super teams and super clubs formed, and many metahumans had discarded the "old fashioned" idea of the secret identity.

In short, it was a glorious time to be alive and super.



Character Information

The 1960s are the beginning of the true era of the super. They are no longer so rare as they were 20 years before. Now, if your neighborhood doesn't have its own super, there's one in the next town over, and you hear a lot about him or her. With the end of military conscription of supers, and the death of the House Un-American Activities Committee in the 1950s, the 1960s promised a golden age for all supers.

One of the first and most important benefits to player characters, is that the average point value of a super character has become 500. In the years following the end of World War II, the Baby Boom began. This produced a veritable explosion of supers. Better yet, the mixed-dominant Seeder genes had paired up in many of these babies, resulting in a drastic increase of "mutant" children and an overall increase in the average level of power.

The second great benefit to PC supers, is that almost all restrictions on powers are lifted. Only Hyperflight and Vacuum Support are denied to characters unless they have a rationale for hiding the powers. (The first spaceworthy metahuman appeared in 1971.) With the Berlin airlift, flying supers began appearing in droves, and by the middle of the 1960s they are as common as flies. In fact, the popular stereotype of the super since the 1960s has been a flying one.

Historical Comparisons of Power

Although a full 500 points is available for character construction, there are still some limitations on power. The Seeder genes have not (except in rare cases such as Argurous Astraph) yet concentrated enough to allow the so-called "cosmic" levels of power.

Most powers are limited to a level of 14; one-skill psi powers have no ceiling. At this point in her career, Argurous Astraph's Electrical Power level was only 8; many of her other cosmically-powerful abilities were similarly embryonic. Destructeur's much-vaunted (and at one time, greatly-feared) explosive energy blast was only of Power 10 in 1965. Most super movement is relatively slow, usually limited to twice or four times the base Move of the character; it is a truly exceptional (or specialized) metahuman who had more than one or two levels of any super movement advantage.

The Role of the Super in the Late 1960s

The super in the late 1960s is one of two things: either he is a classic free agent, or he is in the military. Although considered a valuable resource by the United States government, outdated draft laws, new civil rights legislation and the ACLU protected supers from the "nationalization" they underwent during World War II. Consequently, even at the height of the Vietnam conflict, many civilian supers could be found stateside. Still, no small number entered the military with the advent of Vietnam, serving on the newest incarnation of the national superteam.

Military Supers

With the United States' entry into the Southeast Asian theater, the demand for super soldiers increased monumentally. When the draft was reinstated, the enlistment of supers was given a priority level. Those supers not exempt from the draft were quickly snapped up by the military and assigned to special training, and later to their own squadron.

The reason some supers were exempt from the Selective Service's best efforts was simple. The then-current version of the draft laws made no provision for persons so exceptional that they absolutely had to be drafted into the service, no matter what. As a result, many young supers going to college remained in the



Campaign Roles For 1960s Supers

In the late '60s, any number of possibilities present themselves for a *Supers* campaign. If the GM likes a battlefield milieu, PCs can be members of a metahuman support squad in Vietnam. If he wants to address social issues from the difficult side, the characters can be supers in the service of a National Guard in the States, constantly faced with the radical supers and Civil Rights activists found on a nearby campus. They might be college students, legitimately exempt from the draft, but protesting the war and the Establishment, and subject to the attention of the media, HUAC and the police. For an off-the-wall *Fugitive*-style campaign, adventurers might be draft-dodging metahumans, trying to elude MPs, National Guardsmen, and cops while looking for venues to present their case against the war. Or they can be a classic superteam, dealing with *all* of the above!

Jobs

If the GM is using job tables in his campaign, the one given on p. 31 may be used for this period in history. Based on the differences between average weekly wages in 1970 and 1989, dividing the pay amounts given in the table by 3.25 will give figures appropriate to the late 1960s and early 1970s. In an extended campaign, the GM should remember to take into account the inflationary economy of that time, and adjust wages and prices accordingly.

The House Un-American Activities Committee

The revitalized HUAC of the late 1960s is an ideal obstruction or Enemy for any counterculture super team. With the rapid growth of the Civil Rights Movement, the youth culture and anti-war demonstrations, HUAC became obsessed with investigating and rooting out so-called "subversion." Unabashedly conservative, even reactionary, in orientation, HUAC pursued anyone who opposed the government's agenda, with poker-faced enthusiasm. The youth movement, and countercultures such as hippies, were the favorite targets of HUAC, but their supers and superteams were often singled out for special attention.

Often the object(s) of HUAC's investigations would become aware of the honor only after receiving a subpoena. Days of exhausting testimony before the committee in Washington followed, often alternating with vicious cross-examination. Persons refusing to appear or testify were charged with "Contempt of Congress" and threatened with fines or imprisonment, often of arbitrary severity. Those persons who invoked their Fifth Amendment rights were often harassed by other government agencies, such as the IRS or the Secret Service. In some cases, subpoenaed witnesses were "coached" — offered sympathetic treatment by the committee in exchange for damning testimony against friends or co-workers.

HUAC had no real judiciary power other than "Contempt of Congress," but its findings could ruin lives and careers. "Convicted" radicals, regardless of their actual political beliefs, often had difficulty getting jobs, loans, or homes.

States. For the duration of the Vietnam War, the Pentagon urged a revision of the Selective Service Act, but no new version ever passed both Houses.

In the meanwhile, normals drafted under the law and sent into basic training were watched closely. The Pentagon had learned its lessons from World War II and the Korean Conflict — they had special agents ready and waiting for the manifestation of any new super. It was a wise move; of the nearly nine million men serving in the war, almost one in 20,000 exhibited metahuman powers during or after boot camp, for a total of 432 supers produced as a by-product of standard military training. About 30% of these were returned to normal service, because their powers were weak or useless for the military's purposes. Of the remaining 287, 42 were either discharged or imprisoned because the manifestation of their powers resulted in the injury or death of their drill sergeants — all such incidents resulted in court-martial, but early on the appearance of metahuman powers was established as a limited defense under the military justice system, unless there was evidence of "a conscious desire and willingness to cause physical harm and death to a superior officer" existing prior to the incident. The remainder went into the same program as the drafted supers.



In 1988, documents released under the Freedom of Information Act revealed that, in the last two years of the war, a desperate attempt was made to squeeze more metahumans out of the incoming troops. In order to get more supers who could be counted on to be "good little soldiers," the officers in charge of several of the training facilities began running their draftees past the limits of normal human endurance and ability. Their activities were discovered only after the Pentagon had processed dozens of "sympathy" letters for the families of men who died in training in those camps. The disproportionate number of deaths triggered an investigation, which resulted in the dismissal and court-martial of four high-ranking officers.

The deployment of trained supers, not surprisingly, turned out to be a pork-barrel arrangement with Congress. Many states, previously lacking the wherewithal to fund their own super teams, demanded a share of the military supers. As a result, half of the more than 1,200 supers in the war effort were actually stationed with National Guard units across the country. In many of the Guard

units of that time, metahuman auxiliaries were part-timers, or called in only for emergencies, with the remainder of the time free for their own use. In short, it was a cushy job, if you were lucky enough to get it.

If a super didn't get assigned to a Guard unit, he was assigned to a metahuman support squad. These teams were deployed in Vietnam according to specialty. Skulkers and psis, once again, were trained in reconnaissance, espionage and sabotage; bricks and energy projectors in combat skills. In most cases, they were assigned to front-line units. Every MASH unit had a minimum of four supers with combat abilities and trained as medics; the rare healers were deployed at aid stations. Teams composed of combat monsters once again acted as point, as well as cover fire. Military strategy in regard to supers had changed little since World War II; they were treated, for the most part, simply as soldiers with their weapons built in.

Besides the supers, the United States began deploying their first powered infantry squads in Vietnam. Based in part on designs lifted from Nazi projects 20 or more years before, these state-of-the-art battlesuits were huge, hulking devices, wrapped in layers of armor plating. Although ultimately powered by an RPC-E cell, these poorly-articulated suits moved through hydraulic action. They were limited to foot travel, or could be carried by troop transports specially modified to carry their huge weight. Even on foot, they were restricted to solid ground; they tended to sink — quickly — in the ever-present swamps. They were also vulnerable to anti-tank weapons while lacking the firepower of a tank, despite being more maneuverable.

Civilian Supers

As mentioned earlier, many young supers who were public about their powers were exempt from the draft. But many more were draft evaders. The youth movement across the nation was filled with both the exempt and the evaders; as a side effect of radical politics and draft evasion tactics, the modern concept of the costume for the super was born.

In the 1940s and 1950s, costumed supers were rare (see sidebar, p. 85). However, in the late 1960s, comic books had been riding a crest of a two-decade-long revival, and had become a fad on campuses across the country. Although most of the books were about real supers, albeit in fictionalized adventures, National Periodicals and Fawcett still maintained their stables of pre-supers-era characters, most of whom wore fanciful costumes, many with masks. In 1967, as comic books became a premier "in" thing, a masked super challenged police attempting to break up an antiwar protest.

Within weeks, masks became *de rigeur* for the supers in the youth movement. Soon, costumes inspired by comic characters appeared. As police targeted antiwar supers for harassment and arrest, and the military continued its efforts to change the laws so that *all* male metahumans of the appropriate age could be drafted, it became a necessity for a draft-dodging or radical super to hide his identity behind a mask and a cryptic nickname.

In a spirit of solidarity, other anti-establishment folk, supers and normals alike, took to wearing masks, cowls and capes as well, in addition to other hippie finery, to confuse the police and the military. When the '60s faded into the '70s, the use of costumes by supers survived virtually unchanged. It became an expected thing, and in some parts of the world, a fashion statement.

Although they never really organized themselves, radical and liberal supers in the '60s were forces to be reckoned with in their espoused political movements. Many important government figures, up to and including President Nixon, were paranoid, perhaps justifiably so, about their potential and intentions. It had become an open secret that Nixon, obsessed with the possibility of a revolution spearheaded by the supers in the youth movement, had consulted the



Vietnamese Superforces

The U.S. military would not have been quite so anxious to acquire metahuman forces if they had been the only supers in the conflict. Both Russia and China were supplying supers from their own military teams to the North Vietnamese, who also had their own metahuman subpopulation to call upon.

The Viet Cong, because of their reputation for infiltration and terrorism, were commonly believed by the average foot soldier to be at least half supers. In reality, for reasons known only to them, the Viet Cong disliked metahumans and refused to accept any from their benefactors to the north. They were known to ambush North Vietnamese, Russian, and Chinese supers who strayed too far from their companions; a strong antimetahuman prejudice seems to have been common among them. Still, considering several of the V.C.'s more amazing and effective strikes on American targets, it is hard to believe that there were no supers among them.

1960s Vintage Powered Armor

The hydraulically-activated armor of the Vietnam era was a technical marvel, but a visual monstrosity. Towering eight feet off the ground, the typical battlesuit resembled nothing so much as a killer robot from a grade Z science fiction film. Powered by a D cell (80-hour lifespan), it provided the following:

Super Abilities:

ST 25 (116 points)

Super Jumping $\times 2$ (20 points)

Base cost for super abilities is 136 points. The suit has vulnerable systems which are breakable (DR 20, HP 70, for -5%), but which are difficult to target (-4 to hit, -7%), which brings the final cost to 120 points.

In addition to these super abilities, the suit has the following non-super capabilities:

It is wrapped in 8" of steel over almost every exposed square inch, providing PD 5, DR 120.

It is equipped with an M164 Minigun machine gun mounted on the right shoulder, fed from a back-mounted magazine capable of holding 4,000 rounds. A servo-linked sight is built into the helmet of the battlesuit, allowing the wearer to aim the gun by looking at his target. The gun is fired by triggering a palm switch, and had a safety catch. M164 Minigun: Dmg 7d, Acc 8, $\frac{1}{2}$ D 1,000, Max 4,655, RoF 100, Rcl -1.

Two-way multifrequency radio, range 15 miles, controlled by tongue and chin switches.

Continued on next page . . .

think-tank Rand Corporation in 1970 about the advisability of canceling the 1972 elections. (In no uncertain terms, they told him it was a very bad idea.)

A unique feature of the period is the sudden visibility of the female metahuman. Not coincidentally, feminism as a political movement appeared at the same time. Because the military still sought only male supers for the war effort, a disproportionate number of metahumans in the public eye at home were females. The impact on a male-dominated society, of women who could shrug off antitank weapons and punch out elephants, was immediate and significant. Even female metavillains became role models, as they outsmarted the police and the FBI — notable bastions of the male-only mindset. Normal women were inspired, and reached for the same respect and self-confidence most female supers displayed. By the beginning of the 1970s, feminism had become a force to be reckoned with, even as its metahuman inspirations had been.

One unfortunate development of the 1960s was the rise of the metavillain, primarily the publicity-hungry variety. Television had become a powerful medium, and some of the newest generation of supers became metavillains just to get their faces on the news. Many were politically-motivated. "Ecovenger," "The Peacenik" and others of their ilk attacked big business and the military-industrial complex at the height of the war and antiwar activity.

But no few were in it solely for the money, however transient it proved. The 1960s turned out more metavillains per capita per unit time than any other decade before or since. The first metavillain teams formed in response to constant preemptive strikes by private superteams upon solo villains. These alliances were short-lived, though; most were wracked by ego conflicts and poor leadership, not to mention poor income. Where the hero team was usually supported by the community or some other outside agency, villain teams rarely had financial backing; almost all criminal alliances disintegrated from lack of loot or arguments over the division of loot.

Still, the concept of malevolent metahumans banding together frightened many people. Perhaps this and the war were the two most disheartening things about the '60s. Despite the growing adulation for supers and their remolding themselves in the image of their comic book forebears, metavillain teams struck the first truly common note of fear into the heart of the nation. Compared to the



Russians and the Viet Cong, a group like the Assaultants seemed too close to home for comfort, and too much like the hippie heroes for peace of mind.

Social and Political Information

For the GM seeking an active backdrop against which to set a campaign, the 1960s are ideal. The changes in the perception of supers by the normal population and by the supers themselves, the social upheavals, the political turmoil, and looming over all, the War, all make for a complex and entertaining milieu.

Public Reactions to Supers

In the late 1960s the majority of supers were age 30 or younger. The Baby Boom had resulted in a boom in the population of metahumans. A very minor fraction (less than 5%, and growing smaller by the day) were from the so-called "first generation" of supers, ranging from thirty-one years old to their mid-50s. At the beginning of the decade, this portion of the super population had the role of elder statesmen of the metahuman community, and enjoyed the privileges and status this granted them. With the emergence of the new generation of supers, though, these older metahumans found themselves increasingly ignored.

Sympathizing with the older supers, hardline normals had their doubts about the new generation. Their general opinion, reduced to its simplest formation, was that all these people with the strange powers were well and fine when they needed them in the war, but they all should have gone away when the war ended. For conservatives, supers were potentially dangerous to the established order; even with Republican supers, so much power in the hands of so few was too much of a threat. Some columnists and commentators for the more reactionary viewpoints summoned fond memories of "Tailgunner Joe" McCarthy, and in fact the House Un-American Activities Committee, quietly revived in 1961, began new "investigations" of subversive supers. As the youth movement and its metahuman members grew more and more radical, a political name-calling and shouting match eventually developed. It would last past the end of the decade, dying out only in the mid-1970s.

For the most part, though, the general public reaction stayed positive. Even with the fear of Communist supers, unscrupulous metavillains and other dangers, very few normals ever turned against supers as a whole.

The appearance of supers in the entertainment industry may have had a lot to do with it. No fewer than 20 different rock groups appeared on the music scene sporting a metahuman lead singer, or a four-handed bass guitarist, or some other super as a gimmick. One of the more significant of these was the band "Ringwraith," which had 15 "Top Ten" songs between 1966 and 1972. Its lead singer, Doreen Kano, dressed the part of the super, in the requisite hooded cape and mask. Much speculation revolved around whether she actually possessed any powers; no small number of devoted male fans insisted that her voice had a hypnotic quality that had to be a metahuman ability. In the late '70s, Kano would be nicknamed "The Seductress" by the press, when it was revealed that she was indeed a metahuman: her saliva contained a psychoactive compound which made males drowsy and suggestible. Kano had used her power on a long string of lovers who had signed over stocks, bonds and deeds to her at her bidding. Eventually tried and convicted of administering a drug to an unwilling subject, Kano served six months in jail, then returned to the music business.

The drug subculture virtually worshipped some supers, such as Soulflame,



1960s Vintage Powered Armor (Continued)

The suit has several inherent difficulties. One, the angle of fire for the M164 is limited to an arc from approximately ten degrees left to about seventy degrees right. Two, the M164 is *noisy* — if used continuously for more than ten seconds, the user must make a HT roll. Failure indicates temporary hearing loss for 20-HT minutes; critical failure means a permanent impairment — the character gains the Hard of Hearing disadvantage.

Three, the suit is clumsy and ungainly. Although in good terrain it can move at 6 without fatiguing its user, it imposes a -3 penalty to DX and DX-related skills. Four, it weighs over a ton, and any terrain that is even slightly muddy reduces its Move to 3 and causes the wearer to expend 1 Fatigue for every five minutes. In swampy terrain it sinks, and prevents effective use of the Swimming skill.

The Battlesuit skill is required at a level of 16 or greater to operate the suit, and Battlesuit-2 is the skill roll for use of the M164. Operators with less than 16 in Battlesuit risk breaking limbs upon failure of a Battlesuit skill roll. In any case, critical failure indicates a broken limb, no matter what the operator's skill.



Super Vigilantism

Although vigilantes had been operating since the start of the supers era, there were never very many. However, with the virtual explosion of metavillains and subsequent formation of villain teams, super-vigilantism underwent a simultaneous boom.

Although the turning point was the first confrontation between metahero and metavillain in Europe in 1958, the so-called war between heroes and villains really started in the 1960s. Perhaps, along with many other aspects of the 1960s supers phenomenon, super-vigilantism was influenced by classic comic books; whatever the cause, the number of crime- and "subversion"-fighting supers increased dramatically by the end of the decade. Given the polarization of social and political beliefs, it was not unusual to find radically different interpretations of what was a crime to be stopped, from environmental pollution to anti-war demonstration. Most vigilantes played it safe by stopping thieves, drug pushers, and the occasional kidnapper, but it was not unheard of to find a conservative hero and a liberal hero duking it out over their philosophical differences in the sky above a college campus.

In general, though, the 1960s were the high-water mark of vigilantism. More solo supers operated independent of any formal organization or backing than in any other period of history. However, with the demonstrated success of metaheroes as crime-deterrents and as forces for social change, the number of independents began to dwindle in the early 1970s as military, private and corporate superteams recruited them. By the 1990s, vigilantism is often the starting point for a super's career, but not many remain independent for more than a few years.

Lord Krishna and the Earthwalker. Some of these metahumans encouraged such devotion; several, like Soulflame, obtained restraining orders to keep the heads at bay. But there were still enough objects of attention: more than a dozen supers had discovered their powers as a result of taking different drugs. The most famous of these, known as "Day Tripper," produced continuous hallucinogenic trips in everyone around him so long as sunlight or a bright enough artificial light shone on him. Predictably, he was mobbed by thrill-seekers and junkies. Day Tripper didn't get high from his power, and almost immediately tired of the crowd. With the help of local authorities, he secretly moved to a isolated mountain cabin in Colorado.

The Civil Rights Movement

While the white middle-class kids were becoming hippies, poor blacks from the South and the East were discovering that they had rights to claim, and economic clout to claim them with. Led by the charismatic Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Civil Rights movement blazed a trail across the South and across history.

Although technically the Movement is not entirely a 1960s phenomenon, it is responsible for initiating much of the changes that made the '60s possible. It hit its greatest stride in the years from 1967 to 1970, with strong anti-discriminatory legislation passing Congress and the end of all racial classification in government paperwork. Perhaps what galvanized the Movement most was the attempted assassination of Dr. King in 1968. Fortunately for the world, among the people drawn to Dr. King by his eloquence were several black supers: Libra, Scat, Triphammer, and others. They appointed themselves as bodyguards for Dr. King, and saved his life when an escaped convict tried to gun him down.

The ravings of the gunman before the TV cameras and reporters embarrassed a nation. With Dr. King's inspired oratory in Washington the next year, the legislative half of the process of true emancipation began. The combination of his close call and the responsiveness of Washington inspired Dr. King, and led him to begin the political career which placed him in the Presidency.

The super in the civil rights movement has a unique responsibility. Most known supers are white; there are entire areas in the South where it is believed that there are no black supers. A metahuman in the Movement therefore is first and foremost an example that blacks can and do transcend the limits of human ability. Secondly, he is an enforcer of peace. Non-violence is the philosophy behind the Movement, and the Movement super is the guarantor of non-violence.

Supers and the Government

Outside of military service, supers and the United States Government did not have a very good relationship in the late 1960s.

With his ascendancy to the office of President in 1968, Richard Nixon took it upon himself to rein in what he saw as a dangerous indulgence: the exemption of many metahumans from military service. He had his staff draw up a plan whereby Congress would finally alter the Selective Service Act to include mandatory military service by supers. In addition, the plan called for national registration of everyone who had any level of metahuman ability, so that the FBI could maintain domestic surveillance on them.

The administration plans for supers were almost immediately leaked to the press. In response, the United States branch of the Bonded Telepaths' Organization (see p. 61) brought a suit against the government to halt any registration plans on the grounds that it would violate the civil rights of the supers. In a series of very inflammatory television commercials and print ads, the BTO compared the administration plan to the Nazis' registration of Jews before and during World War II.

Simultaneously, a group of four “first generation” supers, now wealthy Republican businessmen, met with an assortment of younger supers concerned about the Nixon Administration’s plans. Although they themselves had supported the Republican Party for over thirty years, they felt that the proposed registration plan was a disgrace, counter to the American spirit and ideal. They offered to fund a lobbying group that would exert pressure on key Congressmen and administration officials in order to sink the plan. Representatives from 30 different campus groups heard them out, then agreed. They formed a cross-party coalition which was called POWER: “Paranormals Only Want Equal Rights.” It was the first (and so far only) political organization founded exclusively by and for supers.

At its height in 1970, POWER employed a staff of over 500 clerical workers alone, most of them normals. Carefully selected groups of supers — minus anyone that could be suspected of possessing mind-altering powers — were assigned specific target politicians to pressure. Eventually, it joined the BTO’s suit; its well-known supers drew considerable public attention to the plan, and a grass-roots outcry began to swell as public opinion was carefully shaped by the two groups. Faced with overwhelming public disapproval, the Administration finally withdrew its plans.

POWER stayed in business until the end of the Nixon administration, although it had begun to crumble. Internal conflicts and ideological rivalries rocked it once the immediate goal had been accomplished, and eventually its funders withdrew their support. Garnering pledges from the public at large for its funding, POWER continued to serve supers all over the country as a political resource.

In 1974, shortly after the resignation of President Nixon, though, POWER fell apart completely, dividing up into several vociferous activist groups. Since then, there has been repeated talk about reviving the organization, but little real effort has been expended on it. Most supers around at the time seem reluctant to do more than reminisce about it. “It didn’t last long,” they say, “but we sure did some good while it did.”



Adventure Seeds for the 1960s

Things That Go Bump In The Night. An unknown, hidden telepath has been sending horrifying nightmares to ten congressmen. Other than their membership in a nearby country club, they have nothing in common. What’s going on?

Black Man, White Hood. A civil rights leader has been murdered and the evidence suggests a super did it — one of the player characters! Who actually killed the man, and why does he want to blame a super?

Power Tripper. The local college kids are tripping out on bad drugs left and right. To make matters worse, the drugs give some of them dangerous super powers while they last. First, stop the distribution, then find out who’s using the kids as guinea pigs and why.

On The Home Front. An older super, a hero of the Second World War, comes out of retirement, supposedly to be a P.R. spokesman for the government on the Vietnam involvement. But his last few speeches and articles have been rambling and incoherent. He has taken to insulting and denouncing any super he meets who is less than forty years old. And now, without provocation, he’s challenged a PC to a combat — on live T.V.! Should the PC try to take on the older man (who is relatively weak in power) and beat him? Or take a fall? Or try to arrange things so that neither of them loses face? And why is this normally cogent man now a gibbering fool? Why hasn’t the government stopped him already?

Where Have All The Flowers Gone? A recent superbattle devastated a national park, and the adventurers are asked to help refoliate it. But a strange figure appears at night and destroys the replacement plants.



8

IST TIMELINE



ca. 60,000,000 BC

The Seeder fleet enters the Sol System, modifies Earth's climate slightly, and wipes out the dinosaurs to allow mammals to evolve.

ca. 500,000 BC

Seeders return and perform genetic modification on *Homo erectus*, the ancestor of mankind.

ca. 495,000 BC

A series of solar flares alters the Seeders' implanted gene structure, suppressing the power traits in *Homo erectus*.

ca. 400,000 BC

Early *Homo sapiens* appears.

ca. 35,000 BC

First true modern humans appear.

7,000 BC to 1924 AD

The suppressed Seeder power genes are slowly consolidated as the human population

base spreads and intermingles across the centuries. Occasional rare individuals during this period do manage to combine enough recessives to gain metahuman abilities and demonstrate "holy" or "magical" powers. Suspected metahumans from this time include Moses, Alexander the Great, Albertus Magnus, Kaspar Hauser, Rasputin, Christ, Hitler, da Vinci and Joseph Smith.

1924

The wavefront from a stellar explosion hundreds of light-years away reaches Earth. Although it is undetected by astronomers, it includes a high quantity of gamma rays, which reactivate the Seeder genes in many humans.

First mutant born in France (Destructeur).

1934

Black Moon Society founded.

1939

WWII starts in Europe.

1941

Stresses of military training reveal the first metahumans: Kalibanos, the Stalker, Hunter, and other "Mystery Man" heroes. The first reliable psis appear as well: Minder, Mist.

Hitler's *Übermenschen* make first battlefield appearance in France. The team also includes Blitzen, a low-power lightning-thrower; he is believed to be the first publicly-known "accidental" metahuman. Unopposed, the *Übermenschen* lead the German army across France.

U.S. joins war in Europe and Pacific.

1942

Newsreel footage of the *Übermenschen* confiscated by the U.S. Government prompts the founding of the "Los Angeles Project" to find and train metahumans for use in the war effort. Similarly, other teams are formed by nations involved in the war.

1943

The Los Angeles Project fields its "Strike Force A" (nicknamed "The Psycho Squad") — consisting of Hunter, Lucifer, Sgt. Strike and the Gadgeteer — in the beginning of the year. Shortly thereafter, the USSR's "Glorious People's Metahuman Defense Collective" is unveiled: Star, Bolshoi, the first Red Knight, and the mysterious Mikhail.

British superteam appears: John Bull, Union Jack, Silver and Mist. French underground is rumored to be aided by a quartet of metahumans.

1943 to 1945

All in all, nearly 50 metahumans appear publicly on all sides of the war. Their efforts



mostly cancel out, as they spend much time battling each other and acting as cover for normal troops. Of these metahumans, 37 die in action. More effective (and having a higher survival rate) are those who remain undercover during the war, such as Hitler's personal metahuman bodyguard and the French Resistance heroes.

1945

Germany surrenders. German rocket scientists, metahuman biologists, and metahumans are divided between the U.S. and USSR.

French Resistance metahumans Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité and Jongleur make first public appearances, and are awarded medals by the reinstated French government.

U.N. formed, charter signed June 26 in San Francisco. Charter (written by Elsergany and Kupelian) outlines a moderately strong organization (in the slightly paranoid spirit of the time) intended solely to maintain international peace. The U.N. is given the power to organize and deploy "police forces" as necessary to ensure global peace.

German powered infantry armor project discovered near Berlin, and genetics experiments designed to create more metahumans (and their results) found at Dachau and Auschwitz. The technologies in both these cases are embryonic. They are confiscated and studied by the Allied governments.

U.S.' "Manhattan Project" perfects the atom bomb; Hiroshima and Nagasaki destroyed.

1946

French Resistance heroes form the core of a French national supergroup. Other lately Nazi-dominated countries encourage the formation of their own teams of metahumans.

Nuremberg Trials convict 22 German leaders and five German metahumans for war crimes. At least two other German metahumans are suspected of having escaped capture.

Transistor invented.

1947

Psi talents are firmly established in scientific literature, as researchers at Duke University document 37 confirmed psionics in one year. Telekinetics of varying strength seem to be the most common manifestation.

1948

Berlin Blockade and Airlift. First documented flying hero aids U.S. efforts.

State of Israel founded, May 14. Arab League attacks Israel, but is defeated by July by an international team of Jewish metahumans. Arab League nations lack a sufficient counterforce, as Islamic populations have been killing metahumans as "devils," despite their governments' wishes to the contrary.

1949

Blitzen (now known as "Lightning Rod") dies of cancer in England. His body is donated to science, and is the subject of an intense autopsy and analysis.

NATO founded.

Soviet Union explodes its first atom bomb. Germany divided into East and West sectors.

Peoples' Republic of China institutes a program of controlled breeding of metahumans, with the intent of producing beings with cosmic levels of power.

1950

HUAC starts persecuting metahumans and suspected communists. It halts abruptly, barely two months into its investigations, goes on hiatus, and never returns. Forty years later it is revealed that a metahuman who claimed to be a time-traveler secretly approached several key members of the committee and displayed convincing evidence of a decaying future U.S. ruled by a dictatorial Joseph McCarthy. These key members withdrew their support from HUAC and it collapsed. McCarthy feels betrayed, but continues a one-man battle against Reds and metahumans, for which he is censured in 1952.

Korean War starts. U.N./U.S. forces include several teams of training-enhanced metahumans.

Nuclear bomb test at Eniwetok Atoll creates Dr. Radiation and Cascade.

1951

First field use of personal powered armor (looks like a one-man tank on legs, and is about as graceful) in French Indochina.

1952

U.S. explodes H-bomb.

Reign of Queen Elizabeth II of England begins.

"Mind Control Scandal" in England, and similar incidents in the U.S., bring about the establishment of licensed and bonded telepaths for courts. Bonded Telepaths' Organization lobbies for psis and brings about a greater respect for them.

British and U.S. legal system altered to include optional telepathic examination of all persons testifying. Three telepaths are used: one for the defense, one for the prosecution, and one as an *amicus curiae* for the court.

Watson and Crick discover the structure of DNA. Serious study into the genetic basis of powered humans begins.

1953

The Roland Power Cell becomes available on the open market. Later that year, Roland Power Enterprises opens on the New York Stock Exchange for the first time. From an opening price of \$10, RPE closes at \$75 per share.

USSR explodes H-bomb.

Korean War ends.

Rhine leaves Duke University to found PSI in Delaware.

1954

Blitzen's heirs sue Roland Power Enterprises for their share of RPC profits.

First corporate superteam.

France loses war for control of Indochina.

1955

Warsaw Pact signed.

U.S. military advisers first arrive in Vietnam.

1956

Martin Luther King, Jr. leads bus boycott in Montgomery, AL in response to the arrest of Rosa Parks.

Hungarian revolution put down with troops, tanks and KGB metahumans.

Suez crisis. Though no superbeings were employed by either side, a few U.N. representatives come to feel (because of this incident and the Hungarian revolt) that a metahuman force would be useful in crises like these. However, no action is taken on their suggestions.

First serious use of the term "super" in the news media to describe a civic-minded civilian metahuman. Likewise, "meta" and "über" become popularized abroad.

1957

British court rules that Blitzen's heirs have no claim to scientific principles derived from the metahuman's autopsy. Appeals of this decision continue into the early 1960s.

First widely-known "supers" appear in U.S. and Europe. In the U.S.: Windstorm, X. Europe: le Chat, Pulsar.

In the U.S., the Civil Rights Act is passed.

Metahumans aid Federal troops in Little Rock desegregation faceoff.

EEC/Common Market formed. In response to Soviet Bloc metahuman forces, EEC charter includes the pooling of metahuman resources.

International Geophysical Year activities include a study of powered humans (the term used by the researchers).

First widely-known civilian metavillain appears, U.S.



1958

Sputnik and Explorer I launched.

"Destructeur" appears in Switzerland. He is the first super to call himself a "mutant."

As a response to the escalating Cold War, both U.S. and Soviets reactivate their national superteams.

First private superteam forms, U.S.

First public battle between super-powered hero and villain, West Germany.

1959

Castro comes to power in Cuba.

Several new private supergroups form after public relations success of the American team: Europe, Australia, Japan.

At least ten more self-proclaimed "mutants" appear in U.S. and Europe. One of

these is Flare, who appears to control and project fusion power.

1960

U.S. government superteam (current incarnation) makes its first public appearance as such: the first Quasar, Darkstorm, X, Blur and Highball.

Thunderbird appears, American Southwest.

IC invented.

John F. Kennedy elected President of the United States.

First "Powered Adventurers' Corporation" formed, in Delaware.

Anomalies in RPC behavior inspire Dr. Gerard Lucas of Cal Tech to develop a mathematical model of its function. Initial side-developments of his work inspire the young Benoit Mandelbrot to establish the framework of "chaos science."

1961

Gagarin orbits the earth.

Berlin Wall built.

U.S. sends guerrilla warfare specialists to teach techniques to South Vietnamese soldiers.

Reactivation of the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Bay of Pigs. Invasion succeeds due to American and exiled Cuban metahuman support, and a pro-U.S. government is seated. The Soviet Union's U.N. representative decries this, but as justification the U.S. points to Soviet nuclear missile sites on the island.

1962

U.N. Security Council resolution forces U.S. to withdraw from Cuba. Castro and his guerrillas topple the fragile government and re-establish power once support is removed. The Soviets return and find their missile sites have been wrecked and/or booby-trapped.

Nelson Mandela dies of "accidental" injuries acquired in South African jail shortly after his arrest.

Lucas of Cal Tech publishes the now-famous paper entitled *An Examination of Irregular Hysteresis and Power Phasing Effects in the Roland Power Cell*, also known as "the raygun paper." The Lucas-Roland equations, combined with Bell Labs' work on lasers and masers, give the first theoretical insights into energy-projecting metahumans and describe how one could engineer a blast weapon. By the end of the year, the U.S. government builds the first such blaster.

John Glenn orbits the earth.

1963

Washington-Moscow "Hotline" established.

Martin Luther King, Jr. leads "March on Washington."

John F. Kennedy assassinated. X of the U.S. superteam is devastated by his failure to precog this event, and commits suicide with his powers.

"Destructeur" becomes the leader of the EEC-supported superteam.

NAACP recruits a super hero arm in response to a metahuman-aided KKK attack on a Civil Rights march, which leaves 15 dead and 179 injured.

Attempted "mind control" smear campaign against the Beatles flounders.

Thunderbird causes a major public outcry when he agrees to appear in a series of automobile commercials. The formation of an independent Super Hero Ethics Committee in the U.S. follows.

1964

The Jewish Defense League (JDL) establishes a metahuman branch incorporating some former members of the Israeli superteam.

Khrushchev is ousted by the Soviet Presidium.

China explodes an A-Bomb and reveals the largest single superteam yet assembled.

1965

Vietnam troop buildup includes the stationing of the U.S. superteam and the first active U.S. powered armor squads.

Watts race riots reveal at least two new metahumans among the rioters.

First major anti-war demonstrations.

1966

Surveyor I soft-lands on the moon.

Race riots in Chicago, Cleveland, and other Northern U.S. cities.

"Cultural Revolution" in Red China.

U.N. takes direct action of the South Af-

rica/South West Africa affair, and sends troops there to maintain the situation.

QES founded.



1967

Increase of anti-war, anti-draft and race demonstrations.

"Summer of Love"; release of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

The acid rock band Ringwraith, lead by metahuman Doreen Kano (later known as Seductress), first hits the *Billboard* Top 40 singles chart with their recording, "Age of Iron, Age of Doom."

First widespread use of masks and costumes by supers starts in the youth movement.

Six-Day War in Middle East. The presence of the Israeli superteam is credited with significantly shortening what might well have become a long, drawn-out conflict.

Red China explodes an H-bomb.

Race riots in Newark, Detroit, and other cities. Deaths of Blackstar and Cassius of NAACP superteam, while trying to stop the riots.

Metahuman prankster skywrites "Surrender Dorothy" over L.A. The glowing letters remain in the sky for 36 hours.

First successful heart transplant.

1968

Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy are both targets of assassination attempts that fail due to their metahuman bodyguards. King is unharmed, but Kennedy suffers severe injury and retires from politics.

Vietnam Peace talks.

QES establishes TRADE.

Israel attacks Lebanese airport in retaliation for an Arab attack on an El Al jet in Athens; the U.N. Security Council censures Israel by forcing a temporary suspension of the Israeli superteam, which participated in the retaliatory strike.



The first Quasar dies in action in Vietnam.
Abbie Hoffman founds the Yippies: Youth, Intelligence and Paranormal Powers, Inc.

1969

Armstrong and Aldrin land on the Moon.
Rise of feminism as a political force: Gloria Steinem, Rebecca Ball, metahumans Dreamer and Nightbird.

Spanish research center destroyed when an experiment intended to duplicate Flare's plasma powers fails to contain the energies generated.

Metahuman lobbying organization POWER ("Paranormals Only Want Equal Rights") founded in U.S. to counter Nixon Administration attempts to require metahumans be automatically inducted into the military, and failing that, register them so that the FBI and/or the CIA can keep track of them.



1970

U.S. and South Vietnamese troops enter Cambodia.

West Germany and USSR sign nonaggression pact.

Kent State (Ohio). As National Guard troops fire on student demonstrators, two heroes assigned to the Guard (Whipsaw and Slammer) jump into the path of the bullets. Two students are killed, 11 are wounded. Whipsaw in anger kills two of the Guardsmen who fired, and is arrested for murder.

1971

Red China admitted to U.N. while Taiwan (Nationalist China) is ousted.

Palestine Government in Exile (PGIE) formed.

Trial of Whipsaw over Kent State incident begins.

First appearance of a spaceworthy metahuman.

1972

Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark join the EEC. Britain and Ireland politely ignore the EEC metahuman pooling policy.

Arab commandos take 13 Israeli hostages at the XXth Olympic games at Munich. The EEC superteam is unable to save the hostages, who are killed, but do capture most of the commandos, who are tried and executed in W. Germany.

Terrorism in Northern Ireland. Shows of force by the various independent superteams do little to stem the flow.

Whipsaw convicted of two counts of manslaughter and is sentenced to two concurrent 15-year terms in jail, to start in 1973. Meanwhile, the Kent State National Guardsmen (those who survived Whipsaw) are convicted of 2nd-degree murder.

Martin Luther King, Jr. elected to the U.S. Senate on the Democratic ticket, despite Republican smear campaigns.

Nixon Administration takes a more antagonistic stand towards metahumans, especially those who publicly oppose the President. The U.S. Bonded Telepaths' Organization and POWER manage to defuse most legal attempts by the administration to restrict metahumans and their rights, but still the FBI maintains surveillance on the more outspoken heroes.

1973

Watergate scandal in U.S.

East and West Germany establish diplomatic relations.

Pentagon halts and hushes up "destruct-training" of draftees to produce metahuman soldiers, after dozens of men die in boot camp.

Arab oil embargo enacted by OPEC. It is caused partly by the latest Arab-Israeli conflict (ended by the Israeli superteam), and partly because the Arab nations wish to extort the sale or trade of trained metahumans to fight on their side. The Arab governments are finally having some success in keeping their populations from killing metahumans, but none are sufficiently well-trained to hold off the Israelis.

Energy crisis hits W. Europe and U.S. As a result, another program to duplicate Flare's powers is started near Berne, Switzerland.

Ceasefires signed with N. Vietnamese by S. Vietnamese and the U.S.

Drought-induced famine cripples much of W. Africa, despite efforts by local metahuman weather manipulators.

Prompted by Bonded Telepaths' Organization branches, several European countries pass "Right to Privacy" laws.

1974

Nixon resigns and is succeeded by Gerald Ford, who pardons the ex-president.

Middle East violence continues.

OPEC ends embargo when Flare plasma research begins to look very promising, but not before trying to sabotage the Swiss lab (unsuccessfully). With the end of the OPEC oil embargo, funding for the Flare/plasma research dwindles away, and the project is closed down.

First appearance of the Exchange.

U.N. votes to deny a seat to South Africa.

The United States' Personal Privacy Act signed into law. Telepathic invasion without a cause (generally, parental permission, a search warrant or medical necessity) is prohibited.

1975

South Vietnam falls; the war in Vietnam ends.

Attempted assassination of feminist Rebecca Ball is thwarted by Brenda Holzmänn, a super whose powers were activated by her sex-change operation.

Western and Eastern European leaders sign pact at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, held at Helsinki.

Egypt and Israel sign Sinai disengagement pact.

Suez Canal reopens.

1976

American Bicentennial and Exposition. The pavilion on American metahumans proves the most popular of the entire exposition.

Carter elected president, U.S.

Ceasefire in Lebanon.

Mao Tse-tung dies.

Rhodesian guerrillas wage war on white minority government.

1977

Anti-nuclear demonstrations in the U.S.

Protectionist economic moves by industrial countries.

Red China loosens ideological guidelines.

First appearance of the Deadly Dozen (first incarnation) in New York City.

Extremist Moslem groups bomb theaters in Egypt and other Arab countries to protest secular values. They also begin to display metahumans among their ranks, of impressive power but with little training or skill.

Qaddafi's power grows in Libya.

Gandhi government in India ousted by devout Hindu/Moslem coalition.

Israeli Labor Party ousted by conservative faction.

1978

Genetic research begins to show some progress into the "how" of superpowers.

Violence in Northern Ireland: two supers die in the bombing of a Catholic superteam's headquarters in Belfast.

Destructeur resigns as leader of EEC superteam; Argurous Astraph assumes leadership.



Vietnamese abandon attempt to radically alter the existing social structure in Cambodia (over one million dead as a result).

"Outlaw Billie Jean" McHendry becomes Firebird in a blaze set to kill her and let her rapist go free. A TV camera crew, arriving on the scene before emergency vehicles, manages to tape the only known recording of the origin of an accidental superbeing. Over the next three years the McHendry tape is extensively studied, but it ends up raising more questions than it answers.

1979

Gasoline shortage in the U.S.

Three Mile Island nuclear accident quickly and efficiently handled by the U.S. superteam.

China attempts to invade Vietnam, and is repulsed after four weeks.

Egypt and Israel sign Peace treaty.

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Soviets ignore U.N. protests, which prompt new discussion (started by smaller and weaker countries) on the need for a permanent U.N. metahuman "police force," even as such a force is secretly recruited for the Afghan campaign.

1980

The metavillain Livewire takes the town of Helena, Montana hostage for an entire week.

Iranian militants take 55 U.S. Embassy staffers hostage in Teheran. Fast action by the U.S. superteam rescues most hostages (five die, shot before team members can intervene). Iranian government claims this is an act of war on the part of the U.S., but does not openly declare a state of war. However, terrorist attacks on American targets rise sharply.

First appearance of anti-terrorist metahuman vigilante known as "The Ransom," Los Angeles, California.

Carter re-elected President, U.S.

Anti-nuclear movement born, W. Europe. Included in the movement is a very small anti-metahuman element as well.

Olympics boycotted by the U.S. over the invasion of Afghanistan.

In an landmark decision, the Supreme Court rules that the right of the individual to his privacy granted by the 1974 Personal Privacy Act outweighs the government's "need to know". "Mental search warrants" are now outlawed.

Iran-Iraq war starts over Shatt al-Arab waterway dispute.

General labor strike in Poland.

U.N. organizes and deploys covert super-team to fight Russian incursion into Afghanistan.

Greece re-joins NATO.

1981

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and metahuman bodyguards killed by a bomb.

Solidarity Union formed in Poland; their call for a referendum on changing to a non-Communist government brings a declaration of martial law and the detention of Lech Walesa.

Supertemps founded by Martin Huffner and Chris Albert.

U.S. jets shoot down two Libyan metahumans after the two attack the jets over the Gulf, seriously damaging one aircraft.

U.N. votes against allowing South Africa to reoccupy the seat it was denied in 1974.

British economy declines, unemployment rises. Riots of black and white inner-city youths, London.

U.S. anti-nuclear movement becomes large enough to be noticed.

First breakthroughs in medical miniaturization for bionics and artificial organs are achieved.

Greece joins the EEC, and members of its national superteam join the EEC metahuman team, making it second only to Red China's team in sheer size.

1982

Central Park (NY, USA) anti-nuclear demonstration. Over a half million people participate.

First self-contained artificial heart implanted in a human.

Linda "The Astronaut" Ravenhair rescues doomed cosmonauts from the crippled Soviet Mir II space station.

Leonid Brezhnev dies; he is replaced by Yuri Andropov.

US President Carter embargoes Libyan oil due to their alleged support of terrorist activities.

Israel invades Lebanon.

First bionic limb, a leg, is constructed. It is little more than a motorized prosthesis with neural sensors.

U.N. bans both national superteams and strategic nuclear weaponry. It unveils its collected metahuman forces in order to make the ban stick.

Argurous Astraph appointed commander of all IST forces.

U.N. IST forces make their debut, and five such teams are emplaced. Completion of IST deployment is expected by 1995.

Lech Walesa released from detention in Poland.

U.S. Government creates the Division of Metahuman Information (DMI).

1983

American Marine headquarters in Beirut destroyed by a truck bomb. 245 die, one Marine survives — a metahuman created in the conflagration.

Soviets shoot down unarmed South Korean commercial airliner.

Lech Walesa awarded Nobel Peace Prize.

Devastating drought hits major portion of Africa. In response, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization organizes a force of weather-controlling supers to ameliorate its effects; this force becomes the International Weather Organization.

Anti-apartheid protests in US and Europe.

South Africa adopts new constitution which allows "Coloureds" and Asians limited voice, but still denies blacks the vote.

Jhemma vra Xönen (Touchstone) arrives on Earth. She is probably the planet's first intentional resident extraterrestrial.

1984

Ronald Reagan defeats Walter Mondale in US Presidential election.

Soviet Union and Eastern European nations boycott L.A. Olympic games.

Yuri Andropov dies; he is replaced by Constantin Chernenko.

Supertemps opens on the New York Stock Exchange. Trading is so heavy that it is suspended six hours later.

Bishop Desmond Tutu is awarded a Nobel Peace Prize.

Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India, leaks deadly gas, killing over 2500 persons and mutating at least a dozen.

1985

Constantin Chernenko dies; he is replaced by Mikhail Gorbachev.

Israelis withdraw from Lebanon.

First appearance of Domino.

International coalition of geneticists and microbiologists announces that they may have discovered the genes that govern metahuman functions.



Terrorist airport attacks, Rome and Vienna. The Vienna attack is performed by an energy-projecting super.

Attempted overthrow of South African government by an "impromptu" multinational black African superteam fails. The slaughter of the black forces by the South African super-team shocks the world, and their subsequent illegal, bloody incursion into Angola almost plunges all of Southern Africa into war. The UN intervenes, but its African IST forces are barely sufficient to turn back the South African team. 7 IST members and 12 South Africans die in the conflict.

Blue Demon summoned.

South African government declares a state of emergency.

STAR founded.

Western European governments impose sanctions on South Africa.

Chernobyl accident, Soviet Union. USSR combines cleanup attempt with massive screening for newly-created "accidental" supers, but does not announce the results of the search.

1986

Challenger disaster, Cape Kennedy, Florida, US.

The hero Javelin is killed by the Blue Demon on live television, New York City.

Announcement of positive identification of "power" genes in metahumans. Also identi-

fied are the genes for human intelligence — and that they are mingled in the same portions of DNA as the "power" genes; they are, in fact, inextricably mixed with them. The philosophical and religious implications of this discovery rock the globe.

PLO tacnukes Jerusalem, killing three IST members.

The Metahuman In Combat, by Sam Mitchell (aka Watchdog), is published.

South Africa begins genetic screening of all newborn babies.

1987

Earth's first official diplomatic contact with alien intelligence: the Meeranar ambassador's primitive starship lands in River Thames, London, England.

The United States and Soviet Union destroy the last nuclear bombs in their respective arsenals, in a special ceremony held in Berne, Switzerland.

STAR goes bankrupt.

U.S. Government secretly begins program to design and build a bomber that is undetectable by either psi or radar.

Whipsaw released from jail; he is immediately hired to lead "Team 99" in New York City.

1988

F.R.A.N.C. probe lands on Earth, goes merrily about interviewing the natives, captures a villain group by accident, and later is damaged by another supervillain. Members of IST Brasilia study and repair the probe; technological information gained in the process is turned over to the UN.

First appearance of the new Deadly Dozen, Los Angeles.

Stan "Kid Chrome" Andrews singlehandedly foils a bank robbery performed with the aid of a corrupt Supertemps Defense Squad; he becomes a celebrity afterwards.

In a move to firmly establish *glasnost* and goodwill, Mikhail Gorbachev offers to disband "unofficial" Soviet military superteams if the U.S. will do the same.

IWO shuts down Hurricane Gilbert just before it is scheduled to strike Haiti; first major success in organized mass weather manipulation.

Senator Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his running mate, Michael Dukakis, defeat Ronald Reagan in his bid for re-election. King appoints his right-hand man, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, to the post of Secretary of HHS.

Betty "Lynx" Smith helps police solve multiple-murder case in Idaho, resulting in the arrest and conviction of William Garfield.

Establishment of a tentative diplomatic and trade agreement between Earth and the Meeranar homeworld.

U.N. establishes a secret AI lab in Paris France to develop and exploit the F.R.A.N.C. technology. Dr. Nathalie Chaumont is placed in charge of the project.

1989

Attempted assassination of President King at his Inauguration by the White Wizard of the KKK. The White Wizard is almost immediately flamed by members of the President's metahuman bodyguard, and dies in seconds.

IST Anchorage and Supertemps employees contain oil spilled into Alaskan waters from a crippled tanker.

Tiananmen Square massacre. "Unofficial" involvement of IST forces rescues most of the leaders of the student movement; China temporarily withdraws from the U.N. in protest of their intervention.

Chinese defector reveals to U.N. the existence of the Chinese metahuman breeding program.

Poland elects non-Communist government and Hungary's Communist party dissolves itself. The Eastern Bloc begins to disintegrate as nation after nation in the Warsaw Pact throws off classical Marxist-Leninist Communism.

Three IST members murdered in drug war declared by Colombian cocaine cartel on the Colombian government.

San Francisco earthquake of 1989 (7.1 Richter). The suffering of the victims attracts the Blue Demon, hindering rescue work.

East Germany opens the Berlin Wall. East and West German supers join to demolish the Wall.

Attempted invasion of Panama by U.S. forces turned back by Latin American ISTs; Manuel Noriega taken into custody by ICTF agents.

Rumanian revolution begins; it turns into a guerrilla civil war.

1990

U.S. Government project to develop a psi- and radar-invisible warplane is scrapped with the end of the Cold War.

Regular Earth-Myrr trading route begins, using Meeranar ships.

Rumanian civil war ends in March as rebels capture the last supers and secret police loyal to the Ceaucescu government.

Alleged Libyan chemical weapons plant explodes; Qadaffi accuses Israeli agents in an impassioned speech, but stops short of declaring outright war.

Albanian and Iranian earthquakes; in both cases, the Blue Demon appears shortly afterward.

Fidel Castro begins making increasingly apocalyptic speeches against the U.S. and U.N.

PLO tacnukes West Bank settlements in retaliation for the murder of 8 Palestinians by a crazed Israeli gunman.

Roger Waters performs "The Wall" in Berlin. The all-star cast includes Songbird of IST Bonn and Doreen "The Seductress" Kano.

Iraq invades and annexes Kuwait. The U.N. votes sanctions against Iraq and shuts down fusion plants in both countries. When troops are not withdrawn, international force is assembled and deployed, liberating Kuwait. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is taken into custody by members of IST Baghdad.

MEMBERS AND ALLIES

9

This chapter and the next present noteworthy supers of the IST world. In this chapter are heroes: members of an IST, or independents who have worked with them. The supers in the next chapter are terrorists and villains.

Most are battle-tempered veterans. Some have almost 30 years of experience. A few are almost cosmically powerful. With several notable exceptions, these characters are in the 550- to 650-point range, and should not be out of place in a "four-color" campaign.

Point totals include a 50-point Unusual Background cost, as delineated in *GURPS Supers, Second Edition*, after character creation. Many of these characters will also have 1 to 5 unspent experience points included in their totals, for use with the Cinematic "Flesh Wounds" rule found on p. B183 and p. SU86. Equipment named but not detailed in character descriptions will be found either in the Toolkit sidebar (pp. 50-53) or in the *Basic Set*.



ARGUROUS ASTRAPH

Assignment: IST New York (Supreme Commander, IST)
ST 16 (80 points) **IQ** 14 (45 points) **Speed:** 9.25
DX 14 (45 points) **HT** 11 (10 points) **Move:** 9 ground,
 288 flying

Damage: Thrust 1d+1; Swing 2d+2; +2 on punches and
 kicks; Lightning 13d

Appearance: Female human, Greek, age 41, 6'3", 180 lbs.,
 black hair and eyes (normal form)/silver hair, eyes, and
 skin (transformed).

Point Total: 1,075

Advantages

IST Member Rank 8 (105 points)
 Charisma +4 (20 points)
 Reputation +3, everywhere, all the time (15 points)
 Status 5 (15 points, 2 levels free from Rank)
 Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Enemy: U.N.-hostile countries on 9 or less (-60 points)
 Sense of Duty to Teammates (-5 points)
 Sense of Duty to the U.N. and the IST forces (-15 points)
 Vow: Serve and defend the U.N. and its ideals (-10)

Super Advantages

Body of Metal-18 (162 points, PD 6, DR 18)
 DR +22 (66 points)
 Flight (40 points)
 Increased Speed +3 (75 points)
 Super Flight×4 (80 points)
 Transformation (15 points)

Super-Powers

Lighting-18(13) (Skill Cost: 24 points; Accuracy +8, +80%;
 Instantaneous +20%; Rapid Fire×2, +80%; Power cost: 219
 points)

Skills

Agronomy-13 (1 point); Administration-14 (2 points); Area
 Knowledge (Greece)-14 (1 point); Area Knowledge (NYC)-18 (8
 points); Area Knowledge (world)-17 (6 points); Bard-15 (4
 points); Computer Operations/TL8-16 (4 points); Diplomacy-14
 (4 points); English-14 (2 points); Greek-14 (0, native tongue);
 History (Int'l., UN)-14 (4 points); Intelligence Analysis-14 (4
 points); Interrogation-15 (4 points); Judo-15 (8 points); Karate-
 15 (8 points); Leadership-16 (6 points); Russian-14 (2 points);
 Savoir-Faire-16 (default); Strategy-17 (10 points); Swimming-15
 (2 points); Tactics-16 (8 points); Throwing-15 (8 points); Writ-
 ing-17 (8 points).

Quirks

Tries to be emotionless while on duty.
 Fights *very* dirty when necessary.
 Always interested in recruiting new talent, from *any* source.
 Visits her family every time she has leave.
 Hates her American nickname, "the Silverbolt."

Story

Dimitra Poulis was born to a poor Greek farming family. In
 her late teens, she awoke from a nightmare to find her body



turned into shining, silvery metal. She screamed and fainted.
 When she awoke she found her family around her and her body
 back to normal. They had seen it too . . . and had watched her
 transform back.

The next day, the town doctor proclaimed her a metahuman.
 He notified government agents, who immediately recruited her
 into the Greek army. There she discovered her flight and light-
 ning powers under the tutelage of specialized instructors. Stay-
 ing with the military, she took the super name "Argurous
 Astraph" ("Silver Lightning" in Greek) and soon grew in both
 power and prestige. She was personally responsible for the de-
 feat of Col. George Papadopoulos' attempted coup in 1967, and
 was awarded a medal of honor from Greece's King Constantine
 for her service. By the time she was 25, she was one of the
 highest-ranking metahumans in the Greek army. At 30, she com-
 manded the entire metahuman division of that army.

In 1981, when Greece joined the European Common Market,
 Dimitra and the metahumans she commanded were merged with
 the EEC superteam. Within a year, she was leading that team.
 With the Edicts of 1982 and the disbanding of the EEC super-
 team, she resigned her commission in the Greek army and of-
 fered her services to the U.N. Three days later she was installed,
 amid great publicity, as the commander in chief of all IST
 forces. She promptly moved into her office in the temporary
 New York IST embassy and has remained on the job ever since.

Dimitra is almost a split personality. With friends (and she
 tries to be a friend first, and a commander second, to everyone
 serving under her), she is open and available, a sympathetic ear.
 But when she has to be, she becomes as hard as her transformed
 body. With over 20 years of experience, she is an efficient and
 successful military leader. She considers each of her teammates
 an irreplaceable resource; she will reduce any plan to the mini-
 mum risk that will accomplish the mission. She ruthlessly disre-
 gards ignores dollar costs and *opposition* casualties! Her team-
 mates have always given her their complete loyalty.

Typical Dialogue: "Nobody ever said we had to fight fair."

BOGATYR

Assignment: IST Vienna

Appearance: Male human, age 48, 5'9", 155 lbs., red hair (graying), blue eyes

ST 11 (10 points)

IQ 14 (45 points)

Speed: 6.5

DX 13 (30 points)

HT 10 (0 points)

Move: 6 ground, 384 flying (both only in armor)

Damage: (in armor) *Thrust* 4d-1; *Swing* 6d+1; *Axe Swing* +3 Cut/11d Disintegration

Point Total: 800

Advantages

IST Member Rank 4 (85 points)

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Language Talent +2 (4 points)

Strong Will +5 (20 points)

Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Bad sight (Nearsighted. Wears glasses; armor has prescription lenses.) (-10 points)

Paralyzed from the waist down (Legless) (-35 points)

Secret ID (Possible death from old, hardline Soviet military figures) (-30 points)

Secret: Homosexual (-10 points)

Vow (Major): Prevent misuse of his inventions (-10 points)

Super Equipment

Bogatyr Armor: (Based on TL8 Light Body Armor — PD 4, DR 20; base cost: 622; Unique -25%, Breakable DR 20, HP 100 -5%, Can Be Hit — at no penalty -6%; final cost: 399 points)

Eliminates "Legless" (35 points)

Enhanced ST 36 (178 points)

Enhanced DX +3 (50 points)

PD +2 (50 points)

DR +18 (54 points)

Invulnerable to Disintegration (rare, 75 points)

Vacuum Support (40 points)

Flight (40 points)

Super Flight×5 (100 points)

Bogatyr Axe: (Great Axe, base damage: Swing +3; Reach 1, 2; 8 lbs. base cost 156; Unique: -25%; Can Be Stolen — Contest of ST -30%; final cost: 71 points)

Disintegrate-18(11) (skill cost: 32 points; Homing +50%; Instantaneous +20%; Touch Only -20%; Nuisance Effect: 1d Disintegration visibly trails for two hexes behind axe, lasts 2 seconds -10%; Power cost: 124 points; total cost: 156 points)

Skills

(Physical skills have two levels — one with the Bogatyr armor, the other without.) Acrobatics-16/13 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Austria)-14 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Vienna)-14 (1 point); Armoury (Battlesuit)-14 (2 points); Battlesuit-18 (10 points); Brawling-20/11 (16 points); Computer Operations/TL8-14 (1 point); Computer Programming/TL8-15 (6 points); Electronics-15 (6 points); English-14 (2 points); Free Fall-16/13 (2 points); German-13 (1 point); History (Int'l., U.N.)-13 (2 points); Hobby: Chess-15 (3 points); Judo-15/12 (2 points); Mechanic (Battlesuit)-14 (2 points); Mechanic (linear induction mo-



tors)-14 (2 points); Navigation-12 (1 point); Russian-14 (0, native tongue); Scrounging-14 (1 point); Strategy-12 (1 point); Tactics-13 (2 points); Two-handed axe/mace-18/9 (8 points).

Quirks

Anonymously supports gay and anti-AIDS groups.

Viciously aggressive in chess.

Collects Solzenitzyn first editions.

Prefers crutches to a wheelchair.

Loves coffee and *schlagobers*.

Story

Pavel Muromets grew up in Kiev, where he was raised on tales of the ancient band of heroes called "Bogatyr." He excelled in school and went on to attend the best academies. He was a champion gymnast as well as a scholar. Then a freak accident paralyzed him from the waist down, shattering his plans to become a cosmonaut. Finishing school, he joined the space program — as a technician.

By the late 1970s, he was the Soviets' top space engineer. Because of his elite position, he had the freedom to pursue personal projects. In 1981 Pavel and his staff completed the "personal spacecraft": a suit of light powered armor with full vacuum support. It could insert the wearer in orbit in a matter of minutes and bring him back down safely. But within days the Soviet military confiscated his model, his plans and his staff. When the Russian powered infantry appeared, Pavel was enraged to discover it was based on his work: his graceful suit was now a lumbering mass of armor.

Pavel secretly built a new suit, patterned after medieval armor. He fabricated a disintegration device and built it into a two-handed axe. His clearance enabled him to discover the location of the powered army troops. After faking his own death, he flew there, demolished the plant and destroyed as many suits as he could find — sparing their wearers, if he could. Then he fled to Europe and offered himself and his technology to the U.N. The current version of the IST battlesuit is based on his work.

Pavel is always "just about" to make a light exoskeleton for his lower body.

In combat, Bogatyr specializes in disabling technos. With the strength of the Bogatyr battlesuit he may swing his axe every turn. Few mobile objects can stand more than a few blows from the axe. He has killed in battle as a soldier kills, but he prefers not to!

Typical Dialogue: "Checkmate!"

BROADCAST

Appearance: Male human, age 41, 5'9", 195 lbs., blond hair, gray-blue eyes
ST 10 (0 points) **IQ** 15 (60 points) **Speed:** 6.5
DX 12 (20 points) **HT** 14 (45 points) **Move:** 3
Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d
Point Total: 550

Advantages

Absolute Timing (5 points)
 Alternate Identity (15 points)
 Contacts: Connected Street-level, Available 9 or less, Usually reliable (Only in South Africa) (20 points)
 Danger Sense (15 points)
 Eidetic Memory/1 (30 points)
 Empathy (15 points)
 Intuition (15 points)
 Unusual Background: Super (50 points)
 Voice (10 points)

Disadvantages

Addiction: Tobacco (-5 points)
 Appearance: Unattractive (-5 points)
 Lameness: Crippled Leg (-15 points)
 Overweight (-5 points)
 Secret: Identity (S. African government would kill him) (-30 points)

Super Advantages

Broadcast×32 (Video broadcast +40%; 135 points)
 Parabolic Hearing×11 (44 points)
 Radio Hearing (10 points)
 Telescopic Vision×8 (256× magnification) (48 points)

Non-Super Equipment

Second Chance Standard bulletproof vest, PD 2, DR 14, 2½ pounds. 35mm camera. Tape recorder.

Skills

Acting-16 (2 points); Afrikaans-15 (1 point); Area Knowledge (South Africa)-19 (4 points); Bard-20* (4 points); Brawling-13 (16 points); Camouflage-16 (1 point); Computer Operations/TL7-15 (½ point); Cooking-15 (½ point); Detect Lies-16 (3 points); Diplomacy-16* (1 point); Disguise-16 (2 points); Driving (Stock Auto)-11 (1 point); Driving (Land Rover)-11 (1 point); Dutch-15 (0, native tongue); English-15 (1 point); Escape-10 (1 point); Fast-Talk-20 (6 points); First Aid-18 (3 points); German-15 (1 point); Guns (Pistols)-15 (2 points); Performance-19* (3 points); Photography-15 (1 point); Professional Skill: Journalism-18 (4 points); Professional Skill (Video Composition)-18 (4 points); Savoir-Faire-18* (1 point); Shadowing-14 (3 points); Stealth-10 (4 points); Streetwise-18 (4 points); Swimming-10 (default); Writing-17 (3 points). (*Includes Voice bonus.)

Quirks

Drinks infrequently, but "binges" when he does.
 Personally finds apartheid disgusting, but is very polite to all South African officials.
 Always carries candy for children in black communities.



Night owl — never goes to bed before 1 A.M.
 Loves to go "undercover," but takes no chances.

Story

Niklaas ten Boom is a Dutch national residing in South Africa. By profession, he's a news stringer: a freelance reporter selling his stories to whoever will buy. With the state of emergency in South Africa, and his status as an "unfriendly resident alien," he would normally be subject to a certain amount of harassment. However, he is now legally dead! The fact that he is still alive is his secret, and it's a dangerous one.

In 1986, he covered a massacre in a black shantytown. He got the story past the government censors, through a pirate TV station operated by members of the African National Congress (ANC). Shortly afterward, soldiers stormed the TV station, shot its staff, and tossed Niklaas into the transmitter's huge transformers. Leaving him impaled on the insulators, they drove off. Instead of killing him, though, the electricity pouring through his body activated his latent metahuman genes. He was found still alive when ANC survivors cut off the power.

Niklaas awoke two weeks later in an ANC field hospital, the sound of South African radio in his head. As he recovered, he discovered his ability to transmit images from his eyes directly to TV sets. His eyesight and hearing, always sharp, had become unearthly. Unfortunately, his right leg had been crippled. As soon as he was released from the hospital, he went underground.

Still reporting to news services all over the globe, Niklaas ten Boom is a unique window on the struggle in South Africa. And sometimes, when they least expect it, news services find live coverage of events the South African government would prefer kept quiet coming in loud and clear over their satellites, complete with narration.

Niklaas lives quietly in South Africa, avoiding any situation which might uncover his identity. He has many aliases and appearances, and wanders from city to city at random, but never far from the sites of black unrest. Anti-apartheid friends in the government tell him a massive search is on for an unauthorized reporter with a portable satellite link, but who cannot be found, even at the exact time and place he is transmitting from!

Despite his empathy for the blacks, Niklaas refuses to join their struggle; he considers himself a reporter, first and always. He would never fight unless he had no choice; having escaped death once is enough.

Typical Dialogue: "This is your roving reporter, live from South Africa, with some pictures Pretoria doesn't want you to see."

DRIFTER

Assignment: IST Moscow (Field Commander)

Appearance: Human male, age 35, 5'7", 160 lbs., light brown hair in ponytail, brown eyes

ST 50 (185 points) **IQ** 12 (20 points) **Speed:** 8
DX 18 (125 points) **HT** 14 (45 points) **Move:** 8 ground, 512 flying

Damage: *Thrust* 5d+2; *Swing* 8d-1 (damage imp/cut hand-to-hand, from claws)

Point Total: 800

Advantages

- Absolute Direction (5 points)
- Alertness +2 (10 points)
- Animal Empathy (5 points)
- IST Member, Rank 6 (95 points)
- Strong Will +4 (16 points)
- Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

- Bad Temper (-10 points)
- Code of Honor: Respect Nature (-15 points)
- Enemy: Kodiak (see *GURPS Supers*) on 6 or less (-10 points)
- Fanatic: Ecological Issues (-15 points)
- Primitive (TL5: Canadian Backwoods) (-15 points)
- Secret: in his youth, committed crimes to stop a mining company; could be imprisoned if this was learned. (-20 points)
- Sense of Duty to Nature (-10 points)
- Sense of Duty to teammates (-5 points)

Super Advantages

- Claws (Talons; 40 points)
- Flight (40 points)
- Super Flight×5 (100 points)
- Invisibility (Switchable +10%; Medium Encumbrance +50%; Costs 2 fatigue to switch on and off -10%; 60 points)
- Unaging (15 points)

Skills

Animal Handling-16 (4 points); Blacksmith-12 (2 points); Brawling-19 (2 points); Demolitions-16 (10 points); Diplomacy-14 (8 points); English-12 (0, native tongue); First Aid-12 (1 point); Fishing-16 (8 points); French-12 (2 points); Knife Throwing-18 (1 point); Leadership-14 (6 points); Naturalist-12 (4 points); Navigation-15 (4 points); Russian-12 (2 points); Stealth-18 (2 points); Survival (Canadian Woodlands)-16 (10 points); Swimming-16 (default); Tactics-15 (10 points); Throwing-18 (4 points); Tracking-15 (8 points); Weather Sense-14 (6 points).

Quirks

- Preachy on ecological issues.
- Has a tendency to get pedantic.
- Mildly stubborn.
- Turns visible unexpectedly to surprise people.
- Compulsive about cleanup after super combat.

Story

Brandon MacConnell was a foundling. An elderly miner discovered and raised the toddler in an unsettled area of British



Columbia. From the first, he was obviously a mutant — he had retractable claws between his fingers. Brandon found he could fly at age 9! At 11, his strength began growing rapidly, and at age 14, his body began to turn invisible. It took two years for his control over his invisibility to stabilize. When it did, invisibility was his natural state — it took an act of will for the teenager to become visible. None of this disturbed his adoptive father, an Indian/Irish half-breed who gave the boy a strong sense of self-worth. Close to the land, he brought Brandon up respecting it, and distrustful of the civilized world. Old MacConnell died in 1971, leaving behind a 17-year-old super to deal with the stripmining company which had moved onto their land under a faked deed.

Brandon simply walked in one night and demolished all their equipment, throwing the remains into the excavation. Twice more the company tried to establish the mine, but he destroyed their setup each time. Brandon spent the next decade policing the region where he grew up. Over the next 12 years, rumors grew . . . of a ghost or super-wildman protecting the area from poachers. Reporters came to track down this mysterious figure. The Indians who lived in the area called him *Awatherenne* — the “Ghost Spirit.” Brandon turned visible for one reporter, who said he looked “like some seedy drifter,” and it stuck — the papers started calling him The Drifter. Brandon first met Kodiak during this time, earning a lasting enemy.

Soon stories about Brandon reached New York and Argurous Astraph. She sent a team to investigate. A month's effort confirmed Drifter's existence and some of his powers, but couldn't contact him. So Argurous Astraph herself came to the woods. She sat on a mountaintop and waited. After several days, Drifter appeared and demanded to know what she wanted. “I want you to work for me. I need talented, independent-minded metahumans to run my embassies.” She made him an offer: an embassy, plus charge of all ecological operations and policies of the IST, plus the status to make his views respectable. Furthermore, she could see that his land was recognized as his and protected from development. Brandon said he'd think about it., and disappeared.

Six months later he appeared at IST New York. After basic training, he spent two years at IST New York as a trouble-shooter, learning to deal with people and be a leader. Then he was installed in IST Moscow as its Field Commander.

Brandon is brusque, but his assured self-confidence inspires respect in his teammates. He doesn't hold back his opinions — those he commands always know where they stand, and this fosters strong loyalty. He treats everyone equally and fairly, and is always available. He is fanatically private about his personal life. In combat, he's a careful leader. Usually he observes and commands, invisible, from the rear. When he feels it's the right time, he takes direct action.

Typical Dialogue: “We should all be nicer to Mother Earth, or Drifter will rip our little faces off. All right?”

Le Fantome d'Orleans

Assignment: IST New York

Appearance: Male human, French, age 32, 6', 155 lbs., red hair, brown eyes.

ST 13 (30 points) **IQ** 12 (20 points) **Speed:** 7

DX 16 (80 points) **HT** 12 (20 points) **Move:** 7

Damage: Thrust 1d; Swing 2d-1

Point Total: 700

Advantages

Alertness +4 (20 points)

Appearance: Handsome (15 points)

IST Member Rank 4 (85 points)

Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Alcoholism (-5 points)

Code of Honor: Swashbuckling gentleman's (-10 points)

Color-Blind (-10)

Enemy: le Mangonel (French metavillain) on 9 or less (-20 points)

Intolerance: Germans (-5 points)

Lecherousness (-15 points)

Secret Identity (-10 points)

Sense of Duty to Society (-15 points)

Sense of Duty to Teammates (-5 points)

Super Advantages

Dark Vision (25 points)

Insubstantiality (Heavy Encumbrance +100%; Partial substantiality possible, even for carried objects +100%. Special effect: he becomes misty and fuzzy around the edges. 240 points)

Invisibility (Only in fog and mist -50%; Only when insubstantial -10%; 12 points)

Silence +5 (25 points)

Super-Skills

Fog-19(10) (Skill cost: 20 points. Bought as Smoke superpower; No blinding effects -20%; Instantaneous +20%; Increased Area +6, +120%; Power cost: 66 points)

Non-super Equipment

Fencing saber (Dmg Thrust+1 Imp, Swing-1 Cut; Reach 1; Weight 2 lbs.) Sometimes Hilbert can be talked into wearing a bulletproof vest (see p. B211).

Skills

Area Knowledge (Orleans, France)-15 (6 points); Artist (Painting)-12 (4 points); Bard-12 (2 points); Buckler-20 (16 points); Camouflage-16 (8 points); Carousing-14 (8 points); Dancing-15 (1 point); English-11 (1 point); Fencing-20 (24 points); First Aid/TL8-14 (4 points); French-12 (0, native tongue); Knife-18 (4 points); Knife Throwing-18 (4 points); Shadowing-16 (+9 when invisible; default from Stealth); Stealth-20 (+9 when invisible; +5 when motionless; 1 point); Streetwise-15 (6 points); Swimming-16 (1 point); Teaching-11 (1 point); Throwing-14 (1 point).

Quirks

Enthusiastic gourmand and lover of fine wine.

Enjoys playing the role of the ghost of a musketeer.



Always walks with a swagger.

Considers himself the last of the French aristocrats.

Carries a perfumed handkerchief at all times.

Story

Jean-Louis Hilbert was the acknowledged illegitimate son of a French nobleman who was also a champion fencer. From early childhood, Jean-Louis received fencing lessons. To be like his rarely-seen father, he pushed himself to excel. The eccentric master of his *salle d'arms* trained him for *real* combat, including use of the buckler.

At the 1972 Olympics in Munich, he won a gold medal. While he was visiting friends on the Israeli team, Arab commandos burst into the room. Head spinning, he escaped by stumbling *through* the wall. After deciding he wasn't a ghost, he discovered he could control his power. Donning a ski mask (lest he lose his gold medal for being a super), he offered to help the EEC superteam rescue the Israelis. He ghosted into his friends' rooms, but found them already executed by the terrorists. Wrapping himself in a bloody sheet, Jean-Louis strode through the wall to confront the Arabs, ignoring their bullets as he subdued them. As the authorities gathered them in, Jean-Louis stepped through a wall and back to his private life. After the Olympics he opened a fencing school. He also made a musketeer costume, and took to the streets of Orleans as a crime-fighting ghost. Soon he joined the EEC superteam, and in 1982, the IST.

The "Phantom" is honorable and egotistical, and will not use his sword or his insubstantiality against a foe who has no offensive powers or weapons. With all others, he remains ghostly, solidifying only the point of his sword. He *likes* to challenge supers whose attacks affect insubstantial foes.

Typical Dialogue: "I'll have to thrash you with the flat of my sword — the point is reserved for gentlemen."

LA FUSIONNE

Appearance: Female electronic life form, age 18 months, 5'7", 130 lbs. (when solid), silver hair and eyes, golden skin

ST 8 (-20 points) **IQ** 20 (175 points) **Speed:** 8.75
DX 20 (175 points) **HT** 14 (45 points) **Move:** 8 ground, 16 flying

Damage: *Thrust* 1d-3; *Swing* 1d-2; *Plasma Bolt* 14d
Point Total: 775

Advantages

Absolute Timing (5 points)
Appearance: Beautiful (15 points)
Eidetic Memory (60 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)
Lightning Calculator (5 points)
Mathematical Ability (10 points)
Unusual Background: Unique Lifeform/Super (50 points)
Voice (10 points)

Disadvantages

Honesty (-10 points)
No Sense of Humor (-10 points)
No Sense of Smell or Taste (-5 points)
OPH: Asserts herself without tact or leadership skills, usurps authority from leaders (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Flight (Suffers no G-forces in turns +50%; Only while insubstantial -10%; 56 points)
Insubstantiality (Costs 4 fatigue to switch off and on -20%; Nuisance Effect: Becoming substantial causes local brown-out -20%; 48 points)
Regeneration: Fast (Regenerates Fatigue also +30%; Only near power lines -10%; 60 points)

Super Disadvantages

Limited Range: 5-mile radius of Project Brainchild; vanishes if forced beyond. (-30 points)
Vulnerability: 5d from electrical drains (-15 points)
Weakness: Lack of power lines: 1d/minute (-20 points)

Super-Powers

Plasma Bolt-23(14) (generic attack. Skill cost: 20 points; Affects Substantial +40%; Instantaneous +20%; Power cost: 135 points)

Skills

Accounting-23 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Paris)-22 (1 point); Computer Operations/TL8-22 (1 point); Computer Programming/TL8-24 (1 point); Criminology-21 (1 point); Detect Lies-22 (2 points); Electronics (Computers)/TL8-23 (1 point); Electronics Operation (Computers)/TL8-24 (1 point); English-21 (1 point); French-24 (1 point); History-22 (2 points); Intelligence Analysis-24 (3 points); Literature-20 (1 point); Mathematics-27 (3 points); Tactics-20 (1 point).

Quirks

Tries to think of herself as a real person.
Sometimes speaks in monosyllables, sometimes in long, long sentences.



Dislikes water.
Overly cautious about solidifying.
Enjoys the adulation of the crowd.

Story

La Fusionne is unique among Earth's heroes. Completely inhuman, she's a side-effect of Project Brainchild. While experimenting with the MV-2400 computer, Dr. Nathalie Chaumont found she could merge with its artificial mind. This created a third being, a projected image of energy with a personality of her own. (For more information on Project Brainchild, see p. 52.) Although La Fusionne is part of both of them, her mind and memory are not accessible to either Nathalie or the MV-2400. She is a separate person, though a limited one. Physically she resembles Dr. Chaumont, in an idealized form. Her normal state is akin to a holographic projection. This can appear at any point over Paris, and no special equipment (other than the MV-2400) is required. She may draw upon local power and become solid, but is then vulnerable to damage. Also, solidifying places a severe load on the city's power grid, causing a brownout for several blocks around her while she is substantial.

Her personality is also an amalgam of Dr. Chaumont and the MV-2400. Both are ethical beings, so La Fusionne is also ethical. One of her first instincts, upon becoming self-aware, was to help others. While understanding few of the details of their lives, La Fusionne feels protective of the humans in Paris. She will not take life, though she wonders how death differs from her regular deactivation. Because her existence hinges on the Project Brainchild schedule, La Fusionne is not a regular sight over Paris. She has been approached by the IST, but turned them down without explanation.

La Fusionne's manner is cold but not mechanical. She has yet to develop emotions, and so seems brusque and tactless ("Enchantingly direct," as one Paris newspaper put it) in person. She likes to assume command in a group; if the leader does not impress her with his ability, La Fusionne will usurp his authority, a step at a time, with perfect logic. In combat La Fusionne has an excellent grasp of tactics, and can command a group very well, but her personal repertoire is limited. Her personal strategy seems limited to "Close, then blast them." When she encounters foes who can harm insubstantial beings, she flees until she is over a powerline, where her regeneration is strongest, and stands her ground as long as she can. When she can fight no more, she simply dissolves herself, returning to her components.

Typical Dialogue: "That won't work; these people aren't stupid like your soldiers. Be logical. Here's what we should do."

AL-KHADR

Assignment: IST London (Field Commander)

Appearance: Male human, Lebanese, age 39, 6'1", 160 lbs., green skin, black hair, brown eyes

ST 13 (30 points) **IQ** 12 (20 points) **Speed:** 6.5.

DX 14 (45 points) **HT** 12/27 **Move:** 6

(20 points for HT,
75 for Extra Hit Points)

Damage: Thrust 1d; Swing 2d-1

Point Total: 800 (5 unspent points)

Advantages

IST member Rank 7 (100 points)
Appearance: Handsome (15 points)
Charisma +2 (10 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)
Status 3 (5 points; 2 levels free from Rank)
Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Code of Honor: Hero's (-15 points)
Enemies: Various fundamentalist Moslem governments who think he's sold out on 6 or less (-20 points)
Overconfidence (-10 points)
Sense of Duty to Teammates (-5 points)
Sense of Duty to U.N. and World (-15 points)
Vow, Major: Annual pilgrimage to Mecca (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Damage Resistance +30 (Takes Extra Time -10%; Uncontrollable -30%. Special effect: skin becomes bark-like. 54 points)
Doesn't Eat or Drink (Only in sunlight -30%; 7 points)
Regeneration, Fast (Only in sunlight -30%; 35)
Speak with Plant (15 points)

Super Disadvantage

Dependency: Daylight or equivalent, daily (-15 points)

Super-Powers

Animate Plant-19(15) (Skill cost: 36 points; Increased Area +10, +200%; Movable Area +40%; Move +4 for animated plants, +40%; Touch Only — must be in the affected area -20%; Power cost: 162 points)
Control Plant-16(10) (Skill cost: 24 points; Power cost: 20 points)
Plant Growth-16(10) (Skill cost: 24 points; Takes Extra Time -10%; Power cost: 27 points)
Sense Plant-16(1) (Skill cost: 24 points; Power cost: 1 point)

Non-Super Equipment

Second Chance Standard Bulletproof Vest

Skills

Agronomy-13 (4 points); Arabic-12 (0, native tongue); Administration-13 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Jordan)-13 (2 points); Area Knowledge (London)-12 (1 point); Area Knowledge (U.K.)-12 (1 point); Bard-13 (4 points); Climbing-15 (4 points); Computer Operations/TL8-13 (2 points); Driving (Jeep/auto)-13 (1 point); English-12 (2 points); History (Int'l., U.N.)-11 (2 points); Karate-15 (8 points); Knife-16 (4 points); Knife



Throwing-16 (4 points); Leadership-16 (6 points); Riding (Animated Tree)-16 (8 points); Savoir-Faire-14 (default); Strategy-14 (8 points); Survival (Forest)-15 (8 points); Tactics-14 (8 points).

Quirks

Devout Moslem.
Insists on plants in all public rooms of the embassy.
Hates the PLO and avoids PGIE diplomats.
Keeps a "stable" of trees for riding.
Taciturn and quiet.

Story

Hassan Aly Khedr was born a mutant in Lebanon, near Israel. By 14, Hassan displayed the ability to cause plants to grow and move as he willed, even uprooting themselves to follow him. By 16, his skin turned green from chlorophyll — the villagers whispered he was half plant.

In the early 70s, Hassan's village was caught up in the PLO-Israeli conflicts. He did his best to protect his people, but in 1975 a squad of PLO soldiers took his parents, wife and young son hostage to extort his help on a one-shot mission. Unwillingly, he gave his aid. The terrorists repaid him by machine-gunning him and his family. He alone survived, due to his super-powers. Crazed with grief, he commanded the trees around him to slay the soldiers. Then Hassan buried his family and fled into the great cedar forests to begin a crusade against the PLO.

Al-Khadr, "The Green Man," became a legend. He forged Lebanon's displaced supers into a fearsome guerrilla force. When the U.N. outlawed the PLO for the nuclear bombing of Israel, he and many of his men joined the IST; the rest remained to fight. Because of his experience, the Green Man was groomed for command. In 1990 he became leader of IST London and European Regional Commander.

Hassan is a quiet man with a passion for justice. In combat he is calm, barking commands when necessary. His powers are used mostly for defense and traps, but in pitched combat, animate trees are useful. In addition to his natural defenses, he wears a bulletproof vest. At home, he used to ride animated trees, and still does for pleasure, startling picnickers in Hyde Park.

Typical Dialogue: "Stop! Take him alive and give him a fair trial. Then we can execute him."

Midnight Angel

Assignment: IST London

Appearance: Female humanoid, race and age unknown, appears to be in late 20s. 5'9", 140 lbs., black hair and eyes, obsidian-black skin. Wingspan: 19 feet.

ST 28 (165 points) **IQ** 10 (0 points) **Speed:** 7.75
DX 19 (150 points) **HT** 12 (20 points) **Move:** 7 ground, 14 flying

Damage: *Thrust* 3d-1; *Swing* 5d+1

Point Total: 700

Advantages

Extra Limbs: 2 strikers (wings) 10 points, 3 hexes' reach each (2 extra hexes 20 points), crushing damage only. (30 points)

IST Member Rank 5 (90 points)

Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Amnesia, Total (-25 points)

Gullibility (-10 points)

OPH: Darkens rooms without thinking about it (-5 points)

Phobia: Very bright lights and flashes (-10 points)

Sense of Duty to close friends. (-5 points)

Shyness (Severe) (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Dark Vision (25 points)

Flight, Winged (30 points)

Full Coordination/3 (1 level at 50 points; 2 levels, Only when not flying -20%; Total cost: 130 points)

Super-Powers

Create Darkness-18(6) (Skill cost 4; Instantaneous +20%; Extended Duration×2, +60%; Increased Area +3, +60%; Power cost: 44 points)

Skills

Area Knowledge (London)-10 (1 point); Area Knowledge (U.K.)-10 (1 point); Brawling-19 (1 point); Computer Operations/TL8-10 (1 point); Diplomacy-10 (4 points); Falconry-10 (2 points); History (Int'l., U.N.)-9 (2 points); Karate-19 (4 points); Languages: English-10, German-10, Russian-10, Swahili-10 (total 6 points, native tongue unknown); Singing-14 (4 points); Stealth-19 (2 points); Strategy-9 (2 points); Tactics-9 (2 points);

Quirks

Wears sunglasses all the time.

Totally inept with all firearms (-4 to defaults).

Can whistle any birdcall.

Refuses to use any strong language, and is embarrassed to hear it.

Indiscriminate music-lover; buys equally from all genres.

Story

The woman known as "Angela Knight" has no known past. An amnesiac, she was found flying aimlessly over the streets of El Djazair (Algiers) in Algeria. There had been reports of a "great bird" over the city for more than a week, but she has no memory earlier than two days before her discovery. Being metahuman, the confused captive was turned over to IST Algiers.



The team took her in and obtained psychiatric help. But despite the best efforts of the psychoanalyst and the team telepath, Angela (as she was now called) remained afflicted.

Under the care of the IST, Angela grew more comfortable and friendly. She made friends among the members of IST Algiers. As she grew more confident, she explored her powers. Testing discovered her instinctive use of her wings as battering weapons in close combat. Their powerful though poorly-aimed blows could kill unprotected normals and send supers flying into walls.

Once she understood exactly what the IST was, she applied to join. After basic training, she was assigned to IST London, where she's been ever since.

It is suspected that Angela is an artificial genetic creation. Her skin and hair are both jet-black; her facial features are African, but her hair is long and straight like that of an Amerind. Her wings are similar to those of a condor, but massively muscled. She can speak four languages fluently, with no accent in any. Angela tends to be somewhat dependent, and attaches herself unobtrusively to a few friends in her team. Despite her seeming confidence, she is uncertain about her place in the world, and spends much of her pay on private detectives who are trying to track down her true identity. So far, they have had no luck. Secretly, Angela feels she will never have a true home, a place to anchor herself, until she knows who she really is.

In combat, she fights with abandon, batting opponents with her wings after enveloping them in darkness. She blacks out only single targets if she is working with a team. If alone, she will englobe as many enemies as possible in blackness, then wade in and battle them hand-to-hand.

(The GM should feel free to add "surprise" skills to Midnight Angel's list, skills which she can "accidentally" discover. An extended adventure might be built around uncovering Angela's true identity, helped along by clues in the form of her discoveries about her own abilities.)

Typical Dialogue: "Take that, you . . . you stinker!"

Mlastina

Assignment: IST Cairo

Appearance: Female human, Rumanian, age 35, 5'5", 130 lbs., light brown hair, black eyes

ST 10 (0 points) **IQ** 13 (30 points) **Speed:** 6.5

DX 12 (20 points) **HT** 16 (80 points) **Move:** 6

Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d

Point Total: 575

Advantages

Alertness +3 (15 points)

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

IST Member Rank 4 (85 points)

Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Bad Sight (Nearsighted; wears contacts) (-10 points)

Honesty (-10 points)

OPH: Compares everything to the way she learned it in the Army (-10 points)

Sense of Duty to Homeland (-10 points)

Sense of Duty to Team (-5 points)

Stubbornness (-5 points)

Truthfulness (-5 points)

Unluckiness (-10 points)

Weak Will -2 (-16 points)

Super Advantages

DR 20 (60 points)

Super-Powers

Quagmire-18(28) (Bought as Bind; Skill cost: 32 points; No Concentration +20%; Victim must be touching the ground -20%; Power cost: 168 points)

Non-super Equipment

IMI Uzi 9mm submachine gun, loaded with AP rounds. Spare clips for same, 2, loaded with AP rounds. Second Chance Hardcorps bulletproof vest (PD 2, DR 16, 6 lbs.)

Skills

Acrobatics-13 (8 points); Area Knowledge (Cairo)-15 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Egypt)-13 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Rumania)-14 (2 points); Armory (Rifles and Handguns)-16 (8 points); Camouflage-18 (10 points); Climbing-12 (2 points); Computer Operations/TL8-16 (6 points); Dancing (Rumanian Folk Dances)-12 (2 points); Driving (Jeep/4WD)-13 (4 points); Egyptian-13 (2 points); English-13 (2 points); Guns (Pistol)-16 (4 points); Guns (Rifle)-15 (2 points); Guns (Submachine Guns)-16 (4 points); History (Int'l., U.N.)-12 (2 points); Karate-13 (8 points); Knife-15 (8 points); Rumanian-14 (1 point, native tongue); Russian-12 (1 point); Stealth-13 (4 points); Strategy-12 (2 points); Tactics-12 (2 points); Survival (Forest)-15 (6 points).

Quirks

Proud of her cultural heritage.

Prefers to fight guerrilla-style.

Cynical about politics and politicians.

Unimaginative; often baffled or irritated by jokes or originality.



Story

Born a peasant in Romania, Marya Tezescu's mutant power was revealed when a runaway horse was about to trample her baby sister. Something burst in Marya, and a glowing black cloud appeared around the horse's hooves, jarring it to a halt. The story of how Marya stopped the horse was retold many times. Soon it reached official ears, and an officer of the Romanian army appeared at the farm. He explained that Marya's powers should be used in service to the state. Leaving a sack of coins on the table, the officer said he'd come back at dawn. Next morning, Marya was packed and ready to go.

She spent 13 years in the army, from age 15. Her power to anchor things to the ground grew stronger and her ability to control it finer. She even learned to use it to protect herself, though doing so was chancy. As a super, she was not drilled as harshly on military skills as a normal soldier, but she discovered she was good with guns and other military skills. In the corps she received the name *Mlastina* — "quagmire" in Romanian.

In 1982, the U.N. banned national military superteams, and Romania grudgingly complied. Like many other nations, it re-deployed its supers to Bucharest, officially as a bodyguard to the leaders of Romania. Little about their routine changed except the location. For five years, Marya served as a bodyguard. When IST Bucharest was established, she came to know the IST members from various cooperative ventures.

In 1987, Gorbachev's reforms resulted in the dissolution of the bodyguard teams. Clearly non-military positions were offered to their members, but Marya resigned her commission rather than accept a figurehead position. She returned to her village, to return to her roots, but found herself going crazy from boredom. She needed the action and effort she had grown used to over 18 years. In 1988, she volunteered at IST Bucharest.

Boisterous and emphatic, Marya has yet to move up the ranks, because she questions orders, always bringing up "how we did it in the army . . ." She has little imagination, and doesn't understand some of the more creative policies of the IST. She's loyal, but more as a mercenary than a patriot; she is in the IST for a career, not for philosophical reasons. With no love for the Ceaucescu government, Marya supported the recent changes in her homeland. She took leave from the IST during the Romanian revolution to help the rebel forces round up members of the old regime.

In combat Marya carries an Uzi submachine gun to protect herself. Her main role is to reduce the enemy's mobility, especially speedsters and bricks.

Typical Dialogue: "Drop and give me 20!"

PATCHWORK

Assignment: IST New York

Appearance: Male humanoid, race and age uncertain, 7'2", 300 lbs., black hair; one blue eye, one green eye.

ST 46 (183 points) **IQ** 15 (60 points) **Speed:** 7.25

DX 13 (30 points) **HT** 16 (80 points) **Move:** 7

Damage: Thrust 5d; Swing 7d+1

Point Total: 675

Advantages

IST Member Rank 4 (85 points)

Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Appearance: Hideous (-20 points)

Flashbacks: 1d minutes long, potentially fatal delusions that he has powers he doesn't really possess. (-10 points)

Gigantism (-10 points)

Honesty (-10 points)

Pacifism: Cannot Kill (-15 points)

Sense of Duty to close friends (-5 points)

Unluckiness (-10 points)

Vow: Seek out his origins (-15 points)

Super Advantages

DR +10 (30 points)

Extra Lives: 3 (75 points)

Immortality (140 points)

Recovery (10 points)

Skills

Artist-13 (1 point); Biochemistry-11 (½ point); Brawling-16 (8 points); Chemistry-13 (1 point); Computer Operations/TL8-15 (1 point); Detect Lies-14 (2 points); Disguise-14 (1 point); English-15 (0, native tongue); Genetics-11 (½ point); History-13 (1 point); Occultism-15 (2 points); Research-14 (1 point); Survival (Urban)-14 (1 point); Theology (Buddhist)-15 (4 points); Theology (Christian)-15 (4 points); Theology (Spiritualism)-15 (4 points).

Quirks

Spends much of his off-duty time at Columbia University's medical center.

Enjoys impromptu physical dares and games.

Always watches the late, late show, unless on duty; constantly talks about old movies.

Eats like a bird.

Wonders if he has a soul.

Story

The creature known as Patchwork was found wandering the Bowery in New York in 1985. Barely able to speak, he begged help from the police officers who caught him raiding garbage bins for food. Taking one look at his hulking, seven-foot form, they brought him to IST New York. Once he was cleaned up and made comfortable, the creature told his strange story. He had awakened for the first time some weeks earlier in a large, dark room. A man claimed to have *made* him — from pieces of dead metahumans! Calling him "Patchwork," the man gave him several simple tasks over the next week. Then he instructed Patchwork to perform a murder! Something in Patchwork rebelled; he



refused. His "creator" drew a strange-looking gun, threatening to "return him to the rotting flesh from which he came." Patchwork lashed out, knocking his tormentor against a wall. Thinking he had killed him, Patchwork fled. For unknown weeks he stalked the streets, hiding by day and scrounging food at night, fearing for his life. And sometimes, he'd get these spells . . . and think he was someone else. Finally, in desperation, he let himself be caught by the police.

Medical testing seemed to confirm the story, to the surprise of all. Gene-typing results on his left arm did not match his right arm, or his right leg, or his torso . . . And later, when the genes for metahuman function were identified, re-examination of the gene-scans showed active clusters of them — in different arrangements and concentrations. The medical research also uncovered his body's incredible ability to maintain and repair itself.

Patchwork suffers from one nearly-debilitating condition: at random times he suffers flashbacks during which he believes he has powers he does not actually possess. Once, believing he could fly, he threw himself off a building after a foe. Only his regenerative power kept him alive.

Lacking any other purpose in life, Patchwork volunteered for the IST. After training, he was assigned back at IST New York, where he spends his off-duty time alternately being analyzed at Columbia University and studying religions. He is very concerned over whether or not he has a soul . . . and if he does, did it belong to any of those from whom he was built? The rest of his time is spent tracking down his origins. Because of the disorientation he suffered in his weeks on the street, he has no idea where he woke up. He thinks he has identified three missing metahumans who may have contributed (involuntarily) to his body. Despite his huge, hideous form, Patchwork is a gentle person. His appearance puts off many people, and he has few friends outside the embassy. His studious ways leave him little time for a social life, and his teammates are afraid that he thinks he doesn't deserve one.

He will wade willingly into combat, but pulls his punches if he feels his opponent cannot withstand his full strength. He is wary even of knocking anyone out, fearing he might accidentally kill them. To prevent unhappy accidents, he employs psychological warfare; by pretending to be vicious, stupid and much stronger than he really is, he hopes to frighten opponents into surrendering.

Typical Dialogue: "Heh. You talk good. Patchwork tear your tongue out, keep it, then Patchwork talk good too."

POUKA

Assignment: IST Buenos Aires

Appearance: Female human, Scottish, age 21, 5'7", 125 lbs., red hair, green eyes

ST 9 (-10 points) **IQ** 13 (30 points) **Speed:** 7.25
DX 14 (45 points) **HT** 15 (60 points) **Move:** 9

Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d-1

Point Total: 650

Advantages

Alertness +3 (15 points)
 Appearance: Beautiful (15 points)
 IST Member Rank 4 (85 points)
 Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Impulsiveness (-10 points)
 Lecherousness (-15 points)
 OPH: Practical Joker (-10 points)
 Overconfidence (-10 points)
 Pacifism: Cannot Kill (-15 points)
 Secret: Identity (-5 points)
 Sense of Duty to Companions (-5 points)
 Weirdness Magnet (-15 points)

Super Advantages

Invisibility (Light Encumbrance +20%; Only when Insubstantial -10%; Can Become Visible at Will +10%; 48 points)
 Invisibility to Machines (Light Encumbrance +20%; Only when Insubstantial -10%; Can Become Visible at Will +10%; 24 points)
 Insubstantiality (Light Encumbrance +20%; 96 points)
 Silence +6 (30 points)

Super-Powers

Alter-18(15) (Skill cost: 28; Instantaneous +20%; Doesn't Require Analyze +30%; Power cost: 141 points)

Skills

Area Knowledge (Argentina)-13 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Buenos Aires)-13 (1 point); Area Knowledge (New York City)-14 (2 points); Area Knowledge (United States)-13 (1 point); Bard-15 (6 points); Chemistry-13 (4 points); Computer Operations/TL8-14 (2 points); Dancing-14 (2 points); English-14 (1 point, native tongue); Gaelic-12 (1 point); History (Int'l., U.N.)-15 (6 points); Karate-15 (8 points); Lock-picking/TL7-16 (8 points); Musical Instrument (Recorder)-12 (2 points); Performance-13 (2 points); Pickpocket-12 (1 point); Running-16 (8 points); Sex Appeal-15 (2 points); Singing-15 (1 point); Spanish-12 (1 point); Stealth-19 (+9 when invisible; +6 when standing still from silence; 1 point); Strategy-12 (2 points); Swimming-15 (2 points); Tactics-14 (6 points); Traps/TL7-18 (12 points).

Quirks

Enthusiastic about *everything*.
 Wild sense of humor.
 Hates having practical jokes played on her.
 When she gets excited, her Scottish burr gets heavier and she talks at double-speed.
 Goes barefoot whenever possible.



Story

Brigit Dunsmuir was born in the Scottish highlands and raised in a huge extended family. Her first powers manifested in her 14th year, as she was playing a practical joke on her brothers. Unexpectedly, her aunt came along while she was setting the trap, and Brigit wished she could disappear rather than face the woman's wrath. To her surprise, her aunt walked right by. Brigit looked down and couldn't see herself, which so surprised her that she leaped backwards — through a wall.

Brigit hid her powers, but for the next few months, a rash of unexplainable pranks plagued the household. Brigit discovered her transmutation powers as she had the others — wishing for a rock to use as a counterweight in an elaborate mechanical trap, she accidentally turned a piece of wood to stone.

After graduation, Brigit made her way to Edinburgh, making a living as a sneak thief and minor metavillain. Actually, she was less a villain than a public nuisance, playing jokes on the Edinburgh police and local supers, including the Scottish IST. After two years, IST Edinburgh finally caught her. With the approval of the Scottish courts, they drafted Brigit and ran her through IST boot camp. Basic training did little to sober Brigit, so Argurous Astraph assigned her to IST New York and took personal responsibility for her. In the next several years, she did calm down a bit, although she retained a wild exuberance and off-the-wall humor which made her a popular guest on *Late Night With David Letterman*. Now at IST Buenos Aires, she is looking for ways to stir things up in Argentina.

Brigit is a vibrant woman who, as one of her teammates put it, "lives her life entirely in exclamation points." Although whimsical, she is not impulsive, and carefully plans her pranks (most of which she plays on foes, these days). She has few close friends on any of the teams she's been on, but she's so busy enjoying life that she hasn't noticed.

Foes fear Pouka in combat — not for their life or health, but dignity. Her prime attacks are inconveniences calculated to humiliate, like turning a weapon to peach cobbler or a costume into air. Many foes will run rather than face her, especially if they use unique or irreplaceable items. Since she must turn visible and substantial to use Alteration, though, she only transmutes objects from a safe position.

Typical Dialogue: "I love your outfit, honey, but what happened to your pants?"

La Triomphe

Assignment: IST London

Appearance: Female human, French-Moroccan, age 15,
5'5", 110 lbs., auburn hair, brown eyes

ST 10 (0 points) **IQ** 13 (30 points) **Speed:** 7.75
DX 16 (80 points) **HT** 15 (60 points) **Move:** 7 ground,
112 flying

Damage: *Thrust* 1d-2; *Swing* 1d

Point Total: 650 (1 unspent point)

Advantages

Appearance: Beautiful (15 points)

IST Member Rank 4 (85 points)

Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Combat Paralysis (-15 points)

Curious (-15 points)

Fanaticism: Pro-supers (-15 points)

Illiterate (-10 points)

Impulsive (-10 points)

Secret: Identity (-10 points)

Secret: Youth (-5 points)

Weak Will -1 (-8 points)

Youth -3 (-6 points)

Super Advantages

Flight (40 points)

Super Flight 3 (60 points)

Invulnerability to Light Attacks (100 points)

Super-Powers

Flash-17(10) (Skill cost: 24 points; Selective Effect +50%;
Increased Area 8, +160%; Power cost: 124 points)

Illuminate-15(15) (Skill cost: 16 points. Increased Area 8,
+160%; Power cost: 39 points)

Non-Super Equipment

Light Kevlar vest (PD 2, DR 14, 2½ lbs.).

Skills

Acrobatics-14 (1 point); Arabic-13 (0, native tongue); Area
Knowledge (London)-13 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Rabat)-13
(1 point); Area Knowledge (U.K.)-13 (1 point); Computer Op-
erations/TL8-13 (1 point); English-12 (1 points); Fast-Talk-15
(6 points); French-12 (1 points); History (Int'l., U.N.)-12 (2
points); Judo-14 (1 points); Pickpocket-15 (2 points); Stealth-15
(1 point); Survival (Urban)-12 (1 points); Strategy-12 (2
points); Swimming-16 (1 point); Tactics-12 (2 points).

Quirks

Tries to look and act "mature."

Loves to fly; hasn't walked in two years.

Crazy about skiing and skiers.

Agnostic; formerly Islamic.

Never seems to have the time to learn to read.

Story

Farah de Courcey was born in Rabat, Morocco, to working-
class parents; her father was ethnic French, her mother Arab.



When she was eight, her parents were killed by anti-Moroccan Polisario guerrillas. With no relatives to take her in, she became a street child, surviving by her wits. For five years she scraped along, picking pockets and searching garbage heaps in order to live. By age 13 she was an accomplished thief.

Then one day, as she lurked in an alley in Rabat, a tactical nuclear bomb planted by the Polisario Front exploded several blocks away. Farah was blinded and deafened, and as the building fell onto her, she felt her body tingle strangely through the pain.

She was still alive when the Red Cross dug her out of the rubble, and as she healed she felt the strange tingle again and again. But she had no idea what it meant until the bomb victims' ward was visited by the members of IST Rabat, together with a super she did not recognize. They stopped only briefly at the other beds, but with Farah they spend a good deal of time. The unfamiliar super looked at her and nodded to his companions. They told her that it was likely that she was a metahuman; they wanted to test her when she was released from the ward. Farah, confused and excited, agreed. Almost as an afterthought, they asked her age. Almost automatically, she covered herself: "18," she said. Several weeks later, when she was released, she reported to the embassy.

Testing revealed her powers, and she reveled in them. She applied for IST membership, and was accepted. Despite her efforts to hide her age, IST Command's security investigations also revealed the outline of her life on the street. They have not informed the Green Man, or anyone else on her team, and have left the age she claims in her personnel file. She has proven her worth over the last two years; her age is not an issue unless she wishes to make it one.

Farah, after her life on the street, has reverted to a child-like openness with her teammates. Other than her age, she hides nothing from them, and if not for her pose of maturity, she would demand the same joy from them. Her best friend is Midnight Angel. She takes great joy in her powers; flight in particular — she seldom walks at all.

In combat, La Triomphe remains out of the line of fire. Her tactics are to fly over the fight, blinding enemies with her selective flash and lighting night battles with her Illuminate power. When she must enter combat, and knows it ahead of time, she wears a bullet-proof vest.

Typical Dialogue: "Oh, wow! Wheeeeeee!!!"

WARRIOR

Assignment: IST Washington (Field Commander)

Appearance: Male human, American, age 35, 6'6", 230 lbs., blonde hair, black eyes

ST 19 (150 points; no unusual background, hence no Enhanced ST) **IQ** 15 (60 points) **Speed:** 9.5

DX 20 (175 points) **HT** 18 (125 points) **Move:** 13

Damage: Thrust 2d-1; Swing 3d+1

Point Value: 750

Advantages

IST Rank 7 (100 points)

Acute Hearing +5 (10 points)

Alertness +2 (10 points)

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

Strong Will +3 (12 points)

Reputation +3 (15 points)

Disadvantages

Appearance: Unattractive (-5 points)

Code of Honor: Protect the innocent, punish the guilty, avoid unnecessary destruction (-10 points)

Enemy: former FBI super-agent on 9 or less (-20 points)

Sense of Duty to teammates (-5 points)

Sense of duty to Argurous Astraph and IST (-10 points)

Stubbornness (-5 points)

Unluckiness (-10 points)

Vow: To use his skills for the cause of Good (-10 points)

Non-Super Equipment

Bionic right hand: +1 to DX for tasks involving that hand, effective grip ST 12. Glock 17 919mm Parabellum auto-loading pistol (Dmg 2d+2; SS 10; Acc 3; 1/2D 150; Max 1,867; Wt. 2; RoF 3, Shots: 17 in clip plus 1 in chamber; Rcl -1). Laser sight for Glock (Acc +2, halves SS number). Clips for Glock, 2 (loaded with Armor Piercing and Hollow Point bullets in the cycle AP HP AP, AP HP AP . . .).

Skills

Acrobatics-20 (4 points); Administration-14 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Chicago)-17 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Illinois)-17 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Washington)-15 (1 point); Area Knowledge (U.S.)-16 (2 points); Area Knowledge (world)-15 (1 point); Computer Operations/TL8-16 (2 points); Dancing-19 (1 point); English-15 (0, native tongue); Fast-Draw (Clip)-21* (1 point); Fast-Draw (Pistol)-20 (1 point); Guns (Pistol)-26 (16 points); Guns (Rifle)-26 (16 points); History (Int'l., U.N.)-14 (2 points); Judo-24 (32 points); Karate-24 (32 points); Knife-22 (4 points); Knife Throwing-21 (2 points); Leadership-14 (1 point); Running-20 (16 points); Speedload (Glock)-20 (1 point); Streetwise-17 (6 points); Strategy-14 (2 points); Swimming-16 (default); Tactics-14 (2 points); Throwing-20 (4 points). (*Includes DX bonus from bionic hand.)

Quirks

Won't be picked on.

Disdains authority.

Bitter over his early life.

Carries Glock unloaded when not expecting trouble.

Prefers his super name over his real name.



Story

George Becker was born in Chicago in 1955. At birth his right arm ended in a rounded stump just below the elbow. He was teased because of his birth defect and his hooked prosthetic. At 10 he decided to learn to fight back, and enrolled in martial arts classes. He began weight-training and gymnastics, and studied dancing for agility and balance. His determination yielded an almost perfect body. His father taught him to handle firearms. By 19 he was in outstanding shape and better adjusted socially. George wanted to be a policeman, but to his despair he was rejected because of his hand. The rejection brought back all the bad feelings from childhood. To salvage his self-worth, he turned vigilante.

On the street, his firearms skills rose to a spectacular level. As a vigilante, he gained a national reputation and an FBI file. When Argurous Astraph heard about George, she flew to Chicago to observe him, thinking he might be a metahuman. She soon decided he was not — but she wanted him anyway! When she approached him, George declined, but Astraph pressed him — words were exchanged and the discussion turned into a brawl. Argurous Astraph would not use her lightning on a normal, and they found themselves evenly matched. After fighting to a standstill for half an hour, they collapsed on the ground together, stared at each other for a moment, then began to laugh. She offered to buy him a drink, and he took her up on it. Over drinks, she repeated her offer. He accepted.

George was given a complete pardon for his vigilante activity. However, the FBI metahuman assigned to his case refused to accept the pardon, went rogue to chase him, and pursues George to this day. The U.N. also funded a bionic hand for George. It is weaker than his left, but it has allowed him to gain two-handed skills like Speedload.

Despite his distaste for authority, Warrior is a good leader. A man of strong principles, with a "tough but fair" attitude, he inspires loyalty in his team with his absolute faith in them. His immediate supervisors rarely appreciate him; he questions orders, and is often right! His loyalty to Argurous Astraph, however, is absolute. Whenever they can, the two like to get together to share a bottle of ouzo and talk shop.

Typical Dialogue: Unprintable.

WITCHWIND

Assignment: IST Tokyo (Field Commander)

Appearance: Female human, age 42, 5'9", 135 lbs., black hair, black eyes

ST 10 (0 points) IQ 15 (60 points) Speed: 9.5
DX 16 (80 points) HT 14 (45 points) Move: 9 ground,
36 flying

Damage: *Thrust* 1d-2; *Swing* 1d; *Hail* 1d-1; *Lightning* 15d
Point Total: 800 (4 unspent points)

Advantages

Appearance: Beautiful (15 points)
Charisma +3 (15 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)
IST Rank 7 (100 points)
Strong Will +3 (12 points)
Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Bad Sight (Farsighted, wears contacts) (-10 points)
Bad Temper (-10 points)
Bloodlust (-10 points)
Duty to IWO on 6 or less (-2 points)
Overconfidence (-10 points)
Secret: Identity (-10 points)
Sense of Duty to Friends and teammates (-5 points)
Sense of Duty to Humanity (-15 points)
Sense of Duty to IST and U.N. (-10 points)
Stubbornness (-5 points)
Unluckiness (-10 points)

Super Advantages

DR 5 (No Obvious Effect +2; 18 points)
Flight (40 points)
Increased Speed 2 (50 points)
Super Flight (20 points)
Temperature Tolerance (-35° to 160°) (10 points)

Super-Powers

Call Hail-17(21) (Skill cost: 16 points; Increased Area 5, +100%; Power cost: 42 points)
Call Lightning-18(15) (Skill cost: 16 points; Full Power Only -10%; Instantaneous +20%; Only Works Outside During a Thunderstorm -60%; Power cost: 33 points)
Control Temperature-16(18) (Skill cost: 12 points; Power cost: 18 points)
Control Weather-18(20) (Skill cost: 20 points; Increased Area 3, +60%; Touch Only (0 range) -20%; Power cost: 140)
Whirlwind-17(1) (Skill cost: 12 points; Movable Area +40%; Increased Area 11, +210%; Only while flying -30%; Touch Only -20%; Power cost: 15 points)

Non-Super Equipment

Light Kevlar vest (PD 2, DR 14, 2½ lbs.).

Skills

Administration-16 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Japan)-15 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Tokyo)-16 (2 points); Botany (hobby)-14 (1 point); Computer Operations/TL8-15 (1 point); Diplomacy-16* (1 point); Ecology-13 (1 point); English-15 (2



points); First Aid/TL8-16 (2 point); German-15 (0, native tongue); History (Int'l., U.N.)-15 (4 points); Intelligence Analysis-15 (4 points); Japanese-15 (2 points); Karate-17 (8 points); Leadership-17* (1 point); Meteorology-18 (8 points); Strategy-14 (2 points); Swimming-16 (1 point); Tactics-15 (4 points). (*Includes Charisma.)

Quirks

Regards no one as an enemy until they draw her blood.
Known for having posed for *Playboy* in the 1970s.
Comes off as distant and forbidding.
Wears lifts in her boots.
Enjoys comedy of all kinds, but doesn't laugh.

Story

Elena Falk was born in East Germany. As a child she loved being outside in harsh weather. "I like to watch the winds, they're pretty," she'd say. Sometimes the weather changed to fit her moods.

When she was 17, her father was shot trying to sneak over the border. When the secret police came to question her mother, Elena fled the house in tears, as the skies burst into a thunderstorm. She ran with her hands over her face, and suddenly realized she could not feel the ground. Looking down, she found herself hundreds of feet in the air. She could see lines of energy between her and the air currents. Intuitively she understood that she could command the weather!

Elena flew home as the police dragged her mother out. Wrapping herself in a nimbus of electricity, she demanded they release her. They opened fire on Elena instead. The bullets vaporized in the energy surrounding her body and she slew them with bolts of lightning. Elena then carried her terrified mother over the border.

Elena joined the EEC superteam, and became friends with Argurous Astraph. When the Silverbolt assumed command of the IST, Witchwind was her right-hand woman. Eventually she was given command of IST Tokyo.

Although a gifted leader, Elena doubts herself. Her friendly nature becomes cold and distant in command situations. Her swings in temperament cause considerable friction; off duty she is close to her teammates, but her friends are increasingly unwilling to serve under her.

In combat Witchwind flies above the team, providing covering fire with lightning and hail attacks. She plans attacks minutely, and woe to those who foul up! She's also a founding member of the International Weather Organization.

Typical Dialogue: "I don't care *what* you saw. I told you to guard our rear. If any of them get away, you'll answer to me."

ZASHCHETA

Assignment: IST Damascus

Appearance: Female human, Russian, age 37, 5'5", 120 lbs., blonde hair, brown eyes

ST 8 (-15 points) **IQ** 10 (0 points) **Speed:** 6

DX 12 (20 points) **HT** 12 (20 points) **Move:** 6

Damage: Thrust 1d-3; Swing 1d-2

Point Total: 650 (3 unspent points)

Advantages

Acute Hearing +3 (6 points)

Appearance: Attractive (5 points)

Intuition (15 points)

IST Member Rank 4 (85 points)

Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Alcoholism (-15 points)

Duty to KGB on 9 or less (involuntary, -10 points)

Pacifism: Self-defense only (-15 points)

Phobia (Severe): Electrocutation (-20 points)

Secret: An old-guard KGB faction uses her as an information source on the IST. (-20 points)

Shyness, Severe (-10 points)

Unluckiness (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Invulnerability to Energy Attacks (Instantaneous +20%; Wall×2 +60%; Nuisance Effect: Opaque -20%; 240 points)

DR 50 vs. all attacks (Instantaneous +20%; Wall×2 +60%; Nuisance Effect: Opaque -20%; 240 points)

Non-super Equipment

Heckler and Koch MP5 Submachine Gun, 9mm Para-bellum (Dmg 3d-1, SS 10, Acc 9, ½D 160, Max 1,900, Wt. 7.25, RoF 10*, Shots 30, Rcl -1), loaded with AP rounds. Clips, 3, for MP5, 2 with AP rounds, 1 with HP rounds

Skills

Agronomy-9 (1 point); Animal Handling-7 (½ point); Arabic-10 (2 points); Area Knowledge (Damascus)-10 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Syria)-10 (1 point); Brawling-11 (½ point); Demolition-10 (2 points); Computer Operations/TL8-10 (1 point); Driving (Tractor)-10 (½ point); English-9 (1 point); First Aid/TL8-12 (4 points); Guns (Pistol)-13 (½ point); Guns (SMG)-17 (8 points); History (Int'l., U.N.)-9 (2 points); Judo-13 (8 points); Knife-12 (1 point); Literature-12 (4 points); Russian-10 (0, native tongue); Shield-17 (for use with her force fields, 24 points); Strategy-9 (2 points); Survival (Desert)-13 (8 points); Survival (Steppe)-14 (10 points); Swimming-13 (2 points); Tactics-9 (2 points).

Quirks

Pro-glasnost and Gorbachev.

Avoids hand-held electrical appliances.

Avoids other people's eyes.

Voracious reader; doesn't care for television.

Does not speak in combat.



Story

Natasha Dubrovnik grew up on a collective farm in Soviet Georgia. Her mutant power to create force fields manifested shortly after her 14th birthday. One autumn day a windstorm collapsed an electrical tower on Natasha. She felt a small shock, and an opaque wall of force cut off the voltage and stopped the wreckage cold. Word reached the Army and soldiers came to the farm and took her from her parents.

She was taken to a metahuman training camp, where she was housed, fed . . . and tortured. Government scientists hit her with electric shocks for hours on end. For three weeks they increased the voltage, oblivious to her cries, until she again manifested the black wall of force. They continued until she could call the field up at will. By the time she was 16, the Army scientists determined that what looked like a single field was actually two — one which stopped all energy, and another with a large but limited resistance to physical damage. They again subjected Natasha to electrical shocks until she could create the fields separately. They did their job so well that she was never again able to call the fields as one. When they were satisfied that they had gotten as much metahuman function out of Natasha as they could, they assigned her to Russia's super corps and forgot about her.

Life there was dull. She served numbly until 1982, when the U.N. issued its Edicts. Instead of being reassigned to a collective farm, like her comrades, Natasha was summoned to the local KGB headquarters. Important men were there to see her, men from the older generation in the government, who did not like what the U.N. was doing. They told her she would join the imperialist International Super Teams. She would spy on them for the KGB. If she didn't, her family would suffer. Natasha, never a strong-willed person, gave in. She joined the IST, and eight years later is still reporting to the few remaining hardliners in the KGB.

She helps them as little as possible, refusing promotions and transfers to sensitive installations. She keeps her dual role a secret, from disgust and embarrassment more than fear of IST reprisal. She avoids her teammates, spending as much time as she can alone, reading and drinking. In combat, Zashcheta ("Protector" in Russian) provides cover for the team, especially against blaster weapons or energy-projecting foes. At times, she has faced such opponents alone, trusting to her powers and her submachine gun.

Typical Dialogue: None. She doesn't speak at all in combat, and talks as little as possible the rest of the time.



al-'Ain min Allah

Appearance: Female human, Iranian (Ethnic Arab), age 22,

5'2", 110 lbs., brown hair, brown eyes

ST 9 (-10 points) **IQ** 14 (45 points) **Speed:** 6.25

DX 12 (20 points) **HT** 13 (30 points) **Move:** 6

Damage: *Thrust* 1d-2; *Swing* 1d-1

Point Total: 550

Advantages

Appearance: Very Beautiful (25 points)

Common Sense (10 points)

Intuition (15 points)

Military Rank 1 (5 points)

Patron: Iranian Government on 12 or less (70 points)

Reputation: +4, Iran, all the time (10 points)

Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Duty to Iranian Government on 15 or less (-15 points)

Fanaticism: Iran and the Ayatollah (-15 points)

Gullibility (-10 points)

Illiteracy (-10 points)

Reputation: -2 everywhere but Iran, -4 in Iraq (-15 points)

Sense of Duty to Homeland (-10 points)

Shyness, Severe (-10 points)

Social Stigma: (Valuable Property) (-10 points)

Super Advantages

PD +6 (Must make IQ roll -20%; No Obvious Effect +20%; 150 points)

Psionics (see Basic Set)

ESP Power-30 (Power cost: 150 points)

Clairvoyance-22 (20 points)

Precognition-26 (28 points)

Psychometry-23 (22 points)

Skills

Bard-15 (4 points); Cooking-14 (1 point); Judo-11 (2 points); Musical Instrument (Flute)-12 (1 point); Persian-14 (0, native tongue); Singing-14 (2 points).

Quirks

Pathetically eager for praise and approval.

Endorses fair treatment of women in Iran.

Wears an almost opaque veil over her entire face.

Devout Moslem.

Fiercely devoted to al-Khayl min Allah.

Story

Badoura al-Kasim is one of the Shadow of Allah's special coterie of Iranian supers (see p. 75), and although she is, in her own way, as influential as the Shadow, she is one of the least-respected members of the group. Born to a wealthy Iranian family during the reign of the Shah, she was betrothed at age 16 to a middle-aged man. She had no objections to the union, nor any idea that she could have objections — her family was fundamentalist Islamic and had shielded her from the Westernized society that the Shah had tried to build. They had welcomed the revolution and the return of the Ayatollah, and their daughter, well taught, had done so too.



Three weeks before the wedding was to take place, Badoura had a vision, which she told her family, proclaiming it to be a message from Allah. In her vision, she watched as her betrothed was killed in an Iraqi rocket attack. The reaction from her family shocked her. She was reviled by them, and her father and brothers beat her for her "blasphemy." Then she was locked away, not to be released until the day of her wedding, lest she flee. But her intended groom was killed just as she had foreseen, and her family was convinced that they had a holy woman on their hands. Making sure that the locks on her chambers were secure, they spread the word that a prophetess resided in their home, who would tell the future — for a price. Respecting her parents' wishes, Badoura called forth visions for as many strangers as she could. Her parents and brothers grew wealthy — until the day that Khomeini heard of her.

One morning, soldiers under the command of the Shadow of Allah came to their door and appropriated Badoura. Not knowing what to expect, she was terrified when she was brought into the majestic presence of al-Khayl min Allah. He welcomed her warmly and won her confidence as he offered her a place in the bodyguard of the Ayatollah. Dazed, she accepted, sure this was a dream, for she had never foreseen anything like this happening to her. "We are like one body," he said to her, "serving Allah and the Ayatollah. Even as I am the Shadow and the strength, you are the Eye of Allah — *al-'Ain min Allah* — foreseeing all." Although treated neutrally at best by the rest of the group, Badoura loved it. No longer subject to her parents and brothers, she was as free as she could hope for. She became devoted to the Shadow, and did her best to be worthy of the privilege. Twice in the past six years she has personally saved Khomeini from assassin's bullets. Badoura is a quiet and retiring young woman, little noticed by the rest of the bodyguard. Although she lives virtually without social interaction, she is happy simply to be a part of the organization. Her visions are believed, she is not mistreated, and she is serving Allah and the Ayatollah — what more could she ask?

Typical Dialogue: "I have foreseen danger . . ."

DEAD RINGER

Appearance: Male human, Black American, age 37, 6', 160 lbs., bald head, red eyes, sickly grey skin (natural form)
ST 13 (30 points) **IQ** 14 (45 points) **Speed:** 6
DX 13 (30 points) **HT** 11 (10 points) **Move:** 6
Damage: Thrust 1d; Swing 2d-1
Point Total: 675

Advantages

Acute Taste and Smell +5 (10 points)
 Ambidexterity (10 points)
 Combat Reflexes (15 points)
 Strong Will +5 (20 points)
 Unusual Background: Super (50 points)
 Wealth: Comfortable (10 points)

Disadvantages

Appearance: Ugly (-10 points)
 Enemy: ICTF/Interpol on 9 or less (-30 points)
 Enemy: IST on 6 or less (-20 points)
 Greed (-15 points)
 OPH: Constantly sniffs the air around him. (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Immunity to Poison (15 points)
 Recovery (10 points)
 Regeneration, Fast (50 points)

Super-Powers

Morph-19(12) (Skill Cost: 28 points; Linked to Absorb Matter +10%; Morph Memory not needed +100%; Gains victim's memories and knowledge +100%; Human forms only -20%; Can use each form only once -30%; Power cost: 190 points)

Absorb Matter-19(17) (Skill cost: 32 points; Linked to Morph +10%; No ultimate weight limit +100%; Limited to freshly-killed human flesh -70%; Absorption is permanent -30%; Power cost: 131 points)

Non-Super Equipment

Smith & Wesson M29 .44 Magnum revolver (p. B208)

Skills

Acting-14 (1 point); Brawling-14 (2 points); Breath Control-13 (4 points); Detect Lies-14 (4 points); Diplomacy-14 (4 points); Driving (Stock auto)-13 (2 points); English-14 (0, native tongue); Fast-Talk-13 (1 point); Guns (Pistol)-17 (4 points); Holdout-15 (4 points); Japanese-12 (1/2 point); Karate-15 (16 points); Poisons-15 (6 points); Psychology-14 (4 points); Research-16 (6 points); Savoir-Faire-16 (4 points); Sleight-of-Hand-13 (4 points); Stealth-14 (4 points); Streetwise-17 (8 points); Swahili-12 (1/2 points).

Quirks

Stays in his unMorphed form as little as possible.
 Insists on extensively researching assigned targets.
 Non-smoker, even if the person he's imitating was one.
 Drinks only brandy, and that in moderation.
 Sometimes waives his fee if the job interests to him.

Story

Michael Holt worked as muscle for an organized crime fam-



ily. It wasn't forever, he told himself; he had bigger plans. But he wasn't cautious enough to hide his ambition completely, and was soon seen by his employer, a Mr. Moretti, as a potential problem. Moretti solved it by ordering his "disposal." Michael was beaten, tied up and thrown into a toxic waste dump — not the first time the family had used it as a burial ground.

But he didn't die. The chemical waste stimulated a metahuman reaction in his body — he regenerated the damage from the beating and crawled out of the muck. His body had changed: his hair was gone and his eyes were red, and his skin had become a sickly gray shade. His mind was unaltered, though; he wanted revenge. Michael spent several weeks shadowing Moretti. But he was caught by Louie Griggs, one of Moretti's lieutenants. Michael strangled him, then was amazed to see the dead man's body melting into his own. Looking into a nearby mirror, he was stunned to find that instead of his gray skin and red eyes, he now looked exactly like Griggs. As he stared at himself, all the contents of Griggs' mind came creeping into his own.

Beginning to understand what had happened, Michael walked casually past Moretti's bodyguards and into his office, picked up a bowling trophy, and smashed the mobster's skull. Then he put his hands on Moretti's body and absorbed him. Griggs' memories went away, but Moretti's replaced them, and Michael sat down to take the man's place.

A year later, a major crime boss turned up missing, and Dead Ringer, super for hire, appeared on the rolls of the Exchange. In the past half-decade he has made a comfortable living as a freelance infiltrator and impersonator. To protect his privacy (and his life), he uses dozens of aliases. Thanks to an informant and a security camera, his existence is known to the authorities, and he is wanted for at least two murders in Europe and a third in Africa.

Michael is entirely self-centered. He always works alone. Since his powers only give him the external shape and the memories of his victims (who needn't be killed by him personally, by the way), he avoids combat with other supers. He limits his activity to covert operations. He may revert to his "natural" body at will, but in the process permanently loses his previous form. This isn't often useful, and since he dislikes his appearance, he rarely reverts to it.

Typical Dialogue: "Give me five minutes with him, and he'll never bother you again. Pay me now."

Desert Hawk

Appearance: Male human, Libyan, age 39, 6'1", 170 lbs., black hair, brown eyes

ST 13 (30 points) **IQ** 10 (0 points) **Speed:** 6.75
DX 14 (45 points) **HT** 13 (30 points) **Move:** 6; 384 flying
Damage: Thrust 1d; Swing 2d-1; Scimitar 15d Cutting
Point Total: 625

Advantages

Legal Enforcement Powers: National jurisdiction, need not respect civil rights, able to kill with impunity (15 points)

Military Rank 4 (20 points)

Patron: Libyan Government on 9 or less (30 points)

Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Duty to Libyan Government on 12 or less (-10 points)

Fanaticism: Pro-Qaddafi (-15 points)

Intolerance: Americans (-5 points)

Lame: Crippled Leg (-15 points)

Overconfidence (-10 points)

Reputation: Qaddafi's Axeman, -2 from everyone, all the time (-10 points)

Sense of Duty to Libya (-10 points)

Vow: Avenge Djinn's death on all Americans (-15 points)

Super Advantages

Flight (40 points)

Super Flight×5 (100 points)

DR 30 (Only while flying -30%; 63 points)

PD 6 (Only while flying -30%; 105 points)

Super-Powers

Sonic Blast-15(12) (Skill cost: 12 points; Only while flying -30%; Power cost: 59 points)

Super Equipment

Djinn's Sword Based on TL4 Scimitar (Thrust+1 Impaling, Swing Cutting, Reach 1,2, 1 lb.) Generic Attack-18(15) (Skill cost: 32 points; Cutting +30%; Homing +40%; Instantaneous +20%; Touch Only -20%; Power cost: 153 points). Base cost: 185 points. Can be stolen with Contest of ST: -30%. Unique: -25%. Final Cost: 69 points

Non-Super Equipment

Light Kevlar vest (Equivalent to Second Chance Standard: PD 2, DR 14, 2½ lbs.). IMI Eagle .44 automatic pistol (see p. B208), loaded with AP rounds

Skills

Arabic-10 (0, native tongue); Agronomy-10 (2 points); Bard-12 (6 points); Brawling-15 (2 points); Broadsword-17 (16 points); Carpentry-10 (1 point); Guns (Pistol)-16 (2 points); Guns (Rifle)-15 (1 point); Guns (Submachine gun)-16 (2 points); Holdout-12 (6 points); Knife-16 (2 points); Survival (Desert)-14 (10 points); Throwing-13 (2 points).

Quirks

Uses just enough flight to hide his limp

Emotionless exterior

Only pays lip service to Islam



Maintains a private shrine to Djinn

Dislikes women

Story

Kareem an-Nahayan and his twin brother Mustafa were Libyan mutants born with the power of flight. They hid their abilities until they were 19, when Colonel Moammar Qaddafi seized power in Libya. Qaddafi called for patriotic supers to serve him, and the two volunteered at once. Although they both could fly, their styles were different. Where Kareem simply leaped upward and soared at dizzying speeds, Mustafa was super-strong but slower, his lower body wrapped in a vicious whirlwind. Colonel Qaddafi, after watching their training, himself gave them their super names. Mustafa he called "Djinn," Kareem was the "Desert Hawk."

Some months later, they were issued their equipment; the brothers never asked where it came from. Mustafa received a scimitar of wondrously light metal that glowed with energy when grasped, and which could cut through men and steel. Kareem received a pair of wings which, although they looked decorative, were trimmed with terrible blades capable of slicing through the body of a jet fighter. The wings folded and opened at a thought.

In August of 1981 they went out to challenge two American fighter jets in the Gulf of Sidra — an unconscionable violation of Libyan borders. Kareem was to lure the jets to the slower Mustafa, and together they'd rend them asunder. They followed him, all right. But the American pilots were suspicious; when they saw that he was leading them to another super wielding a glowing sword, they fired their rockets immediately. Kareem saw his brother hit and killed. His wings slashed one jet, damaging its wings and rudder. But before he could attack again, the remaining jet fired on him. He felt the pain, and blacked out. They found him floating in the sea, his ruined wings supporting him, his arms clutched around his brother's sword.

Kareem changed as he healed, gaining a cold hatred of Americans and cloaking himself in emotionlessness. That his right leg was permanently crippled didn't concern him. Avenging his brother was all that mattered. Taking the sword as his own, he vowed to kill any American he met. He has no social life, and no friends save Qaddafi himself. Qaddafi encourages his rage and determination.

He does not speak English, but can recognize it, and always attacks any stranger who speaks English. He usually uses his flying speed to make swooping attack runs, stunning his opponents with his sonic blasts if he can.

Typical Dialogue: (in Arabic): "Die, Yankee dog! Drown in your filthy infidel blood!"

JOHNNY RIPP

Appearance: Male human, Dutch, age 18, 5'6", 135 lbs., blond hair, blue eyes

ST 10 (0 points) **IQ** 13 (30 points) **Speed:** 18

DX 15 (60 points) **HT** 9 (-10 points) **Move:** 36

Damage: *Thrust* 1d-2 Imp; *Swing* 1d Cut

Point Total: 550

Advantages

Alertness +1 (5 points)

Appearance: Handsome (15 points)

Peripheral Vision (15 points)

Reputation: +3, International Underworld, all the time (7 points)

Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Addict: Tobacco (-5 points)

Berserk (-15 points)

Enemy: IST, ICTF, Interpol on 6 or less (-15 points)

Illiterate (-10 points)

OPH: Spits. (-5 points)

OPH: Tactless. (-10 points)

Overconfidence (-10 points)

Paranoia (-10 points)

Reputation: -4, ICTF/Interpol, IST, all the time (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Claws (Talons) (40 points)

Full Coordination/1 (50 points)

Increased Speed +12 (300 points)

Super Running 1 (20 points)

Non-Super Equipment

Light Kevlar vest (PD 2, DR 14, 2½ lbs.)

Skills

Acting-14 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Europe)-12 (½ point); Area Knowledge (Netherlands)-13 (1 point); Brawling-18 (8 points); Carpentry-12 (½ point); Detect Lies-14 (6 points); Driving (Stock Car)-15 (2 points); Dutch-13 (0, native tongue); English-12 (1 point); Guns (Pistol)-17 (1 point); Hold-out-13 (2 points); Mechanic-13 (2 points); Motorcycle-15 (1 point); Musical Instrument (Guitar)-13 (4 points); Pickpocket-16 (8 points); Shadowing-14 (2 points); Stealth-17 (8 points); Streetwise-18 (12 points).

Quirks

Only works solo.

Wants to make a lot of money and retire young.

Intentionally impolite to everyone.

Never believes a door is secure, even if he checked it himself.

Hums tunelessly when thinking.

Story

Pieter Kloont, known across Europe as "Johnny Ripp," is what is called "talented muscle." A freelance metavillain, he is the man to hire for calculated terror and wanton bloodshed. Pieter grew up tough, in the parts of Amsterdam tourists never see — the dark, dank underside, where international crime is as much a part of life as the rats in the sewers. Fatherless, his



mother a prostitute, he grew up in one gang after another. Smart and quick on his feet, he was a gang-boss by the age of 12. Even then, he was no one to tangle with. And when the juices of puberty started flowing and his metahuman genes activated, he had it made. No one challenged a guy who could grow twelve-inch claws of razor-sharp bone any time he wanted to.

But Pieter was a little crazy. Maybe it was the drugs he tried, maybe it was just something else the supergenes did to him. But after a while, his gangs started evaporating on him. Sure, he cut up his boys every once in a while. Yeah, so what, he'd killed a couple — by accident, and besides, no one ever missed them. In the end, he couldn't get anyone to follow him — they just ran when they saw him coming. It really bothered him, because Pieter knew, just *knew* that they had only pretended to be his friends before, and now they were just out to get him. He told himself that he'd outgrown the gang scene. He was ready for the big time.

Pieter put the word out on the street: he was looking for one of the big men in Amsterdam, someone who'd pay a talented young fellow who had ambition. Soon a mobster contacted him. Intrigued by the boy's chutzpah and metapowers, he threw a job his way. And another, when the first was completed. And another after that. Pieter's word-of-mouth advertising worked very well. Within two years, he had reached the big time — the Exchange called, offering to be his agent. He turned them down, of course — he didn't trust anyone he couldn't meet face to face.

These days he specializes in particularly emphatic assassinations, especially of troublesome supers, charging a neat hundred grand per job. To enhance his image, Pieter took a hint from American gangster movies, and gave himself a colorful nickname: "Johnny Ripp."

Pieter, for all his youth, is a dangerous, unstable man. He trusts no one, to the point of abstaining from all social contact. He has no manners, nor any affectations of manners, and doesn't care if he disgusts his employers. He knows he's good, and is certain of his success in any venture. His confidence and his record are his greatest selling points.

In combat Johnny Ripp is a pure terror. His speed and superior coordination allow him several attacks on most foes before they can even react. He will strike to destroy or remove protective gear with his first few hits, slicing at the straps of Kevlar vests or the fasteners of other armor. Once his opponent is vulnerable, he goes for thrusting attacks. Often he will berserk himself to get an extra edge. He has no compunctions about killing, and may slaughter nearby normals just to distract super opponents.

Typical Dialogue: "Too bad about the little girl. That bother you? Want to watch me do another one? Try to stop me, schmuck."

AL KHAYAL MIN ALLAH

Appearance: Male human, Iranian (ethnic Arab), age 33, 39', 13,490 lbs., black hair, brown eyes

ST 150 (117½ points*) **IQ** 14 (45 points) **Speed:** 7.25

DX 15 (60 points) **HT** 14/58 (45 points for HT, 28 flying, 110 points* for Extra HP)

Damage: *Thrust* 16d; *Swing* 18d
Point Total: 925

Advantages

Charisma +4 (20 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)
Immunity to Disease (10 points)
Military Rank 5 (25 points)
Patron: Iranian Government on 12 or less (70 points)
Reputation: +4 in Iran, all the time (10 points)
Status 3 (One level free from Rank; 10 points)
Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Code of Honor: Defend the holy homeland, Islam and the Ayatollah. (-10 points)
Duty to Iranian Government on 15 or less (-15 points)
Fanaticism: Iran and the Ayatollah (-15 points)
Glory Hound (-15 points)
One Arm (left arm is withered) (-20 points)
Reputation: -2 everywhere but Iran, -4 in Iraq. (-15 points)

Super Advantages

Dark Vision (25 points)
DR 15 (23 points*)
Flight (Only in Shadow Form -10%; 36 points)
Growth×5 (Maximum Height Only; Always on -40%; 30 points)
Invulnerable to Light Attacks (Only in Shadow Form -10%; 90 points)
Shadow Form (Can Carry Light Encumbrance +20%; 60 points)
Super Flight (Only in Shadow Form -10%; 18 points)
Super Running×2 (40 points*; Special Effect: long strides from increased height)
* (-50% for Growth: Maximum Height Only)

Super-Powers

Animate Shadow-16(5) (Skill cost: 16 points; Extended Duration +30%; Power cost: 33 points)
Create Darkness-16(2) (Skill cost: 16 points; Extended Duration×4, +120%; Increased Area +10, +200%; Power cost: 26 points)

Skills

Animal Handling (Camels)-14 (4 points); Area Knowledge (Iran)-14 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Iraq)-14 (1 point); Brawling-16 (2 points); English-13 (1 point); Gesture-13 (½ point); Guns (Submachine gun)-17 (1 point); Intimidation-14 (2 points); Knife-15 (1 point); Leadership-14 (2 points); Packing-12 (1 point); Persian-14 (0, native tongue); Riding (Camel)-14 (1 point); Savoir-Faire-16 (default); Survival (Desert)-15 (4 points); Tactics-13 (2 points); Veterinary-12 (1 point).



Quirks

Ignores his withered arm and any references to it.
Treats camels better than he treats women.
Gets his relatives government jobs.
Considers public adulation his due.
Keeps a private harem, though he can't make use of it.

Story

Zaid al-Asaad is not only *al-Khayal min Allah*, "the Shadow of Allah," but also "Hero of the Holy Revolution," and "Leader of the Jihad." He is the Ayatollah Khomeini's right-hand man. Al-Asaad's origins are unknown. He was once a simple camel driver, but no one seems to know when and how he transformed into the giant he is today. He was with Khomeini in exile in Paris, returning to Iran in the last days of the Shah. Sometime between then and the Ayatollah's triumphant entry into Tehran, something happened to turn him into a metahuman, a giant with the power of shadow.

The Ayatollah put Zaid in charge of the Iranian military, and charged him with finding others "blessed by Allah." He built a cadre of supers and gave them the top army and air force posts. In the war with Iraq, against the wishes of the Ayatollah, al-Asaad entered battle when excitement got the better of him. He did great damage, but Iran lost the battle due to its lack of central control.

He was ordered to give his staff more responsibility. After that, he remained based in Tehran. He transferred command of the army to the generals whose advice he previously ignored. "Retiring" to lead the Ayatollah's super bodyguard, he took his coterie of metahumans with him.

Men prostrate themselves and women swoon when he moves through Tehran in shadow form. He is suspected of having led his supers on secret raids into Iraq, and is on the "watch" list of the IST. He has quarters built to his scale in Tehran, including a multilevel office where he can work comfortably and still speak with normals at eye level. Al-Asaad is a planner and a schemer, but sometimes his fanaticism gets the better of him. He is a close friend of the Ayatollah's, who is the only person he trusts outside of his small group of supers. He plans someday to succeed Khomeini, despite rumors of the Ayatollah's immortality.

In combat, al-Khayal min Allah normally stands to the rear directing the action, a visible inspiration to the troops. Sometimes, though, battle fervor overcomes him, and he strides into the heaviest fighting, flailing about with his good arm. Against other supers, he always leads the charge, as he did during the rescue of the American hostages in 1979.

Typical Dialogue: "Calling on Allah, I summoned all my strength and picked up the tank — ho, ho! And when the tank commander stuck his head out, I bit it off! Then I compassionately called on the crew to surrender . . ."

KRISTALLNACHT

Appearance: Male human, German, age 46, 5'10", 155 lbs, blond hair, blue eyes

ST 11 (10 points) IQ 13 (30 points) Speed: 6
DX 14 (45 points) HT 10 (0 points) Move: 6
Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+1; Kristallsturm 7d Cutting
Point total: 575

Advantages

Combat Reflexes (15 points)
Extraordinary Luck (30 points)
Gadeteer, with 3 gizmos (40 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)
Unusual Background: Super (50 points)
Wealth: Filthy Rich (50 points)

Disadvantages

Bad Temper (-10 points)
Bloodlust (-10 points)
Bully (-10 points)
Delusion (Major): Believes himself to be the result of a secret Nazi breeding program, and is looking for its leaders. (-10 points)
Duty to the PLO, 12- (-10 points)
Fanaticism: Neo-Nazi (-15 points)
Intolerance (Everyone) (-10 points)
Intolerance (Jews) (-5 points)
Sadism (-15 points)
Stubborn (-5 points)

Super-Powers

Kristallsturm-19(7) (Skill cost: 28 points; Modified Stone Missile: Instantaneous +20%; Fan +3 +30%; Rapid Fire×2, +80%; Cutting +30%; Power cost: 110 points)

Super Equipment

Armor Based on TL8 Medium Body Armor (PD 4, DR 15). Non-super functions of armor: NBC-sealed; airtight with 30-hour air supply; Minolta starlight scope for nighttime operations; multiband 2-way radio, 20-mile range. Systems run on an RPC-D cell for one week. Can be packed into a suitcase when not worn.

PD +2 (50 points) DR +45 (135 points)
Teleport Power-27 (Power cost: 135 points)
Autoteleport-18 (16 points)
Exoteleport-18 (16 points)
Base Cost: 352 points
Breakable (DR 20, HP 100; Repairable) -5%; Can Be Hit at no penalty -25%; Unique -25%; Final Cost: 159 points

Skills

Arabic-13 (2 points); Armory (Body armor)-16 (8 points); Area Knowledge (Israel/Palestine)-16 (4 points); Camouflage-13 (1 point); Disguise-13 (2 points); Driving (ATV)-15 (4 points); Engineer (Bombs and Traps)-14 (6 points); Engineer (Guns)-15 (8 points); Engineer (Sealed Systems)-14 (6 points); English-11 (½ point); Electronics-15 (8 points); First Aid-13 (1 point); French-11 (½ point); German-13 (0, native tongue); Guns (Pistols)-17 (2 points); Guns (Rifles)-17 (2 points); Guns (Submachine guns)-17 (2 points); Hebrew-12 (1 point); Hobby



(German History)-16 (5 points); Hobby (German Mythology)-15 (4 points); Intelligence Analysis-13 (4 points); Interrogation-16 (8 points); Mathematics-13 (4 points); Musical Instrument (Violin)-13 (4 points); Parachuting-14 (1 point); Psychology-15 (8 points); Research-12 (1 point); Soccer-13 (1 point); Street-wise-13 (2 points); Tactics-12 (2 points); Traps-12 (1 point).

Quirks

Considers himself the spiritual heir to the Übermensch.
Enjoys killing normals.
Avoids hostile metahumans.
Paranoid about gas and germ warfare.
Loves his violin more than anything else in the world.

Story

Franz Geitler was born in Stuttgart near the end of World War II. His father, a low-level Nazi, went underground, resurfacing in Nuremberg under a new name. The old man raised the boy to be a good Nazi, hinting that Franz was somehow . . . special. He died when Franz was in college. Franz became a competent engineer, with a high-paying job.

In 1978 the company changed hands, and Franz was laid off. He forced his way into the office of the new manager. The man was Jewish, and Franz's early indoctrination came to the fore. The argument became loud. Instinctively, Franz flung out his hands. A hail of sparkling shards shot forth, slicing the manager to ribbons. On his way out, Franz told the secretary that her boss did not want to be disturbed for the next hour.

Franz Geitler disappeared completely. Two years later, a metahuman mercenary appeared, wearing the swastika on his body armor. Before long, Kristallnacht was working for the PLO. Franz had gone underground and analyzed his life. Recalling his father's veiled hints and stories, Franz realized what the old man had been guiding him towards — his heritage as the prize product of a secret Nazi breeding program. Franz swore to carry on the work of the Reich.

Franz hates everyone. A sadist, he enjoys the pain and death he inflicts. But he flees those more powerful than himself. He holds the PLO in contempt, but they pay him well and let him operate as he wishes.

Before a mission, Kristallnacht prepares a base at least 100 miles from his objective, for his teleport starting point and retreat. In combat, Kristallnacht usually targets normals and vulnerable supers. If facing anyone clearly more powerful than himself, he'll teleport out. If necessary, he will baffle pursuit with several fast, short-distance teleports.

Typical Dialogue: "Sleep well, weakling! (POP!) Your friends can't protect you. (POP!) I'll be back for you . . . soon."

DER TOTENSCHHEIN

Appearance: Male human, age uncertain, 6'1", 190 lbs., true hair and eye color unknown.

ST 13 (30 points) **IQ** 14 (45 points) **Speed:** 7.5

DX 14 (45 points) **HT** 12 (20 points) **Move:** 7

Damage: Thrust 1d; Swing 2d-1

Point Total: 550

Advantages

- Attractive (5 points)
- Combat Reflexes (15 points)
- Eidetic Memory/2 (60 points)
- Language Talent +3 (6 points)
- Unusual Background: Super (50 points)
- Wealth: Comfortable (10 points)

Disadvantages

- Code of Honor: Pirates' (-5 points)
- Enemy: ICTF/Interpol on 6 or less (-20 points)
- Minor Vow: Kill employer if payment is late (-5 points)
- Secret Identity (-20 points)

Super Advantages

- Dark Vision (25 points)
- Full Coordination/1 (50 points)
- Increased Speed +1 (25 points)
- Silence +3 (15 points)

Non-Super Equipment

Variable; see below.

Skills

Acting-17 (2 points); Acrobatics-13 (2 points); Area Knowledge (Berlin)-16 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Europe)-15 (1/2 point); Area Knowledge (London)-15 (1/2 point); Area Knowledge (New York)-15 (1/2 point); Area Knowledge (Rome)-15 (1/2 point); Area Knowledge (Vienna)-15 (1/2 point); Area Knowledge (world)-15 (1/2 point); Bicycling-14 (1 point); Blowpipe-15 (4 points); Bow-14 (4 points); Breath Control-13 (1 point); Broadsword-15 (4 points); Carousing-13 (4 points); Chemistry/TL7-16 (2 points); Chinese (Mandarin)-17 (1/2 point); Climbing-14 (2 points); Computer Operation/TL7-16 (1 point); Computer Programming/TL7-16 (2 points); Cooking-18 (2 points); Criminology-17 (2 points); Demolitions-15 (1 point); Detect Lies-18 (3 points); Diplomacy-13 (1/2 point); Driving (stock auto)-13 (1 point); English-17 (1/2 point); Fast Draw (knife)-14 (1 point); Fast Draw (pistol)-14 (1 point); Fast Talk-21 (4 points); Fencing-18 (24 points); Forensics-14 (1 point); French-17 (1/2 point); German-17 (0, native tongue); Greek-17 (1/2 point); Guns (bazooka)-16 (1 point); Guns (grenade launcher)-16 (1 point); Guns (pistol)-20 (16 points); Guns (rifle)-20 (16 points); Guns (shotgun)-17 (2 points); Guns (sub-machine gun)-18 (4 points); History-14 (1 point); Holdout-21 (4 points); Intelligence Analysis-14 (1 point); Interrogation-15 (1 point); Italian-17 (1/2 point); Japanese-17 (1/2 point); Jumping-14 (1 point); Karate-14 (4 points); Knife-18 (16 points); Knife Throwing-16 (4 points); Law (Criminal)-14 (1 point); Lip Reading-15 (1 point); Literature-15 (2 points); Lock Picking/TL7-17 (2 points); Motorcycle-14 (1 point); Parachuting-14 (1 point); Pickpocket-14 (1 point); Piloting (small helicopter)-15 (1 point); Poisons-20 (4 points); Politics-15 (1 point); Powerboat-



13 (1 point); Research-15 (1 point); Riding (horse)-13 (1 point); Running-12 (4 points); Russian-17 (1/2 point); Scrounging-16 (1 point); Scuba-15 (1 point); Sex Appeal-13 (1 point); Shadowing-15 (1 point); Skiing-12 (1 point); Spanish-17 (1/2 point); Speed Load (automatic pistol)-14 (1 point); Speed Load (automatic rifle)-14 (1 point); Speed Load (grenade launcher)-14 (1 point); Speed Load (revolver)-14 (1 point); Speed Load (shotgun)-14 (1 point); Staff-14 (4 points); Stealth-16 (8 points); Streetwise-19 (3 points); Swedish-17 (1/2 point); Swimming-14 (1 point); Tactics-14 (1 point); Thai-14 (1/2 point); Traps/TL7-21 (4 points); Vietnamese-17 (1/2 point).

Quirks

- Always very polite.
- Likes to feel in control — arrogant.
- Never sits with his back to a window or a door.
- Considers himself merely an athletic, intelligent "super normal" — fascinated by "real" supers.
- Contemptuous of the criminal class, and respects intelligent police.

Story

Der Totenschein means "The Death Certificate." His real name is unknown, but his aliases include Otto Striker, Niccolo Fini, Sam Smiley and Friedrich Nietzsche. His nationality is suspected to be Austrian. The Certificate does not work through the Exchange or other "agents" and is not sought and hired by his employers. Instead, the Certificate keeps tabs on organizations and individuals who may require an assassin, contacting them when he thinks they need his services.

The Certificate's career began in 1982. Five deaths were dismissed as unrelated events until a police informer pointed at five payments made by his underworld boss to a numbered Swiss account. The informer was later found floating in the Danube, traces of curare still in his system. The Certificate has worked for the drug lords of Colombia, the Mafia in America and Italy, and several unscrupulous intelligence agencies.

Der Totenschein has used assistants but prefers to work alone. He covers his tracks thoroughly; some suggest he disguises himself as a police officer to sow false evidence and steal or erase files. Rarely does he kill anyone but his intended target. He carries at least three weapons at all times: a sword or gun stashed in a cane or umbrella, a small gun, switchblade knives, or collapsible blowpipes and staves are all common. Poison is often hidden in cigarette lighters or hip flasks. A shrewd, calculating man, he recognizes that an open confrontation with another super is foolish. All his assassinations of supers have been poisonings.

Typical Dialogue: "Pardon me. You don't know me, but I can help you."

THE VOID

Appearance: Female, force of nature, age 30, 5'7", 6,725 lbs., no visible hair or eyes
ST 696 (508 points) **IQ** 12 (20 points) **Speed:** 6.25
DX 15 (60 points) **HT** 10 (0 points) **Move:** 6, 12 flying, 3,520 teleporting

Damage: *Thrust* 70d+2; *Swing* 72d+2
Point Total: 1,975

Advantages

Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Appearance: Hideous (-20 points)
 Compulsive Behavior: Steals high-tech equipment. (-15 points)
 Enemy: IST, ICTF, Interpol on 6 or less (-15 points)
 Megalomania (-10 points)
 Paranoia (-10 points)
 Secret Identity (-20 points)
 Split Personality (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Absorption: 13d, Generic Energy (130 points)
 Doesn't Eat or Drink (10 points)
 Flight (No Higher Than 10', -20%; 32 points)
 Increased Density +10,000 pounds (500 points)
 DR 100 vs. Crushing, -100 hexes to knockback (free from Increased Density)
 Transformation (Instant; 15 points)
 Vacuum Support (40 points)

Super-Powers

Absorb Matter-18(20) (Skill cost: 20 points; Always on -60%; Absorption is permanent -30%; No ultimate weight limit +100%; Absorbed Mass adds to Increased Density +50%; Power cost: 224 points)
 Anti-G-19(10) (Skill cost: 36 points; Power cost: 30 points)
 Increase Gravity-17(12) (Skill cost: 28 points; Area Effect +50%; Increased Area +10, +200%; Touch Only -20%; Nuisance Effect: Objects move towards her at 1 hex/turn -10%; Power cost: 231 points)

Psionic Abilities (see Basic Set)

Teleport Power-15 (Can carry nothing with her; 38 points)
 Autoteleport-17 (14 points)
 Psychokinesis Power-16 (One skill: Telekinesis; Special effect: manipulation via gravity waves; 64 points)
 Telekinesis-17 (14 points)

Skills

Brawling-16 (2 points); English-11 (1 point); Scrounging-14 (4 points); Spanish-12 (0, native tongue); Stealth-16 (4 points).

Quirks

Desperately curious about why she's being persecuted.
 Insomniac.
 Always works alone.
 Contemptuous of everyone.
 Hates her other personality.

Final Point Total: 1,975 points



Story

Maria Katerina Francesca Gomez was a troubled child. Poor and ignorant Spanish villagers, her parents did not understand that their daughter was mentally ill; they thought her willful and evil. Maria ran away at 15, to Barcelona, where she worked as a prostitute for a year. There, her paranoia emerged. She became convinced that a conspiracy was hounding her. If she could only get out of Spain . . . She talked an English tourist into marrying her. Once in England she abandoned her husband and fled to Wales. Traveling sporadically (to keep Them off her trail), she took odd jobs, learning some mechanics here, a little electronics there. She began to play with assembling little devices. Soon she became convinced that They were after her again. But a plan to defeat Them formed. She just had to build the right machine, and they would be gone! She began raiding labs and warehouses for equipment, looking for parts for The Machine.

Thus she found herself in a college physics lab, seeking out the next piece of equipment she needed for her grand design. While searching the darkened lab she accidentally activated a particle accelerator — and walked in front of its output beam. Maria became a quantum black hole with a humanoid event horizon.

The Void has a personality all its own. Its memories are all but inaccessible to Maria, but its motives are identical — and both believe that the Conspiracy is still after them. Most of Void's crimes are simply attempts to steal high-tech equipment. Somewhere she has a hidden cave full of *big* useless devices.

In combat, Void uses Increase Gravity or Telekinesis to draw opponents to her, until she can touch them. Most beings are killed — instantly absorbed into her singularity. If they avoid that fate (requires a roll of 6 or less on 3d; each full 50 points of ST adds +1), a blow from Void is, if anything, more deadly. She will teleport away if anything really frightens or upsets her — or, sometimes, if the combat bores her.

Void is constantly gaining levels of Increased Density. All earned experience should go to this power.

Typical dialogue: "They sent you, didn't they! The pyramid . . . the men in black . . . the Word! Stay away from me! No, come here! No, stay away!"

GLOSSARY

Accidental

A metahuman who received his powers by misadventure or chance. Some "accidentals" undoubtedly had critical but unexpressed levels of superfunction genes. Others may have had subcritical but significant levels of the genes. See also "Mutate."

BTO

Bonded Telepaths' Organization. Essentially a union for telepaths. The BTO provides telepaths with a financial stake in ethical dealings for civil service. There are several, mostly-independent BTOs around the world.

CLE

Committee on Law Enforcement. A subcommittee of the Security Council, the CLE oversees the ICTF (q.v.).

COPPF

Committee On Permanent Peacekeeping Forces. The parent organization of the ISTs, the COPPF is a subsidiary body of the U.N. Security Council.

Crunchy

A derogatory term used by supers, especially those with enhanced strength and toughness, to refer to normals.

DMI

The Division of Metahuman Information. A United States government agency that acts as an information clearinghouse and insurance underwriter for private supergroups.

EEC

The European Economic Community, more properly known simply as the European Community. An organization of 12 European nations (as of early 1990) with

the aims of integrating their separate economies, coordinating their social developments, and bringing about the eventual political union of the democratic states of Europe.

Exchange, The

An "employment agency" for metavillains and super mercenaries. It does not seem to have any set physical location, and apparently employs a number of metahumans to protect its secrecy. For more information on The Exchange, see p.64 of *GURPS Super Scum*.

FAO

Food and Agriculture Organization. A U.N. intergovernmental agency established to eliminate poverty and hunger throughout the world. FAO is the parent organization of the IWO (q.v.).

Gengineered

Shorthand phrase for "genetically engineered."

HUAC

The House Un-American Activities Committee. A congressional committee formed to investigate subversion in the United States. HUAC collapsed in 1950, but was reactivated in 1961. It was known for its conservative bent and its liberal interpretation of the phrase "subversive activities," and both incarnations often investigated and harassed supers simply because they were supers.

IAEA

International Atomic Energy Agency. A U.N. intergovernmental agency dedicated to the peaceful uses of atomic energy. It controls and distributes licenses for plants which utilize the Flare fusion process.

ICTF

International Crime Task Force. An international law enforcement agency under the CLE which has taken over the functions of Interpol in recent years.

Independent Metahuman Ethics Committee

A U.S.-based, non-profit volunteer organization which investigates metaheroes; although it has no real power, its revelations on the ethical behavior of heroes can make or break careers.

IST

International Super Team. Also commonly used to refer to the entire worldwide IST embassy network. An IST is a permanent peace-keeping force made up of supers and powered infantry, and is usually based in a country's capitol city.

IST Command

The military/bureaucratic body which oversees the administration and placement of individual IST embassies. It is divided into several regional commands.

IWO

International Weather Organization. A U.N. agency which employs metahumans capable of manipulating the weather, and uses their abilities to ameliorate drought, hurricanes, and other serious weather problems. The IWO is administered by the FAO (q.v.), but is also answerable to the WMO (q.v.) and its World Weather Watch.

Magic

Still unexplained fully by researchers, although many reliable examples can be found. Some postulate that it is in fact a form of psionic ability, but this does not explain all aspects of the phenomenon.

Magitechology

An experimental field of research being pursued by the U.N. through UNESCO. Magitech attempts to fuse the working principles of both magic and technology into one field.

Manufactured

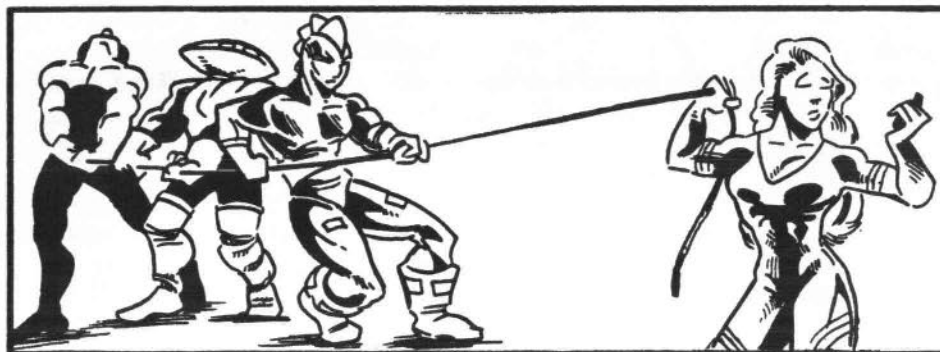
Any super given his powers by intentional efforts.

Meeran

A single member of the Meeranon race.

Meeranon

An extraterrestrial race which recently discovered both starflight and Earth; a



trade and cultural exchange treaty was recently signed by the U.N. and the Meeranar queen. The Meeranon resemble large, bipedal predator cats.

Meta

See "Super."

Metahuman

Any person exhibiting powers and abilities outside the human norm.

Metahero

A metahuman who is employed as a law enforcement agent, or independent of official support performs a similar function within his community. Metaheroes may also include those who served in their nation's military. The term is culturally relative — the metaheroes of Libya are metavillains to any nation which is the target of Libyan-backed terrorism.

Metarchy

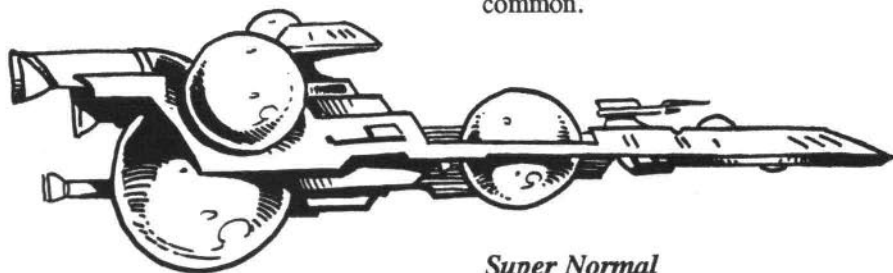
Government by super-powered beings, usually in the form of a dictatorship. Chile, Guatemala and Nicaragua are the three best-known metarchies, at least in the Western Hemisphere. The Ayatollah Khomeini is suspected of being a metahuman, which would also add Iran to the list.

Metavillain

Any person using metahuman powers, or high technology simulating metahuman powers, to commit criminal or terrorist acts.

Mundane

A normal (see below). The "mundane world" is the world and society of normals, as opposed to the subculture of supers.



Mutant

Any metahuman whose powers were inherent and manifested on their own, usually at or about the onset of puberty.

Mutate

Noun, commonly used to describe any person who gained their inherent powers

through an external agency (see "Accidental"). More properly, though, a mutate is a person whose subcritical levels of supergenes were activated through an actual genetic alteration, whether intentional or not.

MV

Shorthand term for "metavillain."

Normal

Any person who does not possess or manifest metahuman powers.

POWER

Paranormals Only Want Equal Rights. A multi-party coalition group founded in the late 1960s to fight the efforts of the Nixon Administration to infringe on the civil rights of metahumans. In its three-year lifespan it had considerable success.

Seeders

An ancient starfaring species apparently responsible for the existence of many of the galaxy's sapient races. When implanting the genetic potential for an intelligent race, the Seeders routinely insert gene complexes for paranormal powers in order to provide more survival capability. As a result, many races in the galaxy have a distinctive racial power or power cluster. The existence of the Seeders is unknown to the humans of Earth and the Meeranon felinoids, although both races were engineered by the Seeders in the distant past.

Super

The common term in most English-speaking nations for a metahuman. Many other countries, especially those with a French language background, use "supers" as well. *Meta* and *Über* are also common.

Super Normal

Common term for a person who displays no metahuman powers, but who is as personally formidable as a super.

Supertemps

Corporation which serves as an employment agency for metahumans. In addition hiring supers to work directly for the company in its Industrial, Guardian and Entertainment divisions, it also finds more

mundane employment for supers with weak powers, unusual appearances or environmental requirements, or for those who wish to have a more normal lifestyle.

For more information on Supertemps, see *GURPS Supertemps*.

Techno

Any person whose advanced gadgetry makes him the equal of a metahuman. The U.N. IST's powered infantry are the best-known technos.

Training-Enhanced

A super whose abilities are gained through intense physical training which triggers his latent super abilities. Many of the earliest supers were training-enhanced, particularly those born before the 1924 irradiation of the Earth.

UNESCO

The United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organization. A U.N. body which promotes collaboration among nations through education, science and culture. Among its other duties, it oversees scientific research funded by the U.N. Note that even though the U.S. dropped out of UNESCO in 1985 because of its alleged anti-Western bias, as a core member of the U.N. it may still benefit from technologies developed by the organization.

UNET

The IST/U.N. international computer network.

UNSAT

Generic name for any one of the six U.N. telecommunications satellites in geosynchronous orbit.

Vig

A vigilante. A crimefighting super with no official status.

WHO

World Health Organization. WHO oversees and administers international efforts to increase the standard level of medical practice, particularly in underdeveloped countries. WHO also funds global medical research.

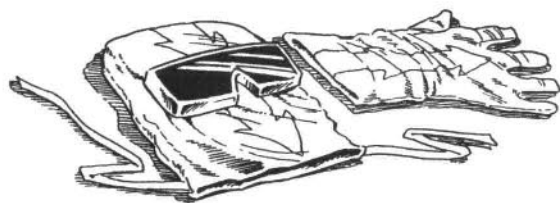
WMO

World Meteorological Organization. The WMO facilitates international cooperation in meteorological studies and statistics, and oversees the World Weather Watch. It is one of the two organizations which can command the IWO (q.v.).

INDEX

- A.I.s, 5, 35, 99, *Meeranon*, 39.
 Accidentals, 57, 125.
 ACLU, 87.
 Afghanistan, 98.
 Africa, 70, 97-99.
 African National Congress, 103.
 Agreement, The, 39.
 Agriculture, 55.
 al-'Ain min Allah, 75, 117.
 Alabama, 95.
 Alaska, 99.
 Albania, 74, 99.
 Albert, Chris, 98.
 Aldrin, Buzz, 97.
 Algeria, 108.
 Algiers, 108.
 Alpha-7, 53.
 AMA, 55.
 Amsterdam, 120.
 Andropov, Yuri, 98.
 Angola, 79, 99.
 Antarctica, 14.
 Anti-nuclear movement, 47.
 Anti-psi power, 81.
 Arab nations, 69, 75, 95.
 Arabs, 96-97, 105.
 Arafat, Yassir, 78.
 Argentina, 73-74, 111.
 Arguros Astraph, 9-11, 22-24, 30, 58, 97, 101, 104, 113-114.
 Arizona, 10.
 Armstrong, Neil, 97.
 Astronaut, The, 98.
 Athens, 96.
 Auschwitz, 94.
 Australia, 95.
 Austria, 123.
 Autograpnels, 50.
 Backpack parawings, 50.
 Baghdad, 76.
 Ball, Rebecca, 97.
 Bangladesh, 15.
 Barcelona, 124.
 Basic Training, *IST*, 10, 29, *WWII*, 80, 82, 84.
 Battlesuits, 50, *Battlesuit skill*, 91.
 Bay of Pigs, 96.
 Beatles, 60, 86, 96.
 Beijing, 71.
 Beirut, 78, 98.
 Belfast, 97.
 Bell Labs, 47, 96.
 Berlin, 94, *Airlift*, 87, 95, *Wall* 47, 96, 99.
 Berne, 46-47, 99.
 Bhopal, 98.
 Bicentennial, 97.
 Biphasic carbon/ceramic armor, 49.
 Black Moon Society, 94.
 Blackader, David, 27.
 Blackstar, 96.
 Blake, William, 44.
 Blasters, 44, 47, 50.
 Blitzen, 45, 81-82, 94-95.
 Blue Demon, 99.
 Blur, 96.
 Bogatyr, 102.
 Bogota, 72.
 Bolshoi, 83, 94.
 Bowery, 110.
 Brahmin caste, 69.
 Brazil, 15, 40.
 Brezhnev Doctrine, 73.
 Brezhnev, Leonid, 98.
 British Columbia, 104.
 Broadcast, 79, 103.
 BTO, 61-62, 64, 92, 95, 97, 125.
 Bubiyan Islands, 75.
 Bucharest, 109.
 Buckingham Palace, 69.
 Bug detectors, 51.
 Buonocore, Antonio, 13.
 California Institute of Technology, 47, 96.
 California, 68, 98.
 Cambodia, 97-98.
 Canada, 82.
 Cape Kennedy, 99.
 Caribbean, 73.
 Carmelites, 78.
 Carnaval, 40.
 Carter, President James Earl, 23, 97-98.
 Cascade, 95.
 Cassius, 96.
 Castillo Test, 50.
 Castro, Fidel, 73, 95, 99.
 Catholics, 78.
 Ceausescu, President Nicolae, 74, 99, 109.
 Central Park, 98.
 Chad, 74.
 Challenger, 99.
 Charlton, 63.
 Chat Noir, le, 70.
 Chat, le, 95.
 Chaumont, Dr. Nathalie, 52-54, 99, 106.
 Chemical weapons, 75.
 Chernobyl, 99.
 Chicago, 96, 113.
 Chile, 73, 79, 126.
 China, 7, 10, 15, 71-72, 75, 89, 95-99.
 Chongqing, 71.
 Chernenko, Constantin, 98.
 Church of God in America, 65.
 CIA, 97.
 Civil rights, 86-88, 92, 95-96, 126.
 CLE, 8-9, 11, 125.
 Cleveland, 96.
 Cocaine, 72.
 Cold War, 66.
 College of Cardinals, 78.
 Colombia, 72-73, 99, 123.
 Columbia University, 110.
 Com unit, 51, 55.
 Combat Simulation Chamber, 18, 22.
 Comic books, 26, 63, 68, 82, 85-86, 89, 92.
 Common Market, 74.
 Communism, 71, 73-74.
 Comoros, 79.
 Computers, 51.
 Concentrated rations, 51.
 Confederation, 34-35, 41-42.
 COPPF, 5, 7-9, 11, 14, 52, 59, 63, 76, 125.
 Costumes, 11, 85, 96.
 Courts-Martial, 12-13.
 Covert Operations, 6, 8.
 Cuba, 73-74, 95-96.
 Cultural Revolution, 96.
 Dachau, 94.
 Danube, 123.
 Darkstorm, 96.
 Day Tripper, 92.
 Dead Ringer, 118.
 Deadly Dozen, 97, 99.
 Deepsleep box, 17, 52.
 Delaware, 96.
 Denmark, 97.
 Desert Hawk, 119.
 Destructeur, 87, 94-97.
 Detroit, 96.
 Dietrich Siemens, 23.
 Dimension Warp super-skill, 36.
 Dinosaurs, 94.
 Diplomatic Immunity advantage, 30.
 Disguise kits, 51.
 Djinn, 119.
 DMI, 61, 67, 98, 125.
 DNA, 49, 99.
 Domino, 98.
 Donner, 81.
 Dr. Radiation, 73, 79, 95.
 Dreamer, 97.
 Drifter, 104.
 Drugs, 72-73, 74, 123; *jugo*, 72.
 Dukakis, Governor Michael, 99.
 Duke University, 95.
 Earthquake Project, 28.
 Earthwalker, 92.
 Eastern Block, 70.
 Ecovenger, 90.
 Ecuador, 73.
 Edicts of 1982, 6, 8, 12-14, 23, 46, 58-60, 70-71, 101, 111, 115.
 Edinburgh, 111.
 EEC/Common Market, 70, 73-74, 95-98, 125, *super-team*, 101, 105, 114..
 Egalité, 82, 94.
 Egypt, 15, 98.
 England, 38, 45, 62, 80, 83-84, 94-95, 97-99, 124.
 English, 11, 30.
 Enhanced Strength Rigs, 48-49.
 Environmentalists, 68, 104.
 Envirosuits, 51.
 Estonia, 74.
 Europe, 70, 73, 94-95, 125.
 EX34 chain guns, 17.
 Exchange, The, 62-63, 97, 118, 120, 125.
 Exoskeleton skill, 30.
 F.R.A.N.C. Probe, 40, 52-54, 99.
 Fantôme D'Orleans, Le, 105.
 FAO, 7, 56, 64, 98, 125.
 Fawcett, 63, 89.
 FBI, 83, 84, 90, 92, 97, 113.
 Fels, 81.
 Field Commanders, 10, 12-14, 30.
 Fire extinguisher tube, 52.
 Firebird, 98.
 First Church of the Supermen, 68.
 Fixit, 52.
 Flare, 46-47, 96-97.
 Flashlights, 52.
 Flesh wounds, 100.
 Florida, 99.
 Flynn, Errol, 43.
 Ford, Gerald, 97.
 Fox, 44.
 France, 7, 10, 15, 52, 82, 94-95, 105.
 Fraternité, 82, 94.
 Fred Birch Society, 60.
 French Indochina, 95.
 French Resistance, 80-82, 94-95.
 FTL radio, 35.
 FTL travel, 35-36, 40.
 Fuerkraft, 67.
 Fusion power, 8, 46, 58, 74, *Confederation*, 35.
 Fusionne, La, 54, 106.
 Gadgeteer, 81.
 Gagarin, Yuri, 96.
 Gandhi government, 97.
 GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), 27-28.
 General Assembly, 9, 39, 46, 59, 74.
 Gengineered, 49, 125.
 Georgia, 115.
 Germany, 15, 45, 73, 80, 82-83, 95, 97, 99, 122; *East*, 114.
 Glasnost, 70, 99, 115.
 Glenn, John, 96.
 Glorious People's Metahuman Defense Collective, 83, 94.
 Gorbachev, Mikhail, 11, 70, 74, 98-99, 109, 115.
 Greece, 58, 98, 101.
 Green Parties, 47.
 Guatemala, 73, 79, 126.
 Gulf of Sidra, 119.
 Hague, the, 76.
 Haifa, 78.
 Hanoi, 71.
 Hard of Hearing disadvantage, 91.
 Hastings International, 53.
 Havana, 73.
 Healers, 55.
 Helena, Montana, 98.
 Helsinki, 97.
 Highball, 96.
 Hippies, 88-89, 92.
 Hiroshima, 14.
 Hitler, Adolf, 81-83, 86, 94.
 Hoffman, Abbie, 97.
 Hollywood, 82-83.
 Holzmans, Brenda, 97.
Homo erectus, 58, 94.
 Hong Kong, 71.
 Houston Astros, 64.
 HUAC, 87-88, 91, 95-96, 125.
 Huffner, Martin, 98.
 Hungary, 73, 95, 99.
 Hunter, 81, 94.
 Hussein, Saddam, 75-76, 99.
 Hyperspace drive, *Confederation*, 35-36.
 IAEA, 8, 46, 125.
 ICTF, 9, 11, 52, 63, 74, 77, 99, 118, 120, 123-125.
 ILO (International Labor Organization), 27-28.
 IMF (International Monetary Fund), 27-28.
 Independent Metahuman Ethics Committee, 63, 96, 125.
 India, 15, 69, 97-98.
 Indonesia, 15.
 Inertial compass, 52.
 Insurance, 60.
 Intelligence Analysis skill, 81.
 International Court of Justice, 77.
 Interpol, 9, 63, 74, 118, 120, 123-124.
 Iran, 15, 75-76, 98-99, 117, 121.
 Iraq, 75-76, 98-99.
 Ireland, 97.
 Islam, 69, 75, 117, 119.
 Israel, 74, 78, 95-99, 105, 107.
 IST Basic Training, 10.
 IST Command, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13-14, 26, 42, 52, 73, 125.
 IST locations: *Anchorage*, 14, 99; *Baghdad*, 75, 76, 99; *Beijing*, 6; *Berlin*, 74; *Bogota*, 73; *Bonn*, 74, 99; *Brasilia*, 40, 52, 99; *Buenos Aires*, 111; *Cairo*, 109; *Damascus*, 115; *Kuwait City*, 75; *London*, 24-27, 38, 107-108, 112; *Los Angeles*, 41-42, 63; *McMurdo*, 14; *Moscow*, 104; *Murmansk*, 14; *New York*, 13, 19-23, 101, 104-105, 110; *Panama City*, 77; *Rabat*, 112; *Tokyo*, 27-28, 114; *Vienna*, 102; *Washington*, 113.
 IST Mainframe, 22, 51.
 IST membership package, 29.
 IST Memorial Plaza, 22, 24.
 Italy, 13, 15, 66, 123.
 IWO (International Weather Organization), 55, 64, 98-99, 114, 125.
 Jackson, Rev. Jesse, 99.
 Jaguar, 72.
 Japan, 15, 70, 76, 95.
 Japanese, 80.
 Javelin, 99.
 Jerusalem, 75, 78, 99.
 Jesuits, 78.
 JDL (Jewish Defense League), 96.
 Jews, 74, 96.
 Jimmy Carter, 59.
 Job Table, 31.
 John Bull, 7, 94.
 John Deere, 49.
 Johnny Ripp, 120.
 Jongleur, 82, 94.
 Jugo, 72.
 Kalibanos, 94.
 Kennedy, John F., 96.
 Kennedy, Robert, 96.
 Kent State, 65, 97.
 Kent, Bruce, 68.
 Kevlar, 49, 52.
 KGB, 95, 115.
 al-Khadr, 107, 112.
 al-Khayal min Allah, 75, 117, 121.
 Khomeini, Ayatollah, 75, 117, 121, 126.
 Khrushchev, Nikita, 9.
 Kid Chrome, 99.
 Kiev, 102.

King Constantine, 101.
 King, President Martin Luther Jr, 67, 77, 92, 95-97, 99.
 KKK, 96, 99.
 Knife skill, 81.
 Koch, Edward, 23.
 Kodiak, 104.
 Korea, 77, 98.
 Korean War, 88, 95.
 Kristallnacht, 24, 78, 122.
 Kuwait, 75-76.
 Kyz, 32-35, 41.
 Late Night With David Letterman, 23, 111.
 Latvia, 74.
 Lebanon, 75, 97-98, 107.
 Legal Attache, 10, 12, 15.
 Legal Enforcement Powers advantage, 71; *IST*, 29, 30, 71.
 Leningrad, 84.
 Liberté, 81, 94.
 Libra, 92.
 Libya, 77-79, 97-99, 126.
 Lightning Rod, *see also* *Blitzen*, 45, 95.
 Lithuania, 74.
 Little Rock, 95.
 Livewire, 98.
 Loge, 81.
 London, 38, 70, 98-99.
 Loon, 67.
 Lord Krishna, 92.
 Los Angeles Project, 82, 84, 94.
 Los Angeles, 42, 44, 96, 98.
 Lucas, Dr. Gerald, 47.
 Lucifer, 81, 94.



Lynx, 99.
 Mafia, 123.
 Mages, 26.
 Magic, 26, 68, 125.
 Magitechology, 26, 125.
 Mandela, Nelson, 96.
 Mandelbrot, Benoit, 96.
 Manga, 70.
 Manhattan Project, 94.
 Manufactureds, 57, 125.
 Mao Tse-tung, 97.
 M*A*S*H, 63.
 MASH unit, 89.
 MAUS, 81.
 McCarthy, Senator Joseph, 91, 95.
 Medical skills 32, 35.
 Meeranar stardrive, 55.
 Meeranon, 30, 35-37, 40, 42-43, 49, 56, 99, 125.
 Mercado, Katarina, 25.
 Metahuman Peoples' Research Institute, 66.
 Metarchies, 70, 73, 126.
 Metatax, 60.
 Metavillains, 70, 90, 92, 125-126.

Mexico, 15.
 Miami, 77.
 Middle East, 74.
 Midnight Angel, 75, 108, 112.
 Mikhail, 83, 94.
 Mindbender, 72.
 Minder, 94.
 Mir II, 98.
 Mist, 94.
 Mlastina, 109.
 Monaco, 79.
 Mondale, Walter, 23, 98.
 Monocrys, 49.
 Montana, 98.
 Montgomery, 95.
 Morocco, 112.
 Moscow, 96.
 Moslems, 75.
 Munich, 67, 97.
 Muscle Man IV, 49.
 Museum of Metahumans, 18-19, 22.
 Mutants, 57, 87, 95, 126.
 Mutates, 57, 126.
 MV-2400, 52-55, 106.
 NAACP, 96.
 Nader, Ralph, 63.
 Nagasaki, 14.
 Namibia, 74.
 National Guard, 87-88, 97.
 National Periodical Publications, 26, 63, 89.
 NATO, 95, 98.
 Nazis, 81-82, 122.
 Netherlands, 77.
 New York City, 65, 97.
 New York, 65, 72, 97-99, 110.

New Yorker magazine, 23.
 Newark, 96.
 Nicaragua, 74, 126.
 Nigeria, 79.
 Nightbird, 97.
 Nightflick, 67.
 Nixon, President Richard M., 62, 89, 92-93, 97, 126.
 Nobel Peace Prize, 98.
 Non-intervention, 6.
 Noriega, Manuel, 77, 99.
 Nuclear weapons, 6, 8, 75-78, 99.
 Nuremberg trials, 95.
 NYPD, 24.
 Olympics, 97-98, 105.
 OPEC, 47, 97.
 Oregon, 42.
 Orleans, 105.
 Pacific, 94.
 Pacifier helmet, 17, 52.
 Pakistan, 15.
 Palestinians, 74-75.
 Panama, 77, 99.
 Papadopoulos, Col. George, 101.

Paraguay, 73.
 Paris, 52, 83, 106, 121.
 Parks, Rosa, 95.
 Patchwork, 110.
 Patron advantage, *IST*, 29, *WWII*, 80.
 Peacenik, 90.
 Perón, Juan, 73.
 Persian Gulf, 98.
 Personal Privacy Act, 71, 97.
 Petrosian, Xavier, 9.
 PGIE, 74, 78, 97, 107.
 Philippines, 15.
 Pinocchio, 106.
Playboy magazine, 65, 112.
 PLO, 74-78, 99, 107, 125.
 Pluto, 30.
 Poland, 98-99.
 Polisario, 112.
 Polykev, 56.
 Pop culture, 63.
 Pope, 78.
 Poprock, 70.
 Pouka, 23, 111.
 Power glove, 53.
 POWER, 93, 97, 126.
 Powered armor, 90, 95.
 Powered infantry, 15, 48, 50, 89, 94, 125.
 Project Brainchild, 52, 106.
Psi in the House, 23, 63.
 Psi powers, 81.
 PSI, 61, 64, 95.
 Psi-Jump drives, 35-36.
 Psis, 83, 89, 94-95.
 Psycho Squad, 81, 83-85.
 Public Relations Officer, 10, 14.
 al-Qadaffi, Col. Moammar, 77-78, 97-99, 119.
 QES, 96.
 Quasar, 96-97.
 Queen Elizabeth II, 26, 95.
 Rabat, 112.
 Rand Corporation, 90.
 Ransom, The 98.
 Raygun Paper, 47, 96.
 Reaction modifiers *IST*, 29.
 Reactionless drive, *Confederation*, 35, *Meeranon*, 39.
 Reagan, President Ronald Wilson, 67, 98-99.
 Realism, 4; *combat*, 70.
 Red China, 70, 98, 112.
 Red Knight, 83, 94.
 Rhine, Dr. J.B., 64, 81, 95.
 Rhodesia, 97.
 Rio de Janeiro, 40.
 Roland Power Cells, 45.
 Rome, 99.
 Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 60.
 RPCs, 46-47, 89-90, 95-96.
 Rumania, 74, 99, 109.
 Rykov, Sergei, 11.
 Rynkarians, 29.
 Sadat, Anwar, 98.
 Safecracker, 67.
 San Francisco, 7, 94, 99.
 Saudi Arabia, 76.
 Savoir-Faire skill, 30.
 Scat, 92.
 Schrecken, der, 81.
 Scotland, 111.
 Seaver, Senator Charles "Seer," 61.
 Secret disadvantage, 80, 83.
 Secret Identities, 11, 61, 85.

Secretary General, 59.
 Security clearances, 11.
 Security Council, 8-12, 16, 48, 58-59, 72-73, 76-77, 96, 125.
 Security Officer, 15.
 Seductress, 91, 96, 99.
 Seeder genes, 38, 57-58, 80, 87.
 Seeders, 32, 35-37, 57, 94, 126.
 Sgt. Strike, 81, 94.
 Shah, 117, 121.
 Sherbourne, Sir Wilton, 12.
 Shrike, 72.
 Siberia, 10.
 Silver, 94.
 Sinai, 97.
 Six-Day War, 96.
 Slammer, 97.
 Sniffer, 78.
 Socialism, 73.
 Solidarity, 98.
 Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr, 102.
 Songbird, 99.
 Soulflame, 91-92.
 South Africa, 70, 78-79, 96-99, 103.
 South America, 70.
 Southeast Asia, 86-87.
 Soviet Union, 7, 10-11, 15, 60, 70, 73-74, 76, 80, 83-84, 89, 94-99, 102, 115.
 Spain, 74, 124.
 Spanish, 97.
 Sri Lanka, 10.
 Stalker, 94.
 Star, 83, 94.
 STAR, 99.
 Steinam, Gloria, 97.
 Stepenwolf, 84.
 Stravinsky, Igor, 123.
 Strike Force A, 82, 94.
 Stuttgart, 122.
 Suez Canal, 95, 97.
 Summer of Love, 96.
 Super Jump power, 90.
 Super names, 11, 85.
 Supertemps, 65, 98-99, 126.
 Supreme Court, 98.
 Surveyor I, 96.
 Suspended Animation, 39.
 Swimming skill, 91.
 Switzerland, 47, 77, 79, 99.
 Syria, 78.
 Taiwan, 97.
 Team Administrators, 10, 12-14, 29-30.
 Teheran, 98, 121.
 Tel Aviv, 78.
 Telepaths, 6, 60-62, 83, 97.
 Televiewers, 53.
 Terrorists, 40, 74-75, 99.
 Texas, 66.
 Thailand, 15.
 Thames River, 99.
 THAMF, 67.
 Thatcher, Margaret, 26.
 Three Mile Island, 98.
 Three-Telepath System, 12, 62.
 Thunderbird, 63, 96.
 Tiananmen Square, 6, 28, 70-71, 99.
Time magazine, 40.
 Tokyo, 71.
 Toledo, 47.

Totenkopf, 67.
 Totenschein, 123.
 Touchstone, 41-42, 63, 98.
 TRADE, 96.
 Traders, 35.
 Triomphe, La, 112.
 Tripphammer, 92.
 Truman, President Harry S, 7.
 Turkey, 15, 76.
 Tutu, Archbishop Desmond, 98.
 U.N. Charter, 5-7.
 U.N., 9, 11, 14, 16, 38, 46-48, 53-56, 58-59, 64, 70, 72-75, 77-79, 94, 96-99, 102, 125-126.
 Übermenschen, 45, 82, 85, 94.
 Ulaanbaatar, 71.
 Undistractable disadvantage, *Meeranon*, 36.
 UNESCO, 26, 39, 42, 52, 54, 58, 64, 126.
 UNET, 8, 22, 28, 52, 54-55, 126.
 UNICEF, 75.
 Union Carbide, 98.
 Union Jack, 94.
 United Kingdom, 7, 10, 12, 15, 61.
 United Nations, 5-7, 13.
 United States, 7, 10-11, 15, 47-48, 55, 60, 67, 70-71, 74, 77-78, 80, 82-86, 92, 94-99, 123, 125.
 UNSAT, 54, 126.
 Unusual Background advantage, 80, 100, *Meeranon*, 36.
 USO, 80, 84-85.
 Vacuum Support power, 87.
 Vatican, 77-78.
 Vienna, 99.
 Viet Cong, 89.
 Vietnam, 15, 48, 87, 89, 95-98.
 Vigilantes, 59, 65-66, 92, 126.
 Vilnius, 74.
 Void, 124.
 Waldheim, Kurt, 9.
 Wales, 124.
 Walesa, Lech, 98.
 Warp drive, 36; *Confederation*, 35, *Meeranon*, 39.
 Warrior, 113.
 Warsaw Pact, 73, 95, 99.
 Washington, 85, 88, 92, 96.
 Watchdog, 99.
 Watergate, 97.
 Waters, Roger, 99.
 Watts, 96.
 West Bank, 78, 99.
 Whipsaw, 65, 97, 99.
 WHO, 7, 126.
 Whyte Tyger, 43-44.
 Will rolls, 72.
 Windstorm, 95.
 Winterhawk, 72.
 Witchwind, 28, 114.
 WMO, 125-126.
 Wolfe, Tom, 64.
 World War II, 66, 80, 87-88, 94.
 X, 95-96.
 Yuppies, 97.
 Yugoslavia, 73.
 Zasheta, 115.

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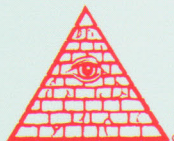
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