

A PART OF GAMMA WORLD REVISITED

James M. Ward



For any role playing game to be really effective, it is vital to create some basic premise for any non-player group. The Cryptic Alliances are tailor-made for any large campaign and to briefly jot down the creation and present situation as well as the direction the alliances will be taking is a good move.

The "Brotherhood of Thought" was started by a biochemist from the University of California that was putting the finishing touches on an ecological monitoring station in the mountains near the university. The time of the "great destruction" pulverized the campus while Dr. Dotson and two assistants were at the station. The years afterward were a matter of survival for the three. Within months, animals of all different types began to flock to the station for the pure well water its pumps could bring up to the surface. The scientific interest of the three couldn't help noticing the change brought about in the thirsty creatures and this interest was intensified when several groups of animals followed unspoken directions from them, and thus revealed their telepathic powers. Long years of work and a specialized breeding program brought about several species of animals of human or better intelligence. The years went by and that biochemist and his assistants had sons and daughters that carried on their work. Because of this all humanoid or animal followers of this group have an inordinate fondness for humans. They spread up and down the west coast and into the Rockies. The groups of three came from an animalistic imitation of what they saw in their first leaders. The group presently is run by the following beings:

ELENOR: 5th generation granddaughter to the first biochemist, MS: 18, I: 18, D: 17, Ch: 18, C: 18, S: 16, Hit Points 91; uses a Black Ray Gun, Stun Rifle, Medi-kit, and Plastic Armor.

CRISPT: 19th generation Gren, MS: 17, I: 18, D: 18, C: 18, S: 18, Hit Points 131; uses a longbow with 18 intensity poison arrows, 2 daggers of duralloy, Armor Class: 4.

POSH: 23rd generation Brutorz: this being is the genius of all of its kind and surprises all who must deal with it; MS: 18, I: 18, D: 18, C: 18, S: 18, Hit Points 82, Armor Class: 7, and it has the following physical and mental attributes: Heightened Vision, Increased Speed, Radiated

Eyes, Regeneration, Mental Control, Pyrokinesis, Repulsion, and Telepathy. This group roams with others and recruits beings for the "Brotherhood" leading them to the original station (now much expanded).

The "Seekers" group began around a nucleus of Texans who were camping out near Lubbock on the range when the time of the "great destruction" hit their area. Their range skills allowed them to begin again with ease. As time went by and mutants started entering the area, humanoids and mutated animals were treated as gruesome vermin to be wiped out with maximum force. Mutants that were "completely" human in appearance were accepted as "unusually" talented partners in a battle for survival. Currently the group is led by Tral-Vash, a human of unusual power: MS: 8, I: 18, D: 18, Ch: 17, C: 18, S: 10, Hit Points 99; he uses a Fusion Rifle, Energy Mace, and Powered Scout Armor. Armories have been raided so that the group has a vast supply of weapons and vehicles. The leader doesn't favor expansion, he wants to create a solid nation of warriors working for several generations to accomplish this goal.

The "Knights of Genetic Purity" evolved from a large group of humans that survived the war, but were dusted with radiation. From that time on, for generation after generation, horrible mutations were created and these were all killed. By the third generation of this grief and sadness a leader arose who moved to end this blight on his race. He created an organization willing and able to breed out all racial defects. They took this one step further in that they began killing all humanoids wherever they found them, even to the point of searching them out far from their home territory. This organization honored those who could recover lost technology and thus they have grown strong in physical power. Their leader has the following statistics: SEVEREN: MS: 3, I: 15, D: 18, Ch: 18, C: 17, S: 18, Hit Points 100, he uses a Mark 7 Rifle, a Stun Whip, and Powered Assault Armor. He and three others, armed as himself, often travel out destroying strong pockets of mutant strength.

The "Friends of Entropy" are gruesome beings worshipping death from the very beginning, when a quasi-religious cult survived in the

intact state from the time of the "great destruction." The initial group started out simply wanting to kill all animal life around them (forcing them to move often). As they ate contaminated flesh and traveled through radiated areas their offspring begin to mutate rapidly. These newer generations caused the cult to modify its thinking in the desire to kill all life. The current co-ordinator of the group is a humanoid mutant named Blern. This creature is the ultimate model for the cult. At birth, when his flesh was exposed to the air a poison gas was given off, killing his mother and the attending midwife. His proud father designed a uniform for him so that he could travel with all the rest. On reaching maturity, he further mutated: growing a pair of horns, requiring tinted goggles to travel during the day, and having to breathe through a special filter to extract all pollen elements from his air. He also increased in mental and physical powers including some powers totally unknown until then: MS: 18, I: 18, D: 10, C: 18, S: 7, Hit Points 104; he uses a Mark V Blaster, Mark 7 Rifle, a Vibro Blade, several Torc Grendades, an Energy Cloak, and a Medi-kit especially designed for his needs (it would kill anyone else). His mutational abilities include: Gas Generation (intensity 18 poison), Heightened Balance, Dexterity, Precision, & Touch, Radiated Eyes, Sonics, Dual Brain, De-evolution, Force Field Generation, Heightened Brain Talent, Life Leech, Mental Control, Telepathy, the ability to magnify by a factor of 3 any blast from *any type* rifle or pistol he uses, and the ability to communicate with any intelligent machine so that the machine is fooled into thinking anything Blern wishes.

He quickly forced his way to the leadership of the Society and established a permanent base near what used to be Lincoln, Nebraska and the group grew in power. He soon became bored with the problems faced with keeping the ghastly cultists together and he set up an administration that ran the group and started roaming far and wide terrorizing other society groups. His methods are always the same. He enters the area and nightly destroys either important crops or domesticated animals. If he is chased by beings with little or no technology, he runs away, just letting them see him and continuing his raids until the angered populace either brings up large numbers of attackers or heavy duty technology. He then faces his attackers using his weapons; both technological and mutative (as in the cover of this magazine when 23 Seekers dared to face him with power weapons and the last one is seen trying to run).

The "*Iron Society*" has no known base, but can be found near any large bombed area. The very nature of the energy nearby creates a psychological condition in all intelligent creatures nearby that forces them to want to destroy any beings not as they (highly resistant to radiation). 95% of all of these groups are totally resistant to all forms of energy weapons, while easily able to use such themselves.

The "*Zoopremists*," starting in the fertile Mexican mountain range below Torreon, tested the theory of survival of the fittest to its maximum limits. Here, insects grew larger and highly intelligent and started logically moving against all other intelligent life forms. In this struggle they forceably domesticated some of the most prevalent mutants and these they use as spies. Co-ordinated attacks are always made against large groups holding technology. The whole organization is led by a giant (20 feet long) drone ant with the following statistics: MS: 18, I: 13, D: 12, C: 18, Hit Points 189, Armor Class: 2: it has Heat Generation, Heightened Touch, Increased Speed, Photosynthetic Skin, Absorption Heat & Radiation, Military Genius, Life Leech, and Telepathy. This creature always personally scouts any large alien group to be attacked, and he takes 10 neuter ants for support (pincers do 4-40 per strike, 20 dice each, Armor Class: 2).

The "*Healers*" began life as a group near Duluth, Minnesota by a number of med-technicians that had been working on sleep therapy and accidentally made a vast break through in artificial telepathy through electrode induction. Their organization quickly gathered all the survivors in the area and efficiently went about living. Their Hippocratic oath soon became translated into helping all intelligent and unintelligent creatures survive in a world gone wild. The telepathic powers developed grew in magnitude over the century and helped the Healers sense all life in a 1 mile radius and influence the actions of any non-sentient beings in numbers up to 10. They range far down into the south and east, healing where possible, teaching others to help themselves, and sending calm beings to their main base for advanced training.

"*Restorationists*" survived in shelters in Boston and Providence. They crawled out of their areas and tried to pull the pieces together from

the rubble cities around them. They grew in strength and were well organized by the time mutated creatures started entering their area. They were able to react with considerable force in the way of technological capability. All of their towns and farms are guarded by robotic units that are programmed to kill humanoids and mutants without warning and conduct humans to the main city. There are 5 town groups that each have an armory manned with men capable of using the powered armor and weapons at hand; a factory unit programmed to manufacture their everyday needs; and a group of robots designed to cannibalize the old cities for materials the smaller groups need. In the town near Manchester, their leader (Mayor), realizing the closed nature of their culture, has forced his citizens to work to create new technology on the basis of the old. He is a mutant (but no one, not even himself, is aware of that fact): MS: 18, I: 18, D: 12, Ch: 15, C: 18, S: 11, Hit Points 88, and the following mental powers: Military, Scientific, and Economic Genius, and Total Healing.

The "*Followers of the Voice*" are usually successful in their efforts to gather technology because they follow insane computer units that use their programs to tell their followers where to go. The most successful group has a strong underground base in the Appalachians south of Charleston and west of Raleigh. This group all have Laser Rifles and Laser Pistols. Their leader is a Hoop, who, besides her normal features, has the following abilities: Heightened Balance, Constitution, Hearing, Precision, and Smell, Increased Speed, and Shapechange All. She also has 120 Hit points and constant advice from a Think Tank buried in their caverns.

The "*Ranks of the Fit*" began near Memphis, Tennessee; when a circus bear had its mental abilities boosted a thousand times by an unusual radiation blast. This creature suddenly had every good mental mutation on the list, and a bunch more not given. It was the only intelligent creature to survive in the city and it went about learning what man's civilization was like. Armed with this knowledge, it began a civilization that has spread to Cincinnati and the shores near the sunken city of Baton Rouge. Its grandson now rules and also has all of the mental powers listed plus the following: MS: 18, I: 16, D: 15, Ch: 17, C: 18, S: 18, Hit Points 210, and an Armor Class of 2. His power is immense and in the form of 10 armies that are 50,000 strong. He places them about his empire and uses them to destroy pockets of mutant resistance or as heavy duty manpower forces to extend his empire.

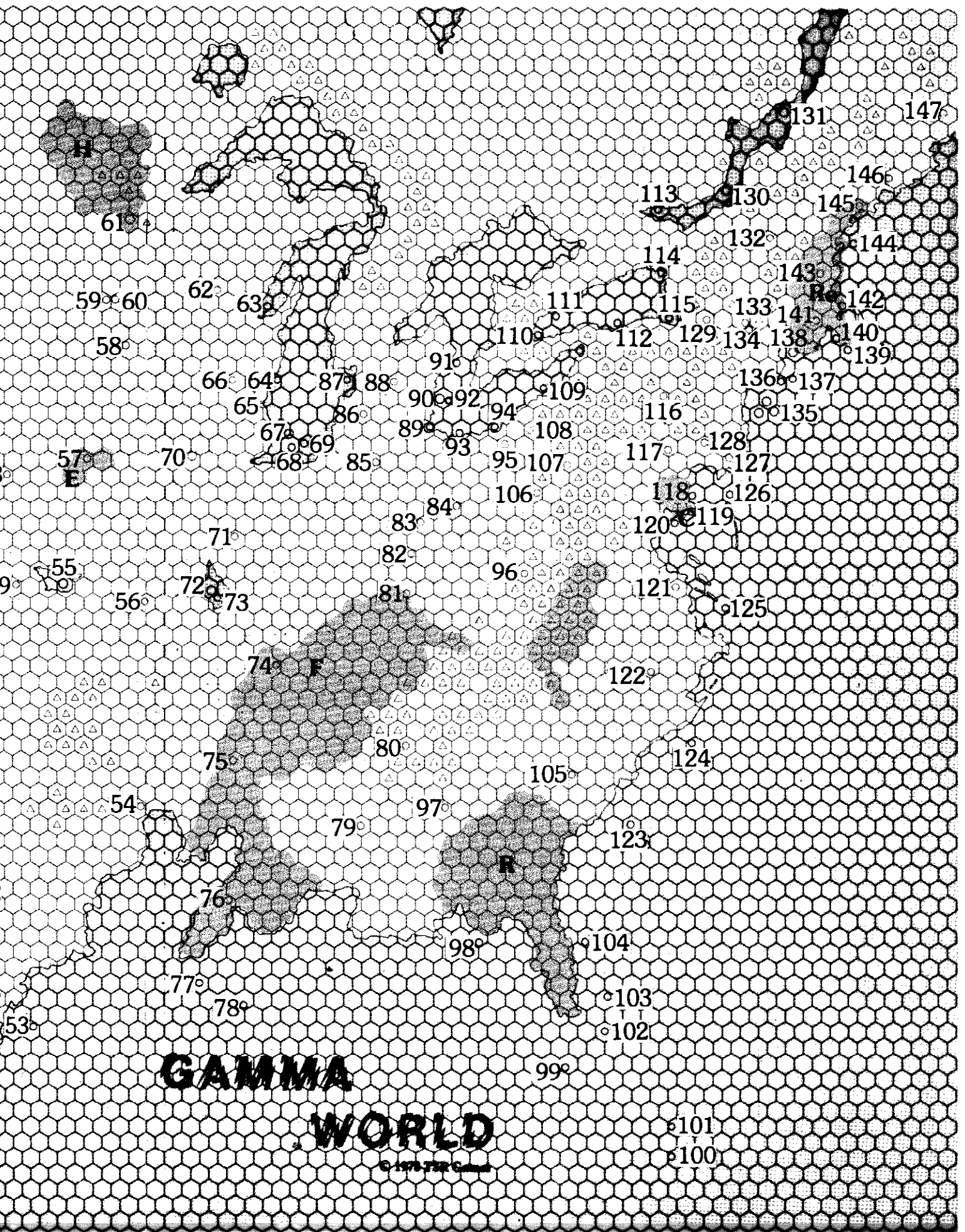
The "*Archivists*" are zealots set up in the mountains between the cities of Butte, Montana, Billings, South Dakota, and Idaho Falls, Montana. They are all cave dwellers that have made miles-long tunnels that connect all of these cities. They have been able to figure out the workings of thousands of earth movers and are in the process of covering up these partially ruined cities for their underground use. While their main base is in the mountains, they have scouted all of the cities from Seattle to Dallas. Their leader is a Fen, who organizes defenses of high technology around his main base and the more important bases they are tying to cover.

The "*Radioactivists*" are almost entirely based below Atlanta in the flattened peninsula that was part of Florida. Its members are all totally resistant to radiation and have seen over and over again what the power of the atom can do to damage life. As a result, they are sowing the edges of their territory with radioactive dust obtained from the interior of their lands. Their leaders are a group of 5 Keeshin that travel on the edges of the territory directing dusting efforts.

The "*Created*" are predominately androids. They were started into life by a med-technician who saw his civilization crashing around him and wanted to give the androids that were under his control a chance to "live." He set his computers on random programming and turned his back on the whole complex (only to die minutes later as a building fell on him). From that time on, the androids that were created programmed their new brothers and started rounding up technological power. At this time they have completely encircled the town of St. Louis with war robots and have rebuilt it to what it was before the time of the "great destruction." The only being that ever successfully invaded their area was Blern and he destroyed their primary Think Tank as a lark and reprogrammed all of the thinking units of the city to ignore Entropy beings.

Note: Special thanks should be given to Brian Blume, who supplied the locations of all of the circled cities by careful comparisons.





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|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 Victoria | 39 Amarillo | 77 Baton Rouge | 115 Syracuse |
| 2 Seattle | 40 Lubbock | 78 New Orleans | 116 Scranton |
| 3 Tacoma | 41 Monterrey | 79 Birmingham | 117 Harrisburg |
| 4 Shelton | 42 San Antonio | 80 Chattanooga | 118 Baltimore |
| 5 Portland | 43 Austin | 81 Lexington | 119 D.C. |
| 6 Eugene | 44 Abilene | 82 Cincinnati | 120 Alexandria |
| 7 Reno | 45 Pierre | 83 Dayton | 121 Richmond |
| 8 Carson City | 46 Bismark | 84 Columbus | 122 Raleigh |
| 9 Sacramento | 47 Winnipeg | 85 Ft. Wayne | 123 Savannah |
| 10 San Francisco | 48 Lincoln | 86 Kalamazoo | 124 Charleston |
| 11 San Jose | 49 Topeka | 87 Grand Rapids | 125 Norfolk |
| 12 Monterrey | 50 Ok. City | 88 Lansing | 126 Wilmington |
| 13 Fresno | 51 Ft. Worth | 89 Toledo | 127 Philadelphia |
| 14 Bakersfield | 52 Dallas | 90 Detroit | 128 Reading |
| 15 Los Angeles | 53 Houston | 91 London | 129 Utica |
| 16 Riverside | 54 Little Rock | 92 Windsor | 130 Montreal |
| 17 San Diego | 55 Kansas City | 93 Sandusky | 131 Quebec |
| 18 Mexicali | 56 Jefferson City | 94 Cleveland | 132 Montpelier |
| 19 Las Vegas | 57 Des Moines | 95 Akron | 133 Schenectady |
| 20 Boise | 58 Rochester | 96 Charleston | 134 Albany |
| 21 Spokane | 59 Minneapolis | 97 Atlanta | 135 NYC |
| 22 Phoenix | 60 St. Paul | 98 Tallahassee | 136 Bridgeport |
| 23 Butte | 61 Duluth | 99 Tampa | 137 New Haven |
| 24 Idaho Falls | 62 Wausau | 100 Miami | 138 Hartford |
| 25 Pocatello | 63 Green Bay | 101 Ft. Lauderdale | 139 New Bedford |
| 26 Ogden | 64 Milwaukee | 102 Orlando | 140 Fall River |
| 27 Salt Lake City | 65 Lake Geneva | 103 Daytona Beach | 141 Providence |
| 28 Torreon | 66 Madison | 104 Jacksonville | 142 Boston |
| 29 El Paso | 67 Chicago | 105 Augusta | 143 Manchester |
| 30 Albuquerque | 68 Gary | 106 Wheeling | 144 Portland |
| 31 Santa Fe | 69 S. Bend | 107 Pittsburgh | 145 Augusta |
| 32 Casper | 70 Dubuque | 108 Youngstown | 146 Bangor |
| 33 Billings | 71 Springfield | 109 Erie | 147 St. John |
| 34 Leadville | 72 St. Charles | 110 Hamilton | |
| 35 Cheyenne | 73 St. Louis | 111 Toronto | |
| 36 Denver | 74 Nashville | 112 Rochester | |
| 37 Colo. Springs | 75 Memphis | 113 Ottawa | |
| 38 Pueblo | 76 Jackson | 114 Jensen | |

B = Brotherhood of Thought
S = Seekers
E = Friends of Entropy
I = Iron Society
Z = Zoopremists
H = Healers
R e = Restorationists
V = Followers of the Voice

F = Ranks of the Fit
A = Archivists
R = Radio activists
C = Created

Judging and You!

BY JAMES M. WARD

It is easy to say (or write, in this case) that you as a "Planet Master" or "Starship Master" are the final arbiter in your campaign game, but, let's face it; there are bunches of bad judges out there because they have a flaw of one type or another. There are several tricks to the judging trade that I have seen and started; I know several of the bad judges I have seen could profit from them.

One of the first things that any new judge must think about is what they are interested in developing in their games. I, as a judge, am not interested in how my players get their daily food (so game is plentiful in all my areas). I am not overly interested in equipment maintenance and breakdowns because my game is extremely destructive. I am not interested in a strict interpretation of the rules for weapons function or the intermixing of cryptic alliances, so I freely change what has been written down. On the other hand, I *am* highly interested in the non-player character and as a result there are many roaming around my *Gamma World* in many shapes and sizes. I *am* interested in the creation of new mutants and groups so this is an ongoing process that gets new groups constantly moving over the ruined earth.

Many people have asked me how I create my maps and encounter areas and usually give me a puzzled look when I try to explain. My biggest tool in the creation and use of any *Gamma World* society, city, building, or hole in the ground is improvisation. I (and many like me all over the place) have not got the time nor the inclination to sit down and write pages and pages of detailed description on what a building looks like and what is inside. The notes I jot down for any given encounter area are very vague as to what things look like and what is contained inside.

At one Origins convention I was running a *Gamma World* tourney and the group ran into an armory in a bombed out city. All I had listed was that fact that it was an Armory and the war machines that were inside it, those being: 2 security robots, 2 engineering bots (HD), 2 medical robotoids, 1 supervisory borg, a think tank in the basement, 2 war-bots, a death machine, and several different types of military vehicles. From then on I improvised the whole thing. My Father works in a National Guard Armory and when just a boy I used to take great pride in putting up the units flag before I went to school and collecting a bottle of pop for my efforts (this gave me a very exact knowledge of what that armory looked like); from this experience I was able to exactly detail every room that the group entered and what was inside it (updated to what I thought was the 21st century's equivalent). They therefore had a choice of entering from a side door that led to the firing range; a side door that led to the kitchen; a side door that led to the motor pool; the large front doors; or a side door that was near the boiler room. After coming in the firing range side door and doing things with the security robot that faced them, I could tell them exactly where the supply room or the communications room was in relation to where they stood at the door. None of this was written down but they didn't know that and it all worked out great. My point is that you should use the very familiar things of everyday life instead of huge piles of detailed description that you have to ply through as well as your players. So what if I didn't know exactly how many pairs of boots were in the locker room or how many shovels or gas masks were in the supply room? I *did* know how many of each I wanted the group to get away with, and that's what I told them. This same concept can apply to everything any referee must play with.

If I am working with a city and I have to take players through lots of different areas; that city becomes the one I live in. My map has what is in (or what type of building) any given area and I list what special things I feel should be in certain areas. Special things are items like power guns, armor, computer systems, and robots. A place like the food store becomes the local one that I visit every week. Hardware stores, drugstores, clothing stores administration centers, etc. all become places that I have been in before and what the players hear are my memories of these areas and my throwing in things that are both useful to the player and

useful to the monsters that I have placed there. I make it a habit never to improvise on the placement of my mutants and alliance groups, feeling that that would be cheating since life in my world is hard enough. The only leeway that I use is that of the wandering creature that comes often to those that argue or cause a great deal of disturbance in any given area.

There seems to be a growing fear and/or worry that players will gain too big of an advantage from knowing the rules and thus knowing how to use the items of any given *Gamma World*. This kind of thinking is ridiculous. I once read somewhere about the referee that hated his gamers to be able to look up the strengths and weaknesses of any given monster in *D&D* and decide what to use against them and that struck me as very funny. First of all, I don't care how much you know about a thing in *Dungeons and Dragons* or any other role playing game; if that giant or vampire is out to get you all the garlic buds, crosses, silver, or clerics aren't going to do you much good without that bit of luck every player must have. Second, there isn't a monster on any list in any role playing game that I have ever judged that I haven't felt it my duty to change (just a little bit), so that problem doesn't exist. There is also the thought that with all those energy weapons, robots, and mutants running around, a player needs a little edge in order to survive from day to day. Finally, there is the gripe that players have it too easy when it comes to trying to use technology because of that fact that they go out of their role and use their "real" knowledge.

Take the ever popular statement that "If I have seen this gun fired I should be able to tell which way to point it and how to use it" type of thing. First of all, I think that it is necessary to reduce things down to their simplest terms. All guns, pistols, rifles, and the like become strange "crossbow devices" and everyone of them has many buttons, levers, and gauges that must be adjusted everytime the thing is used. (Yes, I know, it's a wonder that it gets a shot off every 10 melee turns let alone every single melee turn.) Along the same lines are the marvelous artifact operation charts that are vital to any operation of any device. I have naturally enlarged these things and combined them into one big chart that not only lists the successful operation of any device, it lists a possible breaking of that same device or the possible harm caused to the being fooling around with such a device. One time I was forced to give a party a bunch of powered suits of armor and they all tried to work them with great results, as far as I was concerned. When the first skull crossbones came up I had the armor break the arms of the being using the unit. When it came to the breakage of a unit I had the laser finger of the unit that was being fooled with melt parts of another unit. When players persisted and received another skull I had the unit break both the legs of the trying mutant. Of the entire group, it turned out that only one mutant could figure out the operation of the suits of armor and when she put a suit on and tried to pick up her two wounded friends her thousand fold increased strength squeezed to mush the waists of both her friends.

It is sometimes necessary to describe items in such a way as to make the players wonder what they are looking at. A bathroom sink becomes a white stone bowl; a metal highway becomes a god road that is unlucky to cross; and a sword becomes a huge carving knife of great weight.

As a final note, there are those that are said to be too sadistic in their love of killing player characters. This love takes the form of initially telling the players that they are going to die at his or her hands or breeding masses of monsters to wander about, or creating areas that even the most highly sophisticated being of the times before the destruction could not have figured out. There is nothing wrong with these areas if the players are reasonably cautious. To go a step further, there is nothing wrong with deliberately creating sections, groups of muties, buildings, what-have-you that are as deadly as the referee can think of, for several reasons. First, it is a mark of the good player that they survive and figure out these types of areas. Second, when a referee creates such a place, he creates items that can eventually be used by those that conquer. Lastly, what right do the primitive creatures that try for these great objects of technology have in not expecting to get maximum energy force directed back at them? At several tourneys I have killed off whole bunches of players merely because they failed to be cautious and that is exactly what my best group uses in every case. They are very powerful but even if they face things they have dealt with before, they cover every angle they can think of and then go ahead.

GAMMA WORLD

ARTIFACT USE CHART

by Gay Jaquet

One of the more frequent criticisms of *Gamma World* is the Artifact Use Chart—and the criticism is somewhat justified. It can be mildly interesting to watch one’s progress towards successfully learning the workings of an artifact (only to see the final roll result in a skull and crossbones), but it serves little purpose. The chart could easily be pre-calculated and the possible pathways computed to single percentage rolls. Therefore, I offer a new system for determining the use of *Gamma World* artifacts.

The new Artifact Use Chart appears on the opposite page — it is somewhat similar to the old chart, but it is used in a different manner. One still rolls dice and follows the indicated path, but there are also provisions for players to make actual decisions during the process.

To use the chart, a player starts at one of the numbered squares, the larger numbers representing more complex devices. In terms of the “old” charts, square 1 is roughly equal to chart A, square 3 equals chart B, and square 5 equals chart C. Squares 2 and 4 are provided to allow for additional referee discretion in determining the complexity of artifacts. As with the old charts, the player rolls a single 10-sided die and follows the indicated path.

As the player follows the pathways, squares represent “correct” steps taken towards operation of the artifact. Diamonds represent incorrect steps, short cuts, omissions, etc. Generally, there is a greater chance for a “failure” from a diamond than from a square. A circle represents a failure in the operation procedure. A failure can range from simply spoiling the previous step and forcing the player to start again, to causing extensive damage. Each circle is identified by a letter, and the type of failure is determined by rolling on the table indicated by the letter. Upon reaching the square containing the asterisk, the use and operation of the artifact has been successfully determined.

As with the old charts, a player receives five dice rolls per hour of total concentration on the artifact, and each additional player concentrating adds one die roll per hour. Die rolls are modified with respect to intelligence and mutations as with the old charts.

Thus far, even with the large number of possible pathways on the chart, successful operation of an artifact could still be determined by a simple percentage roll. But this is where player choice comes in. Each time a player attempts to determine the use of an artifact, he starts with a number of “artifact use points” equal to his intelligence. At the cost of some of these points, a player may choose the path he takes on the chart. Choosing a path out of a square costs four points, choosing a path out of a diamond costs two points. Points are not cumulative, replaceable, or transferable in any way. They exist only for a single attempt by a single player at determining the use and operation of an artifact. These choices may be made any time during the overall process of attempting to learn artifact operation, *before* the die roll for a given square of diamond. (As an option, referees may even allow choice of “failure” roll after entering a circle. Cost: six points)

Whenever a player decides to *choose* the path taken on the chart, rather than roll the die, there is no time penalty. (The choice represents an intuitive decision or hunch, rather than study.) Thus a character can spend an hour concentrating on an artifact, roll the die the maximum allowed five times, and (assuming he has an intelligence of 16) choose paths through four *more* squares, all in the same hour. Of course, then he has used up all his artifact use points for this attempt, and if operation and use has still not been determined, he will be left to the mercy of the die rolls until he either discovers the operation of the device or quits.

A glance at the chart will show there are several strategic points where judicious use of the artifact use points and selection of certain paths can be of great advantage towards learning the operation of an artifact. Of course, it is also nice to hold the points in reserve, in case a string of bad die rolls leads off the optimum path and towards an area of high failure risk.

While admittedly this method of determining the use and operation of artifacts is somewhat abstract, it does give the players a chance to use some of their own logic, hunches, or daring in the process, but at the same time (through the artifact use points) ties the process to the “abilities” of his character.

FAILURE TABLE

die roll	a	b	c	d
1	NE	NE	NE	NE
2	NE	NE	NE	D
3	NE	NE	D	X 1d6
4	NE	D	D	X 2d6
5	NE	D	D	X 2d6
6	D	D	X 1d6	X 3d6
7	D	X 1d6	X 2d6	X 3d6
8	D	X 1d6	X 2d6	X 4d6
9	D	X 1d6	X 3d6	X max
10	X 1d6	X 2d6	X 4d6	X max

20th CENTURY PRIMITIVE

Perhaps one of the most difficult situations encountered when refereeing *Gamma World* is that of characters with a primitive technology discovering advanced technology devices. Players will often have a character with 13th century knowledge react in a 20th century manner to a 24th century device . . .

Player: “OK, we beat down the door with the log and hold our spears ready as it falls in. What do we see?”

Referee: “You see a low bench or table with a small box or chest on it. The box has a smooth, sort of clear front — it might remind you of looking into a pool of water. Beneath it is a smaller box with several bead-like objects set in even rows across it. The beads have strange markings on them — each one different.”

Player: “I get on-line and type ‘CALL DUMP MEMORY.’ Everyone else looks for laser pistols and control batons. By the way, is there anything around here that looks like this might be a military security check-point. . .?”

Well, perhaps I’ve exaggerated a bit, but maintaining a perspective on the consistency of the knowledge of the players, especially at the beginning of a campaign, is a problem. Many referees simply start the player/characters at a 20th century knowledge level and avoid the hassle, but to me, that’s placing an unfortunate limit on the scope of the game, and tends to turn it into an exercise in collecting exotic weapons of destruction.

Forcing players to maintain a low technology base, at least at the beginning of the campaign, also forces them to deal with situations in a more challenging and creative manner than the old “bomb it, pave it, paint some lines on it and turn it into a parking lot” method.

Primitive characters need not be stupid — indeed, in the game format, they are the elite of their culture: adventurous, skillful, intelligent, able to make logical decisions and learn quickly from their mistakes. All that is necessary is a little sincerity on the part of the players in playing their characters as they could realistically expect them to behave. The referee can help this process by taking the time to consider how the ruined world of the 24th century would appear to a primitive, and by describing it accordingly.

High level technology, to primitives, is, for all practical purposes, magic. This does not imply a need for human sacrifices to the God of the Nightlight, just a lack of knowledge as to the power behind the function. One need not know the workings of a generator to turn on a light switch.

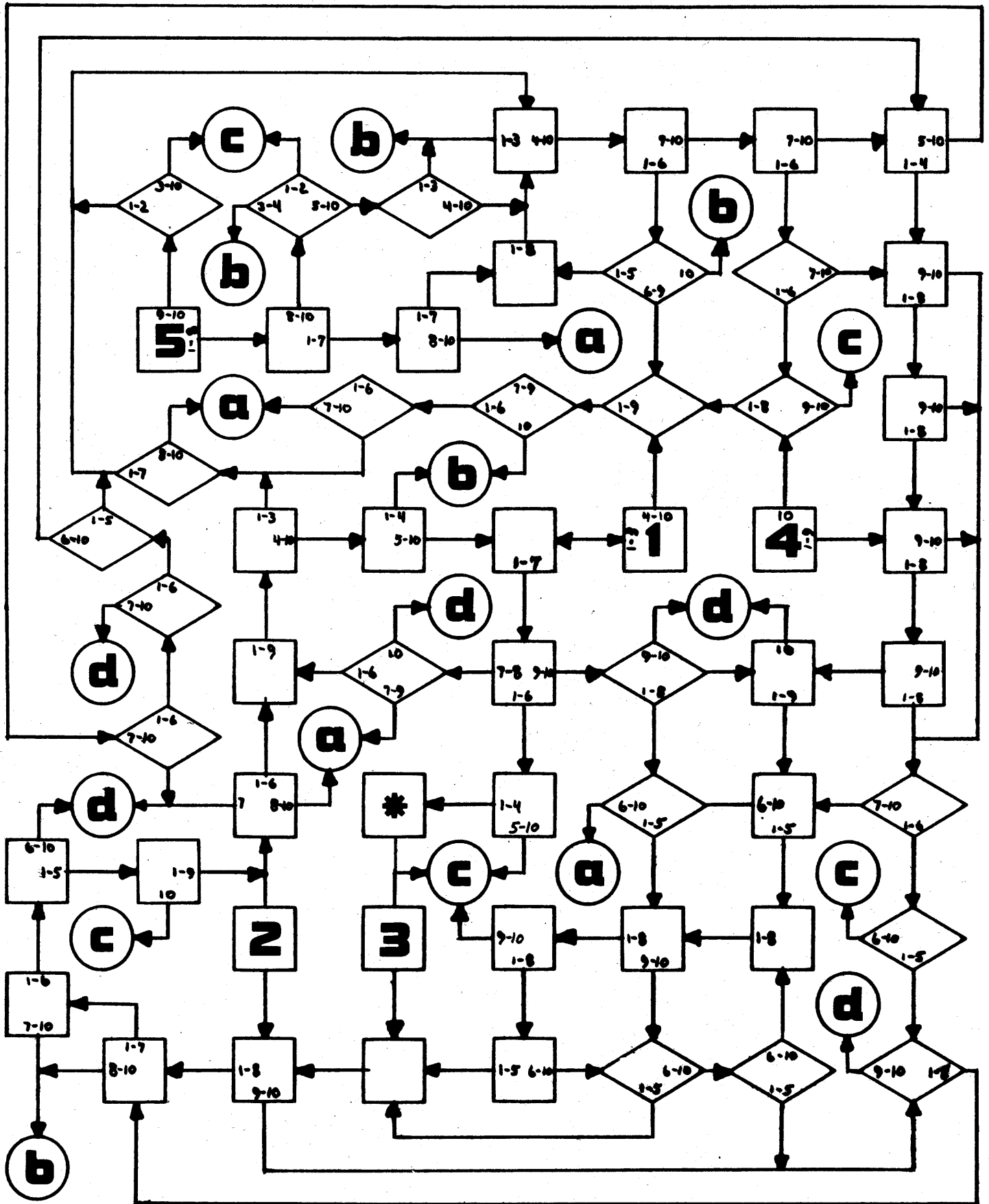
What this boils down to, is, in the early stages of a *Gamma World* campaign, the referee (in addition to his simple descriptions) should allow his player/characters to witness various uses of the technological devices about themselves, and learn from experience. They may not know, initially, exactly what they are doing, but they will know the results to expect. Indeed, this concept must be used not only as primitive characters discover 20th century technology, but also as characters with 20th century knowledge discover 24th century technology.

There is a sense of “reality” to be considered (if that term can be applied to a science fiction role-playing game) in conducting a *Gamma World* campaign. Question it. Would you, as an average 20th century man, walk into the control room at Hoover Dam and start throwing switches for no reason, other than to see what happens? How ‘bout finding yourself in SAC headquarters? Would you start typing “CALL DUMP MEMORY” on a computer terminal?

Not only does the use of a primitive technology level provide a logical starting point, it also can add a sense of “reality” to an admittedly unreal situation. It’s all up to the referee.

FAILURE TABLE RESULTS

- NE No effect —
- Return to previously occupied space
- D Artifact damaged —
- Roll percentile dice to determine point of damage to artifact — character may resume trying to determine operation and use of artifact by returning to previously occupied space
- X Artifact malfunctions —
- Causes damage to all within applicable range in amount indicated, from 1d6 to the maximum amount of energy stored within the artifact.



Before the Dark Years

The timeline of the GAMMA WORLD® game universe

by James M. Ward and Roger E. Moore

One of the most popular topics for debate among pure strain humans and mutant animals alike centers around the question: What was the world like before it blew up? Scholars and adventurers of nearly every Cryptic Alliance have searched the world for clues on the history of the "Gamma World" (as inhabitants of Earth are prone to call it in the middle of the 25th century). The results are often confusing and contradictory, deepening the mysteries of the past.

Careful research has brought to light the following information on the years before the old world ended and the Gamma World began. It is possible that adventurers might recover some or all of this material as they explore the ruins of the Ancients or communicate with living beings or intelligent computers who might have survived the wars.

Obviously, this information is of great use in establishing a consistent GAMMA WORLD® game campaign. The GM, however, should feel free to alter, delete, or add to this timeline if he wishes, to create his own personalized game world. Contradictory information may be given to player characters during a campaign; data from the Shadow Years and after is especially questionable in accuracy.

1945 — First use of atomic weapons in warfare.

1957 — *Sputnik I*, the first artificial earth satellite, launched

1961 — First manned spacecraft (*Vostok I*) launched

1969 — First manned lunar landing made by *Apollo 11* spacecraft

1981 — American space shuttle service begins (earth orbit).

1988-1990 — World War III, world-wide general conflict between East and West, limited nuclear weapons exchange before ceasefire

1999 — First self-aware "think tank" computer activated

2002 — First manned spaceflights to Mars launched (*Ares I/II*); primary base established at Mariner Valley

2003-2021 — Ecosystem collapse in Atlantic and Pacific oceans; world-wide food and water shortages, severe civil disturbances; collapse of Japanese and European economies.

2010 — American, Chinese, Indian, and Soviet international conferences lead to establishment of the First World Council.

2013 — Rise of the first commercial business blocks to control countries.

2019 — First commercial spaceport opens (First Texan Space Complex)

2020 — First Earth-orbital commercial space factory assembled.

2034 — American and Canadian governments unify and form United North America.

2046 — Orbital city Atlantis becomes first politically independent space colony; moves to Martian orbit

2047 — *Columbus*, *Magellan*, and *Marco Polo* unmanned interstellar probes launched from Earth orbit.

2050 — Brazil establishes SAEU (unified South American government).

2061 — Columbus reaches Alpha Centauri and maps local planetary systems.

2066 — Establishment of Mount Olympus and Mount Arsia colonies on Mars.

2072 — *Magellan* reaches Tau Ceti; discovers terraformable planet (Gaea).

2076 — All Martian colonies gain political independence through treaties; Federation of Mars established.

2077 — SAEU collapses after civil war.

2078 — Mutiny aboard *International Station One* (first true space war), arrest and execution of mutineers.

2087-2089 — First Venerean terraforming project attempted, but fails.

2095 — Lunar population reaches 10,000 at Tycho Center moonbase.

2100 — Genesis project (re-terraforming of Earth's environment) completed.

2101 — Terraforming of larger asteroids begins.

2104 — *The Three Suns*, the first manned interstellar spacecraft, launched toward the Alpha Centauri system.

2104-2111 — Widespread civil disorders in Asia lead to formation of Asian Coalition, collapse of Soviet Union.

2109 — Thorium fusion propulsion system perfected and goes into system-wide use.

2120 — Three Suns arrives at Alpha Centauri, establishes first extra-solar human colonies at Gagarin, Armstrong, Greenwood, and Sorokin.

2120 — Second Venerean terraforming project attempted; project crew lost in satellite collision.

2126 — Start of international conferences to develop a world government.

2131 — Sorokin colony abandoned.

2132 — The *Humanity* launched for Tau Ceti system.

2138 — Artificial gravity control achieved.

2144 — Martian world population reaches 10,000 (combined colonies).

2145 — World Union established; all national governments subordinated to World Union General Council in London. Uniform currency (the domar) established worldwide.

2163 — Construction of Trans-Plutonian Spaceyards completed.

2182 — Autonomists Society established, a terrorist organization promoting world-wide democratic anarchy.

2200-2300 — General dates for the "Great Migration" of manned and unmanned interstellar spacecraft to worlds within a 10-parsec radius of Sol; 28 colonization missions and 196 exploratory missions dispatched.

2236 — IMT (instantaneous mass transporter) tested and developed.

2261 — Albuquerque accident kills 5 million people in nuclear explosion.

2266 — Breakup of WU General Council; United America, Asian Coalition, India, and other countries develop divergent policies.

2277 — The *Warden*, the largest interstellar colony ship ever built, laid down at the Trans-Plutonian Spaceyards by the United Western Starship Cartel program.

2282 — League of Free Men established, promoting the rise of pro-world-government factions; terrorism increases world-wide.

2288 — *Warden* completed; trials and loading begin for 45-year voyage to Xi Ursae Majoris double-star system.

2289 — Work on giant starship *Morden* begins at Trans-Plutonian Spaceyards.

2290 — *Warden* leaves Solar System; 1.55 million human colonists and crew aboard.

2302 — *Star Voyager II* returns on robot drive with crew infected by

"Canopus Plague;" ship destroyed after infecting crew of Earth-orbital spaceport.

2302-2309 — Several major outbreaks of "Canopus plague" throughout Solar System; Iapetus colony sealed off and destroyed.

2309-2322 — "The Shadow Years," so

called because of the world-wide destruction of records and archives through terrorist action and government-supported sabotage.

2309 — (Sept 16) Start of Social Wars; initial collapse of Earth civilization begins; rioting and terrorism spread. League of Free Men and Autonomists



are major instigators of world-wide conflict.

2314 — Social Wars expand into space with terrorist strikes against Earth-orbital colonies, Tycho Center, and other spaceports throughout solar system.

2321 — Ecological warfare causes destruction of ocean plankton and collapse of all coastal economies; introduction of nuclear and dimension-warp warfare into conflict.

2321 — Fragmentary transmissions from the *Warden* received; ship apparently entered radiation cloud and crew was lost.

2322 — (April 12) "The Ultimatum," the first appearance of The Apocalypse, a radical group ordering an immediate cease-fire in world-wide conflict.

2322 — (April 17) Radiation strike made against all major national capitals by The Apocalypse. Retaliatory attacks reduce Earth's civilization to ruins in one week. System-wide trade, transportation, and economic collapse.

2322 — (May 23) Major strikes successfully disable space fleets around Jupiter and Earth. Two of Saturn's moons vaporized.

From here on in, only fragmentary historical records can be found. Most pieces of data were obtained from friendly cybernetic installations and think tanks which were able to link up with the remains of hidden libraries, orbital installations, or earth/space communications systems. All further information is considered questionable at best and can only rarely be confirmed.

2322 — Social Wars produce major world-wide volcanic and earthquake activity; collapse of polar ice-caps; world-wide flooding; ozone layer collapse with heightened exposure to ultraviolet and solar radiation. Extreme alterations and die-offs throughout biosystem of Earth.

2322 — Processed-ice asteroid (guidance circuits sabotaged by terrorists) strikes Mars; eight-year duststorm and climatic disruption result. All colonies on planet isolated; Federation charter suspended for duration.

2323-2340 — Rise of every known Cryptic Alliance takes place from the intact cities and power stations of Earth.

2325-2330 — Satellite Wars change the technological levels of all the terraformed asteroids and moons of all the planets.

2330-2340 — Last known interstellar missions flee solar system from asteroidal and outer satellite colonies; Trans-

Plutonian Spaceyards abandoned; all outer colonies except Saturn World Fusion shut down; Mercury mining colonies abandoned and apparently die out.

2331 — Trans-Plutonian Spaceyards assume control of their own programs and generate robotic "life."

2336-2340 — Occasional reports from space communications systems of transmissions from the *Warden*; status unknown.

2380 — Saturn World Fusion ceases all Earth-directed transmissions; fate unknown.

2381 — Severe worldwide earthquakes; explosive vulcanism around Pacific basin.

2381-2388 - "Years Without Summer," blackouts and prolonged winters common.

2385 — Ultrawave transmissions from Trans-Plutonian Spaceyards report open warfare between cybernetic installation there and the presumed automated starship *Morden*. Further transmissions cannot be interpreted and may be in code.

2399 — Short period of lasercom contact with Deimos Base at Mars; PCI at Deimos noted to be insane; no information on Martian colonies.

2420 — Strange transmissions picked up from *Warden's* last known position.

2450 — Approximate start of the GAMMA WORLD "gametime."

Further notes on timelines

The use of timelines is a logical method for creating campaign consistency in any game. The timeline is also the perfect springboard for developing new ideas in a game, whether it has a fantasy or science-fiction nature. How a thing came to be, where it is now, and how tribes or towns developed can become very important to the play of any given game; the timeline is the tool that best defines the general background that player characters can work from.

For example, take some player characters starting out in a small tribe in a GAMMA WORLD® game campaign. The game master presents every player with a small timeline for the tribe that he or she starts in; the players may then launch into scenarios from there.

In this example, suppose you (as the GM) have created a tribe that had its beginnings with the Green Beret battalions. One unit was dropped on an important military installation during the Social Wars with orders to hold the ground at all costs. The soldiers succeeded against terrible odds; when the

battle was over, only 249 men and women were left out of a 2,000 person unit.

The years went by, and these men and women held their ground using their excellent foraging skills to survive. After a decade, they realized their mission was obviously over but they had made a home for themselves in the land around the installation. Several generations passed; at the beginning of the game timeline (A.D. 2450), the real reason for their being there has been lost in the sands of time. Now the unit has grown into a powerful tribe, all members of which have unusually good unarmed combat and survival skills from their ancient military heritage.

Here is an example of what the players might receive for a tribal timeline:

Legendary history of the Green Buray Tribe

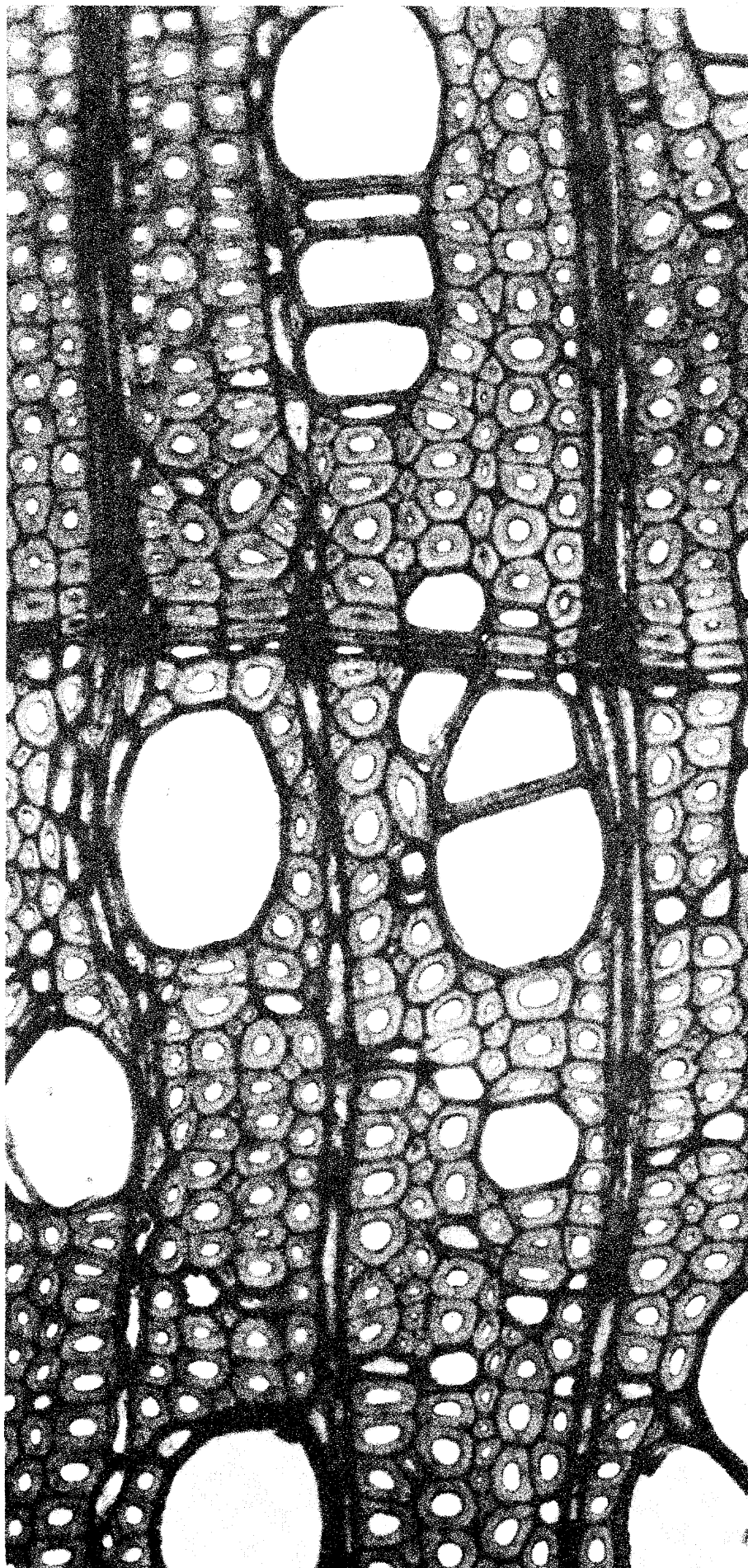
Since the earliest times, it has been taboo to move from the homeland. A great spear in the sky brought the tribe here and will come back when the tribe is worthy. The greatest hero of tribal legends is Jon Wan, who was never defeated in battle and brought back from the east many powerful weapons of the Ancients.

In your great-grandfather's times, the whole tribe was almost destroyed by orlens; since then orlens have been the tribe's most hated enemy. The great hero Ren Spearhead brought back a huge herd of brutorz from the north during this time.

Great snows came to the lands in your grandfather's time, and half of the tribe went west to escape them; two survivors bring back news of a city of Ancients filled with horrible metal monsters. The cave of the Elder Ones was found and worship began; the cave demanded sacrifices of things of the Ancients.

Present times: Three young warriors went into the cave and never returned. Lights have appeared on the western horizon at night. The young hero Rog saw a great desert to the south where things of Ancients were buried under the sand.

Using tribal timelines, your players won't have to ask, "What will we do next?" They'll be able to take their own lead from the timeline, developing adventures from the information given to them. Where are the orlens now? What about the Southern Desert and the artifacts there? The campaign is off and running!



A World Gone Mad

The Moon of the
GAMMA WORLD®

— g a m m e —
By James M. Ward

Eons before mankind existed, an asteroid slammed into the northern hemisphere of the Moon and formed the crater later known as Tycho. This particular asteroid had a very high metallic content and internal density. When humans scouted and explored the barren lunar surface, they found that Tycho Crater contained large amounts of high-grade ore that could be processed into the toughest and most durable metal known: Duralloy.

A major lunar base was built at Tycho Crater in A.D. 2014. Its original function was to mine the ore used to produce Duralloy; because of the base's importance, it was expanded from generation to generation until the base became the only human-inhabited outpost on the moon. The resources of the Earth's small satellite were not adequate to support a human population of greater than 50,000 people; Tycho soon had them all.

When Tycho Center became the only human-populated center on the Moon, all other lunar bases were completely automated and were crewed by robots and androids. These "outer bases" were controlled by the Cybernetic Installation at Tycho Center. Scattered across the Moon, these bases included astronomical observatories, crystal mines, water-processing plants, android and drug factories, and two heavy industrial manufacturing complexes.

All good things must come to an end. In A.D. 2322, the people stationed on the Moon watched Earth's civilization go down in war, plague, and a host of other disasters that followed the start of the

"Social Wars." Many colonists elected to go back to Earth to find loved ones or help those who might still be alive. Many more stayed behind, content with the Moon's relative security and fearful of what horrors might be found on their blasted and ruined homeworld.

Those who returned to Earth did so using a number of bubble cars assigned to Tycho Center's transportation section. Most of the fifty or so bubble cars that returned to Earth were never seen again. A few of them did make it back to Tycho Center, but they brought infected crews and passengers with them. Within hours, plague viruses were spread by the automatic ventilation system throughout Tycho Center. Long existence in a virtually germ-free artificial station had rendered the lunar colonists vulnerable to the slightest infection, and a host of diseases ravaged them.

Unable to escape in time, the 50,000 colonists died quickly. At last, only one human being was left alive at Tycho Center. His name was Ren Odinson, the colony's commander. Ren programmed the station's Cybernetic Installation to continue all normal operations in the event the station could be reinhabited; after putting the Tycho CI on continually-sustaining mode, he died in his command chair.

For the first fifty or so years after the Social Wars, the Tycho CI maintained almost everything at the station in perfect order while waiting for the humans to come back. Worn-out equipment was replaced from the engineering shops. Mining operations beneath Tycho Center continued and huge stockpiles of refined duralloy metal were set aside, ready for use. Normal observations were made on all the ongoing biological and chemical experiments that were started in the Center's laboratories before the wars.

Only two unusual (but major) events occurred: the horticultural growths of each and every hydroponics section were allowed to mutate unhindered, and many biological radiation experiments caused accelerated growth and mutation in various forms of single-celled creatures. These two events combined to create a strange and unending war for control of the main station computer.

By A.D. 2360, the irradiated plant life had gained full control over the environment of the hydroponics sections. Plants mutated into lifeforms that could destroy bothersome robots or manipulate the Tycho CI to generate more food and water for their root systems.

Operating from existing programs, the CI could do nothing about the destructive power of the plants. It was programmed to continue feeding and monitoring operations in those sections, and that is what it did.

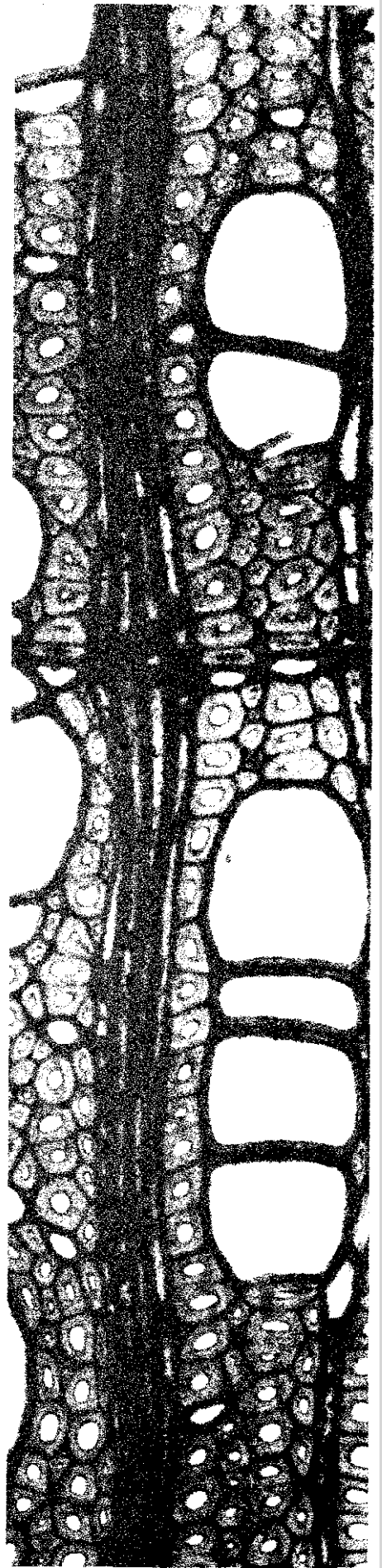
The best the CI could do against the plants was to plow a single three-meter lane through every hydroponics area for the cargo and transportation robots to move through. This was accomplished at the cost of three horticultural robots ruined each month in plant-cutting operations. Replacement robots had to be manufactured from materials in Tycho Center's mining and manufacturing departments.

It was the same story in the biolabs. The huge, mutated (but still single-celled) creatures took over the labs and created environments in which they grew and prospered. New abilities enabled these bizarre creatures to work in the lab areas and many of them developed incredible talents. Where the mutated plants were aggressive by nature, the macrobes (huge microbes) developed defensive mutations that became nearly unstoppable. Engineering robots sent into the biolabs to clean up what were thought to be batches of debris were depowered by one type of single-celled macrobe and eaten by another.

Despite all this, the CI stuck to its programs and continued feeding the mutant macrobes. A three-meter wide lane through the macrobe colonies in the biolabs was kept open (just as in the horticultural areas) at the cost of nine heavy engineering robots ruined each month in the operations.

From about A.D. 2360 to 2400, various plants and single-celled macrobes left their "home" sections and spread slowly throughout Tycho Center. Colonies of mutated life entered and settled down in newly discovered chambers and crawl spaces wherever they could be found. The inevitable happened around the year 2400, when the two expanding biosystems came into immediate contact with each other. Each somehow recognized that the other was competing not only for living space, but for control of the Tycho CI's bio-programming. It was unspoken war from then on.

The plant and macrobe forces devoted all of their resources in the fight against each other. Whole new lifeforms were created and wiped out in the battles between plant and giant bacteria. Vast sections of Tycho Center were burned out and destroyed in the fighting, and the lethal vacuum of space filled entire



areas near the surface of the complex and destroyed the combatants.

The severely damaged sections of Tycho Center were fixed by engineering and repair robots controlled by the Tycho CI. It knew what was happening in the plant-macrobe war, but it only allowed itself to take steps to ensure its own survival. Its programming would not take the nature of the mutant plants and bacteria into consideration to destroy them.

The unmanned "outer bases" around the Moon continued to operate after the Social Wars. The operations of all industrial factories were turned to the manufacture of spare parts for Tycho Center as it began replacing its damaged sections when the plant-bacteria wars began. The other bases continued their routine functions, generally unmanaged by the Tycho CI which had other things to worry about. Several times over the years Earth-bound CIs and Think Tanks were able to contact and communicate

ride of their lives. One by one, the cars landed at Tycho Center; the Tycho CI, gratified to have visitors at last, automatically brought the cars into the base proper, pressurized the docking facility, and opened the main doors into the Center.

For the first time in over 100 years, intelligent beings walked the halls of the base. They looked in upon a world gone mad.

Adventuring at Tycho Center

Setting up an adventure at Tycho Center may appear intimidating, but it need not be. The entire base does not need to be drawn out; the referee can exclude some sections if desired and fully draw out others.

Because of its size, a general layout of Tycho Center is not shown with this article; the referee is free to design his own base (think of it as an extra-large "dungeon"). Tycho Center consists of a

the engineering section to make more robots. Note that the housing centers were designed to support 50,000 people, and it might be easier to have most of these areas be overrun by mutant plants and macrobes to discourage PCs from investigating them thoroughly. The command center for the colony is in one of the housing centers, however, and may prove to be a valuable prize.

The atmosphere inside Tycho Center is very stale but quite breathable. Artificial gravity generators are set throughout the station, so the characters will not have to worry about hopping about in one-sixth normal gravity (unless they go outside). The viruses that killed off the population of Tycho Center have since died off themselves, and present no danger whatsoever to characters (though they won't know that at first).

The Tycho CI will accept programming and will communicate with any pure-strain human, mutant humanoid, or mutant animal; the computer has taken orders from plants and macrobes for so long that it no longer makes distinctions about who is programming it.

The CI will happily provide anyone with information on the station's current situation, but it will know little or nothing about sections of the station that have been sealed off. It may also know very little about the deep interiors of the plant and macrobe "homelands" except for the 3-meter wide highways it plows through them.

Tycho Center may serve as the focal point for a long, "high-level" GAMMA WORLD game campaign. The Center is full of Ancient artifacts, including vast quantities of processed duralloy, but transporting the material back to Earth may prove to be a terrible problem. Remember that if the PCs got to the Moon as one of the Cryptic Alliance teams (or as an independent force), other bubble cars will be showing up soon (or are already there).

The mutants at the Center must also be dealt with. The referee should have a field day designing other mutant monsters to horrify and torment lucky PCs, though some appropriately pleasant rewards might be discovered as well.

Between the wild mutant plants, giant bacteria, and hostile (and heavily-armed) Cryptic Alliances charging around the base, player characters should find the Moon of the future quite amusing. It certainly isn't Kansas, Toto.

Look for a list of mutant macrobes and plants that adventurers might encounter at Tycho Center, in the next issue. **A**

Tycho Center may serve as the focal point for a long, "high-level" GAMMA WORLD game campaign. The Center is full of Ancient artifacts, including vast quantities of processed duralloy.

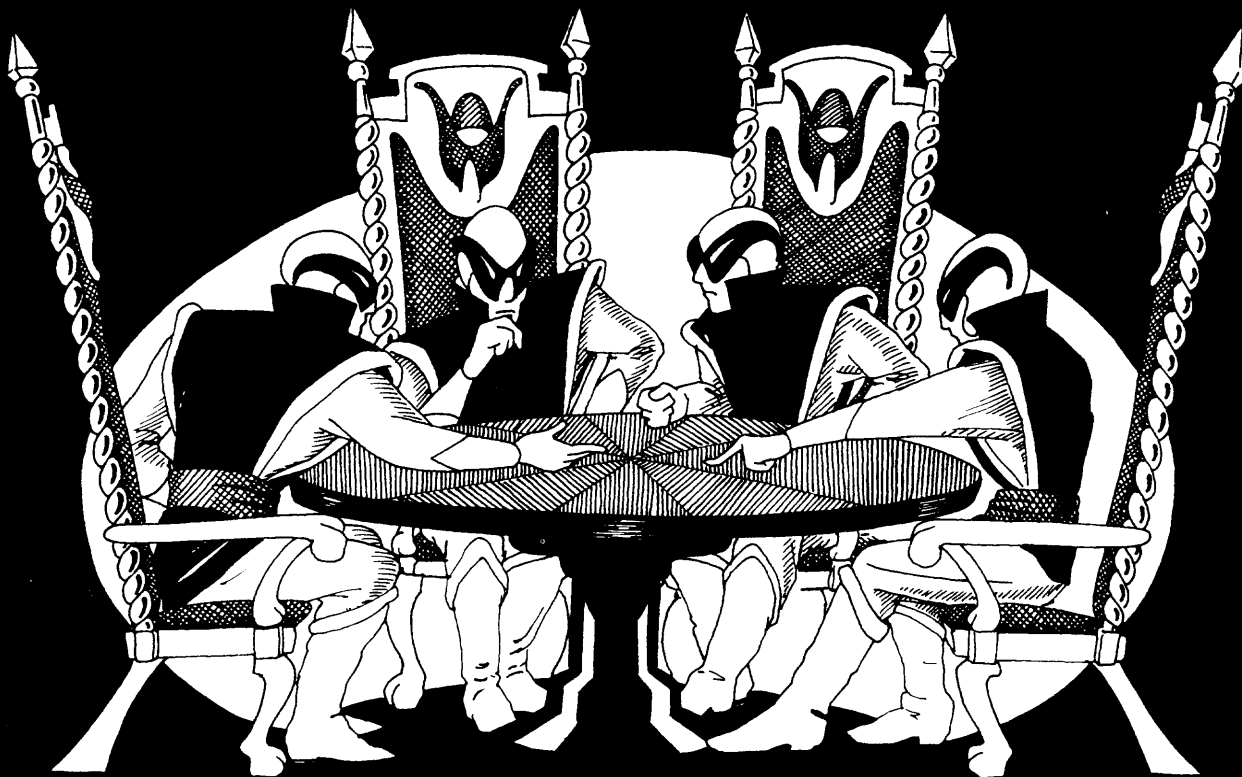
with other lunar bases and even with the Tycho CI, but such contact was sporadic and unpredictable at best, and little came of it.

This was the picture in A.D. 2452 when several Cryptic Alliance groups were independently able to figure out the workings of some abandoned bubble cars they had discovered. Some of the vehicles had been pre-programmed to return to the Moon and Tycho Center; the Cryptic Alliances either missed the programs or decided to use them and visit the lunar station in hopes of gaining access to more powerful technology and knowledge. By strange coincidence, each Alliance launched its expedition to the Moon within the same three-day period.

Whether they went knowingly or as the prisoners of the bubble cars' guidance systems, the passengers on the half-dozen bubble cars were in for the

surface landing area with underground docking facilities, a surface storage area, the computer complex for the Tycho CI, an underground storage area, two hydroponics labs (both infested with mutant plants), two biological laboratories (infested with macrobes), a nuclear power plant, an engineering and repair center that now houses most of the robot manufacturing equipment and spare parts, and several small housing centers and business zones for the human colonists. Three mining zones branch away from Tycho Center, each worked continually by robots and avoided by the plants and macrobes. Some sections may have been sealed off by the plant-macrobe war or by computer error.

The duralloy produced from the mines is stored in the underground storage area, and it is eventually used in



New Brotherhoods

Minor Cryptic Alliances in GAMMA WORLD® gaming by Peter C. Zelinski

The GAMMA WORLD Basic Rules Booklet describes the thirteen most powerful secret societies in post-holocaust America, the Cryptic Alliances. However, scattered across the continent are dozens of lesser Cryptic Alliances, groups that generally sport radical views and limited interests and that have less of a following than other societies have.

Five such minor alliances are described below, in the same format as those for the Cryptic Alliances in the Basic Rules Booklet. However, note that the modified dice roll after each base type should NOT be multiplied by ten to find the number of individuals at that base; lesser Cryptic Alliance bases have low membership levels. Also note the inclusion of main base locations for some groups; most of these minor alliances are found only in certain regions of the Gamma World.

Any player character who hears of one of these groups (and is Rank 2 or higher) may try to join it, assuming that the almighty Game Master approves. The chances of acceptance for certain mutant race are listed among each society's stats.



Friends of Justice (Crusaders)

TECH: II
 TYPES: H (25%); MA (20%); P (5%)
 NUMBER: 1d4
 BASE: A (3d4)
 SECRET SIGN: None. Each being in a clan has its own individual uniform.
 LOCATION: Near certain major post-holocaust cities across America and Canada, particularly on east and west coasts.

DESCRIPTION: This loosely-structured, mutant organization was started when a group of beings began to imitate the habits and beliefs of certain costumed heroes they saw in ancient comic books and movies. The Friends of Justice groups may be joined only by those beings with "superpowers," physical and mental mutations of great power (GM's discretion required). Local Crusader groups are devoted to defending the major city nearest them and take considerable pride in their home towns.

The Friends are constantly on the go, seeking out and destroying everything that they consider to be "evil" or a threat to their home city. Needless to say, this sometimes includes other Cryptic Alliances.



Mental Warriors (Brainlords)

Mental Warriors (Brainlords)

TECH: II

TYPES: H (MS × 4%); MA (MS × 4%);

O (MS × 5%)

NUMBER: 2d4

BASE: A (7d8); B (2d10 + 60); C (20d20);

D (4d100 + 300); G (4d10)

SECRET SIGN: Pentagram tattooed on palm, hoof, wingtip, etc.

LOCATION: Northeast America.

DESCRIPTION: The Mental Warriors believe that thought is the ultimate power and that the creatures of the Earth will someday move out of their fleshy prisons and become beings of pure mental energy. To bring this day closer, they often organize raids against concentrations of "stupid" creatures (those generally having average or less intelligence). Of course, the Brainlords will use mental attacks frequently during these raids.

To join the Mental Warriors, one must have at least two good mental mutations; note that the chance of joining the Mental Warriors is equal to one's Mental Strength multiplied by a certain number, given above. Serfs and Wardents who try to join have a slightly better chance of acceptance (see the "O" after "TYPES").



Searchers

TECH: III

TYPES: PSH (70%); H (55%); MA (40%);

P (10%); A (5%)

NUMBER: 1d8 + 1

BASE: A (3d10 + 30); H (1d12 + 20)

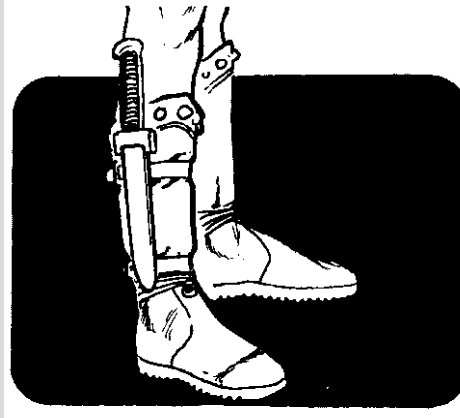
SECRET SIGN: Two eyes tattooed on forearm.

LOCATION: Scattered about America.

DESCRIPTION: The Apocalypse was the group responsible for the destruction of most of the civilized world. Before the Black Years, numerous search teams were assembled to find the secret Apocalypse base (thought to be somewhere on the North American continent) before the final blow was dealt to mankind. Obviously, the teams failed in their mission, but they never stopped looking.

With the arrival of the Black Years, the exact reasons for finding the base either

were lost or became moot. The descendants of the team members, the Searchers, continue the quest as the basis for their secret cult. Pooling the knowledge from the original groups, which often worked at cross purposes, the Searchers hope to find the Apocalypse Base, which they now think of as a sort of "holy place." Searchers are neither hostile toward nor overly concerned about outsiders, unless these stand in the way of their quest.



Spoilsports

TECH: III

TYPES: PSH (75%); H (65%); MA (45%);

P (5%); A (5%)

NUMBER: 2d6

BASE: A (10d4); B (3d20 + 40)

SECRET SIGN: Pistol or knife carried in ankle holster on right foreleg.

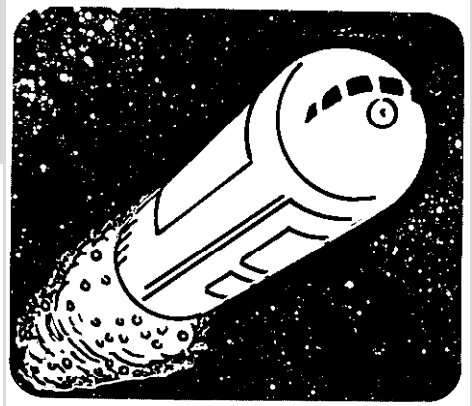
LOCATION: Southwest America.

DESCRIPTION: More than 400 years ago, during a conflict between the ancient nations of the United States and Soviet Union, the "Spoilsport Computer" was constructed and hidden in an isolated area of Arizona. Its purpose was to train and advise teams of soldiers who would defend the American people on their own turf should the country be directly invaded. They were taught to fight in "dirty" and cruel guerilla tactics, thus earning soldiers the nickname "Spoilsports."

After the East-West conflict ended, the Spoilsport Computer lay dormant for nearly half a millenium, until a group of Programmers happened upon it and reactivated it. By following its orders, they became the new Spoilsports. Unfortunately, damage to the computer's memory erased its recollection of who the enemy was, so different clans have different opinions on whom they should be fighting.

Because of their intense training, NPCs found with this alliance may add 3 to their scores in MS, DX, PS, and CN (this does not apply to player characters who join, however). Player characters with

scores over 10 in these four characteristics can try for admission as a Spoilsport. The GM may determine what tactics and weapons are distributed to group members, and what enemies will be warred against.



Voyagers (Spacefarers)

TECH: III

TYPES: PSH (65%); H (50%); MA (35%);

P (5%); A (15%)

NUMBER: 1d12

BASE: A (5d4); H (5d20 + 100)

SECRET SIGN: Hummed tune of specific ancient song ("Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star").

LOCATION: Generally near locations of old spaceports (Florida, Texas, California, Missouri, Illinois, New York, other areas).

DESCRIPTION: This group believes that life on Earth is dying out and will soon disappear. Accordingly, the only hope of survival lies with the few starships that are in solar and planetary orbit and that survived the Social Wars. When a clan of Voyagers discovers a working starship, they study it until they feel that they can successfully pilot it, then leave Earth, never to return. Only two Voyager clans have ever actually left Earth, and neither was ever heard from again. While these two clans are praised and revered by other Spacefarers, their success in reaching another habitable world is doubted by those knowledgeable in such areas; the *Warden* disaster is often cited as evidence of the dangers of interstellar travel (see "Before the Dark Years," *DRAGON*® Magazine #88).

This short catalog is far from complete. Dozens of other lesser groups are at work in the Gamma World, but many are so mysterious and introverted that few people are aware of them. New alliances may be created as you deem necessary. If you think your campaign needs a yexil-worshipping alliance, then it is your duty to make one. After all, you ARE the GM.

Politics Amid the Rubble

*More minor Cryptic Alliances
for GAMMA WORLD® games*

by Douglas Lent

Cryptic Alliances in the GAMMA WORLD® game often wield great power throughout the ravaged lands that make up North America in the 25th century. The rule books present the major alliances in the second-edition game, covering those with the greatest followings across the continent. But there are other alliances, minor ones which fit in where their larger rivals cannot, will not, or simply do not go.

DRAGON® issue #93 presented a handful of these lesser Cryptic Alliances. This article gives the details on five more, using the same format that Peter C. Zelinski set forth in his article ("New Brotherhoods"). As in the earlier article, the modified dice roll after each base type should NOT be multiplied by 10 to find the number of individuals at that base. Any player character of Rank 2 or higher who learns of the existence of any one of these groups may attempt to join it (with the Game Master's approval).

Army of the Deep (The Trident)

TECH: III

TYPES: PSH (35%); H (45%); MA (40%); P (15%); A (10%)

NUMBER: 1d10

BASE: A (5d10; along seacoasts); B (2d10 + 50; along seacoasts); H (10d10+100; usually underwater)

SECRET SIGN: A trident is tattooed somewhere on the body. A trident on a field of

red is displayed on uniforms, flags, and various vehicles.

LOCATION: Along the east coast of America with bases on islands, the mainland, and beneath the ocean's surface.

DESCRIPTION: Created by members of several ocean-dwelling mutant races and a tribe of sea-going humans, the Army of the Deep has grown from a minor alliance of pirates to a force with almost complete control of large portions of the eastern coastal waters. Many tribes and a few of the weaker nations in this region pay tribute to the Trident's soldiers. For the moment, their area of operations and a relatively low membership have kept them from becoming a threat to the mainland, but even now they are working to consolidate their power over the ocean. Should they succeed, there is little doubt that they will then turn their attention to the continental interior. Already, the sign of the Trident is seen to have ominous implications by leaders of major alliances such as the Ranks of Fit, Red Death, and Purists.

The Army's success lies in its three-pronged approach to ocean warfare: dominance above, on, and below the water (hence their symbol, the trident). The Trident is commanded by three generals called Triarchs, each of whom oversees operations in one of the three branches (air, surface, and submarine). There is a degree of overlap in their authority, and all three cooperate closely when the Army is engaged in missions on the mainland.

The Trident possesses a vast store of Ancient technology recovered from several intact undersea bases it has occupied (at least three to date), as well as salvage from now-submerged cities along the

coast. It's arsenal of military hardware includes several submersibles, a number of air/sea fighter-craft, a few hundred marine battlesuits, and an extensive range of personal weaponry. However, it is debatable how much of this collection its soldiers truly understand how to operate, let alone maintain. Nevertheless, their success so far is unquestionable. Whether or not it will continue to be successful remains to be seen.

Knights of Avalon (Defenders)

TECH: II

TYPES: PSH (60%); H (45%); MA (10%); P (5%); A (5%)

NUMBER: 1d6

BASE: B (3d10); C (5d10+10); D (2d100 + 100); G (5d10)

SECRET SIGN: A white unicorn on a field of green, emblazoned on shields, armor, and clothing.

LOCATION: Northeastern America

DESCRIPTION: The Knights of Avalon were established about a hundred years after the start of the Black Years by a few idealistic individuals who were inspired by the image of chivalry as portrayed in old heroic epics and fantasy entertainments. The Knights are organized into two "orders" by their respective duties and abilities. The Order of the Lance is the Defenders' combat arm, consisting of many strong human and physically mutated warriors. The Order of the Scroll handles all administrative and support functions, as well as providing the Lance with skilled mental mutants for various operations. The Scroll is composed of scholarly humans, humanoids, and other beings. The entire organization is overseen by a council of seven members, consisting of those deemed to be the best from both orders.

The Defenders are dedicated to upholding their code, which includes protection of the defenseless, preservation of order, and the destruction of "evil." They can often be found allied with such groups as the Brotherhood of Thought, Healers, Restorationists, Friends of Justice (see DRAGON issue #93), and the Sisterhood of the Sword (see below). Most other alliances are viewed as "evil," and the Knights of Avalon stand ever prepared to thwart their vile schemes, especially those of the Red Death and the Brainlords (issue #93). A special enmity is held for the Knights of Genetic Purity, whom the Defenders view as a gross corruption of their basic ideals. Defenders go out of their way to utterly destroy any Purists they may find.

The Knights of Avalon commonly use Tech II weapons, usually swords and lances. They wear armor and can fight very well even when mounted (most often on a Brutorz or Podog). There is a 50% chance that any Knight has a minor device of the Ancients in his possession. Members of the Order of the Scroll are lightly

armed and armored, usually having a short sword or dagger with leather or normal clothing.

Road Clans (Wild Riders)

TECH: II
TYPES: PSH (50%); H (45%)
NUMBER: 1d8
BASE: A (5d10 +10)
SECRET SIGN: Various individual clan signs are worn by members as tattooed, war-painted, or sewn-on designs.
LOCATION: Scattered across North America, most often along old duralloy roads and highways.
DESCRIPTION: At the time the Shadow Years fell upon the world, a sizable percentage of the North American continent was covered by a network of duralloy highways. Although the following upheavals destroyed most of the population centers, the roads endured. In the Dark Years that followed, some bands of refugees decided that the best way to survive was to stay mobile. Thus were the nomadic clans born.

Each tribe or clan has customs peculiar to itself, but all share certain common characteristics. The most basic unit of road clan society is a single mounted warrior, found with or without a mate. To be recognized as a warrior (and thus as a mature adult), one must have some sort of mount. The better the mount, the higher the warrior's status within the clan (for example, the lowest ranks might ride podogs, higher ones have brutorz, and the elite possess functioning Ancient ground- or hoverbikes). The quest for a mount is often a part of a road clan's rites of passage. Larger families, old people, young children, and all supplies are transported in either brutorz- or rakoxen-drawn wagons, or (if the clan is particularly rich or lucky) in functioning, often revamped, Ancient trucks. The largest such vehicle is usually the property of the clan chieftain, as are any other functioning Ancient craft.

A clan has livestock with it as well, and members often forage for local plants and wild game, sometimes making the clan a double threat in times of famine or drought. The clans trade with local villagers or farmers for food. However, no clan is above an occasional raid on a village or caravan for various goods (especially if said parties tried to cheat the clans at an earlier time), though few will do so on a regular basis. Fighting between clans is not unknown but is rare, with clans observing mutual courtesies when they meet.

Except as noted above, all clans are equipped with Tech II items. Members have a 15% chance per person (30% for the chieftain and his immediate family) of possessing an Ancient artifact. They are commonly armed with spears, javelins, swords, and crossbows. Little armor is worn other than heavy furs or leather.

Sisterhood of the Sword (The Sisterhood)

TECH: II
TYPES (females only): PSH (50%); H (45%); MA (15%)
NUMBER: 1d10
BASE: B (2d6+3); C (3d10+25); D (3d100 + 50)
SECRET SIGN: Ancient symbol for womanhood, with a dagger and crosspiece as the tail, emblazoned on shields, banners, armor, and clothing.
LOCATION: East coast of America.
DESCRIPTION: The Sisterhood of the Sword believes that the Shadow Years and the fall of mankind were brought about by violent, male-dominated governments, and only females are suited to lead the way back to civilization by assuming all defensive and leadership positions. Despite these views, the followers of the Sisterhood do not, with the exception of a few splinter groups, force their views upon others, preferring to gain converts from example and other, gentler means of persuasion. Their bases are test sites for their doctrine, with regular reports to the Sisterhoods main base. The Sisterhood is on good terms with the Brotherhood of Thought, the Healers, the Friends of Justice, and the Knights of Avalon. Their own beliefs, however, often put them at cross-purposes with the Followers of the Voice, Restorationists, the Created, the Iron Society, the Ranks of Fit, and Zoopremists.

The Sisterhood is well equipped to Tech II standards but is always eager to gain functioning Ancient technology. The "Sisters" are most often armed with swords, spears, and crossbows. They prefer chain mail armor and usually have some sort of riding mount. There is a 30% chance that each will have some sort of minor artifact. The warrior elite are usually known as Amazons, Valkyries, Black Widows, or similar terms.

Those Who Wait (Listeners)

TECH: III
TYPES: PSH (60%); H (55%); MA (40%); P (15%); A (10%)
NUMBER: 1d10
BASE: A (5d6); H (5d20+50)
SECRET SIGN: Hummed or whistled portion of an Ancient tune (the opening bar of the theme for *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*).
LOCATION: Most often found around the sites of old astronomical observatories.
DESCRIPTION: As humanity expanded into space during the time before the Social Wars, one of the ongoing concerns was the search for intelligent alien life (such as the few Luntarian survivors found on Mars; see POLYHEDRON™ Newszine, issue #26). For years, scientists had been monitoring interstellar radio wavelengths with no conclusive evidence of such life. It is

believed that some aliens were encountered, but little is now known about such contact. As international tensions increased, the resources for these projects were channeled into military applications; the great radio telescopes were closed down "for the duration," never to reopen.

While the search was going on, speculation ran high about what forms alien life might be (if it existed at all). Eventually, a small fringe group arose which believed that the aliens would be benevolent, omnipotent beings who would teach mankind to overcome its self-destructive urges and create a golden age on Earth. After the Apocalypse struck, a small group of survivors adopted this viewpoint to ease the trauma of the holocaust they had just experienced. "The only reason we did not find them [the aliens] was because we had become too proud," their leaders reasoned. "Now we have humbled ourselves in our mad quest for power. Our world lays shattered about us, beyond our ability to repair. But fear not! Since we have lost our arrogance, we are now worthy of aid from our friends beyond the stars. All we need do is make the proper supplications and they shall come to help us fulfill our glorious destiny!"

And so began the Great Vigil of Those Who Wait. An active campaign to restore the old radio telescopes began, that the faithful might send their pleas to the aliens and receive their reply, and it continues to this day. Bands of Listeners may be found almost anywhere, either searching for components to restore the "holy receivers" or on pilgrimage to such sites. The cult has already completed a few of these projects and now operate and maintain their antenna-shrines, beaming their empasioned call to anyone in the universe willing to listen, and waiting for the day an answer arrives and ends their vigil.

The affairs of this world mean little to the Listeners, unless such affairs affect their "holy" mission. Listeners possess much Ancient technology, usually astronomical or communications equipment. They also keep some weaponry for self-defense (and to protect their receivers, which they will defend to the death) and a few minor gadgets to use as trade goods and bribes to buy themselves privacy. The goals of Those Who Wait occasionally coincide with those of the Followers of the Voice, the Restorationists, and the Voyagers (issue #93); Listeners may sometimes be found in some kind of alliance, usually temporary, although a very few have endured longer. The Listeners share mutual enmity with Radioactivists wherever they find a site that is deemed "holy" by both of them, and with Archivists, who are seen as vile heretics (the feeling is mutual). Those Who Wait have nothing against such groups as the Brotherhood of Thought, the Healers, Friends of Justice, Knights of Avalon, and the Sisterhood of the Sword, so long as they do not interfere with the Listener's activities. Ω

OUT OF THE SUN . . .

The Man-Machines of GAMMA WORLD® gaming

by James M. Ward and Roger Raupp

For over two hundred years, the Death Machine had faithfully guarded the entrance to the Redwood Underground Supply Depot. The machine took considerable cybernetic pride in having needed only its eight cryogenically cooled laser batteries to stop all opposition from getting within one kilometer of the base. Humans, smaller robots, and strange, unlikely animals had all fought the guardian, and all had died seconds after entering range of the lasers.

In all those years, the only damage the Death Machine had taken was from the purple flowers on the perimeter of the

depot's fence. Many years ago, the robot had trained its weapons on the flower patch to clear out its free-fire zone. With the first shot, the flowers had somehow fired back enough energy to strip the machine's energy screens a way and punch a hole a meter across through the machine's hull. The flowers ceased attacking the second the laser batteries were cut off — and the purple flowers were left alone from then on. The Death Machine needed a week in the repair shops to recover

It was a bright, sunny day, and the Death Machine was tracking small birds with its trek guns for practice when its sensors detected two air units approaching, each equipped with a nuclear plant. Not willing to take any chances, the guardian brought all of its weapons to full power and readied itself for battle. The units reached the boundary of the 1500-meter free-fire zone — and the

Death Machine let them have it, its blaster cannons and laser batteries setting fire to the very air with their monstrous energies.

The enemy machines took direct hits and kept coming. The Death Machine rechecked its sensor readings and salvaged missile after howling missile in to the attackers . . . but they still kept coming.

The Death Machine backed away, firing every weapon it had. For the first time in its long, mechanized existence, the Death Machine experienced a new feeling deep within its inhuman consciousness. The Death Machine knew the meaning of fear

The Man-Machines were among the last great battle weapons built in the time before the Shadow Years. They were created in three different models: the Aquabot (see POLYHEDRON™ issue



The Empire of the Sun

by Roger E. Moore

TECH: III

TYPES: PSH, H (see below)

NUMBER: 1 per vehicle

BASE: B (2d4 + 20); H (2d6 + 3)

SECRET SIGN: None (see below)

LOCATION: Scattered bases across Pacific Ocean, east coast of Asia, and west coast of North America; controls island of Honshu, Japan

DESCRIPTION: The Empire of the Sun is not so much a Cryptic Alliance as it is a true nation, one of the few in existence in the Dark Years. Its military is spread very thinly across the Pacific basin and it has a low population base,

but its people, composed entirely of Pure Strain Humans and human-appearing mutants, are highly organized and motivated. They control little land in North America, but have set up a few bases from which their military is studying the local Cryptic Alliances.

As noted in the accompanying article on the AATAAV, the Empire got its start from a group of pilots and ground crewmen working on the island of Honshu prior to the Social Wars. Honshu was at that time a part of the Asian Coalition, which was at war with nearly every other nation on Earth. During the Apoc-

alypse Week of 2322, these crewmen were hustled into suspended animation chambers in a major undersea base off the coast of Honshu, and thus survived the cataclysm.

The crewmen were revived in 2431, and since then have slowly spread across the Pacific Ocean, scouting out the remains of the world. They will accept any human or human-appearing being into their ranks, after a lengthy indoctrination program which includes a telepathic scan by mutant humans. The program is so thorough that there is only a percentage chance equal to the prospective character's mental strength score of successfully hiding any traitorous thoughts.

Only military members of the Empire are encountered away from Honshu. The only sign exchanged by Imperial soldiers is a salute given to officers, in which the right hand is placed over the heart (as if reciting the American Pledge of Allegiance). About 70% of the

#20), the HATAAV (Heavy All-Terrain Armored Attack Vehicle), and the AATAAV (Airborne All-Terrain Armored Attack Vehicle). Manned war machines of incredible destructive power, they had only been in the testing stage when the Social Wars and the Apocalypse brought an end to all civilization.

Hundreds of years later, suspended animation capsules on the island of Honshu, Japan, released a force of AATAAV pilots and ground crew who had survived the Social Wars by entering the capsules at the last possible moment. Horrified at the devastation wrought upon their world, the force began to re-establish civilization — on their own terms, and under the banner of the Empire of the Sun.

This article details the AATAAV fighting machine, which is likely to be encountered along the western coast of North America. Player characters may either fight against or join the forces of the Empire of the Sun, or they may simply try to stay out of the way. . . .

TYPE: AATAAV

STATUS: Two ranks

NUMBER: 1d4

ARMOR: 1

HIT DICE: 300d8

CONTROL: E

SENSORS: A/B/C/ +

POWER: B

MS: Nil

IN: Nil

DX: 1d4 + 14

PS: 250

LAND SPEED: 100/4500/80

AIR SPEED: 200/9000/160 (see below)

Empire's citizens and troops are Oriental or Polynesian, though the Empire's people harbor no ill will toward any race. Mutant animals and plants are not permitted to be soldiers or citizens of the Empire, as their status is still in question. Androids are regarded as enemies, and there are rumors of an Empire-android war going on in the northern islands of Japan.

After the failure of attempts to make peaceful contact with the Iron Society (see POLYHEDRON™ issue #18) and a Radioactivist city on the west coast (see POLYHEDRON issue #20), the Empire began attacks against both of these Alliances with mixed success. The outcome of this conflict has yet to be resolved.

The Empire's basic policy is to bring order out of the chaos of the world, using the most efficient means possible. If peaceful negotiation works, that will be used. If fighting is inevitable — then the Man-Machines are brought in.

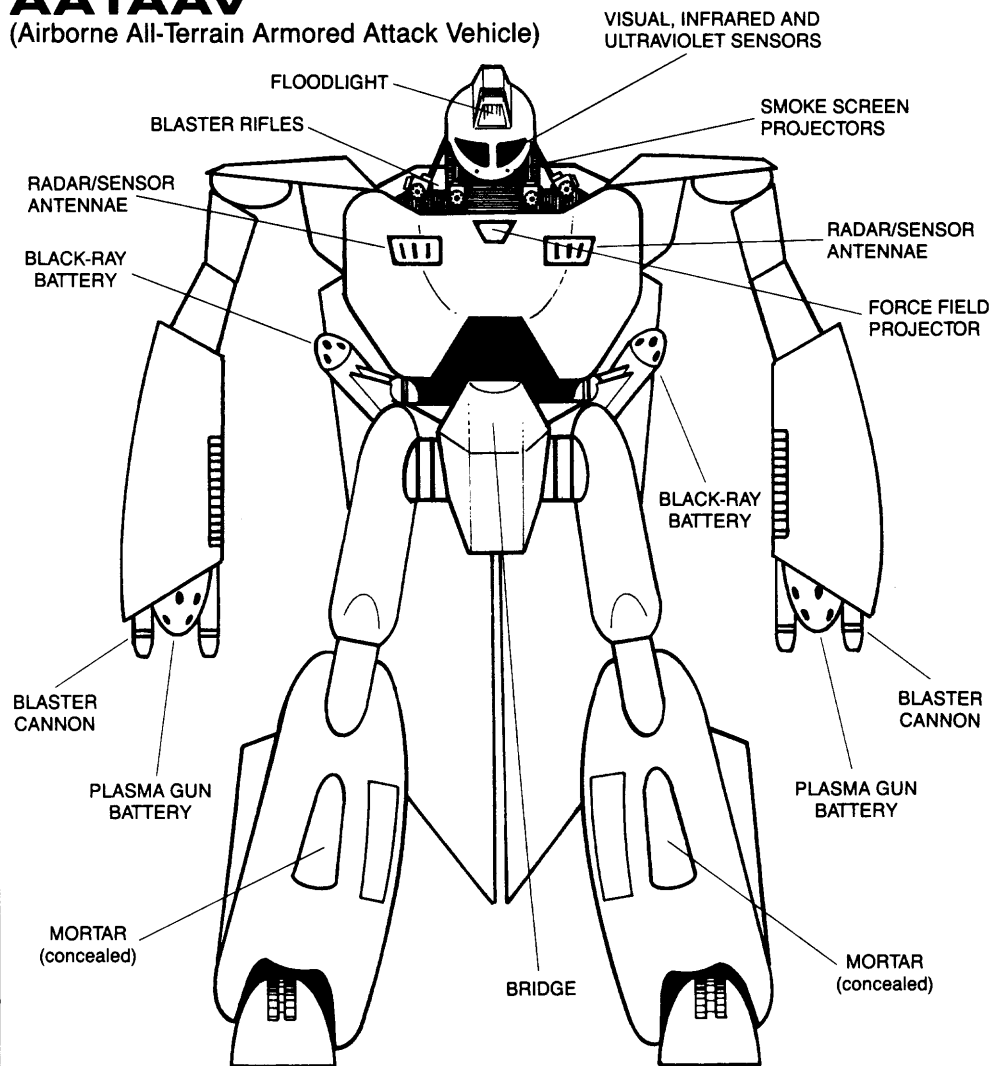
WATER SPEED: 65/2900/50

DESCRIPTION: The AATAAV is a gigantic, manlike war machine, standing 90 m tall and 36 m wide. The body is composed of energy-resistant collaplastic with a duralloy underbase. It must be piloted by a trained driver/gunner with a Stage V I.D.; the pilot controls all functions of the vehicle, including flight, hover, and walking capabilities, and all

limited by power and cooling considerations). For long-range travel, the AATAAV can reconfigure itself into a more aerodynamic form and fly normally, using antigravity pods and jet engines. The reconfiguration process takes only one minute, but during that time the machine's weapons cannot be operated. In full flight configuration, the vehicle can reach speeds of up to 830 kph. Streamlining is provided by shap-

AATAAV

(Airborne All-Terrain Armored Attack Vehicle)



FRONT

gunnery. Intensive training is necessary to operate the device at full efficiency, and such training is only available from certain military bases controlled by the Empire of the Sun.

The AATAAV has standard, infrared, and ultraviolet sensors effective out to 10 km, and has radar good out to 200 km. It can walk over light terrain at 25 kph, or use its hover thrusters to move over all terrain at twice that speed, for 120 minutes every 24-hour period (being

ing the force field around the vehicle. Because of the force field, no weapons can be used while the vehicle is in flight.

The AATAAV has a force-field energy screen capable of absorbing 300 points of damage. A high-intensity floodlight mounted on the vehicle's head has a 1 km range and projects a 30° cone-shaped beam. The floodlight will cause temporary blindness in most light-sensitive or nocturnal creatures within 300 m of the beam's source.

Two smoke-screen projectors, mounted just below the visual sensors, are together capable of creating a cylindrical cloud of smoke or gas 30 m wide and 250 m long within 10 seconds. The smoke negates all laser attacks, ruins line-of-sight optical and infrared sensing, and can be mixed with a poison gas (intensity 3-18, as desired) useful against ground troops.

one launches matter bombs (type beta). Each mortar has a 2-km range and may fire two bombs per action turn, with a supply of 40 bombs for the matter-bomb mortar and 80 for the negation-bomb mortar.

The AATAAV's arms are each able to present a universal firing arc, quickly directing attacks in any direction. Each arm mounts three blaster cannon, doing 20d6 damage each at a 2km range.

Finally, four standard Mark VII blasters rifles are mounted under the vehicle's chin. These weapons have standard ranges and powers, and have a 90° firing arc to the AATAAV's front.

The AATAAV is powered by a fusion power plant with a ten-year life span. The machine is rigged to automatically self-destruct (regardless of the pilot's wishes) from a remote location, usually an Empire of the Sun base. (This is an excellent way of keeping these devices out of the hands of the Empire's enemies.) However, the self-destruct mechanism and circuitry are considered secret knowledge, and no pilots are aware that these devices have been implanted in their vehicles.

Because of the onboard guidance and fire-control systems, it is impossible for the pilot of a AATAAV to accidentally shoot his own vehicle in combat. An AATAAV will always remain upright unless it is depowered or purposefully made to sit down. Very few AATAAVs are in service, perhaps less than ten; only three to six of them would be in operation in North America. AATAAVs usually travel in small groups to provide fire support to one another.

Only a minute had passed since the battle had been joined. The Death Machine's energy shields were gone, and it had taken massive damage from the multiple attacks mounted by the two intruders. Within the cold consciousness of the machine's combat computer, facts were analyzed and a decision was reached. It rocketed away from the attackers at full power, heading for the perimeter fence. If its plan failed, it would be a smoldering hulk within the next few seconds.

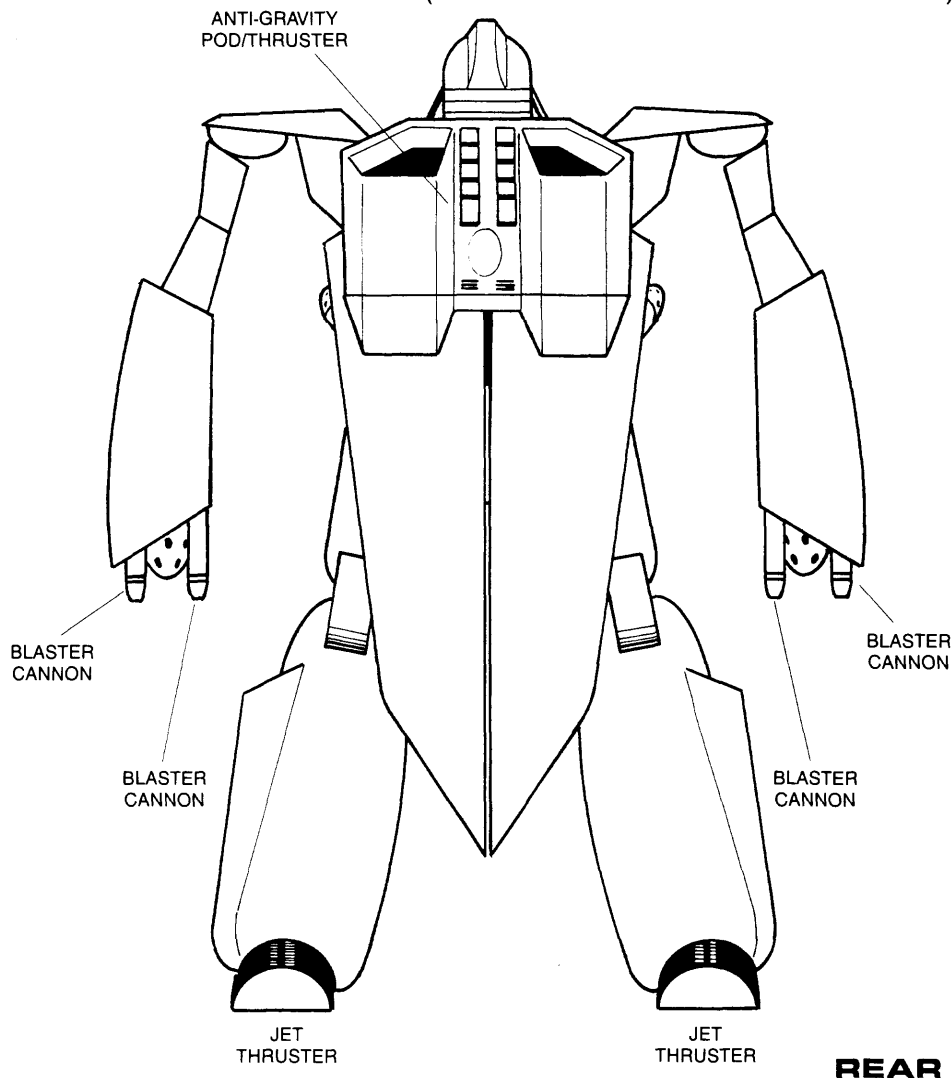
The gleaming titans raised their plasma gun batteries and took aim as the Death Machine suddenly dropped behind the fence, beyond a patch of purple flowers. Earth and sky were suddenly illuminated by the flash of star-hot plasma bolts that linked the two attackers and the flower patch in a bridge of blinding white energy.

It was over with in seconds. The flowers remained untouched, their mutant energy-reflection power undimmed. Slowly, the guardian arose and coasted back toward the flaming ruins of the two invaders. Training its remaining guns and weapons on the wrecks, the robot began to pound the remains until they were molten.

It was not called a Death Machine for nothing.

AATAAV

(Airborne All-Terrain Armored Attack Vehicle)



The AATAAV is heavily equipped and was intended for use as a shock force against massed troop concentrations. Two black-ray batteries, each holding six black-ray guns with a 600-m range, are mounted on the left and right hips of the vehicle. Each battery has a firing arc of 180° to its respective side.

Each shin of the vehicle has a mortar, concealed internally but hanging out for firing. The left mortar is usually rigged for firing negation bombs, and the right

These guns are mounted around a massive central plasma-gun battery, with eight plasma guns per arm. Plasma guns have the following statistics: WC 13, code FIIL, range 500 m, damage 15d6 each. The plasma weapons cannot be removed from the vehicle's arms without destroying them. Because the plasma weapons use so much power, the AATAAV cannot do anything else while these weapons fire and must stand perfectly still.

Rites of Passage

Initiations for the GAMMA WORLD® Cryptic Alliances



by Danny Kretzer

Whitney was lead into a small room by the hooded figure. A single shaft of sunlight from a high window. In one corner of the room sat a large metal box with a screen and buttons along one side. A coiled length of wire sat by the device, one end attached to the back of the device and the other end lying on the floor, tipping with an unusual projection.

"You wish to join the ranks of the Restorationists," the hooded one spoke. "First, you must prove yourself worthy. That device" — the figure gestured to the corner of the room — "was a communications system of the Ancients. Make this device functional, and you may take your place with us. You have until sunset."

With that, the hooded one left the room. Whitney stared at the alien contraption. Over and over, the hooded one's words echoed in his mind.

"You have until sunset...."

In order to join a certain Cryptic Alliance in the GAMMA WORLD® game, all a player character has to do roll percentile dice, as noted on p. 53 of the Basic Rules Booklet. What this dice roll simulates is not specified, but the method seems very insufficient. When a person joins a certain organization, the organization wants to make sure that the new member is of the sort the organization is looking for.

At one point in my campaign, several PCs tried to join the Restorationists. One PC who was a Pure Strain Human with very low intelligence and mental strength scores rolled a 07, so he was automatically able to join. A humanoid PC who was not only highly intelligent

but who also had *mechanical genius* rolled an 86, thereby failing to join that alliance. This didn't seem right. Why should a Cryptic Alliance that needs intelligent people to figure out artifacts and piece together the culture of the Ancients choose brawn over brains?

From that point, I put into effect the "initiation rule." In order to join a Cryptic Alliance, a PC would have to pass a specific test or initiation that replaced the dice roll.

The first thing a PC has to do is to locate an appropriate Cryptic Alliance base, which could prove to be an adventure in itself. Just finding information on certain bases runs the risk of being badly misled or stumbling across enemies of your chosen alliance.

Once the base is located and its personnel contacted, a fee is usually required to take the initiation test. (Every alliance needs money.) Regardless of the amount of money offered or the personality of the applicant, a character cannot join an alliance that is opposed to his or her (or its) racial type. For example, a Pure Strain Human could not get into the Radioactivists.

The initiation itself could vary widely, depending on the nature of the Cryptic Alliance performing it. Warlike alliances are generally the more savage and barbaric sorts, and have goals centering around military activity, conquest, destruction, and warfare. The Ranks of the Fit and the Friends of Entropy are two good examples of this type of organization. An initiation into these alliances would likely consist of a test of courage, endurance, or fighting prowess. Combat with large monsters, driving or running through an obstacle course, or spending the night in a cold, wet, and possibly inhabited cavern are three good examples of such initiations.





Runo stood in the center of the war pit, the howls of the audience filling his ears. The desert sun was as hot as a blast furnace, but he wasn't sweating from the heat.

"Hey, mutant bait!" shrieked a faceless voice among the watching horde. "Catch!" He leaped aside as a six-foot spear slammed in to the ground beside him. The roar of the audience redoubled and became a mindless thunder. Is joining the Red Death a good idea after all? he wondered. But he had little time to think now. The cage door was being opened. The Duel of Death had begun. Runo snatched at the spear in panic when he saw what was coming for him out of the darkness. . . .

Peaceful Cryptic Alliances are those dedicated to the protection and aid of living creatures. Initiations into these groups would consist of healing an injured person or creature with several medical artifacts provided for this purpose, or performing some great and selfless deed using nonviolent methods.

"Attend, Torrel," said the Healer. "On the table before you are five devices. You must choose one with which to heal the podog on the straw mat."

Torrel blinked as he looked over the various artifacts. One was a white box with a scratched red cross on the side, containing several jet-spray tubes and containers of medicine. After a few moments, he chose the box. One of the jet-spray tubes appeared functional, and he loaded an antibiotic into it. Then he walked over to the whimpering, shaggy mass of fur that looked up at him with huge, brown eyes. Here goes, Torrel thought, and gave the creature the full injection. . . .

Some alliances are religious in nature, built around the worship of one or more deities and serving them by acts designed to promote their worship. initiations would usually involve a formal service, prolonged questioning on religious doctrine, and possibly a special rite to see if the gods show favor in the initiate. Archivists, Followers of the Voice, and Radioactivists are alliances of this sort. Successful operation of an artifact might get one into the Archivists; successful operation of a computer terminal or program might work for the Followers (with a **SYNTAX ERROR** message indicating divine disfavor).

Bereny approached the cave under the, watchful eyes of the two mutant priests. He stopped before the ancient opening

and examined the faded sign over the entrance. WARNING! REACTOR CHAMBER! AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY!

"Here is where you must seek your fate," said the two priests in unison.

"Inside a waits the shining Radiant Divine Glory. The Glory will either find favor with you or blight you with a defect. If you are unchanged, there is still the Trial of the Green Pit. Go now."

The priests fell silent. Bereny steeled himself, then started toward the caverns.

Cultural alliances vary greatly, more so than any other sort, and their initiation practices vary as well. Alliances of this nature seek to bring into being a world-wide culture common to all beings. Restorationists, Seekers, and the Brotherhood of Thought are of this sort.

Generally speaking, initiations into these groups requires the PC to show that he has the skills or powers necessary to be an asset to the organization. Whitney's trial with the Restorationists (at the start of this article) was such an initiation. If another alliance wanted to promote a world culture based upon peaceful cooperation between humanoids and Pure Strain Humans, they might set up a puzzle, trial, or problem that requires the combined efforts of one being of each sort to solve. An attempt to find the fastest route through a maze (with some nasty traps scattered throughout its corridors) would be such a test.

Finally, there are the genetic alliances, which are essentially racist in nature and seek to destroy all other intelligent beings not of their own species or mutant type. Some have watered this philosophy down so that they seek only to enslave those not of their own species, but genocide is usually the rule. If a violent end to other creatures is sought, an initiation usually consists of hand-to-hand combat with a captive creature of the disfavored sort. If the alliance permits mutations and the initiate possesses them, they may be used in the combat.

Though theoretically anyone of the appropriate genotype could join a genetic alliance, their ranks are usually restricted to those who are deemed superior to their fellows in skill, power, and dedication to the cause. The Created, Zoopremisists, Iron Society, and Knights of Genetic Purity may be considered genetic alliances, with overtones of warlike alliances evident.

Arturo stood alone in the domed room, feeling the slight chill from the air conditioners. Some arena this was, he

sneered. Big deal. So he was supposed to prove himself to the other Knights by killing some wimp humanoid? Fine. He had his shotgun, commando knife, harpoon gun, strangling wire, and every thing else. So why were the faces pressed against the thick quartz windows around the room so worried looking? Hey, they'd never seen him in action.

The door opposite him opened. With a lightning move, he snatched at his harpoon gun and took aim.

And froze.

She was easily the most beautiful woman he had ever seen in his life, a stunning platinum blonde with a heart-breaking face, crystal blue eyes, and —

Four arms, each whipping back to hurl a dagger at him. He raised the harpoon again, but he'd waited too long. . .

Any PC undergoing an initiation into a Cryptic Alliance should use only the tool and weapons given to him by the alliance itself. Combat situations should be balanced, though bias in favor of either opponent may be hard to avoid in complicated fights using weapons and various mutations.

If the referee has created his own Cryptic Alliances (as delineated in

DRAGON® issue #93), then it shouldn't be a difficult matter to design an initiation rite for them. The Friends of Justice might admit those who prove themselves by taking on a particular threat against their home town, for example.

Adventuring situations with initiation ceremonies should also be considered. The PCs might be hired to infiltrate a particular alliance, thus being required to undergo the initiation ceremony in order to complete their mission. Once in the organization, the PCs set about stealing a particular item, assassinating a hated leader, or the like. Perhaps the initiation will be worse than the mission the PCs were to carry out.

The PCs might also be forced to join an alliance that is suffering from low membership. Once initiated, the PCs' next job will be to escape

Extraordinary initiations might also occur. If the PCs join an organization at a time when the alliance desperately needs a particular mission accomplished, they might end up taking the mission instead of a regular initiation. As one would expect, the alliance is not likely to charge the PCs for this assistance, and if the mission succeeds, the PCs may be hailed as alliance heroes.

SOME REFUSE TO DIE

in the

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CAN YOU SURVIVE?

New Tools of the Trade

More artifacts for GAMMA WORLD® adventuring

by Peter Giannacopoulos

The nature of the GAMMA WORLD® game is such that new and different weapons of the Ancients are constantly being discovered by the multitude of adventurers on post-holocaust Earth. This article describes various devices of the Ancients that may appear alongside the many artifacts currently in use in game campaigns.

The artifacts are divided into the following categories: pistols, rifles, miscellaneous offensive devices, miscellaneous defensive devices, and other artifacts. These items are described below.

Pistols

This category includes hand-held firearms currently in use in modern-day society. For the sake of simplicity, these weapons (and the rifles) have been scaled down or otherwise altered for greater ease in game mechanics. The following are the statistics for contemporary weapons of war.

	Light Caliber	Medium Caliber	Heavy Caliber
Range	100 m	150 m	250 m
Bullet	lead slugs for all		
Rate	5	5	5
Damage	1-4	1-8	1-10
Code	DII	DII	DII
Cost	250	275	325
Kilo	.5	.5	1
Value	100	150	250
Clip	6-30	6-30	6-30
WC	9	10	11

Light caliber (.001-.200), medium caliber (.201-.400), and heavy caliber are designations of the guns' strengths. Light caliber includes pistols such as hand-held pellet guns. Medium caliber includes guns such as the .22 Baretta, the .357 swing-out revolver, the .22 revolver, etc. Heavy caliber consists of the .357 Magnum, the .44 Magnum,

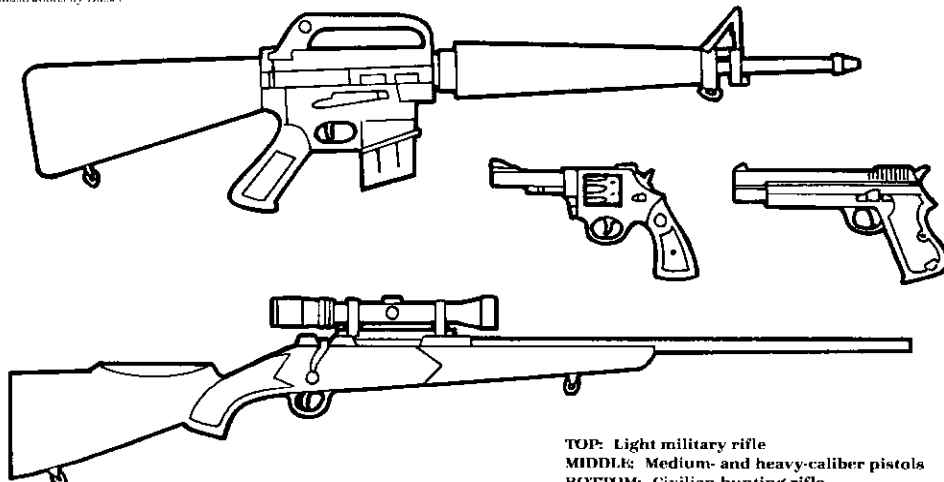
9mm Walther P-38, 9mm Walther PPK, and so forth.

Note that **rate** is the number of shots that can be fired in an Action Turn.

Clip refers to the number of shots that may be fired before the gun is emptied

Civilian rifles include .22 rifles and other light weapons. Light military rifles include the 9mm Uzi, .45 M-3, 5.56 NATO M-16, and 7.62 AKM. Heavy military weapons include all machine guns that must be mounted on a bipod or

Illustrations by Diesel



TOP: Light military rifle
MIDDLE: Medium- and heavy-caliber pistols
BOTTOM: Civilian hunting rifle

of all ammunition. **Damage** is the damage done per shot.

Rifles

Many projectile weapons were in use during the Shadow Years, for both recreational and military/law enforcement purposes. The larger shoulder arms are described below.

	Civilian Model	Light Military	Heavy Military
Range	200 m	250 m	600 m
Bullet	lead slugs for all		
Rate	3/turn	6/turn	10/turn
Damage	1-6	1-6	1-8
Code	EII	EII	EII
cost	400	500	700
Kilo	3-4	5-6	60
Value	350	750	1000
Clip	10	40	100
WC	10	11	12

tripod, such as the .50 M-2 Browning. Rate, clip, and damage are described above.

Other weapons

Many lethal powered weapons were used during the Shadow Years. One of these was the **disruptor rifle**, used by both government troops and terrorists for its sheer destructiveness. Its statistics are: weapon class 15; code EIII; range 65 meters; damage 12d6; not available for sale; weight 4 kilograms; Rank value.

Disruptor rifles run on two hydrogen energy cells, good for 4 shots. If a beam from one of these rifles hits an organic entity, it will cause 12d6 points of damage. Should this disruptor energy strike machinery, it will cause the machinery to malfunction unless the target fails a Mental Attack against an MS score of 15.

A non-intelligent machine, such as a weapon, vehicle, hydraulic lift, etc., is considered to have an MS of 1-4 for defensive purposes. Other items such as androids and cyborgs use the MS given to them by the referee or the rulebook.

These malfunctions can cause the affected machinery to shut down completely (90% chance) or react in a totally unexpected way (10% chance), such as by exploding or running backwards. This effect lasts either 2-24 Action Turns (80%) or permanently (20%). The only machinery not affected by this device are Powered Assault, Attack, and Scout Armors, which were constructed to negate this effect. Wearers of these armors are still subject to the 12d6 points of damage, however.

War bands achieved some measure of popularity among terrorist assassins during the Shadow Years. War bands would not show up on weapons scanners, were completely silent when used,

and use. When an incendiary grenade explodes, it releases searing chemicals which initially cause 11d6 points of damage. In addition to this damage, a spray of burning chemicals covers all in the 9-meter blast radius. These chemicals cause an additional 1-6 points of damage for 2-7 action turns, or until extinguished by immersing the flames in water, since these chemicals easily wash off.

The statistics for these grenades are: weapon class 8; code FIII; throwing range; 11d6 damage (plus 1d6 damage per Action Turn as noted above); cost 100 gold pieces; .2 kilograms weight; 500 Status Points value.

The **freeze ray** was a unique weapon developed at the end of the Shadow Years. It has these statistics: weapon class 14; code DIII; range 80 meters; damage 4d8 (plus special); costs 750 gold pieces; weight 3 kilograms; 650 Status Points value.

Defensive artifacts

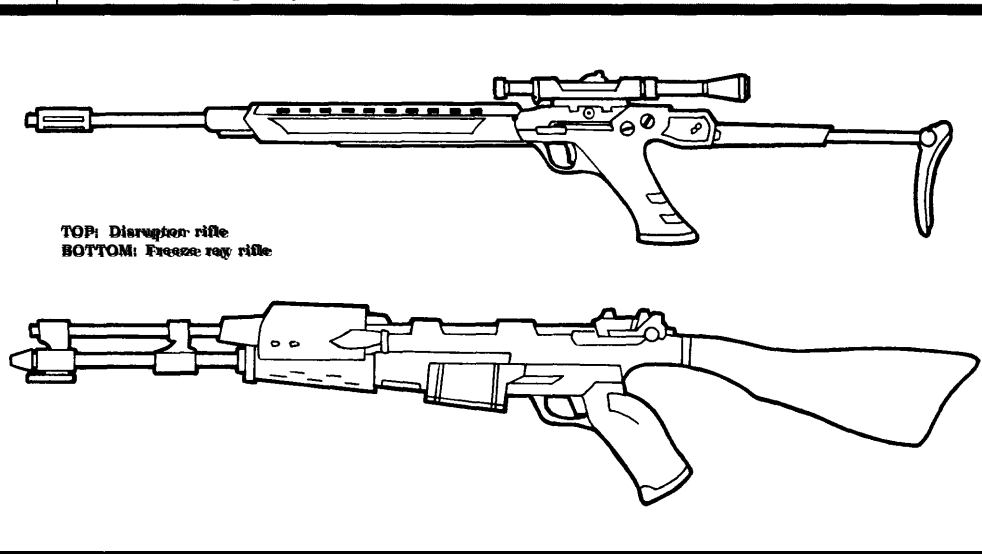
Portable force shields are localized force shields similar to the many types encountered throughout the post holocaust world. The shield has no effect on the user's AC but it gives the user a 50 point defense screen against all laser and blaster attacks, fusion beams, needlers, stun rays, energy maces, vibro blades & daggers, stun whips, and micro and mini-missiles, provided that the user knows from where the attack is coming. It does not give its defense value to any bomb, grenade or rear attacks. Gas attacks are not protected against, either. Portable force shields are code DIII, cost 550 gold pieces, weigh 1 kilogram, and have Rank value.

Neuro collars are code DIII and cannot be bought. They weigh .5 kilogram and are worth 1000 gold pieces. Neuro collars were containment devices used by law enforcement organizations throughout the pre-holocaust world as a means of containing hostile human beings. They are large duralloy collars with many studs imbedded in them. Along with these studs, each collar has two brightly colored buttons, one red and the other green. The red button activates the collar, and the green one shuts it off.

When the neuro collar is in use, it sets up a field in the wearer's nervous system which forces the wearer to obey the commands of the being who activated the device. The wearer becomes subject to the collar if he loses a Mental Attack against a MS of 18. The wearer will obey any order except those that are obviously self-destructive.

The neuro collar only has a 30% chance of affecting mutated plants or animals, since their nervous systems are so different from Pure Strain Humans. The artifact also has only a 80% chance of affecting mutated humanoids, since their nervous systems may also be different.

While in this subdued state, affected individuals are unable to use any conscious physical or mental mutations. They are also unable to act violently in any manner against anyone, even if ordered to do so. Note that affected individuals still possess all of their rational facilities, and they are still capable of independent thought and resentment against their "masters." The neuro collar operates on two hydrogen energy cells good for 20 hours of continual use. The wearer cannot turn off his own collar.



TOP: Disruption rifle
BOTTOM: Freeze ray rifle

and had deadly effectiveness. Their statistics are: weapon class 1; code AII; hand-to-hand range; cost 500 gold pieces; weight .1 kilogram; 525 Status Point value.

War bands are worn over one's fist much like brass knuckles. Physically, a war band appears to be 4 "square piece of duralloy, with a ringed handle for one's fingers mounted on the back. This device is powered by a hydrogen energy cell good for 25 hours of use.

War bands are used to bludgeon an opponent. When a punch is landed, the hydrogen energy cells multiply the user's strength. A hit causes 5d4 points of damage, with the attacker being able to attack twice per round if one war band is worn on each hand.

An **incendiary grenade** is similar to a chemex grenade in both appearance

The hydrogen energy cell that powers this device is good for 5 shots. When a hit is scored by this rifle, the atmospheric nitrogen around the target is suddenly solidified, instantly imprisoning the victim. Aside from the initial cold damage inflicted on the victim, the victim cannot breathe and will go unconscious in as many Action Turns as he has Constitution points, then will die in 3-18 Action Turns more.

A victim may break free of this ice prison if he rolls his Physical Strength or less on 3d6 + 3. If this roll succeeds, the victim may attack on the next Action Turn. If this roll fails, the victim will be trapped for 6-36 Action Turns, at which time the nitrogen will have disappeared back into the air. The freeze ray was in limited use only, being largely experimental in nature.

Other artifacts

The **military combat tank** was a standard army vehicle used frequently throughout the Shadow Years in large-scale battles. It was often pitted against other combat tanks or various military robots. A combat tank will be highly prized and will be heavily guarded. Most such tanks have armor class 1, 40 hit dice, control B, sensors B/C, power A/D, code GIII, a maximum speed of 175 kilometers per hour, and Rank value. Tanks will not be sold.

A combat tank is generally operated by a crew of three. One of the crew members drives the tank, one controls the main gun(s), and the third controls the other weapons systems.

Combat tanks look much like those in use in the twentieth century. The follow-

ing example describes one unusual combat tank, the Win Hammer, that has two main guns on the turret. Numerous small weapons mounts are spread over the Twin Hammer, containing an assortment of lethal weapons. The tank is made of duralloy and has small openings in the sides (covered by duralloy shutters) which contain steel-reinforced glass.

The two main guns each fire a laser bolt causing 10d6 points of damage; the main guns share the same target. Two batteries of micro-missile launchers (each with a clip of 35 missiles), four batteries of grenade launchers teach with 2-12 grenades of mixed types), two batteries of fusion rifles, and four batteries of stun guns complete this tank's armament.

The Twin Hammer's weapons statistics are summarized in the following chart:

type	number	damage	range
Laser cannons	2	10d6	250 m
Micro-missiles	8 (2)	7d6	500 m
Grenade launchers	16 (4)	varies	275 m
Fusion rifles	8 (2)	*	400 m
Stun guns	8 (2)	*	225 m

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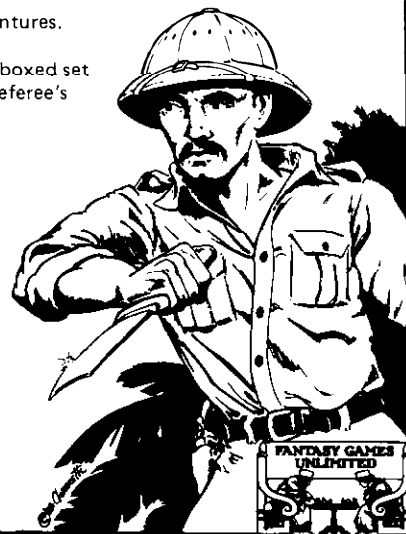
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type	number	damage	range
Laser cannons	2	10d6	250 m
Micro-missiles	8 (2)	7d6	500 m
Grenade launchers	16 (4)	varies	275 m
Fusion rifles	8 (2)	*	400 m
Stun guns	8 (2)	*	225 m

Number shows how many particular weapons are on the tank. The number in parentheses shows how many batteries of that weapon exist. As can be seen, there are four weapons per battery.

Damage is self-explanatory. An asterisk (*) indicates that the weapon has a special effect described in the GAMMA WORLD® rules. **Range** is also self-explanatory. Note that all weapons on a tank may be fired simultaneously.

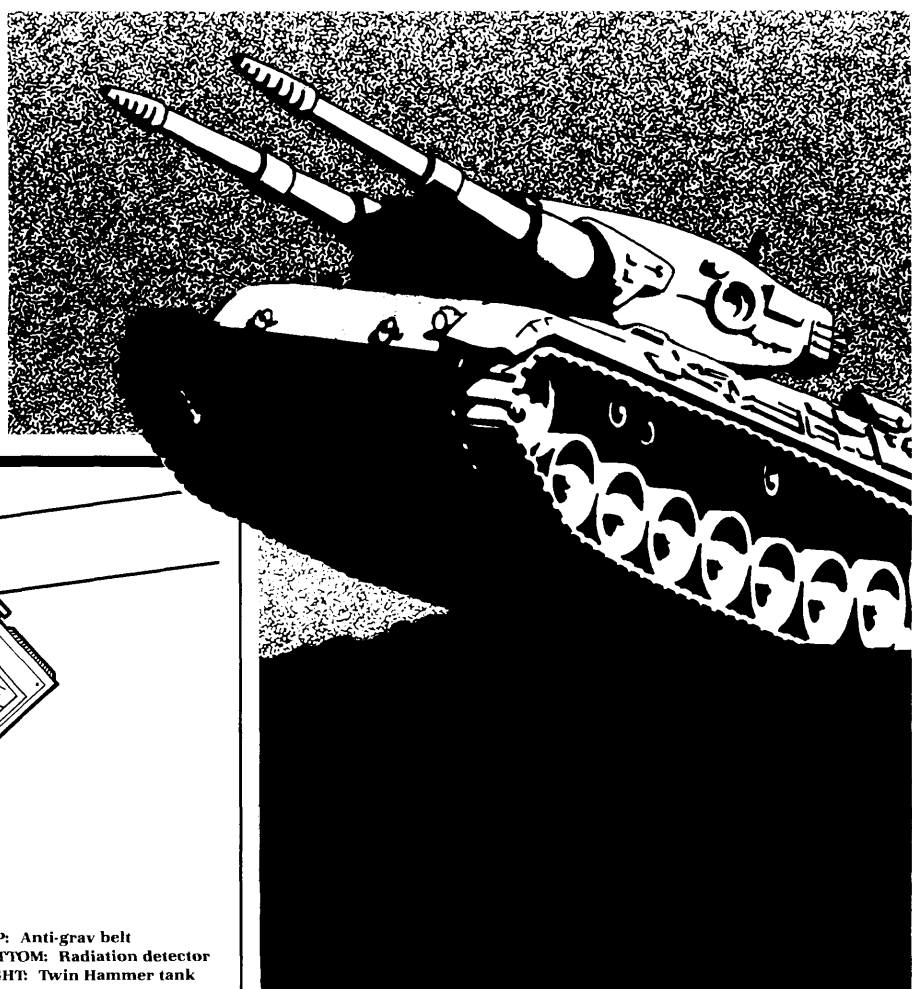
The laser cannons are mounted on a revolving turret and have a 360-degree

good for 24 hours of use. The belt is code BIII, costs 1250 gold pieces, weighs 2 kilograms (when turned off), and is worth 1000 Status Points.

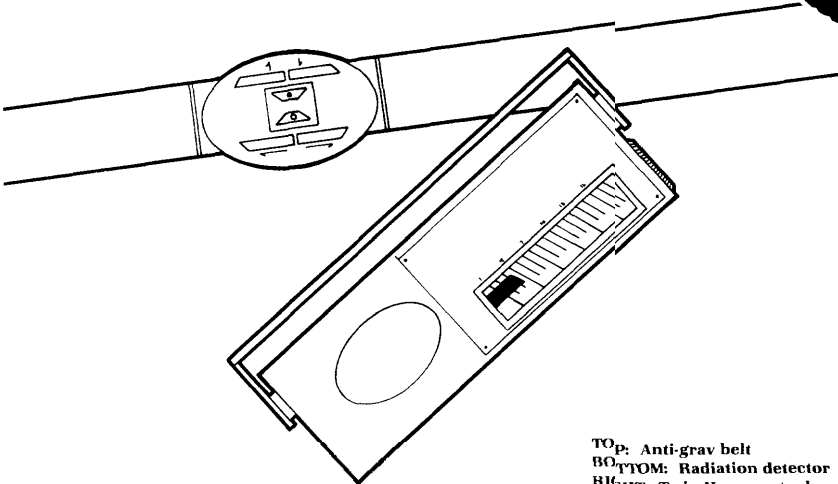
The belt will fit most Pure Strain Humans and humanoids, unless they have some physical deformity such as *fat cell accumulation*. Whether or not

Finding these artifacts

Pistols and rifles can be found with certainty in any well-preserved city or town of the Ancients, having been used frequently by civilians before and during the Shadow Years for recreation,



TOP: Anti-grav belt
BOTTOM: Radiation detector
RIGHT: Twin Hammer tank



field of fire. The micro-missile battery is mounted on the top of the Twin Hammer's turret and may rotate 90 degrees to the left or right, having a 180-degree field of fire. (Note that the field of fire moves as the turret rotates.) One battery each of 4 grenade launchers is mounted on the front, rear, and sides of the tank, each with a 180-degree field of fire. The fusion and stun rifles are mounted on rotating platforms with 180-degree fields of fire at the front and rear of the tank.

The **anti-grav belt** resembles a 1-cm thick belt with an 18-cm square box on the back of the middle of the belt. On one end of the belt is an 8-cm rounded buckle on which are numerous buttons to control the ascent, descent, movement direction, activation, and deactivation of the anti-grav belt. The item is powered by 2 hydrogen energy cells

the belt will fit a mutated animal or plant is up to the referee. Note that any user must stay within the Earth's breathable atmosphere; the maximum altitude for a character without an air supply is 6 kilometers. The movement rate for the belt is 80/3600/80.

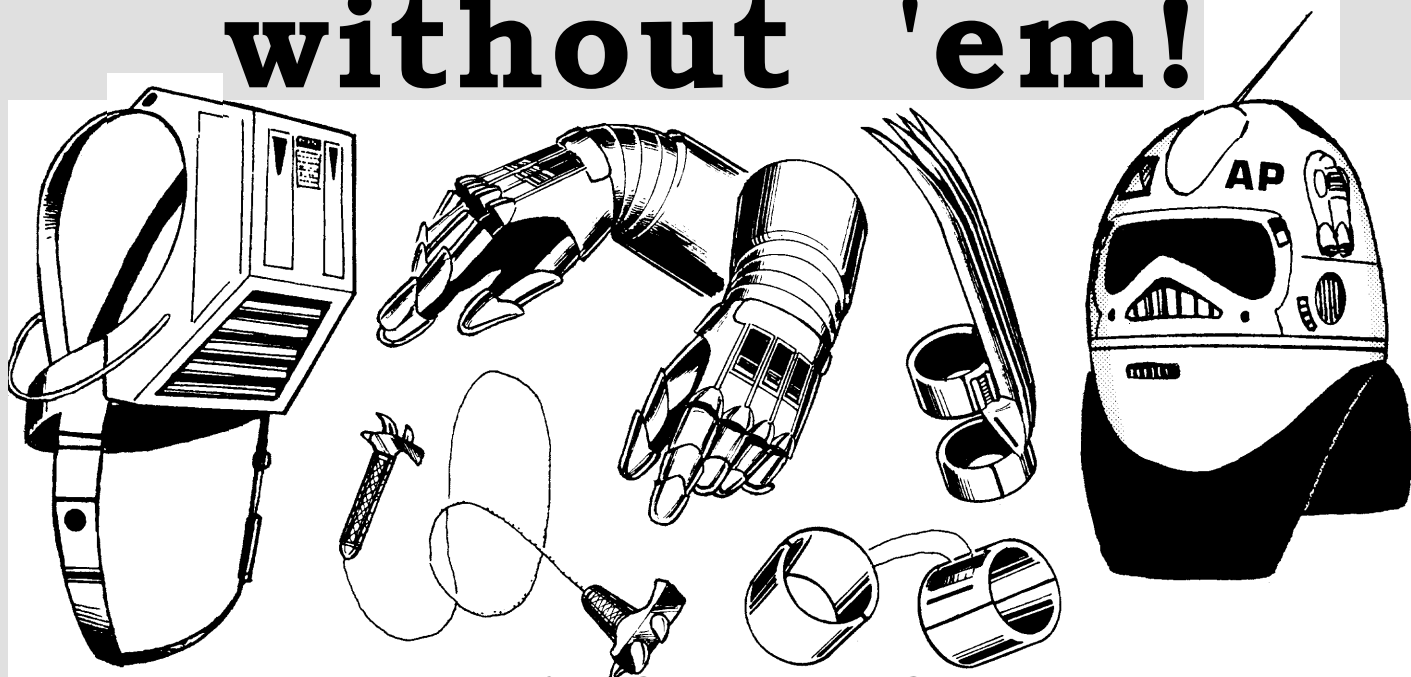
The **radiation detector** is a 30-cm long by 10-cm wide by 5-cm thick metal box which has a dial with 18 lines on it. When this item is taken out and activated, it will give a loud beeping sound when within 30 meters of a radioactive source. It will also show the radiation intensity, from 1 (harmless) to 18 (deadly). The device is powered by a hydrogen energy cell good for 72 hours of continuous use. This device is code EIII, costs 1250 gold pieces, weighs .5 kilograms, and is worth 750 Status Points.

defense, and display. Light and heavy rifles were used exclusively by the military or by terrorists.

Freeze rays, war bands, incendiary grenades, and force shields will only be found in well-preserved military bases or police headquarters. Disruptor rifles are found exclusively in near-perfect installations which are still under heavy guard by warbots, defense borgs, or numerous security robots. Neuro collars, radiation detectors, and anti-grav belts will be found in many installations, police HQs, military bases, and some residences. Combat tanks will only be found in major untouched military bases.

Artifacts mentioned above may appear in the hands of powerful NPCs or Cryptic Alliances. This is especially true of neuro collars, which are often used by slave lords to further their own ends.

Don't leave home without 'em!



New equipment for GAMMA WORLD® gaming

by Scott Hutcheon

The need for new equipment in GAMMA WORLD game campaigns is high; players will eventually learn about most of the items listed in the rulebooks, and referees should always have some interesting and innovative artifacts lying about in the ruins that can be discovered by eager characters. It often happens, however, that the referee won't have the time to sit down and create all the new items the players are hoping to see.

Below is described some equipment that won't be found in the GAMMA WORLD game rules. Some items are entirely new, and some are futuristic representations of existing items. Hopefully, they'll add a little more variety to the catalog of what well-dressed atomic survivors are wearing these days.

Energized assault helmet

The energized assault helmet was used during the Social Wars by infantry for massed battles. Designed to protect the head and face from physical damage, it was also equipped with additional features. The helmet, used alone, has the equivalent armor class of a *partial carapace* (AC 6). If worn with additional armor, it will improve that armor's value by two classes (e.g., plastic armor worn with the energized assault helmet would

be AC 1). The helmet cannot lower the defender's armor class below 1.

The helmet is treated as an artifact with tech level and complexity EIII. It will not be for sale except under special circumstances, and only in Tech Level III areas. Characters will receive one rank level if they turn this helmet in to their village or community.

The helmet can sustain up to 50 hit points of damage before being destroyed, and projects a partial force field that can absorb up to 20 hit points per action turn inflicted by energy weapons directed at the character. The helm gives the wearer immunity to all gases, and has a 24-hour oxygen supply that is automatically activated when a non-breathable atmosphere is encountered; this function can be activated by the wearer's voice command as well.

The helmet contains a two-way radio, ultraviolet and infrared sensors, and a radar/sonar device that can pick up objects at a range of 50 meters (preventing the wearer from ever being surprised). The audio system automatically dampens loud noises (allowing half damage from sonic attacks) and amplifies soft noises (increasing hearing ranges to four times normal).

The energized assault helmet also contains a dataprobe that can separate from the helmet and fly over the terrain

ahead of the wearer to transmit information back on possible dangers. The probe can be directed up to 200 meters away if the target area is in sight, but has a range of only 100 meters if directed to a hidden source (such as around a corner). The probe has a weapon class of 4 and can sustain 20 points of damage before being destroyed. The helmet wearer must control the dataprobe using tongue and cheek controls inside the helm, and must remain stationary and concentrate to do so. Stopping control for even a second will cause the dataprobe to drop to the ground, requiring its retrieval and reconnection to the helmet before it will again be ready to function.

The helmet can spray gas at opponents within 10 meters through a special opening in the front. The gas will billow out to create a 10-meter-diameter cloud, generated from small containers that fit into a compartment on one side of the helmet. Four gas containers can be fitted into this compartment; roll 1d4 to determine how many packs are found with the helmet and randomly roll the gas type.

The helmet can also become electrically charged on the surface, causing 1d6 damage to anyone touching it by hand or with a metallic object. The wearer cannot be harmed by this func-

tion because of the helmet's insulation.

The helmet is powered by four solar energy cells that constantly recharge themselves while in sunlight. The cells can last up to 40 hours if not under direct sunlight (such as in an underground installation). It will take one hour of exposure in sunlight to recharge dead cells so they can be used again. Three action turns are required to remove the helmet.

The helmet has a half-ovoid shape with an opaque black shield on the front. A small ovoid with many extrusions is connected to one side of the helm (this is the data probe). The bottom of the helmet has a thick, rubbery extension that fits around the wearer's neck. Various ancient runes are printed on the sides of the helm. It weighs 8 kg.

Energy shackles

Energy shackles are energized duralloy handcuffs designed to restrain a human or humanoid-like being. "E-shacks" were used by prisons and police forces during the Shadow Years. Energy shackles consist of two bands of thick duralloy material with a thin wire linking the cuffs together. These cuffs are activated by a small switch on one cuff that can only be controlled by a Stage IV I.D. (formerly used by civilian and military law enforcement agencies). Activation causes the wire to stiffen and hold the cuffs rigidly apart or together, as the activator desires, and causes an energy flow to develop around the cuffs and wire. The energy flow will be seen as a shimmering light.

The special energy flow in the shackles causes the victim to become totally passive and submissive; he will be unable to commit any violent act and will not even try to escape while under this influence. This effect is negated as soon as the shackles are removed.

Attempts to stop the flow of the energy will generally fail, though *energy negation* will immediately deactivate the shackles. Two hydrogen cells will provide energy for each cuff for 100 hours. When unpowered, the shackles can take 30 hit points of damage before being destroyed; this increases to 60 points when they are turned on.

"E-shacks" have a rating of DIII for artifact value. They are worth 100 status points.

Powered energy gloves

Powered energy gloves are electro-mechanical devices used in hand-to-hand

combat. They have a weapon class of 1 and do 2d6 points damage per fist attack; normally powered, the gloves can break through wooden doors in 2 rounds. Their artifact level is DIII, and they are worth 500 status points when returned to a community. The gloves weigh 3 kg., and they appear to be a dull silvery color.

Powered gloves cannot be used with any other weapon unless they are deactivated. The gloves have several special functions, controlled by small buttons on the backs of the gloves. They may generate a powerful electromagnetic field of variable intensity. If the field is at full strength and the gloves are attached to a metal object, they will bond with the metal with an equivalent strength of 18; only attackers with a strength of 19 or greater will be able to pry the wearer away from the surface. The gloves can also attach themselves to a metallic robot, allowing the wearer to inflict 2d6 points of damage on the robot every round without a "to hit" roll being required.

These gauntlets can also give out a beam of light from the right index finger, illuminating a 3-meter square area up to 20 meters away. The gloves are powered by two chemical energy cells (one per glove) that last for 60 action turns of continuous use.

Duralink garrote

This item is a small, thin chain of strengthened duralloy links, usually 1 meter long and weighing .2 kg. It can be bought or sold at any Tech II or III level area for 100 gold pieces. Turning it in to one's community will be worth 50 status points. The garrote has a weapon class of 2.

The duralink garrote is usable as a weapon only if the intended victim is surprised. The garrote must be wrapped around the victim's neck, then pulled back and tightened. Opponents will suffer 1d10 hit points damage per action turn until the garrote is removed or the attacker is driven off or slain. Attacks made by the defender on the attacker are at -4 "to hit." The garrote may also be used as a whip against AC 10 opponents for 1d4 points damage (covered areas are unaffected). Defenses that strengthen the neck (such as the rubber neck covering on the energized assault helmet) cause the garrote to do only 1d4 damage per action turn. Defenders with metal neck protection (such as that found on powered armor) will suffer no damage or penalties.

Duralloy war claws

These devices improve hand-to-hand combat ability, allowing one to slash at opponents like a tiger or other clawed animal. They are most often used by Pure Strain Humans and Humanoids, though mutated animals with human-like arms may use them as well. Duralloy war claws weigh .5 kilograms and are worth 300 status points. They can be found or sold at a community of any tech level for 500 gold pieces.

The claws do one point of damage per armor class point of the victim; e.g., the claws will do 10 points of damage to unarmored characters. Two attacks per action turn can be made with these claws. The claws can also be used for climbing vertical walls of any material less strong than duralloy. The climbing is done at a very slow speed, as characters must be sure of the placement of the claws. The claws can help break down wooden doors in 4-16 rounds, but cannot open duralloy-shielded doors.

The war claws are made of four duralloy knifelike projections, each about .3 meters long, that curve down at the end. The claws are connected to small wristlets of duralloy that allow the claws to reach out over the back of one's hand. The claws take one action turn to remove.

Anti-grav pack

This pack generates a null-gravity field around the wearer. The pack weighs 30 kg when turned off and contains a few anti-grav pods connected to the main power outlet. The character can float straight up or down at the rate of 10 meters per action turn. Up to 200 kg, excluding the weight of the pack itself, can be lifted by the pack. Characters using the anti-grav pack will be affected by high winds, and falling as a result of the pack being shut off or the energy cell running out of power is always a possibility. Characters using this pack and being attacked by ranged weapons will be hit as if they were stationary.

The pack is rated EIII and is worth 3,000 gold pieces at any Tech Level III community. The anti-grav pack is powered by two atomic energy cells that will last for 100 hours.

The anti-grav pack looks like an ordinary backpack with strange runes on the covering. A dark meter-long cord extends from one side of the pack, having a small metallic box with lights and buttons on the end (the box is the control device).

In the current GAMMA WORLD® game rules, the physical mutation *new body parts* has been left as a sort of miscellaneous physical, mutational advantage. When it is rolled, the player is allowed to design any sort of *new body part* he thinks will help his character, subject to the GM's approval. The idea seems to be that such a variable mutation, rather than a combination of dry stats and official mutations, will make a character unique.

However, this system creates problems, at least in my experience. Some players have trouble inventing original mutations which are more than mere variations of the official mutations in the book, especially now that the latter have been greatly expanded. Not everyone can be creative at the drop of the percentile dice, and it is not fair to make the party wait a week before adventuring while one player designs his *new body part*.

The system is hard on the GM, too, who must regulate these player-designed mutations to keep them sane and reasonably balanced. As we all know, some players constantly push for all they can get, and some GMs may lack either the experience to balance suggested mutations fairly or the foresight to imagine how a clever and ambitious player could wreck a campaign with a mutation that seemed harmless enough when it was approved.

When the GM does have the strength and the judgment to hold the line against an overambitious player, it can be the beginning of an exhausting round of haggling ("All right, if you won't allow that, how about this?") or bickering ("You accepted his mutation, why won't you accept mine?"). After the furor has died down and the hard feelings have settled in, chances are that the whole group will simply fasten on the one *new body part* they consider the best that the GM will allow. This destroys the whole point of *new body parts*: variety.

A table of *new body parts* is given below. Hopefully, this one is extensive enough to bring variety to the mutation without demanding impromptu inventions from the players or snap rulings from the GM. Some mutations given here are better than others, just as some official physical mutations are better than the others. None of them are utterly useless, but none are doomsday, either. Random percentile rolls are used to keep the system fair. Everyone has the same chance at the best mutations, and it cuts down on conflicts, since players seldom argue with ten-sided dice.

New body parts in GAMMA WORLD® gaming by John M. Maxstadt



WHY IS THIS MUTANT SMILING?

This table could also be used as a list of suggestions for any GM who prefers to assign *new body parts* himself or who has the players choose them. In the latter case, the last two (*duo-animalism* and *multimorphism*) should be excluded, since they are more powerful than the rest. Players would tend to choose them all the time, making them rather common instead of very rare as they should be.

The table itself requires a few words of explanation. It is important to remember that *new body parts* is a beneficial mutation, so the parts that a player rolls should not hamper his character's other abilities. For example, *carnivore jaws* and *siphon mouth* do not lower a character's charisma or impede his speech (although they might change the sound of his voice). *Talons*, *pincers*, or *hands* will not replace existing hands, claws, feet, or other useful appendages, but will have proportioned limbs of their own. *Carnivore jaws* or *fur* would be rerolled for a reptilian character, as they would be net disadvantages over the creature's own natural attributes. If the GM rules that a *hump* or *clublike tail* would prevent a bird from flying, he should disallow and reroll these new parts for avian characters.

Likewise, new body parts should be rerolled if the character already has them, *multiple body parts* being a different mutation. *Hands* are no more new body parts for a humanoid than are *scales* for a snake or *carnivore jaws* for a bear or tiger. In keeping with the beneficial nature of the mutation, the GM should avoid looking for situations in which new parts could be troublesome and restricting, with two exceptions. Most will not allow humanoids to "pass" as pure strain humans, and many will not allow them to fit into armor. Humanoid characters run these two risks with any physical mutation. One final note: Unless otherwise specified, attacks with *new body parts* are rolled to hit on Physical Attack Matrix II.

New body parts

Roll percentile die and consult the following list of new body part descriptions.

1-4: A *poison sting* is gained on the mutant's tail, fingers, or elsewhere. One attack is allowed per round (maximum of five poison uses per day), with a poison intensity of 9-18 (d10 + 8).

5-6: Two *tentacles*, each 1.5 meters long with suction disks, are attached to the mutant's upper torso. Two attacks per round are allowed at 1-6/1-6 damage

(no damage vs. AC better than 5). The tentacles can grasp objects and can disarm opponents (must hit AC 10 and have greater strength than opponent). The tentacles cannot perform fine manipulation, however.

7-8: An *acid pump* is attached to the mutant's digestive system and mouth. It squirts a stream of hydrochloric digestive acid 4 meters long and 7 cm wide, twice per day, hitting anything in its range as weapon class 13 (damage 4-24). The acid corrodes metallic locks, hinges, machinery, etc.

9-11: *Stalked eyes* on 20-cm retractable stalks replace ordinary eyes, giving sight in two directions at once, around corners, etc.

**It is important
to remember
that new body
parts is a
beneficial
mutation...**

12-15: Two crab- or lobster-like *pincers* are gained on the mutant's upper torso or tail. Two attacks may be made per round for 3-12 damage each; the pincers can open cans, act as scissors, etc.

16-18: Beetlelike *mandibles* are set on the mutant's face. One attack per round at 4-16 damage can be made, and the mandibles may act as can openers, scissors, etc.

19-20: A *siphon mouth*, mosquito-like in nature, is gained. One attack per round at 1-6 damage may be made, with continuous 1-6 damage every round after the first hit from fluid draining (ineffective against androids, robots, and other opponents without bodily fluids).

21-24: A *light-producing organ* is gained on the tip of the mutant's tail, palm, or anywhere else. The light covers a 15-meter radius area for a maximum of two march turns per day (the mutant may divide time into search turns or even action turns as desired).

25-26: *Bladelike limbs* are gained on the mutant's upper torso or tail. 1-4 attacks per round (roll d4 for number of limbs) may be made, at 1-8 damage each; each limb hits as weapon class 3.

27-29: A *swimming bladder and fins/flippers* are set on the mutant's abdomen, back, feet, or wherever appropriate. These allow swimming in water at land speeds, but do not confer the ability to breathe water.

30-31: *Froglike legs* are gained. The mutant may move normally and can jump 24 meters forward or 10 meters straight up.

32-33: A chameleon-like, *prehensile tongue* is gained. It may reach out to 6 meters to snatch objects by adhesion, with a strength comparable to the character's arm strength. The adhesion may be broken at will by the mutant character. The tongue may wield a dagger, hand axe, or club for an extra attack each round.

34-37: *Sucker or friction pads* are gained on the mutant's fingers and toes. The mutant may climb sheer, smooth walls and even cross ceilings at slow speed. Obviously, this ability is not effective if the mutant is wearing shoes, gloves, or armor.

38-39: *Eyeshields* (shaded transparent third eyelids) are gained inside the mutant's eyelids. The eyeshields close instinctively to negate *light generation*, and they protect eyes with *infravision*, *dark dependency*, etc. However, they do not negate physical damage taken from *dark dependency*.

40-42: A *saurian snout* (with toothy jaws) is gained on the mutant's face. Mutant may bite for 3-18 damage once per round.

43-46: *Scales* cover the mutant's entire body, giving it AC 7.

47-49: A *clublike tail* replaces the mutant's ordinary tail (if any). One attack per round at 3-18 damage is allowed, and the tail may be used as a hammer, battering ram, etc.

50-51: A *constricting tail* is gained instead of an ordinary tail. One attack per round at 2-12 damage may be made, and damage can continuously be applied every round after the first hit. This attack is not effective vs. any AC better than 4.

52-54: *Poison fangs* are gained in the mutant's mouth, allowing one attack per round (maximum of 5 poison uses per day). Poison intensity is 13-18 (d6 + 12).

55-56: A *viper tongue* replaces the mutant's ordinary tongue. This organ combines the *heightened taste* and *heightened smell* mutations. The mutant

may track prey by "tasting" the air over any terrain, but this ability is ineffective if the trail is over an hour old. This tongue also detects heat and radiation.

57-59: An eaglelike *beak* is gained on the face, giving one attack per round at 1-8 damage.

60-62: *Talons* are gained on the mutant's upper torso limbs or on his feet. Two attacks per round at 1-10 each may be made. These talons can grasp objects but cannot perform fine manipulation.

63-67: *Fur* is gained over the mutant's entire body, providing AC 8 and insulation in cold weather.

68-69: *Skin flaps* that allow gliding are gained on the mutant's arms (forelegs), extending to the lower (rear) limbs. Gliding may be accomplished from any higher elevation to a lower one, for a horizontal distance equal to the difference in elevation x 5. The GM may wish to consider hot-air thermals and other wind phenomena for long glides beginning at great heights. These flaps may also be used as a parachute to slow falls and negate falling damage.

70-72: A food-storing *hump* is gained on the mutant's back, providing food and water for four days with no ill effects. The hump must be replenished by two days of heavy eating before its resources can be used again. The hump has no encumbrance value.

73-75: A *fatty layer* is gained under the skin. The layer negates poison damage from claws, fangs, stings, etc., unless a "to hit" roll 4 or more points over the number needed to hit was rolled. The layer also provides insulation in cold weather, and the mutant may go without food (but not water) for two days, as per *hump* above.

76-78: A *prehensile trunk* is gained on the mutant's face, serving as a third hand for an extra weapon attack each round. Other uses are possible, and the trunk can even fire a pistol or type (slowly).

79-81: *Carnivore jaws* are added to the mutant's face, giving one attack per round for 2-12 damage.

82-84: *Retractable claws* are gained on the mutant's fingers. Two attacks may be made per round for 1-6 damage each, but the mutant cannot use his hands for other purposes at the same time as he attacks.

85-87: A *prehensile tail* 2 meters long is gained. It acts as a third hand (see *prehensile trunk*), but it cannot melee effectively unless brought around to the front where the mutant can see it.

88-91: *Vocal articulators* may be

gained by mutant animals, giving them coherent, humanlike speech capabilities.

92-95: *Hands* are gained on the upper torso or feet. These hands may wield weapons, perform fine manipulation, handle artifacts, etc.

96-97: Roll twice on the above table, ignoring any result over 95.

98: Pick any of above (including "roll twice," though in the latter instance the player must roll for random abilities).

99: *Duo-animalism* is gained. The mutant is combined with another animal type to form a hybrid creature. For example, a human/bird might have wings, talons, and a bird's beak, but could retain human size, speech, arms, and hands. An alligator/lobster might have a *full carapace*, gills, stalked eyes, and pincers, while retaining the alligator's size, bite, and tail-slap attacks. Half-human duo-animals are common in fantasy literature (such as the centaur, minotaur, lamia, and harpy). Any second animal type is acceptable, but the character should not abandon his original animal type altogether. The player and GM should design a hybrid character together and agree on its abilities.

00: *Multimorphism* is gained. The mutant's consciousness exists simultaneously in more than one body. This is not like *temporal fugue*; it more closely

resembles having twins or triplets with a single guiding mind. Roll a d6: 1-5 = two bodies, 6 = three bodies. All bodies may attack at once and otherwise function as individuals, except as noted below.

All bodies are basically identical in appearance and have similar ability scores. Mutations rolled before *multimorphism* is generated are common to all bodies, but those rolled after this mutation are split evenly between them (which may make the separate bodies look different).

Each multimorph can sense everything the other bodies can, even if they are miles apart. A single consciousness guides the bodies, but each body has its own brain, so mental attacks must roll to hit each brain separately (as per *dual brain*, except that each brain hit by an attack will take damage). All bodies may be hit by the same area attack if near each other, effectively multiplying the damage.

Hit points are rolled separately for each body, and they cannot "loan" hit points to each other. Each body heals at the normal rate, effectively multiplying the character's overall healing rate. If one body dies, its hit points do not transfer to the survivor(s).

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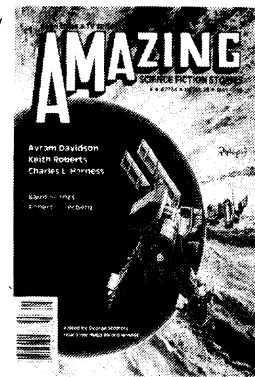
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Of Grizzly Bears



by John M. Maxstadt

Mutant animal characters in

There are three classes of player characters allowed in the current GAMMA WORLD® game rules: pure strain human, mutated humanoid, and mutated animal. The first two are based on a single species, *Homo sapiens*, whose attributes and abilities are fairly well known. Some abilities, such as physical attacks with weapons and speed of movement, are defined in the rules. Others, including diet, longevity, size and shape, are obvious, or at worst can be looked up in the Guinness Book of World Records.

The mutated animal class, on the other hand, incorporates the entire animal kingdom, meaning everything from the blue whale to the amoeba. If four players choose to play a bumblebee, a white rhinoceros, an ostrich, and a moray eel, the Game Master has a problem. No rule or guideline tells him how to assign number of attacks, damage per attack, movement, maximum lifespan, and other vital statistics.

My solution to this problem is to select the families of animals most likely to be played, combine them into a few collective types, and generate statistics for each of these types. Three considerations go into these tasks: logic, zoological fact, and game balance. Of these, game balance is the most crucial, but all three can generally be worked into an acceptable compromise.

The GAMMA WORLD Basic Rules Booklet stipulates that mutated animal player characters be "near human-sized," so that rolled scores in physical strength, constitution and hit points will make sense. Otherwise, how many hit points would a mosquito have? In my campaigns, I allow players to use animals whose largest dimensions are between three and twelve feet (from half to twice as tall as a human) to allow for reasonable variety of animal characters. Minimum and maximum physical strength and constitution scores are imposed on the largest and smallest creatures, respectively.

In adventures that take place almost exclusively on land, it is logical that player characters should all be able to breathe air and walk or fly. Game balance requires that animals with crippling defects also be excluded (a giant tortoise is too slow, a tapir lacks effective attacks, etc.). Other creatures were excluded from discussion here when it became clear that they were distinctly less effective than one of the included types. An ostrich, for example, can run and kick, but not nearly as well as a horse; a badger could be a nasty opponent, but not when compared to a bear.

Faced with these restrictions, there will always be a player who'll say, "Yes, but with the right mutations. . ." True, the ideal mutations would enable the

player's killer whale to fly, his giant tortoise to burn up the track, or his bumblebee to be eight feet long and have plenty of hit points. But what if the player doesn't roll the ideal mutations? It is suggested that the players choose their animal types after they roll their ability scores but before they roll their mutations, so that the ability scores are appropriate to the animal type but the animal type is not necessarily tailor-made for the mutations (otherwise, all characters with electrical generation will be constricting snakes, all those with multiple arms will be monkeys or apes, etc.). Under this system, it is not fair to allow one player to keep rolling until he gets the mutations needed to make a particular animal viable, while everyone else has to accept the mutations they roll the first time.

Game balance was important in determining the statistics of each animal type. Different advantages and disadvantages were used to compensate for one another; one animal type may have superior attacks, but another will have a better armor class or the ability to use weapons or some other highly effective special ability. Outside of the demands of game balance, I've tried to keep the statistics as close to zoological fact as possible.

Some of the statistics require explanation. Examples is a list of animals that



and Chimpanzees

the GAMMA WORLD® game

fall into the designated type, arranged from smallest to largest. If "the largest" or "all but the smallest" of an animal family is stipulated, individual species should be checked to see whether they fall into the size range given. Players should be allowed to select the species they prefer, but the largest species should be reserved for characters with very high constitution and/or physical strength scores. Research may show that an allowed species differs markedly from the others in the type on one or more statistics. The GM may, at his option, allow such variations, but game balance should be considered at all times — for example, a cheetah is much faster for short sprints than other big cats, but it cannot retract its claws to move silently.

Height is from head to foot, and implies that the animal is able to stand more-or-less erect. The exception to this is the herbivore group, in which height is shoulder height. Length is from muzzle to rump, except in the case of saurians and snakes, which are measured from snout to tail tip (for this reason, the largest of them exceed the 12' dimension limit).

Weight can be changed by addition or subtraction of body parts, by mutation, or by a general change in size. Remember that a change in height or length is accompanied by a cubed change in

weight, so that a character that becomes three times as tall as normal becomes 27 times as heavy.

Lifespan is the maximum number of years that a character might live before dying of old age (human lifespan is considered to be 100 years). Diet includes the only foods an animal is able to eat and digest (not merely its preferences).

"The mutated animal class incorporates the entire animal kingdom. . . from the blue whale to the amoeba."

Saurians and birds, for example, are unable to chew and swallow fresh meat from large animals. Sight, Hearing, and Smell are rated relative to other animals, with human senses being considered "normal." A "superior" sense could be considered equal to a mutationally heightened one.

Manipulation refers to the ability of an animal to grasp objects, push buttons, turn knobs, etc., with its paws or claws. "None" and "full" are self-explanatory; "grasp and carry" means that the creature could pick up and move a reasonably large and conveniently shaped object (like a grenade) or turn a wheel, but not type, pull a trigger, or wield a sword.

Vocalization lists the vocal sounds a creature can make to give an idea of the limitations of its vocal expression (primates, of course, could be taught sign languages). If two or more sounds are joined with "or," the individual species in that group can make no more than one of those sounds each.

Minimums and Maximums refer to ability scores. Minimum requirements for a type must be met by the original dice roll, but a player may voluntarily lower his ability scores to get under the maximum for a desired animal type. Mutations may allow a character to exceed his maximums; for example, "taller" (or "larger" for animals) will allow a monkey, rattlesnake, or vulture to regain his original constitution and physical strength score if they were lowered to qualify for the animal type, and "heightened dexterity" will allow an alligator to have a dexterity score over 14. Special Abilities, Special Disabilities, and Special Attacks will be explained in some detail in the notes on each animal type following the statistics tables.

A final note — the statistics are intended to represent the abilities and attributes of an animal before mutation occurs. Mutations may change an animal's size, movement, attacks, senses, special abilities, and so on. These statistics are intended only as a base to build mutated animal characters on.

CARNIVOROUS MAMMALS

	Bears	Big Cats
Examples:	All but the smallest black bears; cinnamon bear, brown bears, polar bear, grizzly bear, kodiak bear.	Pumas, cheetahs, snow leopards, leopards, jaguars, lions, tigers.
Length or Height:	2-4 meters tall	1.5-3 meters long
Weight:	150-650 kg	60-300 kg
Lifespan:	35 years	25 years
Diet:	Insects, meat, fish roots, honey, carrion	Meat, fish, carrion
Attacks:	Claw/claw/bite	Claw/claw/bite
Damage:	1-8/1-8/2-12	2-5/2-5/3-12/
Armor:	8	9
Land Speed:	18/1350/27	18/1350/27
Water Speed:	0/225/9	0/0/6
Sight:	Normal	Normal
Hearing:	Good	Superior
Smell:	Superior	Good
Manipulation:	Grasp and carry	None
Vocalization:	Grunt, while, bellow	Purr, snarl, roar
Special Abilities:	Climb trees	Move silently, see in dark, climb trees
Special Disabilities:	None	None
Minimums:	Physical Strength 14, Constitution 13	Physical Strength 12, Dexterity 14
Maximums:	None	None

HERBIVOROUS MAMMALS

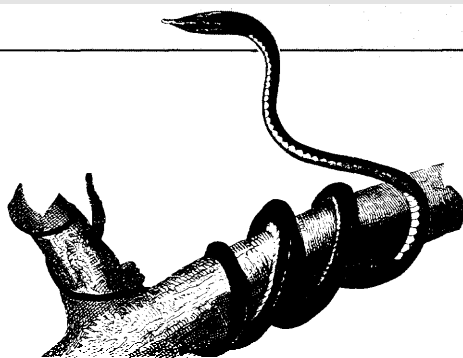
	Horned	Hornless
Examples:	The larger deer, goats, and bighorn sheep; antelope, hartebeest, gnu, elk, caribou, oxen, moose, deer, buffaloes, bison.	Onagers, donkeys, mules and hinnies, zebras, horses, camels and dromedaries.
Length:	2-4 meters tall	2-3.5 meters long
Height:	1-3 meters tall	1.5-2.5 meters tall
Weight:	60-1200 kg	200-900 kg
Lifespan:	30 years	60 years
Diet:	Grass, bark, leaves	Grass, grains
Attacks:	Butt or kick/kick	Kick/kick
Damage:	2-12 or 1-6/1-6	1-10/1-10
Special Attacks:	Charge for 4-24 (2d6x2), trample	Trample
Armor:	9	10
Land Speed:	21/1600/32	30/1800/36
Sight:	Normal	Normal
Hearing:	Superior	Superior
Smell:	Good	Superior
Manipulation:	None	None
Vocalization:	Bleat or bellow	Bray or whinny or none (camel)
Special Abilities:	Carry riders, pull carts	Carry riders, pull carts, jump walls
Special Disabilities:	Trouble getting through doorways	Trouble climbing
Minimums:	Physical Strength 9, Constitution 11, Dexterity 8	Physical Strength 11, Constitution 12, Dexterity 8
Maximums:	None	None

PRIMATES

	Arboreal Monkeys	Terrestrial Monkeys
Examples:	The larger howler monkeys; woolly monkeys, spider monkeys.	The larger guenons; baboons, drills, mandrills.
Height:	Under 1 meter tall	1-1.5 meters tall
Weight:	10-15 kg	15-60 kg
Lifespan:	20 years	35 years
Diet:	Insects, fruit, vegetables, nuts	Grass, eggs, fruit, meat, small animals and reptiles
Attacks:	Bite	Bite
Damage:	1-2	1-10
Special Attacks:	Weapon use	Weapon use
Armor:	10	9
Land Speed:	9/700/14	12/1000/22
Brachiating Speed:	9/1000/22	Nil
Sight:	Normal	Normal
Hearing:	Normal	Normal
Smell:	Normal	Good
Manipulation:	Full	Full
Vocalization:	Chatter, screech, howl	Chatter, scream, bark
Special Abilities:	Four hands, prehensile tail, climb trees	Climb trees
Special Disabilities:	None	None
Minimums:	Dexterity 15, Intelligence 9	None
Maximums:	Physical Strength 12, Constitution 12	None

	Lesser Apes	Great Apes
Examples:	Gibbons, chimpanzees.	Orangutans, gorillas.
Height:	1-1.5 meters tall	1.5-2 meters tall
Weight:	20-60 kg	75-250 kg
Lifespan:	45 years	40 years
Diet:	Fruit, leaves, bark, insects, eggs	Fruit, vegetables
Attacks:	Punch/punch or bite	Punch/punch
Damage:	1-2/1-2 or 1-3	1-4/1-4
Special Attacks:	Weapon use	Weapon use
Armor:	9	8
Land Speed:	12/900/18	12/900/18
Brachiating Speed:	9/1000/22	0/600/12
Sight:	Normal	Normal
Hearing:	Normal	Normal
Smell:	Normal	Normal
Manipulation:	Full	Full
Vocalization:	Chatter, shriek	Grunt, bellow
Special Abilities:	Four hands, climb trees	Climb trees
Special Disabilities:	None	None
Minimums:	Dexterity 14, Intelligence 9	Dexterity 12, Intelligence 9, Physical Strength 14
Maximums:	None	None





SNAKES

	Poisonous	Constricting
Examples:	The largest pit-vipers, cobras, kraits, and sea-kraits; mambas, king cobra.	Amethystine python, rock python, Indian python, reticulate python, anaconda.
Length:	2-2.5 meters long	7-10 meters long
Weight:	5-30 kg	80-200 kg
Lifespan:	25 years	30 years
Diet:	Other snakes, small animals	Meat (large animals)
Attacks:	Bite	Constrict
Damage:	1-4	2-12
Special Attacks:	Poison, intensity 13-18	Continuous constriction
Armor:	8	8
Land Speed:	4/300/6	3/200/4
Water Speed:	6/450/9	6/450/9
Sight:	Poor	Normal
Hearing:	None	None
Smell:	Superior	Good
Manipulation:	None	None
Vocalization:	Hiss	None
Special Abilities:	Crawl through small openings, climb cylindrical surfaces, move silently, coil in small bundle	Crawl through small openings, climb cylindrical surfaces, move silently
Special Disabilities:	No ground clearance, cannot climb stairs	No ground clearance, cannot climb stairs, -2 to hit unless attacking from above
Minimums:	None	Physical Strength 13
Maximums:	Physical Strength 12, Constitution 15	None

Special Notes

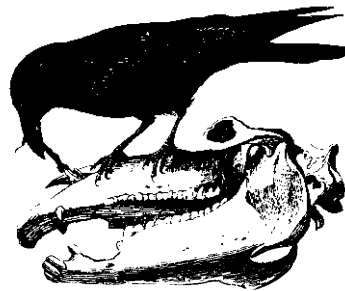
Bears must hit with one or both claw attacks on a natural roll of 18 or better to hug, and the opponent must not be too much larger than the bear (a death machine, for example, is too big to hug). Bears can climb trees large enough to support their weight.

Big cats rake only if both claw attacks hit. They may retract their claws and move silently so that they will surprise other creatures on a 1-4 and be surprised only on a one. This assumes that the character is alone or with other silent creatures and that the general surprise situation is normal — if the cat is walking down a hallway which is under surveillance by security monitor

cameras, moving silently may not accomplish much. Big cats can see 60 meters in shadow or moonlight, 30 meters in near-perfect darkness. They can climb most trees.

Horned herbivores do double damage if they can charge 20 meters or more straight forward to butt or gore an opponent. This takes the first half of a round, and an intelligent opponent may opt to get out of the way rather than attack. Horned herbivores kick at -2 to hit opponents in front or behind. The larger ones and those with elaborate horns may have trouble getting through narrow openings at the GM's option.

Hornless herbivores can ordinarily jump barriers as high as themselves with a running start (and no rider).



BIRDS

	Birds	Saurians
Examples:	The larger cormorants and eagles; secretary bird, vultures, condors.	Caimans, alligators, gavial, crocodiles.
Length or Height:	.7-1.2 meters tall, 1.5-3 meter wingspan	2-7 meters long
Weight:	2-12 kg	70-1000 kg
Lifespan:	75 years	50 years
Diet:	Smaller birds, and animals, fish, carrion	Fish, small animals, carrion
Attacks:	Claw/claw or peck	Bite or tailslap (both if surrounded)
Damage:	1-4/1-4 or 1-3	3-18 or 1-8
Special Attacks:	None	None
Armor:	10	6
Land Speed:	0/50/2	6/450/9
Air Speed:	24/1800/36	Nil
Water Speed:	Nil	10/900/18
Sight:	Superior	Normal
Hearing:	Normal	Poor
Smell:	Good	Good
Manipulation:	Grasp and carry	None
Vocalization:	Squawk, Shriek	Grunt, bellow
Special Abilities:	None	None
Special Disabilities:	Must be airborne to use claws, attacks only one round in three	Poor ground clearance, sluggish in cold
Minimums:	Dexterity 12	Physical Strength 10, Constitution 12
Maximums:	Physical Strength 10, Constitution 12	Dexterity 14

Other jumping abilities will depend on the situation. Camels can, of course, go for days without food or water (it is suggested that a 17 constitution be the minimum for camel characters). Onagers, zebras, horses, and camels may have trouble climbing stairs or rocky surfaces (like mountain sides) at the GM's option — they could climb a ramp with no difficulty, however.

All herbivores can pull carts or chariots and carry riders. The size of the cart, chariot, or rider would depend on the size of the herbivore — it takes a herbivore 200 kg or heavier to satisfactorily carry a normal human rider. All herbivores can trample instead of making another attack. Trampling does 1d4 damage per hoof for every factor of two

that the herbivore outweighs its opponent. At twice its opponent's weight, a herbivore may trample for 1d4; at four times its weight, 2d4, at eight times its weight for 3d4, etc., to a maximum of 10d4. A herbivore may trample only opponents that are no more than half their height (however, a human lying on the ground is not very tall). Trampling attacks are -1 to hit per potential die of damage. The GM may allow multiple trampling attacks on an opponent in one round if the opponent is horizontally large enough for more than one hoof to hit.

Primates may use weapons, including artifacts, just as humans can. It is suggested that arboreal monkeys be allowed to use nothing larger than a dagger, vibro dagger, or small pistol. Terrestrial monkeys and lesser apes can use nothing larger than an axe, short sword, hammer, vibro blade, heavy pistol one (like a Mark V blaster). Only great apes should be allowed the full range of weapons.

Great apes and terrestrial monkeys have two hands (unless they gain or lose some through mutation); lesser apes have four hands and arboreal monkeys have five (counting the prehensile tail, which can even fire a pistol), but they can only use them all if they are not standing on two of them. A lesser ape can hang from a tree or rafter or beam by one hand and have three attacks (if he can reach the intended target); an arboreal monkey can hang by his tail and get four attacks with weapons. A flying lesser ape or arboreal monkey would get four or five attacks respectively.

Brachiating speed is the speed with which a primate can swing from limb to limb or rafter to rafter. Arboreal monkeys and all apes can climb virtually anything but a sheer wall; terrestrial monkeys are less skillful, but they can climb trees better than most humans and about as well as the big cats.

Birds need at least 64,000 cubic feet of open space to fly properly. A 40 x 40 x 40 room would be large enough if not cluttered with large objects. On the ground, birds need their claws for walking or standing, and can neither grasp and carry nor attack with them, so a grounded bird is relatively useless for combat purposes.

In the air, a bird can only attack an opponent every second round in three – the first is spent approaching, and the third recovering and turning. If the bird has a long-range attack such as mental blast or radiation eyes, he can attack on

the approach round as well. The bird is -2 to be hit at all times when in the air. He can only be hit with claws, teeth, sword, etc., while attacking with his own talons and beak (every second round in three), but can be attacked every round with ranged weapons or mutations.

Saurians have poor ground clearance; even such low obstacles as fallen logs can slow or even stop their movement on land. They cannot jump at all, and can hardly climb even the shallowest stairs (although a slope or ramp would be no problem). Cold makes saurians sluggish – they move and fight at half speed at temperatures below 50°F, and are paralyzed one round for every six points of cold damage they take (from cryokinesis, for instance).

Poisonous snakes can add poison to their bite, but only five times per 24-hour day. The player should roll his character's poison intensity before beginning play, and that intensity will remain invariable except by mutation.

Constricting snakes attack at -2 to hit unless they can find a way to drop on an opponent from above. Once they hit, however, they may continue to do damage to their opponent every round without having to roll a new hit. A con-

stricting snake is +2 to be hit by any creature while it is constricting another creature. Depending on the mode of attack, a hit or miss could also injure the creature the snake is constricting, and an attack on that creature could also injure the snake.

Both kinds of snake can crawl through small openings like broken air ducts and wide pipes (poisonous snakes can get through smaller ones), and can climb all but the thickest trees and other cylindrical objects. They can coil up for comparatively easy carrying, but the bundle a constricting snake makes could hardly be called small. All snakes can move silently as big cats can, surprising opponents on a 1-4 if alone and under ordinary surprise conditions. However, snakes are still surprised on a 1-2 when alone, because they are deaf (a fact that should be remembered for communication situations).

Snakes have no ground clearance at all; if they must slither across a surface that is burning hot or corrosive, for example, they will take more damage than a running man or a galloping horse. They are flexible enough to get over logs, but they can only climb stairs by coiling and uncoiling on each step, a very slow process (a ramp will help).

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The Six-Million Dollar Mutant



Cyborgs in the GAMMA WORLD® game

by Bruce Humphrey

One of the areas that the GAMMA WORLD game has never fully explored is that of bionics. Bionics is the study of living systems to find solutions for engineering problems. One of the results of such study is the creation of bionic parts and prostheses, artificial replacements for lost body parts. This brings up the question of how to turn a player character into a cyborg.

Forget the reruns of "The Six-Million Dollar Man" — that stuff wasn't very accurate. Your character won't be running sixty miles per hour or lifting tons, but he'll have vast potential. Of course, he'd be well advised to make friends with a good mechanic and a vat of rustoleum.

For game purposes, a bionic part may be classified as any inorganic item which is surgically attached to a living being. This would include a simple metal club used in place of a missing hand or a high-technology arm controlled by thought and as functional as the original (or more so). Bionic replacements essentially become part of the person "wearing" them. In the GAMMA WORLD game, bionic parts can be used to strengthen a weak character or compen-

sate for a permanent wound or weakness. Bionic parts are also useful to even up character abilities and to provide the basis for quests centered around their location, upkeep, and augmentation.

Problems and more problems

The first goal in the quest for bionic parts is to find a way to get them implanted or attached. Depending on the campaign, it could prove difficult to locate a surgeon who can do such work. Healer-type mutants might be able to effect bionic "repairs," and they are usually easier to find than doctors are in the GAMMA WORLD game. It might be possible to program a med-kit to do this sort of thing, but one is usually better off finding a medical facility (such as an intact automated medical complex containing medical robots, or possibly a "rejuv chamber").

Unfortunately, an aversion often exists among medics (living and robotic) to implanting bionic parts unless absolutely necessary. If "natural" replacements for missing limbs or organs are available, a character may have quite a job convincing medics that the bionic parts are the

most desirable option.

Suppose, too, that a character wants to have his perfectly functional hand replaced by a bionic hand. Few doctors would consent to such an operation unless bribed or otherwise convinced to perform the operation; the same holds true for robotic surgeons, which would seldom be programmed to perform unnecessary surgery. If your character wants a bionic hand, he may have to get his own hand removed first — and probably not by surgical means. The removal of the body part could result in death or a permanent loss of hit points even after the attachment of bionic parts. If the bionic implant is unsuccessful, the character will have a permanent disability. A lot can go wrong if one purposefully goes questing for bionic parts.

If the character is lucky, the physician will have bionic prostheses around for his use, but this is not something one can count on. Often one will have to take second-best parts. Second best in this case includes new or used bionic parts which were not quite what your character wanted or needed, such as a three-fingered "experimental" hand when he wanted a "regular" one. Beg-

gers can't be choosers. Some rewiring and reconstruction are to be expected when one takes on a bionic project. A skilled technician will be needed for complex reworking, though a hammer and luck might work as well.

There's also the question of paying for these services. This may entail compensating the doctor or robot in terms of money, artifacts, work, or spare parts. The medical bill can be painful to pay; some things never change.

The last resort would be to adapt non-bionic mechanical and electronic parts for the job. While these are not reliable as a rule, they can be the most innovative and powerful of bionic parts. Android and robot parts are best for such scavenging, but guns, vehicles, and other simple and complex mechanisms will do in a pinch. The power of scavenged bionic parts should be somewhat less than that of the standard equipment, if only because of the minor alterations made on it during installation. The size of such weapons and equipment should also be a factor, since the more powerful equipment found in such things as Death Machines and engineering robots could be difficult for the average character to lug around.

Energy cells, batteries, or other reserves of power may need to be placed within the bionic part or implanted on the character and connected to the equipment. This can become important in the case of deeply implanted bionic parts which may have limited power reserves. How will the cell be replaced? Who will do it? This problem is solved if the power supply is in an accessible place and wired to the equipment, but the power cell could accidentally be removed or accessed. The wiring could be damaged in combat or sabotaged by an irate character. Security may be sacrificed for some utility, but both are considerations.

Once the bionic parts are implanted and the character is using them, the parts' upkeep and limitations should become important. Most bionic parts will fall apart sooner or later; the more work and punishment a part receives, the more it will need maintenance. While routine oiling, inspection, or cleaning could be done by the wearer, some maintenance must be done by a skilled technician. Such folk may be hard to come by. The search for a skilled technician could form an adventure; the party could also embark on a quest for information which would make one of

the adventurers such an expert.

In any case, bionic parts must be inspected at least once a month by a knowledgeable technician or robot, and they should be cleaned at least once a week. This frequency can be adjusted up or down, depending on the complexity of the equipment and the damage taken by the owner in combat. If the periodic cleanings or inspections are not made, or if the owner loses more than 75% of his hit points in battle (excluding non-physical damage from mental attacks), there should be a 30% chance of bionic failure. For each additional week (or 5% damage taken in combat), add a 10% (cumulative) chance for failure. Any bionic part which fails will not work again until an equipped technician spends 6-36 hours working on it.

Other problems with bionic parts should not be overlooked. A major consideration is the source of power for the equipment. Usually this will consist of atomic or chemical energy cells, but the bionic parts may also be geared to the character's own biological energy reserves. For a mutant, this could mean using mutational energy to charge the bionic parts; a mutation such as *electrical generation* could be harnessed in this way. A Pure Strain Human or mutant could also have bionic parts that drain hit points temporarily when these parts operate, lowering hit points by a certain amount with each use of the bionic part (such as one attack from a laser or one scan from a sensor). Whatever hit points are lost would then be regained within a few minutes or hours.

Other problems must be considered. Damage to bionic equipment could cause power supplies to explode, for instance. Malfunctions could range from simple shutdowns (usually at the most inopportune times) to bizarre actions such as twitching, uncontrolled firing, piercing whistles, and electrical shorts which do up to 3d6 damage to the wearer. Some of the more unusual things that can happen to bionic parts include being taken over by mutant powers (*energy negation* and *magnetic control* are possibilities). Bionic parts can also be removed or misplaced by accident or on purpose, particularly in combat or by someone else looking for bionic parts. Of course, some bionic parts can rust unless they are protected.

Types of bionic parts

The possible uses of bionic parts are far too varied to completely list here.

Instead, what follows are guidelines and suggestions which might spark your own ideas.

ARMS: While bionic arms will not give fantastic strength (they are, after all, still attached to a normal body), gripping and elbow strength could be great (up to +2 PS lifting, +6 PS for gripping or braced elbow actions). Sensors could be implanted in a bionic arm, with possibilities as described in "sensors" below. Spikes mounted along a bionic arm would be very useful in combat (for up to 1d8 of damage, when applicable), as would retractable claws (adding up to 3 points of damage per melee attack).

HANDS: Bionic hands could range from simple hooks to sophisticated robotic mechanisms. One can have a variety of artificial bionic hands, each with a particular function; one simply disconnects one hand and affixes a new one with (hopefully) little trouble and effort. A sword-hand or pistol are two obvious bionic options, and these would do damage the same as standard weapons. Tools and electronic implements for repairing equipment could be built into other bionic hands. A communicator or sensor could be added as well. One example of a bionic hand appears on the cover of the revised GAMMA WORLD® game box (see the mutant in the lower right-hand corner).

TEETH AND THROAT: A well-known application of this possibility is "Jaws" from the recent James Bond films. Steel teeth could do 1d6 damage per bite, or more if mounted in a mutant animal's mouth. Sensors could be implanted in the mouth to give special taste senses. Artificial gills or a permanent oxygen mask for protection from gas attacks could be implanted. One's voice could be amplified, acting as the mutation *sonic blast* or altered to mimic other voices or sounds.

EYES: Bionic eyes could have camera-like, telescopic, or microscopic powers, or could allow infrared or ultraviolet vision. A ray weapon could be incorporated in a non-seeing artificial eye (damage ranging from 1-2 d6, with a range up to 10 meters). Such a weapon would have to be recharged after no more than 3 uses. The eye could also be made immune to blinding illumination or even be made unaffected by certain illusions.

EARS: Obviously, bionic ears could hear well into supersonic ranges or be made extremely sensitive to sounds (with the problem of filtering out unwanted noise like crickets, birds, and

wind). They could also protect the wearer from sound attacks (halving sonic damage and preventing deafness).

BONES: A bionic skeleton could give extra strength (up to +2 PS, due to a stronger muscle platform) and act as the mutation *skeletal enhancement*. Bionic parts connected to or contained within the skeleton might grant special powers, such as added dexterity (no more than +3 to the original score).

LEGS: While they would be useful for jumping (distance figured at up to 2/3 DEX in meters, height at 1/4 DEX in meters), running (no more than +1/3 increase in speed), and kicking (+1d6 damage), bionic legs would not allow extreme additions to existing abilities in these areas, since the rest of the owner is still mortal flesh. As with arms, sensors could be placed in bionic legs, and they would probably aid in balance so that the owner would take less damage from falls (allowing one to fall up to 9 meters without damage). More exotic attachments could be jets (allowing the wearer to fly) or other vehicle parts to enhance movement capabilities. The equipment available will determine the limits of these latter bionic parts.

SKIN: The obvious use for bionic skin is as armor. This could mean anything

from a shell-like surface (AC 2) to a flexible metal skin (AC 6). Such armor would also give added resistance to damage from acids, fire, or cold (effects to be determined by the referee). Sensors could be included in the skin. The bionic skin could also act as the *no nerve endings* mutation.

ARTIFICIAL GLANDS: Special implants, possibly controlled by the character, could put chemicals into the owner's bloodstream. These could include any of the standard chemicals (such as "accelera" or "cur-in"), but could be stimulants or anti-toxins as well. Another possibility is to implant an injector which could be used like a poison sting in combat, giving a poisonous or acid touch attack (that might harm the wearer if he isn't careful).

Other bionic additions

The following equipment could also be added to a cyborg character:

ROBOTIC PARTS: Practically any equipment found on a robot could be used as bionic parts. Weapons are an obvious example, but small tentacles, tractor/pressor beams, sensors, and movement modules may also be used.

SENSORS: Detection equipment can be found in most robots, but other types of

sensors may be improvised or created by someone with the right training and/or mutations, using materials from various sources. Sensors include infrared, UV, telescopic, microscopic, and metal-detecting sorts; other sensors that might be developed or found include mutation detectors, mental energy detectors, gas analyzers, radiation sensors, movement detectors, atomic or electrical energy sensors, force field detectors, or even simple watches. Most sensors should have a range maximum of 100 meters. Depending on their function and the GM's rulings, sensors can range in size from ring-sized or smaller to camera-sized devices about 3" square.

EXTRAS: Cyborg building does not necessarily entail the replacement of a lost organ or the addition of some compensatory equipment. It can be used to increase a normal character's abilities as well. Robotic tentacles can be implanted for increased manipulative and combat abilities. A permanent helm can be added to give continuous protection to the head. Antennae can be fitted with sensors or can function as communications mechanisms. The possibilities are limited only by the imagination and daring of the players and the equipment at the characters' command.

A

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Danger on a Budget

The unexpected and the unknown in GAMMA WORLD® adventuring

by Bruce Humphrey

Why "on a budget?" Because certain dangers in the GAMMA WORLD® game should be doled out sparingly. Swarms of mutant monsters bleed off the excess firepower of an adventuring group, but are seldom deadly to heavily armed adventurers. The *real* dangers are the unseen, the unexpected, and the unknown.

The Gamma World is a land where instant death is commonplace, and a careless move can bring an entire party to grief. Frequently, players will react to this with extreme paranoia, and their characters will blast anything that moves — and even some things that *don't* move. This "blast and burn" mentality can turn a campaign into a constant war in which the player characters expend amazing amounts of firepower in each encounter. One reaction to this on the part of the Game Master is to increase the frequency by which weapons malfunction. This is a halfway measure at best, and often increases the value the players place on those weapons. This leads them to work all the harder to acquire more, which leads the GM to further increase the breakdown frequency, and so on.

Concealed or disguised dangers force players into a different style of play. When the real threat is neither visible nor certain, a laser rifle or torc grenade will no longer solve every problem. The campaign becomes more involving, as players find their brains challenged more than their die-rolling abilities.

There is more to danger in GAMMA WORLD gaming than a tribe of Arns or an automated military complex. While entirely new adventures can be created using the techniques given below, old locations can be rejuvenated as well. Re-using old adventure sites in new ways can lessen the preparation involved in game mastering, allowing you more time to concentrate on the adventure itself.

Likewise, when players become complacent or begin to rely on their equipment or mutant abilities too often, toss one or two of these options into the situation and see what happens.

The unseen

Invisible dangers can be extremely difficult for players to handle. Radiation, mutations, force fields, poisons, and bacteria are all present in the Gamma World in large quantities. In fact, characters frequent those ruins and ancient technological sites where these dangers are most often found. Some of these dangers will mimic others, further confusing and misleading the players. Not all need be deadly, but every one is a challenge, and players are not likely to find out which are dangerous until after the fact. It is important, however, to provide clues to alert PCs, allowing them to use their minds and role-playing skills to check for dangers. This encourages them to think.

Radiation is probably the most common of all dangers in the Gamma World. Weapons fire it, ruins retain it from the time of the Social Wars, and creatures use it for defense. But, radiation is not always detectable; it does not have to glow to be dangerous. Many high-tech items scavenged from ruins may still be deadly to their bearer, since metal retains radiation over long periods. It may not cause instant death, but it may lead to radiation sickness (manifested by a loss of a hit point or two per day until the item is discarded). The same thing goes for the ruins proper. And what about leakage from the nuclear batteries used in many high-tech (level III) items, or the runoff from streams and lakes filled with Barl Neaps?

Just as radiation is often invisible, so are the workings of most mental mutations. A single intelligent mutant with

just one long-range mental attack can ambush a group while remaining safely hidden. Simply announcing the effects of such an attack, without stating the source or cause, can throw a group into mass confusion as the players try to deal with the situation. Many of the Gamma World's inhabitants are supposed to be intelligent (and have to be to survive), but they seldom exhibit even this level of forethought in game play. How many of the weaker species would survive if they always acted like they are often played, with massed attacks on high-tech player groups? When setting up encounters, the GM must note both the powers and intelligence of the creatures involved, then play them accordingly.

Poisons and bacteria in the Gamma World may be played similarly. Both are frequently the result of either high technology or mutation, both are usually invisible, and both may be defeated with similar countermeasures. Poisons and germs do not have to be deliberately set by nasty mutant foes. Many high-tech items, if malfunctioning, can be poisonous or give off toxic gases.

Poisons and germs may provide clues to their presence. Toxins may be barely visible on certain surfaces, and the presence of a plague zone may be indicated by sick or dead victims with evidence of the disease upon them. Thinking groups will be able to avoid these dangers, while unthinking ones will push on ahead to their own detriment. Many advanced types of armor give at least some protection against both, as do simpler precautions such as gloves or cloth worn over the face. Also, exposing susceptible areas, surfaces, and bodies to radiation, high heat or cold, or certain mutational energies can neutralize most poisons and bacteria.

It should also be noted that the Gamma World will have produced many varieties of poison and bacteria. (Read-

ing *The Andromeda Strain*, by Michael Crichton, can give you a good idea of what a mutant germ might be capable of doing.) Strange disease or poisoning symptoms can puzzle players as much as any other invisible danger can.

Functioning artifacts can create invisible effects. Force fields are a common feature of many military artifacts, but they are also rarely dangerous (unless a flying character happens to swoop into one). Other force-field-type mechanisms might include energy-draining rays which affect power packs, mutation energies, or even the characters themselves (similar to a *life leech*). Another relative of the force field is the damage field, which causes PCs or items within its confines to take a certain amount of damage per action turn. Certain kinds of damage drained or inflicted might may be treatable medically, or lost hit points might only be recovered by rest.

Such attacks may also cause other damage, from wiping out computer memory to causing artifacts to malfunction. Characters might receive some warning or premonition of the danger confronting them. Perhaps they become uncomfortable (from the sonics or rays

affecting them or their possessions), are aware that some energy source is nearby, or find ancient warning signs and ruins.

Dust is a natural and generally imperceptible threat which may easily be placed in an area. The advantage of this particular danger is that it can be noted in clues presented by the GM without making the danger obvious. Dust can be found in long-enclosed areas, or it may be expelled by exhaust systems or ventilation ducts in suits of armor, vehicles, or complexes. Aside from aggravating allergies, dust may be poisonous or radioactive, making it doubly dangerous and even life-threatening. Dust may be more subtly used in situations in which it will be dangerous without being inherently deadly; a dust cloud may be blown in the characters' faces by a draft, blinding or choking them as they are escaping from or about to be attacked by other opponents. A large amount of inhaled dust may lower Constitution temporarily.

The unexpected

While natural events are not invisible, they are not usually detected until it is

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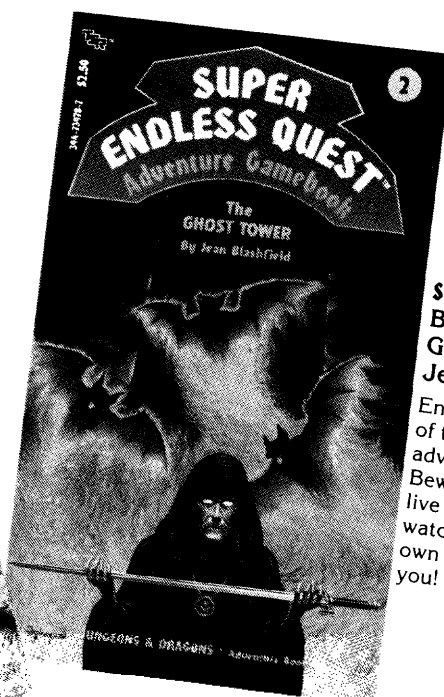
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far too late to avoid their effects. The disasters and geophysical imbalances generated by the Social Wars can also be used to create sudden disturbances which can plague the PCs. Players are geared toward expecting their problems to come from mutations and technology, making a good tornado all that much more effective.

Earthquakes and volcanoes may be common events in the Gamma World. More frequently encountered dangers include fires, storms, floods, and avalanches. Quite often, the approach of one of these disasters may be signaled by the sudden flight of creatures from an area. This is common before forest fires and bad storms even in our own time. At times, the characters themselves may set off one of these disasters by firing weapons in a dry forest or under an unstable cliff. Whole adventures can be constructed around natural disasters, as PCs struggle to escape or save their village from a brush fire, investigate a ruin before it is flooded or the cliff above gives way, or race against time and a terrible storm to accomplish their objective.

The unknown

High-tech ruins are favorite places for the Gamma World adventures. They are also excellent places to introduce unknown dangers. The reasons for the prevalence of creature-related threats in a ruin should be obvious, since ruins are not only more sheltered than the wilderness, but they can also hold vast treasures of items and weapons (a fact known to intelligent creatures throughout the Gamma World). Ruins are, however, more like dragons' lairs than store-rooms, as such treasures contain not only treasure but also guardian creatures.

High-tech ruins should not be in the best of repair. A century of invaders' depredations and attacks, mutants' curiosity, vegetable overgrowth, and natural erosion will surely weaken even the best preserved and protected military complex. Less fortified sites may be completely hidden or leveled. Many base defenses will be inactive, but some (the most centralized and heavily armored) will remain. However, man-made defenses aren't the half of it.

Ruins are natural traps. Crumbling concrete and rusting metal allow roofs to collapse, floors to cave in under a simple footstep, or walls to slump from a simple weapon blast. Whole buildings

may turn to rubble through carelessness by PCs — not the best fate for those fragile high-tech items within. Many of these structures will be obviously dangerous and crumbling, and they may give warning of their condition in the form of sounds, cracks, and falling dust. Then again, they might not. It is good policy to give some type of alarm if the players indicate that they are alert for the signs of danger which an impending collapse might generate.

High-tech items, too, will probably not be in the best condition when found. Radiation and poison contamination may come about as a result of deterioration in containers and generators. As chemicals degenerate, they leave hazardous residues. A weapon might work not at all, only intermittently, or simply explode. Suits of powered armor can malfunction and trap or injure the wearer, since they contain sensors and feedback mechanisms which can be misadjusted. Force fields can suddenly collapse on the user, squeezing him like a tube of toothpaste. Seemingly sound boats may turn turtle or come apart at the seams. Flying and land-roving vehicles can lose power at the most embarrassing moments. Even in the best of circumstances, unfamiliar tech items can be as dangerous to the users as live grenades. Such accidental events usually do not happen without some warning, but poison gas or a failing circuit seldom make much noise.

Other dangers found in ruins include malfunctioning or damaged equipment which is part of the buildings themselves. Gas lines are common and may be leaking or ruptured. In a research installation, such conduits may carry explosive, corrosive, or poisonous gas which will be around for torch-carrying groups to find. Pipes may still contain liquids which they once transferred from place to place, including water, acids, poisons, and flammables. Damaged electrical systems might electrify whole walls or corridors. Smells often indicate these dangers exist; ozone around electrical shorts is a common example.

Ruins can also create other dangers. Elevators can fall or stop between floors. The elevator doors can malfunction and close on a PC, or not open or close at all. Robots may attack, have a short and be electrified, or blow up when asked to perform some difficult action. Underground complex tunnels might fill with water from a nearby lake when a wall cracks. One-way doors can leave characters in particularly difficult situations with no retreat. A large

nuclear plant could malfunction creating areas of intense heat and radiation if it doesn't just up and blow up altogether.

Computers can keep up a running patter of conversation, most of it useless but some potentially valuable or misleading. Rubble will often conceal dangers, such as small mutants, snakes, bombs, and electrically charged wires. Characters might even run into a secret military spy complex, with a lab similar to Q's in the James Bond movies; everything looks mundane, but most items are deadly (exploding pencils, laser-firing shoes, etc).

While there are many dangers in a ruin, the real hazards are the inhabitants and other looters. Any permanent residents would probably be familiar with the majority of the dangers in the ruins and may have set up a few of their own. Many of these booby traps should be suitably primitive, but some may be technological and of advanced design, possibly making use of the complex's own defenses. Looters in the ruins might steal warning signs guarding dangerous areas, or they might actually attack the characters in order to protect their finds. Seemingly natural hazards, such as falling walls or explosively malfunctioning items, could actually be well-planned traps set by other creatures.

There are other ways to convince players that blasting everything in sight is not healthy. Frequent use of high-tech weapons by characters will attract the curious and covetous, just as flashing gold will do on any street today. Firing weapons may also attract other similarly destructive creatures, or it may gain the attention of high-tech computers. If used in a complex, such weapons and items might trigger defensive systems better left inactive. At the same time, such things frequently scare off the more friendly and peaceful creatures. Trigger-happy characters can also be goaded into destroying useful items or blasting creatures who will give them information. The results of these actions should be made clear to them later, after they have suffered as a result of not having the item or information.

Players faced with the above may be persuaded to cut down on their destructive tendencies much more realistically than by increasing the breakdown frequency of their characters' weapons. In any case, by reducing their use of firepower, the GM will force the players to think more carefully, be wary, and be less likely to solve all their problems with the attack dice.

The Exterminator

A special GAMMA WORLD® encounter

by John Mau and Brian Shuler

For over a century, the duralloy vault had remained undisturbed. Buried deep within the Earth's crust, it silently waited for a single atomic pulse to count down the years, days, hours, and seconds until the vault would re-emerge to perform its function.

The count reached zero. A circuit closed, and the vault awoke. The time of waiting had come to an end. Ancient machinery, dormant for over a century, slowly came to life. Power modules glowed with renewed energy as nuclear

reactions began to increase. When sufficient energy reserves had been reached, the sonic bore engaged and ripped into the surrounding earth. For miles around, the ground shook. Tractor/pressor beams of immense power kicked in. The ascent had begun.

Hours later, the sonic bore cut through the last layers of earth. Mutants and humans alike fled in terror as the ominous shape emerged from the ground. Moments later, the vault opened. The Exterminator stepped out

and examined the surrounding terrain. It detected nothing in the area, leaving it free to concentrate on itself. Analysis revealed minor damage to its organic layer, due to the prolonged suspension. Self-repair was calculated at twenty-five minutes.

That night, the Exterminator headed west. It did not know where it was going. It did not care. It had only one function, one purpose — to exterminate.

The Exterminator

TYPE: Exterminator

STATUS: 3500

NUMBER: 1 **ARMOR:** 3/1*
HD: 8d8/15d10* **CONTROL:** --
SENSORS: A/B **POWER:** B

SPEED: 12/900/36 (feet)

MS: 1d4 + 17 **IN:** 1d4 + 17

Dx: 1d6 + 15 **PS:** 1d4 + 21

* -- See note on armor classes below.

DESCRIPTION: An Exterminator is an upright-walking, 2-meter-tall robot. An improved structural design and synthetic-skin covering makes it completely identical to a Pure Strain Human. Its internal skeleton is made entirely of strengthened duralloy, and all vital mechanisms are encased in strengthened duralloy shells, making the Exterminator impregnable to all non-energy attacks. (See note on armor classes.) Due to structural limitations, it is slightly vulnerable to high explosives.

Although the Exterminator's sensors are limited for tracking, its high intelli-

gence — allowing complex deductive reasoning and social insight for quick adaptability in an environment -- easily compensates for any such limitation. The Exterminator's high intelligence must be stressed. It was one of the most advanced robots ever created.

The Exterminator can communicate with CIs and Think Tanks, but only to further its own purposes. It will take orders from no one, except possibly its creators (see below). The Exterminator will communicate with beings only when necessary. Any attempt at undesired communication will prompt a sudden, but concise, response, ending all conversation. The Exterminator never asks for help and always works alone.

Due to the lack of records, little is known of the Exterminators' original function. No one has yet discovered who created them or why. Some believe they were created by the Apocalypse to insure the complete destruction of mankind. Others believe they were placed by pre-holocaust military and scientific leaders to help establish a new order. Still others feel they were created solely

to eradicate mutational strains, since most of their targets are mutants.

Their function appears to be the elimination of selected targets. This target selection is apparently at random, although the majority of targets is comprised of mutants. It should be noted that anyone or anything obstructing an Exterminator from completion of its functions will be eliminated.

An Exterminator will attack only at the most advantageous time, and will never attack when the opposing force is too powerful. If necessary, it will make use of any weapons available to it. The Exterminator will never stop pursuing its target until it has eliminated it. If damaged, the Exterminator is capable of limited self-repair. No Exterminator has been destroyed so far.

An Exterminator has dual armor class and hit dice. The first set (AC 3, HD 8d8) represents the synthetic-skin and clothing covering the Exterminator. This outer covering is vulnerable to all forms of physical attack. The second set (AC 1, HD 15d10) represents the internal duralloy structure. This is impervious to any non-energy/non-explosive attack

(swords, bullets, etc.), and can only be damaged after the outer layer is destroyed. An Exterminator will function normally if its outer covering is destroyed.

Exterminators each initially carry a special weapon when they leave their vaults. This weapon is described below.

Plasma rifle

Weapon Class: 15

Range: 300 meters

Damage: 10d10 (20d10 vs. force fields)

Weight: 7.5 kilograms

The plasma rifle is a hand-held weapon carried only by Exterminators. It is powered from an Exterminator's internal power supply. When fully charged, the plasma rifle is good for 8 shots. It is recharged by attaching the rifle's power converter to a hidden access plate (located on the right side of the Exterminator's waist). Recharging takes 40 minutes, at 5 minutes per bolt. The plasma rifle releases one bolt of plasma energy per round.

Due to the nature of the plasma, the weapon does double damage to all force fields (does not apply to mutations) and

penetrates many types of armor more effectively. The plasma rifle makes the elimination of protected targets more feasible.

The Vaults

These self-contained duralloy structures are equipped with a sonic bore as well as tractor/pressor beams, powered from an internal nuclear power supply. A vault seems to have only one function, that being to hold an Exterminator for approximately one century, at which time it releases it. The complete purpose of the vaults (if any) is not known. It is speculated that the vaults may be storage facilities and/or emergency retreats containing a supply of both weapons and repair materials (and possibly repair facilities). It has also been suggested that the vaults may be communication centers to coordinate Exterminator action.

Whatever the purpose of the vaults, the Exterminators have not been known to return to them. The vaults close up within ten minutes after opening and have so far withstood all attempts at re-opening them. It is believed that the vaults have been scattered throughout the continent and possibly the world.

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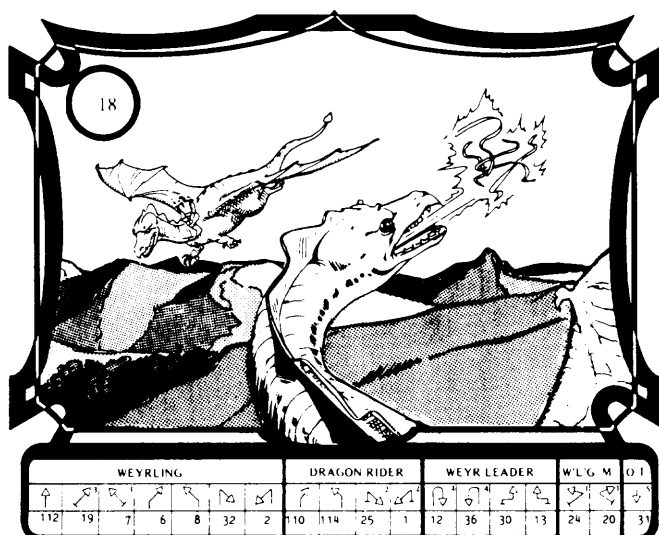
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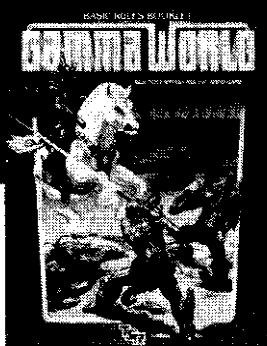
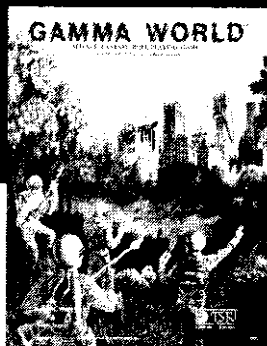
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GAMMA III

Campaign conversions for the third-edition GAMMA WORLD® game



by **James M. Ward**
and **Harold Johnson**

At last, the GAMMA WORLD® science-fantasy role-playing game is back by popular demand. Not only is this granddaddy of science-fiction role-playing games back, but (like the creatures and characters in the game) it has mutated. It is now leaner, meaner, sleeker, and deadlier than ever.

Why the change? When we were given the opportunity to revise and update the GAMMA WORLD game for the third edition, we seized the chance to improve the game to meet the current state of the art of role-playing. After all, the original GAMMA WORLD game is eight years old, created when role-playing games were in

their infancy. There have been a lot of advancements in game design since then. This was the opportunity to make the rules more accessible and easier to use by game master (GM) and player alike, and to remove any inconsistencies still existing.

Our goals for the revision of the original GAMMA WORLD game were many, but they centered on our desire to remain compatible with the prototype which had won such loyal fans, while making the game better. The first major goal was to introduce an epic scope of adventure to the game, providing player characters with a grand purpose, and bringing awe and wonder to what had become a grim world. The second goal was to create a better response system for swifter play while improving consistency throughout.

We specifically sought to streamline combat and character-action resolution, using easily expanded game systems that were designed to handle and encourage GM-created rules and situations. Last, but not least, we wanted to create a good advancement system to allow for character growth and game playability at all levels of experience. In short, we tried to provide you with as much information as possible to make the game complete.

Some errors occurred in the rush to get the third edition to the printers. In an effort to be thorough, we greatly overwrote the game. At the last minute, in an effort to meet deadlines, much of this material was withheld. This situation has been corrected with the release and distribution of the GAMMA WORLD Rules Supplement book for free. (If you don't have your copy, see the note at the end of this article.)

This article shows how easy it is to convert characters from the second edition for use with the third-edition rules. In fact, earlier adventures designed for use with the first and second editions can still be used with the third-edition rules. Rules are discussed in the same order as they appear in the third edition.

The Action Control Table

At the heart of the new GAMMA WORLD game is a completely revamped resolution system, the Action Control Table (the ACT). The original rules used many different tables to resolve combat, encounters with hazardous substances, and special actions. Now, the success or failure of any action, danger, or challenge confronting a character can be resolved using this one multipurpose chart.

The game has become score-driven, and every action undertaken either relates to a specific ability score or is assigned a special danger-intensity score of its own. Scores typically range from 1 to 21, but the ACT also possesses three groups of semi-logarithmic negative and positive numbers beyond this range. These columns make it possible to use any score higher or lower than the typical ranges.

A score is found on its corresponding column on the ACT, and percentile dice are rolled to determine degree of success or failure. If a GM wants to create a situation not fully detailed in the rules, he need only assign it a comparative score to determine the chances of success.

The ACT fulfills many functions and has more variability than is first apparent, as explained in more detail in the rules. In addition, it offers the advantage of limiting chances of success and failure in the game to ranges that have been determined to be the most fun for all. In general, even the lowest score allows a 26% chance of minimal success. With the highest score, there remains a 12% chance for failure (including a 1% chance for really screwing up). Of course, a GM may introduce difficulty

factors that can reduce or increase chances, but there always remains a 1% chance for failure or success.

In addition, some scores may modify other scores' chances of success. The modifier value of a score is determined by its placement on the ACT Divided into groups of three, and treating each "plus" or "minus" semi-log column as a single group, modifiers range from 0 to 6 as penalties or bonuses. These modifiers are then added or subtracted from the modified score to determine which column is used. This system allows interaction between related forces and counterforces in the game.

This new resolution system provides an avenue for rule changes while maintaining high compatibility with the original rules' characters and adventures. Original score ranges and (in most cases) the types of ability and equipment scores remain the same; they are merely processed by one system instead of several different ones.

Converting characters

The differences between second-edition and third-edition characters are few but important. The changes were made to improve game balance, to permit better meshing with a single system approach, and to provide avenues for developing a working character advancement system. Changes are divided into seven categories: Ability scores, Character Types, Mutations, Senses, Poison and Radiation resistance, Tech Levels, and Character Advancement.

Ability scores: The six basic character ability scores have not changed, but the ways in which they may be used have been expanded. No longer do the six scores only define chances for certain actions; these scores may also modify related subability scores, as well as impose limits on actions. Examples of such effects may be noted under the sections on character classes and mutations.

Ability Checks have become more important than ever to determine the chances of success when performing uncertain actions. But, instead of using an awkward multiplier rule, now you only need to turn to the ACT to define the chances of success.

Character types: The three original categories of characters have undergone minor changes. We also added two new character categories that were originally limited to NPC status: Intelligent Plants and Symbiotic Plants. Brief overviews of each of the other character types follow.

Pure Strain Humans: This has remained fairly unchanged. Though the method for creating higher ability scores and hit points have altered slightly, you should not have to make any adjustments to your human characters when converting them to third-edition rules. Note, however, that

humans are now subject to temporary mutational effects from biogenetic agents, whereas originally they had been immune.

Humanoids: Again, you do not need to change the ability scores of your second-edition rules humanoids. However, this category has been expanded to include any mutated creature possessing a humanoid shape and the capability of using tools. Humanoids are no longer subject to mutation from biogenetic agents.

Mutated animals: Here, too, there has been only one minor change, and characters generated using second-edition rules need not be changed. Mutated animals are no longer mutated by biogenetic agents,

Mutations: This section has been greatly changed, but the conversion is easily managed. Mutations now possess individual scores where they originally used the same scores as Physical Strength or Dexterity (for all physical mutations), or Mental Strength (for all mental mutations).

To utilize any mutation in an uncertain action or attack, now requires that an action roll using the mutation score must be made. A mutation score is determined by rolling 3d6, discarding the lowest die, and adding the modifier for Physical Strength or Mental Strength (depending on whether the mutation is a physical or mental one) to the remaining total. No score can ever exceed the corresponding, modified basic Ability score. To determine scores for each mutation for existing second-edition characters, roll 1d6 and subtract the result from the corresponding basic Ability score.

Mutation definitions have been reorganized by subcategory — physical, mental, plant, and defects — to make them easier to find. Available mutation options have been increased or expanded in the game. Because mutations have been rewritten to define when a mutation check must be made, you should review the new definitions of all mutations appropriate to your mutant character.

Some of the mutation names have been altered, as shown below:

Second-edition mutation	Third-edition mutation
Actual Metamorphosis	Metamorphosis
Bacterial Susceptibility	Body Weakness
Bodily Control	Body Control
Body Structure Change	Body Weakness
Dark Dependency	Nocturnal
Daylight Stasis	Nocturnal
Energy Negation	Spore Cloud
Energy Sensitivity	Vulnerability
Fear Impulse	Phobia
Heat Reaction	Temperature Sensitivity
Mental Defenselessness	Mental Weakness
No Nerve Endings	No Pain
Over-sized Body Parts	Modified Body Parts
Planar Travel	Planar Opening
Poison Susceptibility	Vulnerability
Seizures	(Special Attacks Section)

Size Increase/Decrease	Taller or Shorter
Skin Structure Change	Body Weakness
Speed Increase	Heightened Speed
Texture Change	Bark/Spines
Throwing Thorns	Thorns/Spikes
Vision Defect	Diminished Senses
Water Dependency	Amphibious

In addition, the following mutations and defects have been dropped from the game system:

Anti-Charisma	Arterial Weakness
Attack Reversal	Doubled Pain
Fat Cell Accumulation	Low Fertility
Multiple Damage	Poor Dual Brain
Poor Respiration	Time Suspension
Unconscious Summoning	Weight Decrease

Senses: New rules have been introduced for using a character's different senses. These rules establish new sensory ranges and should be used in place of previous rules. The new specialized senses can be equated to one of these three basic forms: sight, hearing, and feeling (touch or tactile).

Senses are used to identify objects within examination range. For each range factor greater than the base examination range, an action roll one color higher than Blue on the ACT is needed to succeed in identifying an object.

A character's sight range is a number of meters equal to two times his Intelligence score. A character's hearing range equals his Intelligence score in meters, but this sense is not as acute as sight. A character's feeling range equals half his Intelligence score in meters, or must work by touch if the character is not highly sensitive to vibrations. This latter sense can only be used to examine one item at a time.

Poison and radiation: In the original rules, separate tables were used to determine the effect of these hazards versus a character's Constitution score. In the third edition, this mechanic is replaced with a new single system for all hazards. Each hazard is assigned an Intensity score, as in the original rules. This score is used to make an attack against any appropriate victim. If the attack achieves any result of Blue through Red, the attack inflicts a base damage equal to half the Intensity score.

A character successfully attacked in this manner must make a Constitution Save vs. the color of the hazard attack. If the result is less than the color of the hazard's attack, the character suffers from the special effect of the attack. Poison might paralyze or knockout, depending on the category of poison. Radiation and biogenetic agents would cause mutations.

Tech Levels: The new GAMMA WORLD game expands and redefines the available Tech Levels. Tech Level I is still primitive technology, while Tech Level II remains medieval. Tech Level III is now defined as the age of gunpowder to the

20th century. Tech Level IV is futuristic technology featuring lasers, robots, and supercomputers. Tech Level V represents an unknown, alien technology centering around matter/energy conversion.

Pure Strain Humans begin the game at Tech Level III; Humanoids at Tech Level II, and Mutated Animals at Tech Level I. Each character type may readily use any artifact of its technology level. However, the use of unfamiliar technology is penalized by treating any colored result as the next lower color (but never less than a Blue result) for every level of difference of the user.

Character advancement: The original rules did not provide much in the way of a rewarding Character Advancement system. In order to create such a system, certain mechanics were stripped away and replaced. Most markedly different is the method of determining the chance to hit in combat. Originally, this was a function of the category of weapon used. Now, the chance to hit is based on the character's experience Rank.

To convert existing characters to the third-edition rules, give your character one Rank for every six months of real time that he has been played. A character's Rank score is also used to define the chance of success when using learned talents. A list of available talents and how

they work is provided in the third edition. Characters may not possess more talents than their Intelligence scores. Converted characters should possess a number of talents equal to their Tech Level, plus one per two Ranks.

A character's Rank also increases the number of hit points a character possesses. The number of additional points gained at each level depends on the Rank attained. A converted character adds 5 hit points for every Rank attained from 2 to 5; 4 hit points for every Rank from 6 to 10; 3 hit points for every Rank from 11 to 15; and, 2 hit points for Rank 16.

Beasts

GAMMA WORLD game beasts have only changed slightly in the new edition, usually in the way statistics were presented. Instead of presenting statistics in the form of a dice range, they have been listed as an average score with general instructions that they may vary, give or take three points. In some cases, we have intentionally made a creature tougher or weaker. However, the original statistics can be easily converted to the new format with little difficulty. This method may also be used to convert your own original beasts to the third edition rules.

Number: This score is no longer given as a dice roll, but has remained in the same range.

Morale: The average range had been 2 to 12. This has been raised to a number from 5 to 15. Take the average of the current range and add three to it to get the new morale score.

Hit dice: This score was originally used to determine a creature's attack rank. It is still used this way, but it now uses the new ACT. This score may be used in place of a Constitution score if the GM so desires. This score represents the average rank of each beast encountered. The GM is free to create higher-ranked leaders and lower-ranked peons by adjusting the Hit Dice score.

Armor: Armor originally reduced a foe's chance to hit. In the third edition, armor now reduces the amount of damage suffered each turn. The armor system was also inverted. Originally, no armor indicated an Armor Class of 10; now it is an AC of 0. Subtract 10 from the original AC score to find the new AC used. The number of points of damage subtracted from the total of all damage suffered during one turn is equal to the new AC value times 5.

Speed: Instead of having three different movement rates for each creature, this has been simplified to a single speed index score. This score was determined by taking the old Action Turn speed and increasing it by one-third its original value.

Abilities: For ease of play, you may use a creature's Physical Strength and Mental Strength scores in place of individual mutation scores.

Attacks: The amount of damage caused by an attack is now determined by multiplying the base damage of the attack times the degree of success indicated by the attack roll. In this case, all attack damage scores were reduced to base damage. To determine the base damage of an attack, take one-fourth the maximum damage that may be inflicted.

Robots

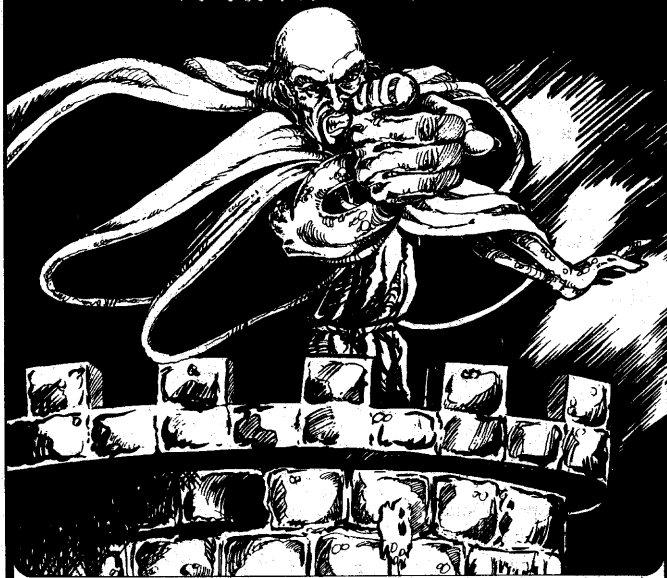
GAMMA WORLD game robots can be adapted using the same method as for beasts, above. The Intelligence score has been renamed Programming. Furthermore, available sensors and power sources have been expanded, and gamers may wish to consider adding new options. If a robot possesses a force field, the field should be listed as a -1 RF force field for every 100 points of damage the old field could absorb. We also took the liberty of introducing several new types of robots and borgs, and the GM may want to review these as a guideline for creating balanced new robots.

Overview of game changes

Now, let's take a look at the major changes in the game rules themselves. The categories that are most important to consider when converting old adventures to the new GAMMA WORLD game are Time, Movement, Surprise, NPC Responses and Morale, and Combat.

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Time: There were no real changes in the segments of time used; only the terminology changed. Instead of calling all time increments "turns," now only the 10-second Action turn is referred to as a turn. After turns, minutes and hours are used instead of other game terms. We do note that four hours is the duration of a march or rest period, but this is most frequently referred to as four hours. Ten minutes is also referred to as a search cycle for reference purposes.

Movement: Detailed new rules are provided for movement speed, burdens, leaping, and special movement rates, such as climbing and swimming. All characters move at a base rate of 24, though mutations may increase this rate. A character can move at half speed or double speed, resulting in a change in his chance to observe things. A burdened character is slowed to two-thirds speed, while a heavily burdened character is slowed to one-third speed. Dexterity Checks are needed to exceed normal rates for a turn and to perform difficult movement feats.

Surprise: Surprise is no longer determined by the roll of a six-sided dice. Instead, the character most likely to first notice a startling situation (or the party member with the highest Dexterity score) must make an Intelligence Check vs. the GM-assigned difficulty of discovering the hidden item and reacting in time.

NPC responses and morale: Since role-playing and character interaction are the name of the game, a more comprehensive NPC response tool was devised. Suggested responses to a variety of situations have been provided on the GM's screen included in the new edition.

An NPC's morale score (or his Intelligence score, if a solitary creature) is used to determine the response to major negotiations. The higher the score, the more likely the creature will prove hostile and attempt to take control of the situation. White and black results are the most favorable, while red and orange results prove the most negative or hostile. This response system may also be used to determine the morale response of foes or retainers during combat, as outlined in the new rules.

Combat: This combat rules section was completely rewritten in an effort to streamline the system and to open it up to handle any special types of attacks or situations which might arise.

Combat sequence: The sequence of events was reworked to provide for both initiative importance, logical sequencing of activities, and response to a foe's actions. The side that wins the initiative in combat may now choose to act first, or it may choose to wait and respond to an opponent's actions during each phase of the

combat. The sequence of events is as follows.

At the beginning of an encounter, check to see if either side is surprised. Then:

1. Both sides declare intended actions and targets.
2. Determine who wins the initiative. Choosing to respond to an opponent's actions instead of moving first permits changes in declared actions and targets.
3. First side moves.
4. Resolve all mental attacks in initiative order.
5. First side resolves missile fire and thrown weapons.
6. First side resolves melee and unarmed attacks.
7. Second movement, phase; both sides move.
8. Second side resolves missile fire and thrown weapons.
9. Second side resolves melee and unarmed attacks.
10. Both sides resolve remaining actions, movements, and reactions to opponents.
11. Grenades and bombs detonate.

How to attack: To attack in the new GAMMA WORLD game, the attacker or attacking hazard makes an action roll a using either his attack Rank, Mutation score, or Intensity score. Generally, any colored result that is Blue or higher indicates that the foe has been struck.

Attacks may be modified by movement, cover, defenses and opponent actions. These modifications are made to the attack Rank before the dice are rolled. A complete list of combat modifiers may be found on the GM's screen.

Damage: We eliminated a second dice roll for damage by making the result of the attack roll determine the degree of success, called the attack result factor. Every form of attack is given a base damage score (equal to one-fourth the maximum damage possible, or equal to half the Intensity or mutation score). This number is then multiplied by the result factor to determine how much damage is inflicted. A Blue result inflicts one times base damage; a green result inflicts two times; yellow inflicts three times; orange inflicts four times; and, red inflicts five times the base damage score. For example, a sword that causes a base damage of 5 hit points is used to attack. The attack result is yellow, so the amount of damage inflicted equals 15 points.

Weapons: All weapons found in the original rules are listed on the new GM's screen with all their abilities. If a GM has created a new weapon he wants to convert to the new system, he should draw a comparison between his invention and existing weapons.

Weapons no longer determine the attack score as they did in the original rules. This is now a function of a character's Experience Rank.

Mutations: You will probably note that mutations do not attack using a character's

attack Rank, and therefore start a game at a more powerful level than the use of most weapons. On the other hand, few mutations give ranged attacks.

Defenses: As noted earlier in the section on beasts, defenses have undergone a change in the new GAMMA WORLD edition. Defenses now fall into three categories. Armor no longer reduces the chance to be hit, but it does reduce the total amount of damage that may be suffered in one turn of combat. Shields, on the other hand, do not reduce damage suffered, but do penalize a limited number of foes' chances to hit. Finally, force fields reduce the result factor multiplier of each attack against the wearer. The reduction averages -1RF (result factor) per 100 points of reduction of the original rules. This reduction does not necessarily negate special effects, and the target must still make Ability Saves at the actual color of the attack to avoid many special effects. All defenses may be permanently damaged by red attack results against their wearer.

Special damage: Special effects of certain types of attacks, such as burns and bruises, have been added to the rules. This provides a degree of interesting detail, but if a GM does not want to worry about the special bookkeeping such special damages require, he may omit these effects from his game.

Special attacks: Furthermore, we included numerous special attack forms and effects to provide the most comprehensive listing of possible special effects and their game mechanics. Again, here is a plethora of detail, and the new GM should feel free to use those that interest him, and ignore or replace others with his own rules.

In closing

The response to the new GAMMA WORLD game has been overwhelmingly positive; thanks for all the support. Its vocal fans spell the real success of any game. The new GAMMA WORLD game is designed for all gamers with a passion for science fiction and wild adventure. Even if you just play fantasy games, give the new GAMMA WORLD game a try; it weaves adventures of wonder and presents challenges such as you have never seen. Ω

If you possess the third-edition GAMMA WORLD game with a Red Death Rider mounted on a robobeast on the cover, make sure your set includes a copy of the GAMMA WORLD Rules Supplement. If not, you can get a copy of the GAMMA WORLD Rules Supplement for free. Send a postcard with your name and address to:

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The New Humans



Pure Strain Humans in the GAMMA WORLD® game

by David Wainwright

From any perspective, it must be admitted that the Pure Strain Humans of the GAMMA WORLD® game are tough customers. With their 8-sided hit dice, high constitutions, and high number of hit points, a well-armed and armored human is a fearsome opponent.

All things being relative, though, the GAMMA WORLD environment is a very unhealthy place in which to be. Even

with the 50 or so hit points the average character may have, he is at best just marginally suited to his world. Still, this incredible durability of post-holocaust inhabitants is a two-edged blade. Without this durability, the GAMMA WORLD game would be nearly unplayable, yet with it, situations in which it takes two dozen arrows to kill a so-called "normal" man add a degree of absurdity that is hard to ignore.

This article examines Pure Strain

Humans in two respects. First, a comparison between Pure Strain Humans and "normal" humans (as detailed in the AD&D® game) is given. Second, a history is created for the origin of Pure Strain Humans, to explain their durability and strengths.

GAMMA WORLD® and AD&D® humans

One of the most interesting aspects of the GAMMA WORLD game has to be the inordinate hardness of the average game resident. When compared with their AD&D game counterparts, GAMMA WORLD humans are incredibly hard to kill. A 1st-level AD&D character can be killed with one dagger thrust, yet there is almost no way to do in a GAMMA WORLD character with a dagger blow.

Perhaps it would help to look at the AD&D game's explanation of hit points. While an AD&D character's hit points reflect how hard it is to kill him, such difficulty is not due to invulnerability or toughness of skin but rather to combat skills the character has learned. "A certain amount of these hit points represent the actual physical punishment which can be sustained. The remainder, a significant portion . . . at higher levels, stands for skill, luck, and/or magical factors. . . . Thus, the majority of hit points are symbolic of combat skill, luck . . . and magical forces" (*Players Handbook*, p. 34).

A 1st-level AD&D character with 3 hp can be killed with a dagger doing 3 hp damage. At 2nd level, with 6 hp, the same thrust doing 3 hp damage only wounds him. This isn't because the character in question has acquired hard skin, but because he has learned to get out of the blade's way.

Perhaps the main reason for the seeming incompatibility of the AD&D and GAMMA WORLD systems lies in confusing what we call "normal" human beings with Pure Strain Humans. One blow with a sword would probably hurt you or me as much as it would a 1st-level AD&D character, so it is convenient to label AD&D characters "normal" human beings. Where does that leave Pure Strain Humans?

It is ludicrous to think that GAMMA WORLD characters are born virtually indestructible. It should not be too difficult to believe that such characters, since they don't progress in levels of ability like their AD&D counterparts, attain their full adult abilities while still

very young, perhaps at age 7 (just like Li'l Abner). The average post-holocaust person learns quickly how to dodge potentially lethal blows and can only be killed after first tiring him or her. [Note, too, that combat damage is assessed every Action Turn (10 seconds) in the GAMMA WORLD game, whereas it is assessed every melee round (60 seconds) in the AD&D game. The time differential in game mechanics accounts for some of the hit-point differential. — Editor]

References to Pure Strain Humans in the *Metamorphosis Alpha* game and in both versions of the GAMMA WORLD game state that Pure Strain Human resemble, but are very different from, their pre-holocaust ancestors. (See GW2, *Famine in Far-Go*, p. 30). Most people exposed to high levels of radiation die. If radiation poisoning doesn't kill them outright, then leukemia or other degenerative disorders that develop after massive irradiation will. Pure Strain Humans, however, can take it. Why? A little inventive history might help.

Before the holocaust

Pre-holocaust humankind was quite similar to the average non-combatant in the AD&D game, though better dietary habits and increased access to medical care would have added up to better health (and more hit dice). What caused the drastic change in mankind's physiology was the end product of his former ecological carelessness.

Even before the Social Wars of the 24th century, mankind was in serious trouble. Toxic chemicals had been poisoning the earth for generations. Biological weapons released new and horrid plagues; formerly harmless microorganisms that had been affected by mutagenic substances developed by earlier civilizations also generated new diseases. Background radiation took its toll on humanity, adding to the chromosomal damage done by the various scourges of modern life (e.g., radiation accidents).

While the causes of these afflictions were known, no defense was known from these evils. Then, from the cornucopia of 24th-century medicine, came hope: a process of genetically boosting the human body's defenses against outside agents. Early experiments actually increased the number and degree of mutations before the final Genetic Safeguarding Treatment was perfected. Genetic Safeguarding Treatment (GST) created the ultimate human: *Homo novus*, resistant to the mutational haz-

ards of nearly every known chemical and radioactive toxic then known.

The inventors of GST had no idea of the degree to which their process exceeded their initial intents. Despite being 100% successful in aiding human physiology combat the many hazards of 24th-century life, there were some very unexpected side effects. One serendipitous side effect of GST was the reinforcement of the human immunological system. This resulted in a total resistance to every communicable and hereditary disease known to 24th-century man, including the common cold!

More amazing still was the development of a genetic repair system, which provided automatic radiation resistance. As a result, those receiving GST were now able to recover from doses of radiation that would have killed those not so protected. Nonetheless, the same genetic repair system which allowed *Homo novus* to heal otherwise fatal radiation wounds now prevented the genetic booster (as well as other mutagenics) from working for repeat applications. It is due to this chromosomal maintenance that Pure Strain Humans are no longer prone to alterations of their genetic code as their ancestors obviously were, or else the GAMMA WORLD land would not have its present population of mutated humanity. In short, the road to becoming a Pure Strain Human was a one-way street. Mankind was now locked into a permanent mold — but what a mold it was!

Another benefit that did not manifest itself for several months after the treatment was an amplification of human reflexes and adrenal responses to an incredible degree (not necessarily raising dexterity scores). Beneficiaries of GST were able to dodge, roll with, and avoid the full effects of most potentially fatal blows. Even falling damage did not affect New Men (as they were initially called) as one would expect. This enhancement is not considered a mutation as far as game purposes go, but it goes a long way in explaining why Pure Strain Humans have so many hit dice. (A general household robot, by comparison, has only 5 HD.)

Within months after its adoption by a grateful humanity, the benefits of GST were realized, as the hospitals of the early 24th century were emptied of their patients. The majority of humanity had changed from our present form to nimble and resilient beings whose chances for survival had been maximized. By the time of the Social Wars,

every family that could afford GST had gotten it, leaving only the very poor and those skeptical of its benefits unprotected.

The genetic booster, one of the final discoveries of the pre-holocaust world, was the key to GST. The demand for it became so great that soon nearly every adequately stocked doctor's office had it. After the perfection of GST, genetic booster was still widely used for breeding livestock and growing horticultural foodstuffs, as well as certain applications in the fur industry. But, not long after this breakthrough in medical science, came the Social Wars.

After the holocaust

Unlike their medieval namesakes, the Dark Ages (or Black Years) that followed the holocaust were literally devoid of light. Blasts during the wartime holocaust threw up gigatons of soot and earth, blocking out sunlight and rapidly lowering the earth's temperature in what is currently referred to as a "nuclear winter." Those who survived the original catastrophe were further diminished by the hard times that followed. To the credit of the initial survivors, it can truthfully be said that their mutual cooperation and courage saved humanity from extinction. However, after the darkest hours had passed, divisive elements emerged.

Throughout the world, the majority of survivors were *Homo novus*, which didn't please those not given GST. Those who had voluntarily refused GST came to regard science and technology as evil, and the New Men as the crowning achievement of that corruption. On the other hand, those initially unable to afford GST came to resent and despise a society that could so easily abandon its wretched to the consequences of its own past indiscretions.

In many of the pockets of gathered survivors, these factions gradually formed into a religious movement calling itself the Faithful, and it urged condemnation of the New Men for being the minions of the evils of Science. Though some of these holdouts were later more than happy to take GST to increase the odds of their survival, the majority of them still perceived GST as representative of the evil technology that led to this destruction in the first place.

After all, wasn't it man's obsession with science that had initially resulted in the poisoning of the world? Surely the suffering of 24th-century mankind was deserved as long-overdue punishment

for tampering with forces best left alone! Wasn't it obvious to all that man's only hope now was to turn his back on the false god of Progress? Yet, in spite of all these "signs," there were still pompous fools whose arrogance kept them from seeing the error of their ways.

Still, there was hope for the Faithful. In time, they realized that as the earth itself had been changed, so had they. Though beset with hardships, they also received help in the forms of new powers and abilities, not the least of which was an enhancement of the adrenal/reflex response, similar to that of the New Men. This beneficial mutation quickly became prevalent throughout the Faithful population. Clearly, this could only mean that only those who had been mutated would inherit the reformed earth. With this divine providence, they knew that they could still prevail over the Hell-spawned might of the New Men. It was from the ranks of the Faithful that mutantkind would eventually spring. Later, schisms within Faithful doctrine would ultimately produce such diverse schools of thought as the Mutationists, Radioactivists, and the Seekers of the New Dawn.

At the same time, the New Men were undergoing a parallel metamorphosis. At first patronizing towards the "Untreated," as they referred to the Faithful, the New Men gradually came to feel aloof from them. They slowly cultivated a condescending attitude towards the simple-minded and superstitious Faithful, which in time became open contempt. After all, wasn't it ignorance and a refutation of the warnings of the scientific community that allowed the poisoning of the earth in the first place? In mankind's hour of need, it was those who used their natural intelligence that came through with GST and saved the day. Wasn't it obvious to everyone that the only hope now for man's continued survival lay in whatever could be salvaged from the technology of the past? Yet, there were still cretins whose ignorance kept them from seeing the evidence all around them.

About this time another unsuspected effect of GST was making itself known. While nothing seemed safe from the unleashed power of the atom, the New Men observed that their children were seemingly unaffected by radiation. The effects of GST were hereditary! Occasionally, children were born who lacked the full benefits of GST, but such throwbacks had no mutations or defects — although, like their pre-holocaust ances-

tors, they were susceptible to mutagenics. Throwbacks can be considered "latent mutants" and only need exposure to radiation, genetic booster, or some other mutagenic to realize their abilities. This seems to be the case in one of the scenarios in GW1, *Legion of Gold*, in which a family of Pure Strain Humans has a child susceptible to mutation.

How much of the increase in hit points is dependent on the GST-heightened reflexes and how much can be accounted for by training in combat, martial arts, and learning in general? The little girl in the above scenario is said to be 10 years old, yet she has 8 HD and 30 hp! Obviously, in the setting of the GAMMA WORLD game, self-defense tactics would have to be taught and learned at a very early age; however, it is implausible to assume that a non-mutant could learn enough evasive maneuvers by the age of 10 to become tougher than a plastic-and-steel mechanical construct. (Remember the general household robot with 5 HD?)

Far more likely is that the effects of GST are independent of each other and need not all be present in each and every Pure Strain human. Some throwbacks could have, as in the case of the

little girl in GW1, the enhanced reflex/adrenal system (which would explain her hit dice) and still lack the genetic repair system that would normally prevent mutations from occurring in Pure Strain Humans. It should be added that to strip any other GST-enhanced ability from a Pure Strain Human character other than genetic repair is to diminish his or her odds of survival (and playability) drastically.

What happens to a pre-holocaust human arriving in the Gamma World of the 25th century? Unless the character is a New Man, he will lack the genetic repair system which stands between him and radiation poisoning. Without GST-enhanced immunological system, the character will suffer the same consequences as if he had the defect *bacterial susceptibility*. A Game Master must consider what sort of man-made diseases are lying in wait for such an unprotected organism. Such a character would also be susceptible to all the toxic wastes in the world, too; again, the GM should decide what poisons are natural or industrial in origin, for purposes of allowing or not allowing saving throws. The pre-holocaust human shouldn't have more than 12, possibly 15 hp altogether.

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In short, an unprotected pre-holocaust human is not long for the Gamma World.

When one considers all the complications that pre-holocaust NPCs present, it seems to discourage inclusion of pre-holocaust characters in a campaign. It is not improbable that some fortunate (?) pre-holocaust survivors may turn up from time to time in stasis chambers. Such characters may have valuable historical, technological, or medical knowledge which will make them important in any power struggle in your world. To preserve game balance, a GM may be more likely to allow a pre-holocaust restaurant manager into his world than a nuclear physicist or a firearms expert.

Gradually, as more and more mutations occurred among the Faithful, the New Men came to see themselves as not only the true heirs of 24th-century man, but also the sole progenitors of future humankind. Due to their superficial similarity to their pre-holocaust ancestors and their resistance to mutation, they came to think of themselves as "pure-strain" humans. This was the first use of that term, and, as that way of thinking spread across the land, it polarized the two respective populations further.

Unchecked distrust and animosity between Pure Strain Humans and the Faithful erupted into open hostilities in many of the enclaves of survivors throughout the GAMMA WORLD lands. Some of these battles resulted in genocidal pogroms by the Faithful to purge the hated Pure Strain Humans from the community. Although any Knight of Genetic Purity believes that the only good mutant is a dead mutant, the Purist order was not the brainchild of any one man. Mutant defense leagues sprang up in many isolated villages as a last line of defense against hordes of fanatical mutants on holy jihads. Elsewhere, mutant-hunting posses formed in human-held territories for the sole purpose of wiping the "evil stain of mutantkind from the face of this great land!" In either event, the outcome was the beginning of the longstanding strife and warfare between human and humanoid.

The Faithful, susceptible to the mutagenics that made up their new world, continued to mutate; all humanoids of the 25th century could (if any records had been kept) trace their ancestry back to them. This includes members of such Cryptic Alliances as the Mutationists,

who maintain the original Faithful belief that only the changed should inherit the earth, and the Radioactivists, who agree but whose conviction that "The Great Mutator helps those who mutate themselves" has become an obsession. Both of these offshoots of the Faithful have long since abandoned the original Faithful condemnation of all technology.

Oddly enough, both Mutationists and Radioactivists view each other as having strayed from the true path. Mutationists consider the Radioactivists to be idolatrous heretics who dare to presume the Provider needs their aid. The Radioactivists believe the Mutationists are passive agnostics who lack the conviction of faith to approach the Radiant Divine Glory in all its Atomic splendor.

Pure Strain Humans, once forming the majority of humanity, fragmented into numerous and varied sub-groups. The high regard Pure Strain Humans had for the technology of the ancients, combined with the veneration of the good old days before the cataclysm, produced the Restorationists. The scarcity of such artifacts and their great value during the Black Years caused some members to succumb to ignorance and superstition. These ritualistic technology worshipers founded the orders of the Archivists and the Followers of the Voice, debased offshoots of the original Restorationist concept.

Another group, the Healers, often comes from small communities centered around ancient medical facilities. In the days before the Social Wars, many advances had been made in the fields of medicine, holistic theory, and psychical research. Healers are the retainers of the end product of such research. Their extraordinary powers, they claim, are natural abilities only dormant in most men. Most inhabitants of the GAMMA WORLD lands, while in awe of the "White Hand," secretly scoff at the Healers' vows of poverty and meditation. Still, Healers live long lives (up to 125 years) and generally enjoy excellent health.

Pure Strain Humans today

Dark ages breed illiteracy and ignorance in the way careless campers breed forest fires. In the setting of the GAMMA WORLD campaign, all inhabitants are steeped in oral traditions. No one knows with any degree of certainty where facts end and legends begin. Much of what passes for truth is that which people want to hear, and Pure Strain Humans

are as attached to their "truths" as anyone else. By A.D. 2450, they have forgotten that their current condition was artificially arrived at through genetic engineering, and they are unaware that they have more in common with their humanoid antagonists than they do with pre-holocaust humanity.

Yet even when legends are false, they tell us something about the people who made them up. The most popular surviving tale of the ancients among Pure Strain Humans is that of Cinderella. The story of the dutiful daughter maligned by those around her has special meaning to a people who feel the resentment of almost every other being on the planet. Pure Strain Humans see great relevance in the dilemma of Cinderella, victimized by her stepmother and sisters, as compared to their own predicament.

In a world of powerful mutants, intelligent animals, and sentient machines, it's safe to say that Pure Strain Humans no longer occupy the pedestal their genetically-engineered ancestors once did. There are other residents of GAMMA WORLD besides humanoids with grudges against the direct descendants of 24th-century man. As sentience flowered in the animals, they came to appreciate the atrocities committed against their ancestors by the Ancients, whom Pure Strain Humans resemble so well. Androids, once the servants of mankind, also have axes to grind with the descendants of their former oppressors. Rightly or wrongly, Pure Strain Humans are perceived as being responsible for every wrong in the post-holocaust world.

Perhaps this explains the current attitude of Pure Strain Humans in the year 2450. Despite their present impoverished state, Pure Strain Humans still have an attitude not unlike that of dispossessed royalty. As compensation for the loss of their former status and prestige, they have embraced that which alone distinguishes them from the other tenants of the GAMMA WORLD lands: the legacy of the Ancients. Throughout the ruined world, the monuments of the Ancients all give mute testimony to the original favored place of humans in the scheme of things. Statues, billboard advertisements, and what few surviving records of pre-holocaust life there are proclaim the role of humans as the shapers of the world. In the GAMMA WORLD game, Pure Strain Humans are feared, hated, and envied — but, above all, respected.

A Change of Diet

by Tom Adams



*A new mutational defect
for
GAMMA WORLD®
gaming*

Effects: Characters with this physical mutation must sustain their nutritional needs with nourishment of a very specific and potentially troublesome variety. This nourishment is absolutely required in place of food of more normal varieties. Roll 1d6 to determine which nutritional requirement the mutant has on the following chart. Types of nourishment other than the ones below will not be eaten by the mutant, and they will be both foul-tasting and mildly poisonous. If nourishment other than the allowable type is eaten, roll 2d4 to determine the intensity of the poison; this is done immediately after the mutant eats any foods other than that which his body can properly digest.

DIE ROLL	RESULT
-------------	--------

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | VAMPIRISM: The blood of any warm-blooded creature is required for the mutant's daily diet. Water is still needed, though only half the amount normal for a creature of the mutant's size is necessary. Blood can be drawn by cutting the victim's flesh or by sucking it in through small fangs in the mouth, hollow talons on the fingers, suckered tentacles on the mutant's body, etc. The GM and player should decide how blood will be drawn and how often each day the mutant must feed. |
| 2 | CARNIVOROUS DIET: Only meat may be eaten by the mutant, and such meat cannot be older than 24 hours. Also, there is a 25% chance that the mutant has latent cannibalistic tendencies. |
| 3 | HYPERCARNIVOROUS DIET: Again, only meat may be eaten, but this is a more demanding defect. The meat can be no older than 1 hour, and there is a 40% chance that the mutant has active cannibalistic behavior. |
| 4 | RADIATION DIET: The mutant must absorb an Intensity Level of 1d6 + 2 radiation at least twice a day, for at least 10 minutes each time. The mutant will not suffer any mutations or damage from the radiation intensity it requires, or from radiation of lesser intensity. This immunity applies to all forms of radiation exposure, but the mutant takes full damage from radiation of greater intensities. |
| 5 | VEGETARIAN DIET: Fresh, live plant life must be eaten, but — because of the lower levels of energy gained from vegetable matter — large quantities of food (2d4 kg per sitting, 1d4 + 1 times per day) are required. Optionally, the mutant must have a very rare type of plant matter for its survival (like eucalyptus leaves or bamboo shoots). |
| 6 | POISON CONSUMPTION: Poisons of normally lethal sorts are required for the mutant's diet. Either poisonous liquids, solids, gases, or poisons from organisms that carry venom can be digested. Roll 1d6 + 2 to determine the intensity that the mutant needs. He is immune to the effects of poisons of equal or less intensities, but not to those of greater intensities. Note that if nourishment of other types is eaten by a mutant with this defect, it must still check for poisoning (as above), even if the intensity is equal to or less than the tolerance level for true poisons that this mutant can withstand. |

Each GM should decide when and if this defect is to be used in a campaign. I suggest that when using the PC Mutation Table (page 26, GAMMA WORLD® Adventure Booklet), humanoids should this defect on a roll of 14, and mutated animals on a roll of 13.

NAME: Abnormal sustenance dependency (D)

RANGE: Body

DURATION: Constant

NUMBER: Self

TYPE: U P

USE: Constant

DAMAGE: None

Knowledge is Power!

A skills system for GAMMA WORLD® characters

by John M. Maxstadt

Except for actual fighting, much of the GAMMA WORLD® game revolves around what the player characters know and what they don't know. Success and survival regularly depend on knowing how this artifact works, what that sign says, what this building is, how that monster is likely to behave, how to deal with this Cryptic Alliance, or what those robots are doing. Mutational powers, often crucial in combat, quickly come to the end of their usefulness elsewhere. *Precognition* and telepathy, the only two mutations likely to provide any useful data, are usually restricted by Game Masters who (often rightly) fear abuse by players who would claim omniscience for their characters if they could.

Player characters will pick up some knowledge (about monsters, for example) as they gain experience in adventuring. Other information pertaining to a particular scenario will no doubt be scattered around in the form of clues. The GM may reasonably hope that the players will be able to figure out some things for themselves. But, all this leaves open the question of prior knowledge. What do the player characters know before the campaign begins? Did they just roll off the turnip truck, never having heard of a badder or a yexil, and unable to understand what an explosion is? Or, if they know more, how much more do they know? And do they all know the same things?

These questions have important implications for many game situations. If the party captures a batch of centisteeds for riding purposes, how should the GM rule? Can they just hop on and yell "Hi-yo, Silver!" or do they have to learn how to ride — and, if they do, how do they go about it? What rationale does the GM use with the player who says, "Any idiot knows how a pistol works. I just point it, pull the trigger, and see what happens. Why do I gotta roll dice?"

There are opportunities connected with the issue of prior knowledge to beef up

weak characters and give various party members different roles to facilitate party cooperation. The GM could also use prior knowledge to make some characters more interesting, especially Pure Strain Humans, who are essentially defined by seven numbers (six attribute scores and a hit-point total). Character backgrounds — past histories of player characters, detailing places they've been and things they've learned — can flesh out cardboard characters and improve roleplaying. However, the GM needs some control over backgrounds, lest the players decide that their characters have been everywhere and know everything.

These problems do not crop up so badly in most other role-playing games, because player characters in those games are defined primarily by what they know. In the AD&D® game — the inevitable standard — class, race, and many other factors determine what a player character knows before play begins. Fighters know how to use weapons, clerics and magic-users know how to cast spells, and thieves have a variety of useful skills. Each of the demi- and semi-human races has its special area of knowledge and skills. Weapons are chosen based on character class, and languages based on race and intelligence. Players can also roll for "secondary skills," although that table is often ignored because many of the listed skills are of questionable utility (limner/painter?), and because skilled NPC laborers and money are both relatively plentiful in the campaign.

In the comparatively primitive milieu of the GAMMA WORLD game, both money and skilled workers are usually in short supply, and player characters might find it useful to have a few mundane, practical skills. But most of the AD&D systems translate poorly. Imposing full professional classes on GAMMA WORLD gaming would change its complexion. Race doesn't mean quite the same thing in GAMMA WORLD gaming, and it seems illogical to apportion knowledge strictly by racial type (although it might be interesting to consider what special skills and knowledge might be appropriate to different kinds of mutated

animal characters). Probably the simplest and most easily adapted system is the one used for secondary skills — having the players roll dice for their characters' skills and areas of knowledge when they roll up their other attributes, before the start of play. The system below also borrows from the AD&D language system in that it allows racial type and intelligence to influence the die rolls, and it is more generous than the AD&D secondary-skills system in that it allows more than one skill per character.

In this system, a distinction is made between *skills* and *areas of knowledge*, and the two are treated separately. Skills are basically manual abilities that involve some training and previous experience. Areas of knowledge are more erudite, and most involve some kind of formal education. Areas of knowledge are, on the whole, more valuable and harder for characters to get.

Pure Strain Humans and mutated humanoids may begin the game with skills and areas of knowledge. Mutated animals do not, unless the campaign assumes that they have grown up among humans who have treated them as complete equals. Since established animal types (as per DRAGON® issue #89) cannot talk without a specific mutation, it seems more likely that their first human contact, at least on an equal footing, will be with their human and humanoid player character comrades. The GM may wish to allow mutated animal PCs to learn skills and knowledge from other party members as play progresses; this will be taken up at the end of this article.

Players using human or humanoid characters will roll 1d4 for skills and knowledge after rolling up their other characteristics (attribute scores and mutations) and before buying equipment or beginning play. Pure Strain Humans add one to the die roll, while mutated humanoids subtract one; a humanoid that ends up with no skills or knowledge (by rolling a one) can be assumed to have been orphaned or outcast at an early age, or to have grown up in a tribe of primitive, feral humanoids — either way, the charac-

ter has had little contact with human civilization. If greater than zero, the modified number indicates how many skills and areas of knowledge (combined) the character has mastered before the beginning of play. The player gets that number of rolls on the skills or the knowledge table.

Before each roll, 1d6 should be rolled to determine the appropriate table. The die roll is modified as follows: -1, for mutated humanoids; -1, for characters with less than 9 IN; +1, for characters with over 12 IN; and, an extra +1, for characters with over 15 IN. All these modifications are *cumulative* as they apply to each character, so a humanoid with 17 IN adds one to the die. A modified result of four or less indicates a skill; five or more indicates an area of knowledge. The specific skills and areas of knowledge are rolled on the following tables, with an unmodified d10 and 112 respectively.

d10 Skills

- 1 Bowmaking/Fletching
- 2 Clothesmaking
- 3 Cooking
- 4 Fighting With Weapons
- 5 Fishing
- 6 Foraging
- 7 Hunting/Trapping
- 8 Riding
- 9 Vocation
- 10 Weaponsmaking

d12 Knowledge

- 1 Ancient Culture and History
- 2 Ancient Language
- 3 Astrology and Meteorology
- 4 Botany
- 5 Cryptic Alliance
- 6 Economics and Trade
- 7 Government and Bureaucracy
- 8 Human Physiology and Medicine
- 9 Literacy
- 10 Physical Science
- 11 Underground/Black Market
- 12 Zoology and Entomology

Duplications rolled on either table should be rerolled on the same table. Alternately, the GM and the player may agree to allow a skill or area of knowledge rolled twice to stand as an improved skill or area of knowledge. A character with Fighting With Weapons skill rolled twice might be +4 to hit and do +2 damage, or might have the usual +2/+1 with six weapons instead of three; a character with Ancient Language knowledge twice might know French, Spanish, or Russian (or even a computer-programming language) in addition to pre-holocaust United American English.

Skills and areas of knowledge which the GM feels the character would be unable to master (discussed further at the end of this article) should also be rerolled. In fact, the GM should feel free to take liberties

with the results of dice rolls in this as in other areas of the game. The GM may prefer to assign each character's last skill or knowledge himself rather than leave it up to the dice, to create a more unified whole or to balance out particularly strong or weak characters. The GM may give some characters extra skills and knowledge, if the party is short on humans and humanoids or if no one happened to roll such necessary areas of knowledge as Ancient Language, Literacy, and Human Physiology and Medicine.

Skills

Bowmaking/Fletching skill enables a character to make short bows, arrows, crossbows, and bolts of normal quality (no bonuses or penalties in use). The character will need materials and tools. Short bows are made of straight branch-wood and strong cord. Arrows are made from light straight sticks, feathers or bristles, a little thread or cord, and a piece of stone, horn, or bone for the head. Necessary tools include a sharp knife and a chipping or grinding stone. Crossbows require the same tools and materials as short bows, plus small pieces of stone, horn, or bone and tools to work same. Bolts are made like arrows. Metal arrowheads and crossbow workings are only possible if the character also has Vocation skill (see below). A short bow takes four hours to make, after all the tools and materials are assembled; a crossbow takes seven hours, and arrows and bolts an hour apiece (fifteen minutes if a ready-made head is available). In a shop with advanced tools, such as a clamp and a pedal-operated lathe, times may be cut in half.

The GM may wish to assign a percentage change that bows will be defective and that arrows will not be "true:" depending on the circumstances of their manufacture. Arrows and bolts that miss or that hit AC 1 or 2 have one chance in four of breaking, but the head will be undamaged (all heads but metal ones will eventually wear out, however).

The GM may opt to allow characters with this skill to make blowguns and darts as well. Darts require small twigs, feathers or fiber of some kind, thread, a knife, and ten minutes of work each. Blowguns can be cut from hollow wood such as bamboo — solid wood cannot be bored to make a blowgun without a laser drill. Mutants with *genius capability (mechanical)* and Bowmaking/Fletching skill can make weapons as above that do an extra die of damage, if they make both the bow or blowgun *and* the projectiles, and if they spend triple the time in making them.

Clothesmaking skill enables a character to stitch together passable clothes and footgear. Nothing well-fitted or becoming (or saleable) will be possible without

woven cloth and tailor's tools (scissors, ruler, etc. — all very expensive), but furs and skins can be laced together with rawhide to cover one's nakedness or make cheap armor (furs and heavy skins, AC 8) at no cost, once the pelts are obtained. The character could also make passable moccasins, packs, sacks, or a somewhat leaky tent from similar materials. The only tools needed are a sharp knife with an awl point (or a knife and an awl) and a needle, which can be made from a piece of bone or horn with the knife. Furs and skins or a sack can be made in half an hour; moccasins or a pack take an hour and a half, and a one-man tent takes two and a half hours, once the skins have been scraped and dried.

Cooking skill enables a character to prepare and cook dead animals and plants, including poisonous and diseased ones, so that they are safe to eat. The GM may wish to exclude some extremely poisonous creatures (and tell the character which ones those are), but no disease can survive a thorough cooking. No amount of cooking will affect the radioactivity of a radiated carcass, which would be unsafe to handle in any case. Characters without Cooking skill could throw food suspected of being poisonous or diseased on a fire and hope for the best, but the GM should allow them only a small chance for success. Characters with Cooking skill are the only ones able to boil down creatures like soul beshes, win seems, etc., into antidotes and ointments.

Cooking requires a fire, a knife, and some sturdy sticks; but if anything is to be boiled (including drinking water), metal cookware will also be needed. A character with Cooking skill can start a fire in ten minutes using matches, in twenty minutes using a tinder box, or in an hour with just sticks and stones — under reasonable conditions (pouring rain or a windstorm would be unreasonable conditions). A character without Cooking skill will take twenty minutes with matches, an hour with a tinder box, and will never be able to start a fire without one or the other or some mutation like *pyrokinesis*.

Fighting With Weapons skill assumes that the character has been in an army or guard unit, and has been trained to use certain weapons. The player may choose three weapons, and his character will be +2 to hit and do +1 hp per die of damage with them. These bonuses are cumulative with those from *genius capability (military)*, *heightened physical attributes (strength)*, *taller*; and similar mutations. Mutated animals and humanoids with body weaponry like claws and teeth cannot use this skill to enhance those attacks, which are based on size (hit dice) rather than skill. Characters cannot develop skill with artifact weapons (guns, (energy weapons, etc.) unless they have access to the

weapon and a virtually unlimited supply of energy or ammunition with which to practice. This will not happen before the start of play; it may be possible if the character learns the skill during the campaign (discussed at the end of this article) — at a Tech Level III base with an energy cell charger, for example. Player characters do not necessarily begin the game owning the weapons with which they have skill.

Fishing skill enables a character to make or assemble tackle and catch fish, by hook-and-line, net, bow-and-arrow, spear, or javelin, in fresh or salt water. Hook-and-line fishing requires a hook (made from a bent metal pin or needle, or carved from bone or horn), cord, and a flexible stick. Bait consists of bits of meat or fish, or insects, worms, and grubs which the character could gather in a few search turns. Net fishing requires a net at least one meter square, which costs 12 gold pieces or takes two days to make out of 30 meters of cord or twine. Arrow- and spear-fishing require that the projectile be tethered with cord or twine, and even then there is a 25% chance per hour of fishing that an arrow will be broken, lost, or warped beyond use (10% per hour for a javelin or spear).

In waters where fish are reasonably plentiful, a hook-and-line fisher will catch 1d8-2 kg of fish per hour, a net fisher 1d6-2 kg, and an arrow- or spear-fisher 1d4-2 kg per hour. Circumstances may lower these figures; some lakes, for example, will be "dead" due to chemical or radiation pollution, although a character with Fishing skill should usually be able to tell this by looking. Characters without Fishing skill supervised by a character with Fishing skill can also catch fish, using the same device as above, but subtracting four instead of two (so that they can never catch fish with bow-and-arrow or spear). A boat crew casting or dragging nets much larger than that described above may be supervised by one character with Fishing skill. They might catch up to 3d12 kg of fish per hour, depending on fishing conditions and the size of the boat, the crew, and the nets.

Most fish caught will be harmless to player characters, although many may be inedible or poisonous to eat. There will be the usual chance for random water-area encounters, of course. A character with Fishing skill will know most or all of the dangerous water creatures (especially the fish), and will know tricks like painting the bottom of a boat orange to keep the mutant, nine-eyed, orange-hating letharps away.

Foraging skill enables a character to find and identify edible plants (berries, roots, etc.). The GM should decide how much food such a character will be able to find

(if any), based on season, terrain, climate, etc. Whatever is found should be safe for consumption, either raw or after simple preparation that the character will know how to perform. If the character or someone else in the party has Cooking skill, the forager will have many more plants from which to choose. The character with Foraging skill is also able to identify a variety of poisonous, disease-carrying, or otherwise dangerous plants (including plant monsters). The GM should decide what plants the character will and will not recognize, possibly by rolling dice in some cases. Plants that only grow in an area where the character has never been before will certainly not be recognized. Plant monsters that are recognized will only be identified in general terms of behavior and attacks; the character may know that a horl choo is a predator that shoots poisoned spines, but not the poison intensity, or the creature's hit dice or relative intelligence

Hunting/Trapping skill enables a character to track, stalk, and set mechanical and improvised traps for wild animals. The chance to track large, terrestrial creatures that have passed by recently varies according to weather, terrain, and the nature and habits of the creatures, but will average about 75%. Stalking skill allows the character +1 to surprise creatures in forest or mountain terrain, +2 if he or she has been tracking them successfully. The stalker loses these advantages if he or she moves faster than "slow speed" or is accompanied by armed, armored, or otherwise noisy characters who do not have Hunting/Trapping skill. In all cases, the character with Hunting/Trapping skill is -1 to be surprised in forest and mountain terrain.

The character with this skill can also set mechanical jaw traps or homemade snares, deadfalls, and pit traps in regular animal runs, to catch small- to medium-sized animals (traps may be set for larger animals at the GM's discretion — and the hunter's peril). Mechanical traps cost 35 gp each; the other kind can be made out of cord and whatever is handy with a knife and an axe. The chance of catching anything will vary, depending on the season and the abundance of game, but will never exceed 15% per day for each mechanical jaw trap and 5% per day for each improvised one

Characters with Hunting/Trapping skill will recognize the standard game animals (centisteads, hoppers, etc.) when they see them. They will also recognize some of the more common predators (herps, parns, hawkoids, etc.) at the GM's option. The GM may rule that predatory animal PCs, such as mutated leopards and bears, will automatically have tracking and stalking (but not trapping) skills. Parties which include a character with Hunting/Trapping skill (or

a predatory animal) should have a much better chance of finding game in a day of hunting than a party which does not — a 90% chance, as the rules suggest, seems extremely generous for the latter.

Riding skill enables a character to tame and ride mount animals such as arns, brutorz, centisteads, hoppers, pinetos, podogs, and similar animals featured in modules, Mutant Manuals, and ARES™ Section articles. Brutorz and other intelligent mounts need not be tamed, but they will only carry characters they wish to carry unless mentally controlled or otherwise coerced. Characters with Riding skill can fight with most weapons while riding a brutorz or a well-trained podog; all other mounts require the full attention of the rider.

Taming and training non-intelligent mounts (podogs, centisteads, and the rest) should take days or even weeks, at the GM's discretion. The rules touch on the difficulties of taming, training, and riding some mount beasts — arns and podoga, for example, must be caught young.

It may be assumed that any character with Riding skill has already fallen from a hopper once and need not do so again. Characters with Riding skill will also understand the care and feeding of mount beasts, although the GM may rule that some can provide for themselves. Characters without Riding skill have no chance to tame or ride untamed mount beasts, and if they insist on trying they will be thrown for 1d6 damage and possibly trampled as well. Such characters may be able to hold on to a trained mount for some time, but have a 30% chance of falling off for 1d6 damage every two search turns; the chance is 40% for hoppers, and it is doubled for any mount beast which the unskilled character is riding for the first time.

Unskilled characters can ride cooperative brutorz and other intelligent mounts, but may require a DX check to stay on if the creature moves rapidly through difficult terrain. Under no circumstances can a character without Riding skill make a weapon attack while mounted, unless a character with Riding skill is controlling the mount. Beings with Riding skill also know the value and use of stirrups, reins, and similar gear, though they may not be able to manufacture them

Vocation skill may be any of several useful trade skills, including blacksmithing, weaving, tanning, and the like. Characters with Vocation skill can find paid work in almost any reasonably large and prosperous base or town. Pay will vary according to the local economic conditions and demand for the skill, but an itinerant journeyman will almost never make much more than enough to support a moderate-sized party at subsistence level. Except as

near where the character is currently adventuring) and may know something about their forces and resources, including the signs, signals, and passwords of the organization. The GM may reasonably assume that the character left some enemies behind at that base, which could be the basis for some future scenarios. Under no circumstances does this knowledge allow a PC to be a member of a Cryptic Alliance before earning the required status points, but a character could take the considerable risk of posing as a member for a short period of time.

Economics and Trade knowledge is knowledge of buying and selling in the Gamma World economy. Characters with this knowledge know the prices of most standard items and are even able to guess at a fair price for some artifacts (i.e., the GM supplies a ballpark figure). Such characters also know where to go to buy and sell most items. If in a strange place, they are able to find out quickly.

Characters without this knowledge often walk open-eyed into places where they are robbed or swindled. Characters with this knowledge are able to identify and locate legitimate merchants. Of course, even "legitimate" merchants often cheat, especially if they have the "muscle" to handle angry customers. Characters with this knowledge get an IN check (modified by the GM, depending on how gross or transparent the fraud is) to detect overpricing, underbidding, or some other intentional deception on the merchant's part, even without any idea of what a fair price would be to begin with. Note that this does not allow characters to detect honest mistakes, as when the merchant does not really know what an artifact is worth. Such characters also get an IN check to resist the cajolery of characters with *genius capability (economic)*. A character with Economics and Trade knowledge will know if a particular item must be bought or sold through black marketeers; but he or she will not know how to find or deal with such people without Underground/Black Market knowledge (which see below).

Governmental and Bureaucracy knowledge is that of human and humanoid power structures and chains of command in the broadest sense, including cities, Cryptic Alliances, bases, tribes, gangs, etc. Characters with this knowledge can figure out how the lines of authority run in any such group: who really holds the power, and how to deal with that person or clique. Dealings might not be with the leader, but possibly with an underling strategically placed to do the party a service. Of course, dealings might or might not be entirely honest. Power structures differ, and it may take the character days of looking around and asking discreet ques-

tions before he or she is ready to wheel and deal, the more alien the power structure, the longer this will take

This knowledge is not a substitute for Cryptic Alliance knowledge, but it might help in dealing with such a group. If snooping around a Seeker base, for example, a character with Government and Bureaucracy knowledge would never uncover all the secrets that a character with Cryptic Alliance knowledge would know, but he might put the total absence of artifacts together with the general prosperousness of the place in other ways, and conclude that this would not be the place to use a digital watch as a bribe or peace offering. It would be better for the GM to follow the above example and lead the player to the correct conclusions by underscoring the significant details and hinting at the important questions, rather than simply providing the information. This way, the character gets the benefit of his ability, and the player gets the experience of roleplaying it

Once a character has figured out a power structure, he or she will have a functional +4 reaction adjustment with members of that structure, as well as an idea of the relative effectiveness of different sorts of bribes, threats, offers, etc. This does not always mean that the ideal bribe will be available to the character, although he could try to lie about it. Also, the GM may wish to allow more than a +2 reaction adjustment for particularly suitable and valuable bribes offered to particularly susceptible functionaries. If all the character wants to do is pass through a city or base unmolested, he or she should be able to deduce enough of the local norms to keep out of trouble, and should also be able to keep the rest of the party out of trouble, if they will listen to good advice.

Human Physiology and Medicine knowledge is none too advanced in GAMMA WORLD gaming, but is very valuable nonetheless. A character with this knowledge and a little medical equipment (clean rags, grease, certain herbs, etc.) can immediately heal 1d8 points of damage taken from any given hit and quadruple the patient's healing rate (four points per day of rest). However, some kinds of damage, such as from *sonic blast* or *radiation eyes*, will not yield to such treatment. Characters with this knowledge can also remove five intensity levels from poison inflicted by bite or sting (not contact poison or gas) by cutting open the wound and sucking out the poison. Such a character can recognize 2d4 GAMMA WORLD diseases (see "More Mutant Fever" in DRAGON issue #108), rolled by the GM when the character first learns Human Physiology and Medicine. The character will recognize the six standard artifact medicines (Antibiotics A, B, and C, Antivirins A and B, and Antiparasitic — see "Mutant Fever" in

DRAGON issue #107), and the standard symbols which appear on other medical artifacts (red or white cross, caduceus, etc.). He or she will not automatically know how to use such artifacts without rolling, but will know that they are medical artifacts and may be allowed a bonus like the one for Ancient Culture and History knowledge with such artifacts, at the GM's option.

Literacy knowledge allows the character to translate written messages into spoken language. In short, he can read, but only if the language is familiar (post-holocaust United American English). He can sound out pre-holocaust English, since the alphabet itself has not changed much, but without Ancient Language knowledge he will not know what the words are or what they mean. Characters with Ancient Language knowledge and Literacy knowledge can decipher written pre-holocaust English, but they may need the help of a third character with Ancient Culture and History knowledge to really understand the message in some cases. For example, "Terminal parking in rear," means little even to someone who can sound out and define the individual words, unless that person also understands the basic workings of pre-holocaust travelports and starports.

Physical Science knowledge deals with scientific principles that govern physical phenomena, particularly phenomena that do not occur every day (such as explosions, electrical shocks, etc.). Characters with this knowledge will understand explosions and have some idea of how to focus or contain them. They will know what electricity is and that it is conducted by water and most metals. They will know that gases rise or fall according to their relative weight, and that, for example, the safest air in a burning building is near the floor. In short, they will know many things that the players also know, but that other player characters could not possibly have learned without special schooling.

The GM will have to be strict in refusing to allow player characters without Physical Science knowledge to make practical use of their players' understanding of physics, chemistry, etc. The scientific method itself (controlled experiments to test hypotheses) was not discovered by humans for thousands of years, so latter-day Galileos and Newtons among a PC party seem unlikely.

Characters with Physical Science knowledge will also understand things that many players cannot grasp, for some reason, such as that it is unsafe to approach (much less eat) a creature recently rendered radioactive by a party member's *radiation eyes*. Characters with this knowledge will have no special bonuses to figure out artifacts, but they

a source of funds, Vocation skill will seldom affect play by itself. It may be more effective in combination with other skills; with Vocation (tanning) skill and Clothes-making skill, a character could make leather or fiber armor; with Vocation (blacksmithing) skill and Weaponsmaking skill, a character could forge metal weapons, including swords. Of course, the local smith would probably not lend his tools and forge to a player character for nothing, but he might rent them. Player characters can never make metal armor, because that takes more practice and training than a wandering adventurer has time to spare.

Weaponsmaking skill enables a character to make Tech Level I and II weapons, excepting swords, muskets, and missile weapons that can be made by characters with Bowmaking/Fletching skill. These weapons will typically have wooden hafts and stone, bone, or horn heads, fastened with leather strap. Needed tools include a sharp knife, a chipping or grinding stone, and possibly an axe, adze, hammer, or pounding stone, depending on the weapon desired. (Exception: A club can be cut from any tree, so any character can make a club.) Tech Level I weapons will be -2 to hit and -1 per die of damage unless the heads are metal. With Vocation (blacksmithing) skill and the use of a forge, the character could make normal Tech Level II weapons, including swords and muskets. The GM must decide how long each weapon will take; a rule of thumb would be one hour per gold piece cost, variable by circumstances. (Exception: A sling can be cut out of leather in fifteen minutes, and sling bullets can be forged in ten minutes — sling stones, of course, are simply gathered.) Characters with *genius capability (mechanical)* and Weaponsmaking skill can make weapons that do an extra die of damage, but this takes triple the usual time.

Areas of knowledge

Ancient Culture and History knowledge concerns United America during the Shadow Years and before the holocaust. (For more information on the pre-holocaust years, see DRAGON issue #88, "Before the Dark Years.") This knowledge involves knowledge of technology, lifestyles, and important events. The character will understand what vehicles, guns, robots, etc., were, what they were used for, and (in very general terms) how they worked. The character may never have seen an artifact up close, and must still roll dice to figure out any artifact (except for batteries and ID cards); but he or she may subtract five from the start number due to knowing in general what the artifact is supposed to do in the first place. It is a great help in figuring out a vehicle, for

example, to know that it must be operated from inside and that it is supposed to go from place to place with controls to start it, stop it, steer it, etc. The GM may, of course, modify this bonus for some artifacts.

Characters with Ancient Culture and History knowledge understand concepts that seem self-obvious to us but that would never occur to other PCs, such as the fact that guns, vehicles, etc., are powered by batteries or other fuel sources that can be replenished or replaced — they do not work by magic, and they are not necessarily used up (and worthless) when they stop working. Characters with this knowledge understand most kinds of installations as well — what they were and how they worked. They recognize elevators, light switches, security cameras, etc., after at least a moment's thought, and should be able to figure out push-button-type systems like elevators with little difficulty. The GM may use the character's knowledge of history to leak pieces of background information on an area or adventure that he or she wants the party to have, but the GM will want to be careful to preserve the game balance here and avoid doing the party's thinking for them.

Ancient Language knowledge simply means that the character can speak and understand United American English as it was spoken before the holocaust — the patois of the Gamma World has changed so much since then that the languages commonly in use are virtually foreign to each other. Ancient Language knowledge does not enable a character to read, but if someone with Literacy knowledge will sound out written words for him, he can explain what they mean (although not necessarily their full significance; for that, Ancient Culture and History knowledge may also be required). Without help, this character can communicate with robots and talking computers that have had no contact with post-holocaust humans. Those that have had contact will have learned the Gamma World's patois, if they have any (artificial) intelligence at all; some, particularly androids, may still converse in pre-holocaust English when they do not wish to be overheard. All ranking Programmers know pre-holocaust United American English (as well as several programming languages), and they use it as a secret code and a sign of fellowship and brotherhood.

Astrology and Meteorology knowledge involves the ability to read the sky, by day and by night. By day, the character can tell time to the half-hour (more accurately if he or she can make a sundial), and can predict the next day's weather with approximately a 60% chance of success. By night, the character can tell time to the hour (unless it is overcast), and can navi-

gate long trips on land or water by the stars (an astrolabe or sextant will allow greater precision). The character is also able to plot horoscopes, and may believe in them; these will be no more accurate than they are in 20th-century reality, but they might be sold locally (as here) to the credulous.

Botany knowledge is knowledge of plants, animate and inanimate, dangerous and benign, including plant monsters in the rulebook and modules. Compared to a character with Foraging skill, a character with Botany knowledge will recognize more plants (including all or almost all of those in the rules) and will know more about them. The character may not know how many hit dice a plant has, but will know in general how hardy an opponent is compared to other plants, and may also know more esoteric but potentially useful things about a plant's habits and anatomy — that a kep has mobile seeds, or that a win seen can be made into poison antidote, for example. He or she will also be able to recognize several edible and medicinal plants, although without Foraging skill he or she may or may not be able to find them. Unlike a forager, a botanist may know about plants in faraway places he or she has never visited, since such knowledge is gathered by wandering scholars and passed on to the learned community. (Exception: Unique plants, such as the tarn zeb in GW2, *Famine in Far-Go*, will definitely *not* be known.)

Like the medieval bestiaries, this body of knowledge will also contain misconceptions and erudite errors, and may miss important pieces of practical information. Thus, the jungle lurker (DRAGON issue #85) may be listed as a philodendron which is frequently inhabited by invisible life-leechers (none of which have ever been captured for study), or the kai lin may be described in excellent detail except for any reference to its *radiation eyes*. It is up to the GM how much information to give a character with Botany knowledge, but the knowledge should be of significant benefit to the character.

Cryptic Alliance knowledge allows the character to know and make use of the information in the rulebook (pages 54-55) concerning *one* Cryptic Alliance. This information is generally secret and jealously guarded by the respective Cryptic Alliances, so there is no way that PCs could have learned any of it prior to the beginning of the campaign, although they might know the names and the general aims of some of the Cryptic Alliances. This knowledge assumes that the character was once recruited or captured by the Cryptic Alliance in question (which one could be determined by excluding one — say, the Created — and rolling a d12). The character, therefore, has been inside a Cryptic Alliance base (which may or may not be

will have some understandings in common with characters with Ancient Culture and History knowledge — notably, that artifacts operate on scientific and technological principles, not magical ones; that everything that moves or functions requires a power source; and, that mixing acceleradose with cur-in-dose will not necessarily produce a substance that simultaneously heals damage and neutralizes poisons, for example.

Underground/Black Market knowledge is the streetwise understanding of the ways of criminals and other social outcasts. Most towns of any size will have a "thieves' quarter" of some kind; some will consist of nothing else. Characters with this knowledge will be able to find and identify (or identify and avoid) the shady section of any town, although in some places this may require time and careful investigation (or an IN check, at the GM's option).

If the character wishes to deal with the criminal element, this knowledge picks up where Economics and Trade knowledge and Government and Bureaucracy knowledge leave off. It enables a character to find out where to buy and sell things illegally, and gives him a chance to tell if he is being cheated. It also enables him to figure out the true chain of command in a gang and gives him a reaction modifier with criminal types (or, perhaps, negates the negative reaction modifier that PCs without this knowledge would have when dealing with criminals).

The GM will want to see that the player role-plays this knowledge properly, using caution, tact, and quick thinking — if the player simply relies on his character's knowledge and the dice to take care of everything, the GM should feel free to reduce or remove the character's advantages until the player role-plays more realistically. The GM may assume that the character has "contacts" in his home town, which may or may not be within traveling distance. The GM could use these in starting and steering adventures, and it is less of a free lunch when one considers that the character has no reason to assume that his contacts are trustworthy.

Zoology and Entomology knowledge is that of animals and insects, particularly those large enough to be classed as monsters. This knowledge is analogous to Botany knowledge for plants, and has the same relationship with Hunting/Trapping skill that Botany has with Foraging skill. The zoologist will know more creatures and will know more about them than a hunter or trapper, but will lack the latter's practical skills of tracking, stalking, and trapping, and may suffer misconceptions about some animals similar to those suffered by botanists. Since there are more animal and insect monsters than plant

monsters, the GM may wish to restrict the zoologist to knowledge of a smaller percentage of the total field than is allowed the botanist.

Learning new skills and knowledge

Skills and areas of knowledge will be rolled for human and humanoid PCs at the time of character creation, as explained above. The GM may also opt to allow player characters to learn new skills and knowledge as the campaign progresses. This should be tied to character status. Characters could receive training and education automatically on reaching certain rank levels, or they could "spend" status points on skills and knowledge rather than on increases in rank (the exact number varying with the value and difficulty of the skill or area of knowledge), at the GM's option. Either way, characters will not automatically receive the skills and knowledge they desire just because they have accumulated the necessary status points or achieved the appropriate rank. There are other considerations.

First, training or schooling will take game time, during which the character(s) will not be able to adventure. The GM should decide how long it will take, based on the complexity of the skill or knowledge (no less than a month in any case).

Second, someone must be available to teach the skill or area of knowledge. This may be someone in the player character's community or, if status points are being spent on education, it could be another NPC in the area. If the community is giving the training as part of the benefits of rank, the GM must consider the characteristics of the community. A very primitive community may be able to teach most skills, but will have little knowledge to offer. Restorationists would be able and very willing to teach Ancient Language and Ancient Culture and History to new members; Programmers would teach Ancient Language and Literacy, but their version of Ancient Culture and History would be so fictionalized as to be worthless. If an NPC outside the community is providing the training, he or she would want to be paid something besides status points (the status point charge is intended to prevent characters from simply buying training any time they get some money, although that is another option some GMs may want to consider).

If the community provides training as a benefit of rank, it will provide that training to further its own aims, and not primarily for the self-aggrandizement of the character. Thus, a low-ranking character in a fairly militaristic clan (or among Bonapartists) would probably be taught Fighting With Weapons skill or possibly Weaponsmaking skill without regard for his own wishes. On the other hand, if the community were short of specialists like

spies or combat medics, the character might be taught Underground/Black Market or Human Physiology and Medicine, again with no option except (possibly) take it or leave it. The GM could use these considerations to justify training party members in the skills and knowledge that they will need most in his or her opinion. As characters advance in rank, the GM could give them more latitude to pick and choose. In any case, the community will expect the characters to use the skills and knowledge provided to help the community from time to time. With knowledge comes responsibility.

Finally, characters must be capable of learning and using the skills and knowledge they seek. Most skills require at least two hands or other manipulative members, and most areas of knowledge are optimally useful only if the character has the power of speech. These two limitations will exclude many mutated animal characters from many skills and areas of knowledge.

Beyond this, the GM must use common sense, for there are too many considerations involved in each skill and area of knowledge to list them all here, one example should suffice. Riding skill requires two hands but it also requires that the character be essentially bipedal and erect. A giant lobster which has a pair of mutated hands will still not be able to ride a horse. Riders must be no more than half as heavy as the mount (one-third as heavy as a flying mount) and no less than one-fifteenth as heavy, a three-meter, 350 kg humanoid can ride nothing smaller than a brutortz, while a 15 kg monkey could not expect to control a centisteed. The GM might also want to set a minimum DX for Riding skill (7 or 8 is suggested).

Player characters may wish to share their skills and knowledge by training fellow party members during the course of the campaign. This will be simpler to referee if the GM has been using the status-point charge system rather than the rank system. The GM could simply require that a character earn the set number of status points before he can learn a skill or area of knowledge from another player character. Alternately, if the GM wants to retain complete control over the spread of skills and knowledge, he or she might rule that training other characters requires special skills beyond those that the character mastered when he learned the skill or knowledge itself.

If the GM does allow PCs to teach each other, it should be noted that this will take time. It could be done during "off hours," so not to take away from adventuring, but some time would elapse before the student would fully master the skill or knowledge. Interparty training like this may be the only way mutated animal characters will ever learn skills or knowledge, unless the party is affiliated with a community that treats animals as complete equals.

Born in the Ruins

Social class and GAMMA WORLD® game characters

by Dan Salas

The social systems of the second-edition GAMMA WORLD® game are briefly described in the Basic Rules Booklet and Adventure Book, giving a rough idea of the world in which the player characters live. Yet how do the PCs and NPCs fit into these cultures? Loners and wandering adventurers seem to be the most common types of PCs, but many characters may not have begun their careers in this way. For this reason, a PC's Base is much more than a place to buy starting equipment. It is the character's home of origin — and in this home, social classes can be an important aspect of every person's life.

Each player must decide if his or her character has been raised in a particular social level. Some communities have no class system. A good example is a small egalitarian tribe in which all people share the same tasks, all contribute to the production and gathering of food, and none have more wealth or possessions than the others. In such a tribe, the leader is the wisest (and sometimes strongest) person, and he or she rules in cooperation with a tribal council. Yet the leader is no wealthier than the other hunter-warriors of the community.

Most larger groups have a class system which develops when there is a division of labor among the people. In simple terms, the food-producers (herdsmen, farmers, etc.) give food and taxes to the non-food producers, in exchange for services such as military support from soldiers, spiritual leadership from priests, medicine and healing from doctors, material goods from craftsmen and merchants, and governmental leadership from officials, judges, and royalty. Social rank becomes the com-

munity's view of a character's wealth, power, authority, and importance.

When families hold tightly to their own class levels, the system closes and becomes unchangeable. Referees would be wise to keep the system open so that PCs can strive to advance in the community.

Social levels are completely different from status-rank levels, though both can complement or contradict each other to provide interesting situations. For instance, a low-ranking king might be distrusted because of his lack of experience (in other words, status points), while a high-ranking farmer is respected for his experience and proven ability. PCs can struggle to increase in both social and rank levels, and referees are free to give awards in both areas to successful characters.

To determine the level of a character, roll 1d100 on the Social Level Table provided with this article. The social system is divided into five levels:

Very low. This level includes ex-slaves, beggars, criminals, and outcasts.

Low. This level includes laborers, farmers, fishermen, herdsmen, peddlers, and craftsmen.

Medium. This level includes technicians, doctors, government officials, merchants,

soldiers, and priests.

High. This level includes rich merchants, important officials, judges, tribal shamans, and knights (high-ranking soldiers and heroes).

Very high. This level includes the community's ruling family, royalty, and nobles from wealthy and powerful families.

These examples are general ones, not reflecting the specifics of any single community. Most tribes have no important officials or royalty, while a city-state might have no shamans. The exact background of a PC must be chosen by the player and given approval by the referee. Since Part VII of the second-edition Adventure Book explains that player characters should begin in Tech Level I Bases in wilderness areas, many of the more civilized backgrounds, such as technician and royalty, are not available to starting PCs.

The following notes apply to the table.

Starting money. Beginning characters use this die roll to determine the number of gold pieces which they can spend to arm and equip themselves. This rule reflects the economic considerations of social rank, where wealth brings respect and positions of power.

Research modifier. This modifier is used when a character does research at a Base

Social Level Table

	Social level	Starting money	Research	Charisma	NPC reaction
1-5	Very low	2d4 X 10	- 0%	- 4	0
6-55	Low	3d4 X 10	- 5%	- 2	1
56-85	Medium	4d4 X 10	- 10%	+ 0	2
86-95	High	5d4 X 10	- 15%	+ 2	3
96-00	Very high	6d4 X 10	- 20%	+ 4	4

in a community in which the character is a member. The researcher is using authority and contacts to gain access to information.

Charisma modifier. This modifier is added to or subtracted from the character's ability score when determining the maximum followers and Morale adjustment on the Charisma Table, found in the second-edition Adventure Book.

NPC reaction modifier. This modifier is similar to the one used in *Oriental Adventures*. When two characters meet and know each others' levels, subtract the smaller modifier from the larger. The character of lesser social level uses the final number as a penalty when rolling for the other's reaction, and the character of higher level uses the number as a bonus when rolling for the other's reaction. This modifier is also used when a character is attempting to hire or recruit an NPC.

If a group in the community (such as the ruling family or the merchants) is on bad terms with another group (such as the farmers, the soldiers, or the entire low social class), then ignore this NPC reaction modifier. Instead, use -2 if the group is disliked, or -4 if the group is hated. This penalty applies only with reactions between the opposing groups. The penalty is doubled if the reacting NPCs are armed and prone to violence.

All modifiers listed on the table are subject to change when a character publicly changes in social level. To do this, the character must enter the profession of another level, either willingly or not. Thus a farmer can increase in level by becoming a soldier, and a royal prince can decrease in level by becoming an outlaw. If the royal prince's criminal acts are never known to the community, then he remains in the very high social level, even if he is secretly banished by his own family.

When a character holds professions of varying levels, he or she is still considered to be a member of a single level. If all the professions are good, then the person is known by the highest social level of the given professions. Thus, a noble-doctor is of very high level. If one or more professions are "bad," then the character is treated as being in the lowest of the bad-profession social levels. Thus, a noble-doctor-criminal is treated as if he were in the very low social level.

The referee must decide any other considerations of a system of social levels. Will a corrupt politician be executed, pardoned, or demoted to a lower social level? Will an ex-slave be allowed to become a priest? Can a knight freely seize the rulership of his community, or will the community resent his attempts to increase his social level? These questions are left to the judgment of the referee, who knows his campaign world better than a series of reaction charts. But, from the starting point given here, the referee is welcome to expand social levels into a complex and fascinating part of his game world. Ω

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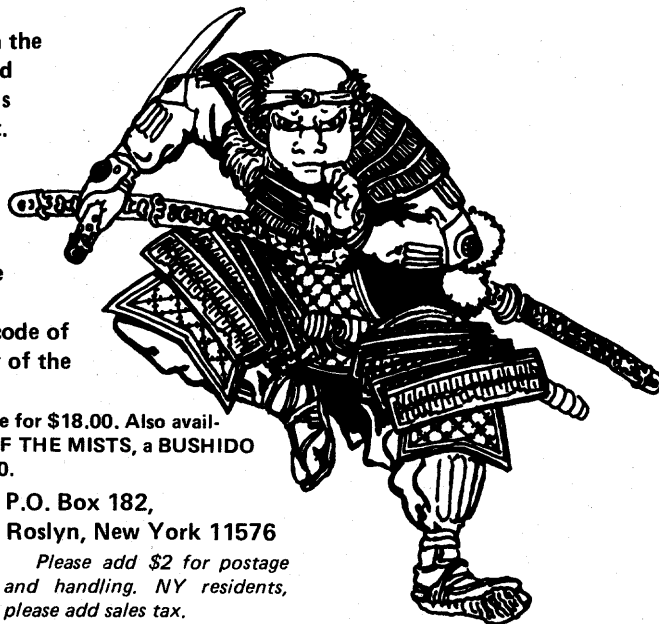
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A Mutant by Any Other Name

A GAMMA WORLD® game lexicon for mutant adventurers

by Kim Eastland

"If a creature is known throughout the lands by the same name, there is a reason: It can either save your life or end it."
— Estelroth Twilyght

The Gamman language, as presented in the GAMMA WORLD® game, is a strange patchwork of nicknames, translations, and scientific names, all taken from civilizations long past. Before writing some of the new modules for the GAMMA WORLD game, I decided to make some sense out of the existing mutant-monster names so future ones could have a rhyme and reason to them. Where possible, I translated names of mutant beasts literally into the alternate names given in the rulebooks.

Eventually, some of the players in my campaign learned this new vocabulary. Srea, for instance, means invisible. If an NPC mentioned that a srea-something-or-other lived in the hills into which the PCs were venturing, the PCs knew that there were creatures living there who were either excellent at camouflage or could bend light around themselves and be invisible. This type of word association is important in creating atmosphere in a

role-playing game; consider, for example, the effects produced when fantasy-world PCs overhear someone mumble about a dragon. The very word *dragon* triggers the imagination. It is also fun to create new monsters in the GAMMA WORLD game, and properly naming them can lead an attentive party member to anticipate what some of their attacks or defenses might be.

Most of the Gamman names are simple constructs of individual syllables, each of which has its own meaning. This is very much like German word construction in which, instead of creating a new word for the animal *bat*, a couple of other words are combined to create a name that literally means "the mouse that flies." In the Gamman tongue, *seroon* lous means "aquatic trees that are masters of their areas." Sometimes a letter used in the middle of a word grouping, or used as a suffix or prefix, is actually a substitute for a word (such as *i*, meaning "living") or a concept (such as *n* followed by an accent mark, meaning "beings who are"). Most of these syllables can be used as prefixes, suffixes, or as root words. There are no rules governing how the syllables should be combined. As a general rule, if a combination of syllables forms a word but is repetitive (such as *par* ("sword") + *arn*

("beetle") = *param*, "sword beetle"), the repetition is usually dropped (*thus*, *parn*), though this is certainly not always the case. This abbreviating of words is a result of handing a name down over generations, with the repetitive sounds being dropped for convenience.

The following is a simple lexicon of Gamman terms translated to English. There are actually so few Gamman words compared to the bounty of the English vocabulary that a reverse translation would be highly repetitive. Some GAMMA WORLD game names are ignored completely because they don't fit this system; these names were probably affixed to creatures at the beginning of the Shadow Years and have undergone hundreds of pronunciation changes. Other names, like *blood birds*, are borrowed directly from English. These names do not fit in with the overall nomenclature of Gamman creatures and were dropped.

- A-:** Concealed, hiding (usually used to mean cowardly, as part of an extremely derogatory term).
- Al:** One who climbs extreme heights, like a mountain climber.
- Am:** Shapeless.
- An:** Tail
- Ar, er:** Folks, people.
- Arl:** Slime, slimy.
- Arn:** Of or belonging to the beetle family.
- Ark:** Of or belonging to one of the larger canine families, such as a wolf or coyote.
- Ash, ashe:** Post-Shadow Years, gamma (as in the Gamma World environment).
- At:** Servant, one who obeys.
- Ba, bar:** Endlessly, forever, eternally; frequently used for any material that lasts "forever," such as a rock.
- Bad:** Dig, digger, one who burrows.
- Bai:** Beast.
- Barl:** Large fish.
- Bat:** To spin, spinning.
- Bber:** Beggar, one who is a pest.
- Ber:** Sweet (as in taste or smell).
- Besh:** Any member of any of the large insect families.
- Bil:** Crescent, in a crescent shape.
- Bis:** Of or belong to the swine family; also used as a derogatory term for one who is sloppy.
- Bla, blaa, blas:** Of or belonging to the moth family.
- Bli, blit:** Any creature that is or resembles a worm; also a derogatory term for one who does not stand up for himself.
- Bof:** Powerful; of or belonging to the oxen family.
- Boom, booma:** Explosion, exploding.
- Brath:** To consume with a voracious appetite.
- Bru:** Big.
- Bu, buo:** Moon-flier, any creature that flies at great altitudes.
- Bumb:** Of or belonging to the bee family.
- Cal:** Of or belonging to any family of flying insects.
- Carr:** Emperor, ruler.
- Cee:** Feathers, feathered.

Centi: One who is fast.
Choo: Plant, generic term.
Chot, chote: Bristles, short needles, small spines, etc.
Con: Hunger, hungry.
Coo: Any baying animal.
Cren: Any member of any fish family that can alter its appearance.
Crep: Carnivorous.
Crisp: Midwinter.
Crol: One who runs, running.
Cut: Friend, friendly.
Cyn: Yellow.
Daan: An indescribable animal.
Dab: Brown.
Day: Bird.
Deb: Crest, crested.
Dek: Thatched hut.
Dent: Deviate, sick creature; exiled.
Die: Block, cube.
Dog: Any mount not of an equine nature.
Dol: Trade, bargain, barter.
Ed: Paradise.
Eeb: Without structure or form.
Ek, eka: Fur, furry.
El: Sneaky, one who moves by sneaking around.
Ep: Tree.
Erd: Fin, finned.
Erf: Psionics, mental powers, powerful thoughts.
Erp: Beetle.
Er, ert (when followed by k, l, m, or n): Fish. Given the many varieties of fish, the four additional letters designate either the size or variety of the subject, but this distinction is unfathomable.
Erth: Bush.
EsK: Hedge, any bushlike plant that forms a hedge.
Et, eta, ethh: Plains, grasslands, or savannah; usually pertaining to a creature found there or to the grass itself.
Eth: Of or belonging to any family of lizards with near-human intelligence.
Eto: Cactus.
F, fal: Manlike, humanoid.
Farb: Haven, sanctuary.
Fel: Metal stud, studded.
Fer: Overly willing, gutless.
Fho, fhot: Orange.
Flin, fl-in: To fly in a fluttering manner.
Flipp: Of or belonging to the porpoise family.
Frid: A creature that resurrects itself, like a phoenix; one who is believed to be immortal.
Froth: Glider, gliding.
Ga, gar, gr: Various shades of color, from light to medium green.
Garr: Of or belonging to the squirrel family.
Gel: Plate (armor), plated.
Ghit, ght: Cloud, air.
Gon, gen (or a prefix of -n): Dragon, dragonlike.
Goth: Of or belonging to the elephant family.
Gre: Wooded, one who belongs in the woods.
Gum: Flat.
Har: Powdery snow.

Hel, h-el: Devil, demon, hellish.
Her: Tiger, tiger-striped.
Herk: Cannibalistic, a cannibal.
Hex: To suspend above the surface by ropes or poles.
Hoi: Ugly.
Hoop, hop: Of or belonging to the rabbit family.
Horl: Of or belonging to the porcupine family, a porcupine-like creature or plant.
Hri: Indestructible creature, one who can withstand a great amount of damage.
Hu: Hungry or omnivorous, a creature that will eat anything.
Hur: Packed snow.
Hydr: Multiheaded (three or more heads).
Hyr: Ice.
I: When used at the beginning of a word and followed by an apostrophe, it means "living."
Ik: Acid, acidic.
Il: Of or belonging to the feline family in general.
In: Black, dark.
Irn: Ribbonlike, flat and twisted, spiraling.
Jag, jagg: Of or belonging to one of the family of felines that inhabit the plains or savannahs.
Jema: Glass.
Jin: Wing, winged, wing-shaped.
Ju, jut: White.
Jugg, jugg: Rampage, a creature that runs rampant.
Kak, -k, -ak, -og: Of or belonging to the canine family.
Kai, kam: Of or belonging to the lizard family.
Kath: Fun, amusement.
Kee: Weird, a highly mysterious creature.
Kep: Sand.
Khesh: Reclusive, a hermit.
Kiik: Love, loved, loving.
Kins: Bramble, thorny bush.
Kir: Endless, seemingly never-ending.
Kit: Mud, clay.
Klos: Dusk.
Ko: Shadowy, shadowlike.
Kraw: Demon.
Krea: A hateful creature, a monster.
Kreel: To leap, leaping.
Kus: Motion, moving.
Laj: Blue.
Lar: Village.
Leen: A cottage, a home surrounded by plants.
Len, lens: One who walks upright, bipedal.
Lep: Of or belonging to any of the families of aquatic plants that float on the water.
Li: Tall, one who is large.
Lil: Small, one who is tiny.
Lin: A mobile plant, a plant that can move by itself.
Lop, lope: Of or belonging to the deer family.
Lou: A large aquatic plant.
Ma, maa: Slasher, one who slashes.
Man: Render, one who renders.
Mar: Warrior, one who fights.
Mel: Ruins.
Men: Troublemaker, one who bedevils others.

Mish: Goo, a substance or creature that has a jellylike structure.
Mub: Murder, to kill.
Mut, mutan: Gas, to spray gas.
N: When used at the beginning of a word and followed by an apostrophe, or at the end of a word and preceded by an apostrophe, it means "beings who are."
Narl: Ghost, spirit.
Naut: Blue-black.
Neks: Predator.
Nep: Death.
Nog: Gray.
Nos: Of or belonging to the monkey family.
Not: Place, location.
Ny, ni: Deadly.
Oala, ola: Ball, sphere.
Obb: Of or belonging to any of the Gamman families of mutated, intelligent, airborne fungi.
Oda, odo: Thunder, deafening sound.
Og: Of or belonging to the ape family.
Omnit, omnite: Mirror, mirrored.
Oon: The area or environment around a creature that it prowls or controls.
Or: Double, twin, twice as much.
Par: Sword.
Per: Radiation, irradiated.
Phant: An elephant-like trunk.
Pier: Of or belonging to the bear family.
Pin: Mount, horselike.
Pod: Terrifying.
Prot: Protection, defense.
Puf: Wind.
Qas, qash: Electricity, electrical; also an electrical shock (like a zap).
Qith: Clear, transparent.
Quan, quana: Barricade, barricading.
Rak: Horns, horned.
Rakee: Literally means "one whose horns have grown inside," it is a derogatory term for someone who is not mentally balanced (i.e., crazy).
Ram: Of or belonging to the sheep family.
Rark: Den.
Reg: Of or belonging to the turtle family.
Ren: Pure strain humans.
Ris: Sticky, gooey.
Rod: Rodent (mice, rat, etc.).
Rot: Roost, avian perch.
Rrer: Cold, freezing.
Sar: Dirt, earth.
Strep: Of or belonging to any of the tree-dwelling lizard or reptile families.
Seen: One who tangles, tangling.
Sep: Of or belonging to the shark family.
Ser: Master, one who has mastery.
Shee: Long hair, one who is long-haired.
Shez: Any fast, flying bird.
Shil: Rain.
Shin, shiny: Water (highly reflective and pure).
Sho, shoo: Moonlight.
Sith: Nest.
Sky: Of or belonging to the ant family.
Sled, sledd: Tunnel, tunneling.
Slee: Seers, prophets.
Slith, slithe: Of or belonging to the snake families.
Smok: Flames, flaming.
Smov, smove: Iron.
Soul: Blood-drinker, vampire.

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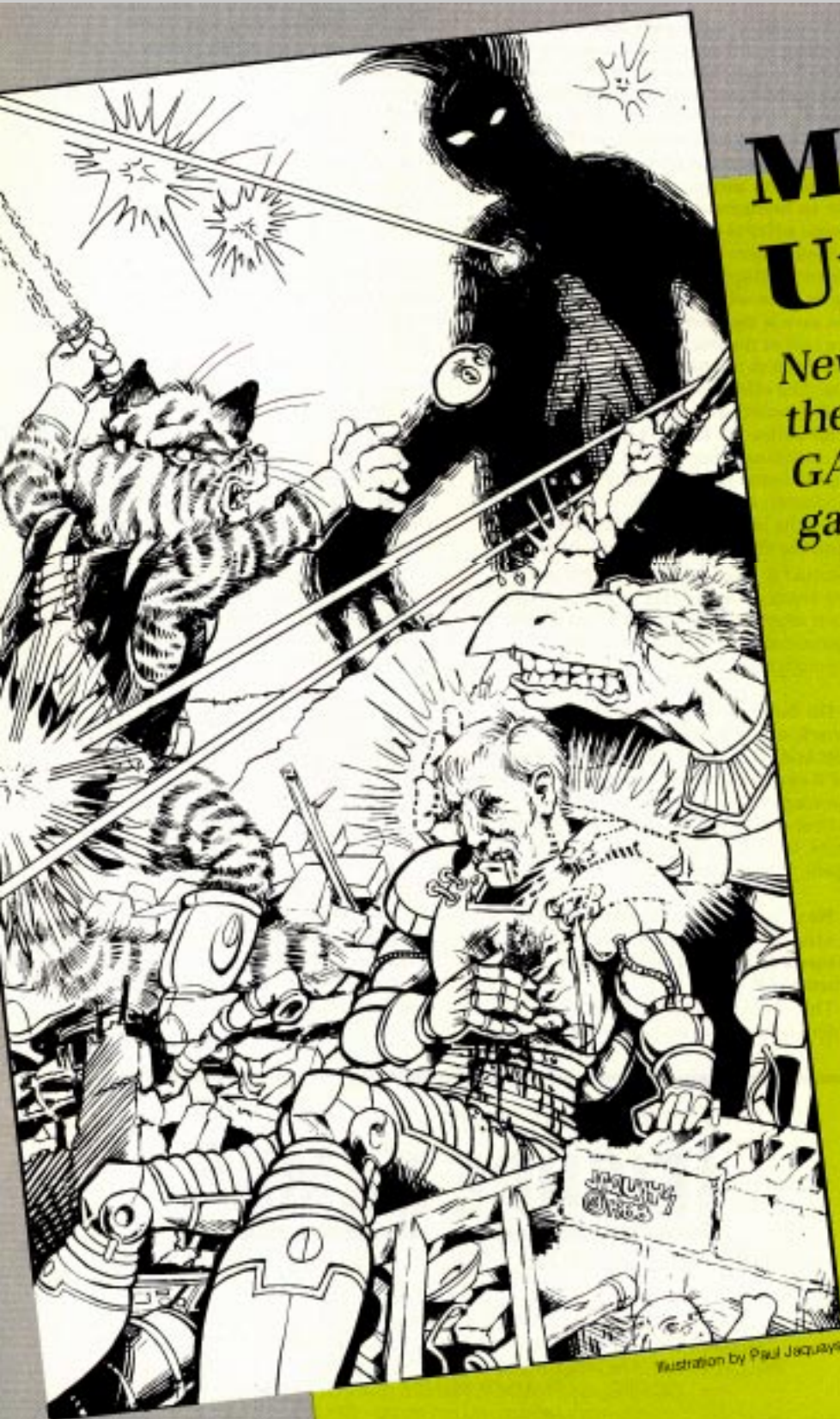
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Spir: Tall and thin, spiral-like.
Sprot: Growing, to grow, growth.
Squeek: One who emits sonic attacks.
S'Re: Dependable, reliable.
Sre, srea: Invisibility, invisible.
Sree: Home.
Ssi, ssis: A gathering of snakes.
Steed: An animal that serves as a mount, usually an equine creature.
Suc, suck: Suction cup, covered with suckers.
Sut: Giant.
T: When used at the beginning of a word and followed by an apostrophe, or at the end of a word and preceded by an apostrophe, it means "she who."
Ta, tat: Dark green.
Tel, teld: Fire, fiery.
Ter: Tree-dweller, tree-dwelling.
Tes, -ets, -ts: Stone, stonelike.
Then: Ripper, shredder.
Thlai: Strange, bizarre.
Tis: Emerald green.
Tith: Garden.
Tog: Day, a 24-hour period measured from dawn to dawn.
Tor: Of or belonging to the reptile family in general.
Torn: Of or belonging to the grasshopper family.
Tos: Cactus, cactuslike.
Tosh: Of or belonging to the amphibian family in general.
Torz: Walker, one who walks.
Tsor: Of or belonging to the bat family.
Tsurp: A batlike humanoid.
Tyen: Nameless, unclaimed.
Uns, unus: Of or belonging to the spider family, spiderlike.
Ur, urr: Spike, spiked.
Vath: Hideous.
Ven, vene: Villain, villainous.
Ver, verz: Guardian.
Vilch: Jump, jumping.
Ward: Small beast, usually used to refer to a smaller than man-sized mammal.
Wed: Red.
Win: Vines.
Wolk: Week, seven togs.
Xan: Mildew.
Xen: Mushrooms, toadstools, and other large fungi.
Xil: One who eats with incredible speed; to eat like a beast.
Xon: Mold, moldy.
Y: When used at the beginning of a word and followed by an apostrophe, or at the end of a word and preceded by an apostrophe, means "he who."
Yak: To talk, chatter.
Yama: City.
Ye: Orange-yellow, golden.
Yuk: Spores.
Zar: To drill, bore.
Ze, zee: Purple.
Zeta: Rocky, mountainous.
Zorr: To fight, to combat.
Zu: Scamper, to climb small heights very rapidly.
Apostrophe ('): When placed between two syllables that stand alone, it means "of the," "which has," or "which is."



Mutations Unlimited

New powers for
the third-edition
GAMMA WORLD®
game

by Kim Eastland

Most GAMMA WORLD® game GMs have it happen to them when they least expect it. A player is generating a new character, or something has further mutated a player character (such as the Alpha Factor Generator in the GW6 *Alpha Factor* module), and the magic number rolls up: 90, New Mutation. Suddenly, the routine of listing the normal mutations is gone, and the GM has to provide a brand-new power for the PC. Fortunately, sources for new mutations abound. Spells from AD&D® game books, superpowers from the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game, and material from other RPGs are the best places to find inspiration. The GM can also take notes while he is running his campaign when a player says something like, "Boy, I sure wish I could create a light of my own." Most players will be glad to have their PCs receive the power they helped create.

But for all the sources and inspiration, it still takes time to create new mutations. This list of new mutations is for those GMs whose time is tight and who prefer that someone else did the work. These statistics are for the third-edition (1986) game. A range of "Sight" refers to normal sight; a range of "M. Score" means the mutation score is used.

270° Sight (S) Physical

Range: Sight **Duration:** Constant

Modifier: None **Use:** Constant

Number: Self **Effect:** New Sense

Description: The character has multiple optical sensors around his head, giving him a 270° field of vision. The character adds his mutation score to his surprise roll when in front of a party or when operating on his own. This bonus is never added to the party's surprise check, however. The character can focus in a certain direction, but is still aware of things going on around him beyond the normal range of vision. The mutant checks against his mutation score when attempting to identify something he is not actively examining. Because he is so optically enhanced, however, the subject suffers one additional base point of damage from light attacks.

360° Sight (S) Physical

Range: Sight **Duration:** Constant

Modifier: None **Use:** Constant

Number: Self **Effect:** New Sense

Description: The character has multiple optical sensors around his head, giving him a 360° field of vision. The character cannot be visually surprised. This bonus is never added to the party's surprise check, however. The GM must roll for the party separately, then determine what the character with this mutation intends to do. The character can focus in a certain direction, but is aware of things going on all around him. He rolls against this mutation score when checking for anyone moving behind him, trying to pick his pocket, or performing similar actions. Because he is so optically enhanced, a mutant with this power suffers double damage from light attacks, and must roll his mutation score or be blinded for 1d10 minutes.

Dark Creation (C) Physical

Range: M. Score **Duration:** 10 min.

Modifier: MS **Use:** 3 per 24 hours

Number: Variable **Effect:** Darkness

Description: This mutation allows a character to emit an area of darkness equal in a radius of meters to his mutation score. This darkness is not of sufficient intensity to harm anyone by itself, but it does block all illumination of an intensity up to that of a glow cube. All other bright lights — including that of floodlights, a *light generation* or *light creation* mutation, etc. — have their intensities reduced by half, which also applies to range, damage, and so on. The user of this mutation cannot see in his own area of darkness. Unless consciously turned off, this darkness exists until the end of the duration set for it, even if the character falls unconscious or dead.

Energy Healing (C) Physical

Range: Touch **Duration:** Constant

Modifier: CN **Use:** Constant

Number: One **Effect:** Healing

Description: The mutant has a power similar to the energy metamorphosis mutation, except that the healing he can perform by the transformation of energy only applies to other creatures, not to himself. After making a successful mutation-score roll to absorb the energy and prepare to transfer it, the healer needs to touch a creature to heal it. The healing energy is immediately transferred, but the mutant must concentrate for one full turn for the transference to be completed. Any organic creature can be healed in this fashion. The amount of hit points healed during any one turn equals the base damage of the absorbed attack, times a mutation-score result-factor roll result -1 RS. The mutant must heal some creature by the end of the turn following the turn in which the attack was taken, or else lose the energy and take half the damage from the attack, no matter what the mutant's normal immunities are.

Genius Capability — Sociological (S) Mental

Range: Body **Duration:** Constant

Modifier: IN **Use:** Constant

Number: Self **Effect:** Special

Description: This mutant's mind is particularly acute when dealing with sociological information (laws, mores, cultural types, etc.). As a result, he adds this mutation score to his Intelligence when using this type of information. Furthermore, he gains the Bargain skill (or gains another such skill level if he already has it), along with a +1 RS in his favor when rolling on the Impress, Pacify, Parley, and Encounter Reaction Charts.

Light Creation (C) Physical

Range: M. Score **Duration:** 1 hour

Modifier: MS **Use:** 1 per hour

Number: Variable **Effect:** Illuminate

Description: The mutant can cause his body to glow, emitting light in a radius equal in meters to this mutation score. This glow is not of sufficient intensity to harm or blind anyone, but does provide illumination equal to that of a glow cube. Once activated, this light glows until the end of its duration (unless the mutant consciously turns the mutation off), even if the character is unconscious or dead. The only drawback to this mutation is that the mutant using this power is often the most obvious party member, and might draw creatures at night as does a campfire.

There is a 1-in-6 chance that a mutant can also use this mutation as a light-flash attack for one turn, once per day. All creatures within the affected radius suffer a mutation attack and must save vs. Dexterity or be blinded for 1 turn per result factor. Those who do save are still stunned for 1 turn.

Material Transparency (C) Mental

Range: Touch **Duration:** Perm.

Modifier: MS **Use:** 1 per 6 hours

Number: Variable **Effect:** Special

Description: The mutant can touch an item or a material and — without changing that material's strength, armor class, etc. — turn it permanently transparent. Living organisms are not affected by this action, although inanimate matter may be by making a special roll. The column on which this action is rolled differs for every type of material. The being must start with Rank 20, then subtract one column for every material strength (ST) rating of the material being altered (stone, being ST 16, shifts 16 columns to the left on column 4). The mutant may then shift the rank upward with his Mental Strength modifier by one column per point of the modifier. The amount of material turned transparent is up to the mutant, with a maximum area of a 30cm square or cube multiplied by the result factor; green indicates 60cm, yellow indicates 90cm, etc. This mutation is best used on items that a party member wishes to see through, like ammunition clips, walls, etc. Successful material transformation makes the material as clear as glass. Failure has no effect.

Mental Retention (C & S) Mental

Range: Body **Duration:** Constant

Modifier: IN **Use:** Special

Number: Self **Effect:** Retention

Description: The mutant can accurately remember any information he hears or sees. (This mutation is only useful if the mutant can read or speak the relevant language; otherwise, he must make a mutation-score roll to remember gibberish or runes he does not comprehend.) This mutation can be invaluable to an adventuring party in a number of ways. For example, if the party is given explicit instructions, as they are in the current GAMMA WORLD game series of modules, this mutant can remember the instructions word for word. He can look at a diagram of an item or creature and be able to recognize it on sight. He adds four skill levels to any Singer, Poet, or Storyteller talent or skill he chooses, as his repertoire becomes vast. If he makes his mutation-score roll, he can also remember cryptic runes and have them interpreted later by someone who might know them.

If the GM feels this mutation might unbalance his campaign, he could have the mutant make a mutation check in order to remember something. A black result indicates mistaken information; white indicates the gist of the information is recalled; other colors indicate more exactness, with red meaning a special insight into the information (given by the GM).

Molecular Rearrangement (C)

Mental

Range: Touch **Duration:** Constant
Modifier: MS **Use:** 1 per 6 hours
Number: One **Effect:** Special

Description: The mutant can rearrange the molecules in an inanimate, nonliving item by merely touching it. When making a mutation-score roll, the mutant can alter the size, shape, or basic structure of the item. Thus, the being can change a piece of metal into a basic tool with which he is familiar, a pile of vegetation into edible food, or a branch of wood into a bow. Some restrictions apply; for example, the item or material created must be the same weight as the material with which the mutant began. Materials cannot be changed into other materials, such as metals to wood. Also, any item created must be simple and must be something with which the character is familiar. If the GM wishes to allow more complicated or detailed tools and items to be created, he should assign a greater Difficulty Factor to the mutation-score roll. The maximum amount of weight in kilograms that the mutant can change at any one time is equal to his mutation score. This mutation also allows the being to purify tainted food or water.

Plasma Spheres (C) Physical

Range: Touch **Duration:** Special
Modifier: CN **Use:** 1 per 4 hours
Number: One **Effect:** Special

Description: By making his mutation-score roll, the mutant can create a sphere of stable, invisible plasma by merely touching a solid surface. The sphere is only 1cm in diameter, and can only be seen by the mutant producing it and anyone with infravision. The plasma sphere remains wherever the mutant initially places it, whether on a path, on an item, in a doorway, etc. If a person other than the sphere's creator touches the object, it becomes unstable and explodes immediately. The radius of the explosion is one meter, and the base damage equals one-half the mutation score. Untouched plasma spheres fade away into nothingness after 1d6 +6 days.

Silence Field (C) Physical

Range: M Score **Duration:** Variable
Modifier: CN **Use:** 2 per 24 hours
Number: Variable **Effect:** Sonic Dampening

Description: The mutant can generate a field of silence around himself that extends in a 2-meter radius centered on the user. He turns the field on by making a mutation-score roll; the field remains in place until the mutant either loses concentration or an hour passes, whichever comes first. The mutant may move around while concentrating on this mutation, although he may never fight. The field completely eliminates all sound that enters it; this includes all sonic attacks. Anyone else in this field during a sonic attack is also exempt from its damage. The PCs are forbidden to talk to anyone within the field, as no sound can be heard at all (including pleas for help made out of the party's sight). A *silence field* grants the user +20 to any surprise roll he makes.

Sonic Bellow (C) Physical

Range: 15m radius **Duration:** Constant
Modifier: CN **Use:** 1 per hour
Number: Variable **Effect:** Sonics

Description: The mutant can generate high-frequency sound waves that cause damage to organic and inorganic material in a 15-meter radius. Use the mutation score for the attack rank; the base damage is equal to one-half the mutation score to all organic and inorganic materials under material strength 10.

Sonic Roar (C) Physical

Range: 30 meters **Duration:** 1 turn
Modifier: CN **Use:** 1 per 24 hours
Number: Variable **Effect:** Sonics

Description: The mutant can emit extremely high-frequency sound waves once every 24 hours. These waves cause damage to the exposed tissue of everyone in the direction that the mutant releases the roar. The mutant picks the target; everyone within three meters of the target or in a straight line between the mutant and his target also receives damage. The base damage for this attack equals one-half the mutation score plus three points. Inorganic targets gain a -1 RS to the damage suffered.

Static Field (C) Mental

Range: Special **Duration:** 30 min.
Modifier: MS **Use:** 2 per 24 hours
Number: Variable **Effect:** Special

Description: The mutant can generate a static field either centering around himself or centering on a place or object up to 30 meters away. On a successful mutation-score roll, the field activates and covers a 30-meter radius. Transmission of broad-

cast beams through that area are jammed until the field disappears because of time duration, the mutant's will, or the mutant being rendered unconscious. Radio, television, communicators, security and surveillance equipment, and similar devices are completely jammed, as are broadcast-power beams which robots and large machinery use. Radar and sonar of all types are also completely blocked. Strangely enough, *telepathy* and *empathy* mutations are also affected, and any mutant using them must make a Mental Strength save or suffer Mental Shock.

Water Walking: (C) Mental

Range: Special **Duration:** Constant
Modifier: MS **Use:** Constant
Number: Self **Effect:** Special

Description: The mutant can increase the surface tension of the area beneath his feet (and hands or paws if he is quadrupedal or crawling on all fours) so that buoyancy normally lacking in the surface beneath him suddenly exists, thus allowing him to move across the surface walked upon as if it were packed earth. This allows the mutant to walk across sand, mud, thin ice, and similar surfaces without sinking into them, at his full movement rate. He also can walk across closely packed fields of grain or long grass, or water of intensity A to 6, but at one-half his normal movement rate. If the fluid's conditions are greater than 16 (steady current with 30cm to 60cm waves), the mutant must make a mutation-score roll to remain on his feet every 500 meters he moves, and he only moves at one-quarter his normal movement rate. He can never walk on churning water that is greater than 118.

Weather Summoning (C) Mental

Range: 250 meters **Duration:** 1 hour
Modifier: IN **Use:** 1 per 24 hours
Number: Self **Effect:** Special

Description: This mutation is similar to the *weather manipulation* mutation. It allows the mutant to alter the weather by as much as 40°F in an area within a diameter of 250 meters, but does not give him control over how the weather progresses from there. He must make a roll on his mutation score -3 column shifts to change the weather. The mutant cannot control the wind's speed or direction, and has no control over the effects of a storm system. The only control the mutant has is over the temperature. The desired temperature is reached in five minutes, and remains there until either an hour has passed or until another creature uses the *weather summoning* mutation to return it to normal. ☐

Cash & Carry, Gamma Style

Economic wheels still turn in GAMMA WORLD® games

When a GM invents a scenario for a GAMMA WORLD® game adventure, there is a good chance that the quest will in some way involve the economic environment. If the scenario is set in a city or town, it's especially hard to conceive of a plot that wouldn't involve economics in some way. Many characters stop at a town market at least once every few adventures to buy food, extra arrows, new weapons, more oil, or better shields, laying down their domars or gold and picking up the supplies. Sometimes, too, the characters are paid to investigate some ruins or rescue a valuable person or item.

But there are flaws in the assumptions governing the game's economic system. On page 22 of the second-edition GAMMA WORLD Adventure Booklet, the economic

system is described as similar to that of the American West in the 1800s. But there are many significant differences between these two environments. Although the Old West could be a hostile place (where terrain, climate, and outlaws were concerned), it was many times safer than the GAMMA WORLD game's environment, where deadly hazards abound. Given the dangers of radiation and biogenetic toxins, secret groups dedicated to controlling or destroying the planet, man-eating plants that sneak up on characters when they least expect it, flying warbots that coordinate 42 weapons at once, and giant lizards capable of emitting sonic blasts so loud that they cause physical injury, the 25th century is unpleasant indeed. What does this have to do with the economy? Plenty!

Fiefs and towns

As one might imagine, there are certain things in the GAMMA WORLD game world that are much more important than domars or gold pieces. In a world where biogenetic poisons and radiation are commonplace dangers, it is right to assume that things such as good food and pure water would be so scarce that civilians would order the local militia to get its hands on these necessities at all costs. It is also reasonable to assume that such necessities would actually be used in barter by a great number of people.

Unlike the Old West, where there were big cities within reasonable distances and where food could be bought with money if necessary, few such big cities exist in the 25th century, and good food is often hard to find. It is possible that in many places, coinage and precious metals are almost worthless. Characters may want to spend

more time finding pure springs and operational food-production plants than they spend looking for old banks or cash registers. This leads to more realistic exchanges between characters and townspeople: "Okay, we'll make it 50 kilos of pure water and the location of the fruit trees for the powered assault armor, *if* you throw in the vibro blade."

Additionally, the Adventure Booklet states: "Some communities practice tribal communism and many Tech Level II cultures are Feudal in nature (divided into classes, some of which are tied to the land)." Feudalism seems to be a good choice of government if the people can find fertile land that bears edible food. If the GM wants to use feudalism in his campaign, it is recommended for realism's sake that he makes sure that the overlord keeps a firm military grip on the peasants

and a close eye on all who wish to pass into his domain, since such feudal communities would be targets for raiders, animals, and refugees.

In such a world, most communities would be very careful with food and water since both outsiders and local citizens themselves would be out to steal it. Food would probably be rationed out to all citizens equally, and heavily armed militia-men would stand guard over the supplies, with orders to kill thieves.

Nearly every town should be on some waterway, lake, or coastal area. The GM may also want to have a few communities lie on fairly decent roadways (not that there should be many left). The reasons are simple. Very few towns will be blessed with good soil or a fresh spring; those towns that are will be the strongest. Smaller, weaker communities thus need something to offer in exchange for food and water. While holding strategic military positions and vowing loyalty to a rich town in return for food are possibilities, other towns may resort to claiming part of a trade route and charging tolls to all those who wish to pass. Transportation and communication routes (waterways and clear highways) will become invaluable bargaining chips, and water sources of any kind are necessities.

Some towns might evolve into bandit communities, kidnapping victims for food ransoms or looting from passersby and their neighbors. Search teams could be sent by other towns to look for old artifacts to use in bargaining. Political marriages, offers of useful information, yearly gifts to the leaders of rich towns, and oaths of fealty are possible options. Poor communities could unite against a rich community in guerilla warfare.

A few isolated towns might be controlled by Cybernetic Installations. These well-defended places would be home to people who had lived there before the holocaust, their way of life more or less preserved through the years. As these communities will be much like the lost Ancient societies, Restorationists would be highly interested in them. However, the CIs that control these areas may be very isolationist in nature, believing that is the best way to survive.

A town serving as a Cryptic Alliance base will be interested in helping only those who support its cause or give food to its people. At other times, a valuable resource could be owned or guarded by a creature or group of creatures who work for the town or must be bribed to allow the resource's use by others.

Towns also have the ever-present problem of the infamous black market, which can be very influential in a town's survival. Since most town governments try to control the sales of goods so they can take a percentage of the profits to fund their military or necessary construction, they are opposed to black marketeers who get their goods from unknown sources and

sell those goods in secret. Most town governments will have undercover agents looking for black marketers and smugglers, with PCs on either side. The black market may get goods from hidden stores, wells, or food plants, or from thieves and bandits who fence their goods to the marketers in exchange for other services. Sometimes the black market's operatives aid rebels by gunrunning, if they feel the rebels' government will be more favorable to them than the current one.

Over 90% of a town's population will not be blessed with either luxuries or leisure time. Citizens will be busy farming, hunting, gathering, fighting, and transporting cargo. Only very rich leaders who do not have to worry about getting food and water will ever have luxuries; the leisure time of such people is usually spent plotting out ways to gain more power. Public entertainment almost always exists, however. If a community is warlike, public executions and death duels may be common. Some towns might have sporting events or primitive forms of drama. There may be an old movie theatre in the center of town where the people can be entertained when power is available. Whatever PCs can do to support these amusements is bound to win allies and favors for them; they merely supply what the public demands.

The economic mutant

Resources are critical to PCs. If a character needs a certain piece of information or equipment, he could very well get his hands on a vital resource and barter it for what he needs. Why dig through old ruins when you can get someone to do it for you? Indeed, some NPCs may take control of a resource simply to have insurance against assault. If a powerful NPC with numerous weapons decides to retire, he could take over a spring and give water to the locals in return for peace and quiet.

In like manner, characters can raise their status levels by handing over certain resources to the community. If a character uncovers a nearby food-production plant and gives control of it to his community, this could well be worth over two ranks! Of course, smaller status awards would be given if all the character found were a few fruit-tree seeds or a herd of milk-giving animals. The awards should be modified according to just how much the community is in need of the resource found.

Still other things can be used by characters as barter or currency besides coinage. Medicine would be invaluable to a community suffering from a plague or having an ill ruler, for example. Another good idea for NPCs or PCs who wish to receive favors from nearby villages is to find and activate certain pieces of fixed equipment, especially life chambers, rejuvenation chambers, and broadcast power stations. Weapons and armor are primary tools for defense; although these should be secondary in value to food and water, they should be

much in demand by town militias, who would be willing to trade for (or steal) them.

The profession of fighting is barter in itself for PCs. Though many communities have a militia to defend their homes, the weaker ones would value anyone capable of fighting or going on special military missions. Mercenary PCs (à la *The Seven Samurai*) might find endless employment.

If characters have no particular home town or are very far from civilization, and they are not members of any of the nearby Cryptic Alliances, then they should be encouraged to donate to or serve a community for the sake of having a safe place to sleep. Camping out in the radioactive, mutant-infested wilderness is not one of the safer things that characters can do, and a string of friendly cities is an excellent trail to leave behind.

Although it is an important part of being powerful, food and water are not the only necessities. All towns need defenses, and weak communities can achieve this by giving out food and water for weapons and armor while using their influence to cause surrounding towns to defend them in times of war. Some communities, usually those with few neighbors or situated near a great threat, might get powerful mutants or warriors to live nearby and defend them in return for food and shelter. In addition to having PCs hire on as mercenaries for the town, this situation

poses interesting adventure plots for charismatic PCs to find and tame dangerous monsters or recruit combat veterans.

Concluding thoughts

The GAMMA WORLD game should place more emphasis on the economic actions of the characters and the various communities in the area. In this way, the world is made more consistent and realistic. Characters soon get the feel of a post-holocaust economy, and their actions will show it. Once you've established a few communities as economic powerhouses and the rest as their dependents, all sorts of economic and political scenarios appear in which the characters may be caught.

It is important to determine the community types from which characters hail. If you like having characters deal on the black market, make alliances between their city and others, or fight other communities for resources, then you should have the characters be members of a small, weak community. If you like the idea of the characters trying to catch black marketers and defeat bandits while trying to suppress rebellious communities, you should make the characters members of one of the stronger communities. Whichever you choose, using economic strategy in the GAMMA WORLD game can improve the quality of play and the role-playing aspect of the game enormously. Ω

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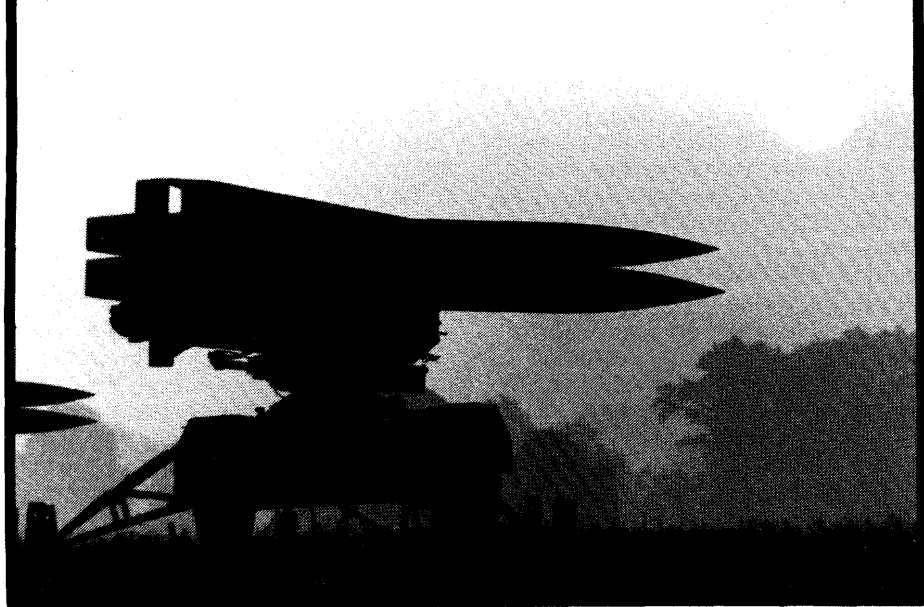
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by Daniel Salas

Catching Some Rays

Radiation damage and the GAMMA WORLD® game



Illustration by Timothy Truman

Given the real world's recent encounters with widespread contamination from nuclear accidents, second-edition GAMMA WORLD® game players should take a closer look at radiation and the hazards it can present. The information here is designed to make player characters more cautious when dealing with this hazard, though it is not necessarily realistic (you don't really mutate just from being exposed to radiation, though your offspring might).

In nuclear science, there are three types of radiation: alpha, beta, and gamma. Alpha particles are weak and relatively harmless. Beta particles can cause damage, but their long-term effects are beyond the scope of the fast-paced GAMMA WORLD game. However, the effects of high-energy gamma rays are quite immediate. Player characters are already aware of the damage they can sustain from exposure to dangerous radiation, but the full effects of such exposure need to be more specific than simple hit-point loss, mutation production, and instant death.

Expanded radiation rules

Radiation damage is cumulative, and should be recorded in addition to hit-point

loss. For example, if a character with 85 hp takes 20 hp damage from radiation, then he now has 65 hp and 20 radiation damage points (RDP). This amount is increased each time the character takes more radiation-caused damage. The RDP score heals by one point each day.

On the Radiation Matrix (Adventure Booklet, page 27), the letter "M" indicates new mutations for Humanoids and Mutated Animals, and 8d6 hp damage for Pure Strain Humans. Why would a Humanoid gain a beneficial mutation while his companion, a Pure Strain Human, lose hit points? Instead, *all* creatures should take 8d6 damage from such a powerful blast of gamma rays. Any new mutation gained is determined by Table 1 of this article; the chances of gaining a beneficial mutation are poor.

When "D" is indicated on the Radiation Matrix, the character exposed takes 9d6 damage. If the character's RDP score is less than 60, then increase it immediately to 60.

Table 2 of this article outlines the effects of radiation at different RDP levels. These effects occur each time the RDP score reaches the indicated level; thus, a character can suffer repeated effects if repeatedly exposed to gamma rays.

The following illnesses occur from radioactive poisoning:

Anemia: This illness is caused by a lack of red blood cells, which carry oxygen throughout the body. The victim is left in a weakened state which reduces Mental Strength, Dexterity, and Physical Strength by half. At the end of the illness, the victim recovers at a rate of two points per attribute per day, until the original scores are restored.

Five-Week Sickness: This illness develops over a period of several weeks. The first signs are nausea and vomiting, which strike 2-5 hours after exposure. Anemia lasts for 2-3 days, and the victim feels tired and run-down, but appears to recover. Then, 21-30 (1d10 + 20) days after exposure, the second phase of this illness begins. The victim suffers from anemia (again), arterial weakness, and bacterial susceptibility for the next 13-16 (1d4 + 12) days. The latter two effects are treated as per the mutations on pages 8-9 of the second-edition Basic Rules Booklet, and even Pure Strain Humans are subject to their effects (though these conditions are not acquired by victims as permanent mutations). On the last day of the illness, the percentage chance of the victim's survival equals the victim's current Constitution score times eight. Failure means immediate death. Success means immediate recovery from arterial weakness and bacterial susceptibility, as well as recovery from anemia as described above.

Gastrointestinal Syndrome: This fatal illness begins like Five-Week Sickness. Nausea and vomiting strike within 2-5 hours. Anemia, arterial weakness, and

Table 1
Mutations from Radiation

1d20 Mutation

- 1-4 Arterial Weakness
- 5-8 Bacterial Susceptibility
- 9-14 Skin Structure Change
- 15-18 Weight Decrease
- 19-20 Any random mutation

bacterial susceptibility strike within 2-5 days; at the same time, the victim begins to lose one Constitution point per day (also deduct the appropriate hit-point loss from the reduced attribute). When the Constitution score reaches zero, the victim dies from bleeding ulcers and bacterial infection in his digestive system.

Central Nervous System Syndrome (CNSS): This is the most severe form of radiation sickness. Vomiting begins 2-5 minutes after exposure. Damage to the central nervous system affects Mental Strength, Intelligence, and Dexterity; each of these attributes are reduced at the rate indicated on Table 2. Death occurs when any attribute reaches zero.

Mutations and weapons

Due to the new dangers now presented to player characters, the effects of certain mutations and weapons should be reevaluated. Any characters who use radiation as a natural weapon (specifically, Radiation Eyes and Gamma Hands) must have penalties to diffuse the increased power of these mutations. Though these characters are immune to the effects of gamma rays, their bodies constantly give off radiation at Intensity 3, affecting all creatures that come within one meter of them. Also, these characters have Weight Decrease as an additional mutation. This mutation is not counted as one of those rolled up in character creation.

A fusion rifle is given disadvantages for similar reasons. First, the Atomic Energy Cell that powers the weapon gives off continuous low-energy gamma rays, causing 1 hp damage per March Turn to characters not properly protected from the item. Second, the weapon's user must endure an Intensity 3 blast for each shot he fires!

A dirty fission bomb creates a permanently radioactive crater where it explodes. This crater is 520 meters wide and 50 meters deep, and it glows at Intensity 15. For every 20 meters beyond the edge of the crater, the Intensity drops by one level. Thus the entire blast radius of the bomb is filled with radioactive* fallout that lasts for 5,000 years.

Protection and treatment

Aside from a Force Field, the best physical protection against gamma rays is lead. For each meter of solid lead between a character and a radioactive source, the Intensity of exposure drops by 3 levels.

Table 2
Health Effects of Radiation

RDP Score	Effects
20	Anemia for 24 hours
25	Anemia for 48 hours
30	Anemia for 72 hours
40	"M" and Five-Week Sickness
50	Gastrointestinal Syndrome
60	CNSS; rate: 1 point per hour
70	CNSS; rate: 2 points per hour
80	CNSS; rate: 3 points per hour
90	CNSS; rate: 4 points per hour
100	CNSS; rate: 5 points per hour

The same amount of protection can be gained from two meters of concrete or three meters of wood or soil.

The best treatments for radiation poisoning are the medicinal drugs created before the Social Wars. Though an accelera dose will not heal damage from gamma rays, antiradiation serum will certainly help if applied in time. Two new drugs should also be mentioned.

Antibiotic serum: This is a 10-cm-long, disposable, jet-spray tube of a substance that destroys harmful bacteria and viruses. Once taken, the drug cures colds and pneumonia, and eliminates all infections. It does not prevent later attacks from bacteria and viruses. Cost: 50 gp.

Blood-stimulant serum: This is a 10-cm-long, disposable, jet-spray tube of a chemical that stimulates the production of red blood cells, white blood cells (which attack bacteria and viruses), and platelets (which block open wounds and stop bleeding). This chemical prevents the effects of anemia and arterial weakness for 24 hours. It also acts as an antibiotic serum. Cost: 150 gp.

Keeping the balance

One last point remains: how to restore the balance of the game. Are the player characters doomed to die miserably for the sake of detailed radiation rules?

One solution is for radioactive hazards to be well known to residents of affected areas. PCs will know of these restricted zones in their own home territories, and can learn about them from the inhabitants of unfamiliar territories. This "need to know" could stimulate some good PC-NPC interaction, as the characters scavenge for maps and information so that they don't wander into their own radioactive tombs.

Another solution is for referees to create fewer encounters with radiation. Deathlands, gamma-beam weapons, and radiation-spitting monsters should become rare ingredients in the GAMMA WORLD game campaign.

Under these conditions, the PCs' encounters with radiation will be challenging, nerve-racking, and maybe a little more frightening — as they are in real life. As they say, gamma rays are forever. Ω

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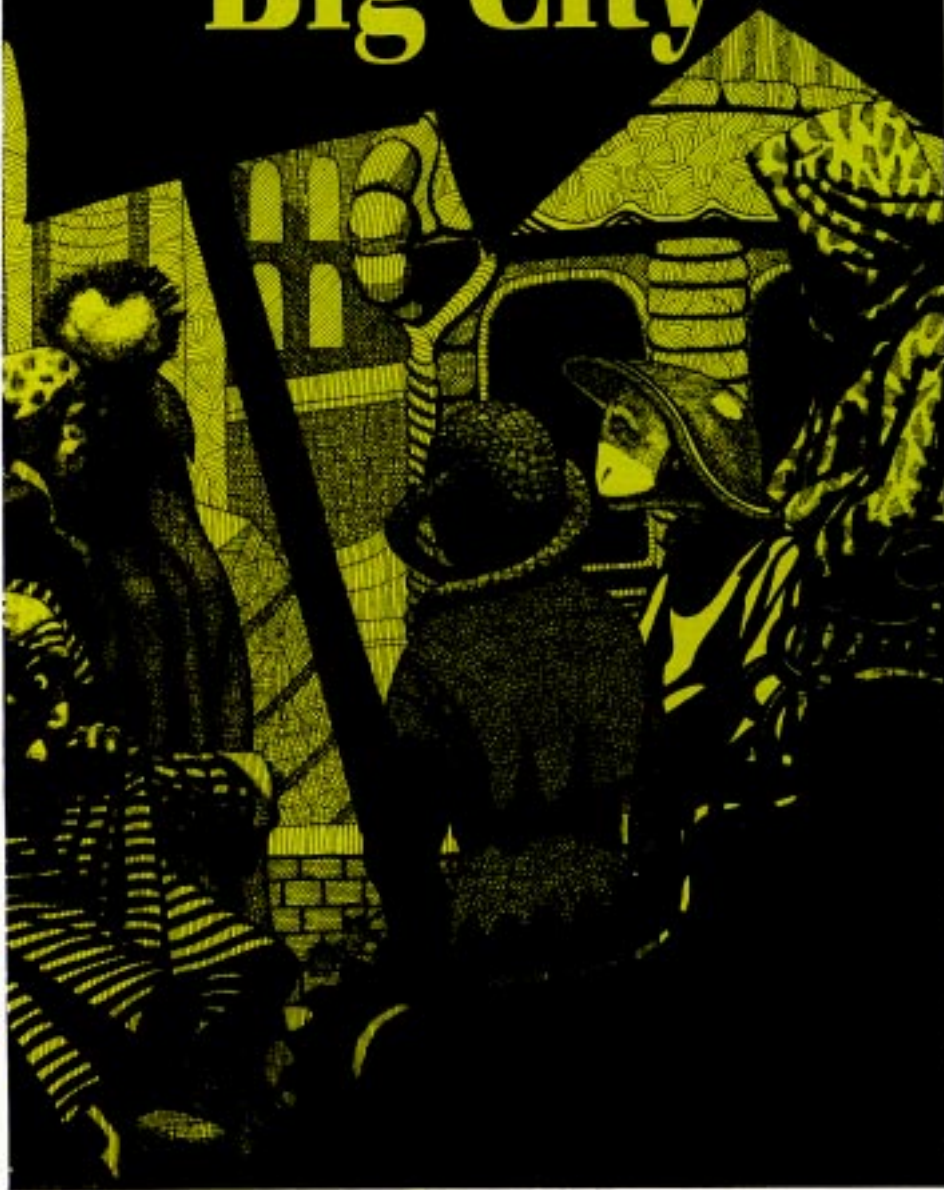
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by Dan Kretzer

Gamma Life in the Big City



*Cities and societies in the
GAMMA WORLD® game*

In the world of the GAMMA WORLD® game, the word “city” has numerous definitions. It can describe an abandoned deathland (like Pitz Burke), a small tribal community, a large city-state, a Cryptic Alliance base, a free city with no controlled land, or a city of the Ancients that remained intact during the Social Wars. As a rule of thumb, however, most cities of the so-called Gamma World resemble the city-states of old in terms of government, economy, militia, and so forth. Most of these cities are fortified and rely on a feudal form of government (as in the Middle Ages). In some cases, the lands immediately surrounding the city may be claimed as city property and farm land. More ambitious city leaders may claim large tracts of land under the dominion of their own city, which becomes the region’s capital.

Many GMs like to set adventures in either recently abandoned cities or cities of the Ancients that have remained much as they were long ago. It is in these locales that PCs find artifacts and gain information, both of which are enjoyable activities that advance the campaign plot. Adventures in active cities are sadly uncommon in many campaigns because most GMs (veterans as well as beginners) feel that communities are places in which the PCs spend their time doing nothing between adventures. They also mistakenly believe that the Gamma Worlds communities are usually hostile toward all outsiders. These misconceptions stem from a deep-rooted belief that all cities are closed communities, isolated against outsiders in what is perceived as the best way to survive. With regard to survival, nothing could be further from the truth. Most cities actually welcome outsiders for the commerce they bring, which leads to greater wealth.

Inhabitants of the Gamma World’s cities are cautious about welcoming outsiders, but not to the point of firing upon travelers as they approach. The Gamma Worlds urbanites realize that strangers might be members of a more powerful community coming to negotiate an alliance. Allies in the Gamma World are of great value when entire cities are concerned. Consequently, no city avoids the minor risk involved in letting strangers in if it might lead to a better future. Likewise, turning away or killing emissaries could lead to war.

Most city leaders allow ambassadors from other cities to enter their towns, granting audiences to the newcomers to see if they bring terms for a treaty. Consequently, travelers are often allowed into a city simply by saying that they are from a powerful neighboring community or tribe. Such visitors may find themselves entering the role of ambassadors even if they were not officially appointed as such.

Strangers new to an area are often expected to pay entry fees before they are allowed into a city. This payment might be in the form of information, an artifact, or

a sum of currency. As a general rule, most cities will part with small amounts of food and water if it means gaining valuable tools for survival. Once inside the city walls, there is much that PCs can explore – though you have to design it first, of course.

Creating a city

When setting up an urban area, you should first decide if the city existed prior to the Social Wars, was built afterward, or was built around a military or postholocaust installation. After deciding the city's origin, draft a map of the city. As the focus of this article regards life in the Gamma World's cities, a full-blown discussion of mapping is inappropriate. A DM in need of inspiration may find it by simply consulting any Rand McNally road atlas or a map of his hometown. City-based modules for other fantasy or science-fiction games are also very helpful in creating the specific layout of a Gamma World city. A scale of 1" = 25 meters works best when mapping. The use of blank paper (perhaps with an underlying sheet of graph paper) for city-mapping is suggested; it keeps graph lines from obscuring building walls. Unlike an outpost or installation, a city is rarely built to specification and thus does not always fit well on graph paper.

When running a city adventure, you have two options: the players may be expected to map according to instructions, or you can provide a photocopy of the city map to the players. Since the former case takes a long time and is often confusing, it is better to photocopy the map before numbering important buildings, then give this map to the players and let them fill in the building names and descriptions as they explore the city.

Most cities should be built in naturally defensible areas like peninsulas and mountain tops. Likewise, toxic marshes and radioactive zones provide protection if city inhabitants can find a way to adapt to or protect themselves from these regions.

When designing a Gamma World city, there are a number of other considerations the GM should address prior to conducting the adventure. Some of these considerations follow.

Political tension: Hunger for power and control over the lives of others is an unfortunate trait of many people. In a politically unstable environment (e.g., virtually any postholocaust urban setting), there are sure to be some who covet the control held by community leaders. This envy can easily lead to an attempt to influence or seize command from the present rulers. If there is one prime ruler, for example, an ambitious and charismatic character might call the people into revolt in an effort to take command. Elections may also provide tense times in a city. (Of course, some primitive communities may choose leaders by lot, duels to the death, or "divine right.") Examples such as these and others

suggest a multitude of plots in which PCs can become involved. For instance, if a group of PCs decides to rusticate in a barbarian community, they may be chosen in a drawing (which by chance allows visitors to be included as well) as the new tribal leaders. By community law, they may then be challenged to a death duel by other members of the tribe.

Cryptic alliances: Some cities are bases for Cryptic Alliances. For reasons mentioned earlier, however, these bases might not always drive off strangers. While the racial alliances often attack those of all opposing races, most alliances allow wayfarers into their cities to rest, buy equipment, or attempt to join the alliance. Cryptic Alliances may also be clandestinely based in more established, law-and-order societies. For example, there may be a Restorationist member in one city's government who secretly influences others to advance the Restorationist cause.

Racial prejudice: It is a natural instinct to shy away from outsiders. The same holds true in a Gamma World city. In a city comprised of a Pure Strain Human population, mutants will be shunned to some degree, even if the community is not affiliated with the Knights of Genetic Purity. Environments such as these offer a wealth of role-playing scenarios. For example, if there are members of any of the violent, racially based Cryptic Alliances hiding in a city, PCs may become the victims of racial terrorism or become fall guys for the crimes of the terrorists.

Ancient culture: Many communities in the Gamma World are greatly influenced by the cultures of the Ancients, but often in bizarre ways. For example, a primitive community may be built around an Ancient football stadium. The tribe is divided by racial type: Pure Strain Human, humanoid, and mutant animals and plants, each of which has a representative. The mutated animal and plant representatives cannot become the chieftain, but each year the humanoids and Pure Strain Humans dress up in the sacred uniforms of the Jetz and the Jients and engage in a one-hour, hand-to-hand war out on the field, battling for an Ancient football. The winning faction's representative then becomes chief of the entire tribe.

In order to decide what effects Ancient culture has on a city, one must first develop a brief history of the city. Perhaps the people of a city built around an Ancient library are descended from those who took shelter there during the Social Wars. Since the wars ended, the refugees came to call the place home. Their descendants now regard the authors of the books they read as gods or other great powers in the universe. A wide variety of strange religions that originate from beliefs about Ancient culture can spring up in a GAMMA WORLD game campaign.

Family life: The way individual families live is important when making a city adventure. You should decide what exactly

constitutes a family in a certain city, and what roles the members of a family typically play. Are family bonds weak or strong? How do families tend to feel about the government? How do they respond to threats? Are families large or small, settled or nomadic?

General knowledge: Education in the Gamma World is not rare, as one might expect. Children can certainly learn their parents' crafts. The children in a community also learn a little about the Ancients, especially if the city has an installation of some type in it. Self-defense is taught to all children in the hostile environment of the Gamma World. Such training sharpens dexterity, strength, and constitution above average levels, which is why most PCs have better abilities than peasant NPCs. Thus, in a barbaric, warlike community, characters add a point to each of their physical attributes. To balance this, you may give a character a starting skill if he comes from a less barbaric community.

Economic structures: Economic systems are important when designing a city. If a city is communist or socialist, the characters will often deal with agents of the government as opposed to dealing with private individuals. If the city is based on a capitalist structure, the characters have a wider range of services from which to choose and are able to communicate with the people as well as the (often weak) government.

Some cities have no other resource except that they are centers of trade. Cities of this kind are nesting places for all types of NPCs: con men, bandits, pickpockets, smugglers, mercenaries, escaped prisoners and slaves, deserters from different armies, and other riffraff. They are also stopover points for pilgrims, merchants, nomads, crusaders, wandering performers, and noble NPCs. All in all, this type of city is a great melting pot for all types of races, professions, and religions. While the actual number of long-term residents might be small when compared to the number of transients, the size of the city and the average number of people there at any time is tremendous compared to any other cities in the campaign area.

All of the Gamma World's cities should have some form of trade with other communities (unless they are somehow completely self-sufficient). If one city has food and another has water, the two will most likely trade with each other to get the resources they need. These two cities might also look out for each other for the sake of their own interests.

Taxes are placed on all sold goods in any community. This allows the government to benefit from the trade brought by outsiders. Black marketeers and smugglers can avoid this tax by selling through underground networks. This sort of activity, however, should always be conducted at a high risk.

Some cities are run entirely by merchants. In places like these, characters

have an easy time buying and selling goods. There is also a greater availability of rare items in these kinds of cities. Sellers of these items frequent cities like this to hawk their goods. Without the sales tax levied by other cities, these dealers are free to make a greater profit.

Some cities may have prohibitions on certain goods, which are not allowed to be sold by anybody. In fact, most cities won't even allow prohibited items inside city walls. Guns, alcohol, and explosives are examples of items that may be prohibited in a city.

Utilities: You must decide if a city has public utilities available to its inhabitants. If so, you should consider what organizations take care of electricity, heating, water, and waste disposal. Furthermore, you will have to decide how these utilities are employed and regulated. In an energy-starved environment, not everyone will have access to power sources. Many of these luxuries are taken for granted by today's urban inhabitants; in a postholocaust city, they become problems. Generally, there will be little or no electricity. Camp fires and fireplaces provide most heat, and a stream or lake of pure water is usually nearby (without a water source, the inhabitants may have to beg, steal, or trade for this commodity). The city may opt to reroute waterways through the city; these may then be used as sewage systems, transport routes, and water supplies. Of course, the ingenious role-player will immediately note the compromising position a city could be placed in if threatened with the contamination of its only source of water. Garbage and other wastes are usually burned or dumped where they (hopefully) cause little trouble to the people of the city.

Laws and customs: Every city has certain laws that keep the peace. These laws may take many forms; they may be as complex as our current set of laws or as simple and practical as a set of verbal commandments. For example, a simple set of laws may read as follows: "Do not steal, kill, show disrespect for the city, betray the city for another, or use firearms unless

the city is under siege or you are under fire by terrorists. Do nothing that will hinder the authorities in any way, and always support the city leader's cause." Failure to adhere to these laws could mean imprisonment, flogging, slavery, loss of a limb, or execution.

There are also unwritten laws that are adhered to because of custom, superstition, or religion. For instance, although some societies believe that breaking deals is simply a part of doing business, other societies may look on such actions with great disdain, holding the dealer responsible for an infraction of social custom. Clashes such as these make the game less predictable, and you can choose whatever punishment you wish for those who break these unwritten laws.

Customs are also an important part of a city's character. Many customs can be worked out, although most are based on the customs of the Ancients. For example, in the football-stadium city described previously, "What's the score?" is a common greeting and "Two minute warning" is a common good-bye. Such details add reality and fun to the role-playing of a city adventure.

Local professions: In a Gamma World city, there will be a wide variety of professions, as in almost any city anywhere. Given the great power of Ancient devices, stores that sell weapons outright will be rare, but there might be a gun expert or collector who could be persuaded to sell an artifact to the characters. Other technical professions include computer experts, auto mechanics, and robot repairmen. The primitive aspect of the Gamma World also produces blacksmiths, tanners, carpenters, and other craftsmen. Such people are often paid for their services in barter, by giving something they do not have and cannot make. For instance, a PC might give a blacksmith a sack of grain in return for fixing that character's sword.

Creating urban adventures

Once your Gamma World city has been designed, you are ready to set up adventures in this city. First, you should make a

building key that marks all of the areas that will be of importance to the characters in the adventures (such as the overlord's castle, the guards' barracks, various shops, and the homes of important NPCs). You should also note secretly where there are secret bases, thieves' hideouts, black-market storage areas, and other similar buildings.

Once this is complete, you can devise a random-events chart for the city. Such events can include a terrorist strike, a robbery, an encounter with a special NPC, or other events that might be a part of everyday life in that Gamma World city. Die rolls for these encounters should be made every few march turns (or at least once per day).

The main plot of your city adventure must now be decided. Unlike other types of adventures, a city adventure seldom involves an "explore the unknown" scenario. Rescuing prisoners and escaping from enemy territory are good plots if the city concerned is hostile, but there's more to city adventuring than that. To create a good adventure in a friendly city, you should be creative and think of ideas that are exciting without being excessively violent. Go through the following steps:

1. Decide who the villains are going to be. Possibilities include corrupt officials, black marketeers, thieves, power-hungry scientists, unknowns seeking political power, and so on. Some villains might be inanimate things, such as nuclear reactors on the verge of meltdown, terrorist bombs hidden somewhere in a large city, or even plagues that must be kept out of the area. The Canopus plague in *The Albuquerque Starport* minimodule is a good disease for this type of city adventure because its victims are compelled to spread the disease, not isolate it.

2. Find a way to introduce the characters to the plot, giving them the proper incentive to complete it. Rumors, which are common with exploration scenarios, are not always necessary in city adventures. If a pack of zombies with Canopus plague are pounding on the city gates, it's not likely to be a subject that is merely gossiped about. In a city, news travels fast. Often, an adventure can begin as soon as the characters walk into a city and talk with a friendly guard; actual encounters lead the characters into the adventure. If the group happens to be in the wrong dark alley during a moonless night, they may witness a murder or similar happening that could get them embroiled in their next adventure. Even if the characters do not want to become involved with the city's organized crime gang, they may not be able to avoid it if the gang decides that all witnesses need to be rubbed out.

3. Set up a series of planned encounters designed to further the adventure's plot. Such encounters should involve the lead villain, one of his minions, or an NPC who knows something that will help the characters. Any combat in these encounters

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should seldom exceed the hand-to-hand level and should only rarely involve loud, destructive weapons. If any of the villains have mental-attack mutations, they will use them instead of destructive weapons.

In these set encounters, the players should be able to find various clues about who the head villain is. Sensory mutations should aid the characters in the discovery of such clues. Any clues that you have the bad guys drop should lead the characters to the next planned encounter.

4. Present the characters with the final conflict. This should be a confrontation (but not necessarily combat) with the main villain. The characters should discover the general nature of this antagonist and his motives. If you care to make a sequel to this adventure, have the NPC villain escape in some unique manner (if all else fails, use a unique mutation or technological device to accomplish this). You could even have the characters confront an innocent person whose body has been taken over by mental control.

One possible city adventure follows, designed for PCs who like a lot of activity (i.e., combat and thinking). The assumed reactions of the party are given, though of course different PC groups will rarely react in the same ways.

The day after the characters arrive in a large city, bombs start going off in crowded buildings and streets. Since the characters are new in town, they are the immediate suspects. Then the group notices a suspicious robed man carrying a box. He sets the box by a fountain in the center of the town and leaves. Minutes later, the box explodes.

When the PCs report the bomber, the captain of the guards refuses to believe them, thinking they are trying to clear their own names. Soon, the PCs give up and leave. As they head back to the inn, they see the bomber again on a crowded street and begin pursuit. They chase him through the city to a locked warehouse, where he sneaks through a small hole in the wall. Before the PCs can follow, they are arrested for breaking and entering. After spending the night in jail, they return to the warehouse and discover the entry hole. They discover a large supply of explosives and detonators stored there. Obviously, the mad bomber has made this location his manufacturing area. The party decides to lay an ambush for the bomber.

When the villain returns, the party attacks. Upon subduing the villain, the party discovers that he is a powerful, heavily armored humanoid who, when captured, admits to being a member of the Red Death. Before the characters can turn him in, however, he breaks free and jumps down a hole in the floor of the warehouse. The characters follow him down and find themselves involved in a game of cat-and-mouse played in a massive complex of natural caverns. The NPC has set up a network of traps and pitfalls, and the PCs find they are entrapped in an entirely new

adventure setting in which one mistake could mean instant death. The PCs still have the chance to resolve the adventure by capturing the bomber or slaying him.

This example shows how the scenario is established and how it can lead to more adventures. Will the PCs clear their names? What will they do with the explosives they've found? Where do the caverns lead? What else lives down here?

It is a good idea to place subplots into an adventure to lead the PCs into future adventures. Depending upon your preference, these subplots may or may not have anything to do with the current adventure. For instance, in one adventure, a character may find a jeweled pendant on one of the villains. Chances are that he will take the item and soon forget about it. A few adventures later, he may remember the item and inspect it, discovering a small button. He presses the button. When nothing happens, he simply forgets about the pendant again. About a week later, an alien spacecraft lands and informs him that they were sent to pick him up and return him to his home planet. Of course, thousands of adventures can spring from this subplot.

Special NPCs

The use of special NPCs is absolutely necessary to good city adventures. In the case of the mad bomber, the villain's description and statistics may take up two or more pages. Such depth of description and detail adds to the richness of the NPC. Of course, the mad bomber is not the only special NPC in the adventure; the captain of the guards plays an important secondary role. A number of other minor NPCs could help lead to the eventual confrontation with the main villain.

When created, NPCs should be played according to their abilities. A fast character is not going to try to fight a PC on a city street and risk getting caught; he's going to run instead. A smart character isn't going to make stupid errors every five minutes just to give the PCs a break. When being pursued through the caverns, the mad bomber (whose intelligence is 16)


doesn't try to fight the characters every time he runs into them; he tries to hide or lead them into traps he has set. Only once does he directly fight the characters, in a confrontation left till the climax of the adventure. This final conflict is what the adventure has been leading to all along. Although the plot lacks heavy, weapon-intensive combat excitement, there may be plenty of underground mutants in the caverns to fight the PCs.

When faced with an intelligent adversary, the PCs are more inclined to treat him seriously and think harder for a solution to their current dilemma. In the end, the characters may finally catch up with the NPC by using their brains instead of their brawn. In the previous example, the PCs could beat the mad bomber at his own game by setting traps for him as well.

Monsters and NPCs should be vividly described. Give memorable details on all physical characteristics, as well as mental and emotional attributes. Consider the following description: "Suddenly, a large, green-furred beast crashes through the bushes. With batlike wings unfolding, he glides toward you. His whipping tail extends back and over his head; there is a glimmering stinger on its tip. His bared and bloody fangs indicate an angry disposition." Colorful descriptions like these give the players a better impression of exactly what they are up against, adding to the immediacy of the encounter.

The opinions, disposition, personality, hatreds, affections, goals, and motives of an NPC all depend upon the way he was brought up. If raised in a community overrun by Red Death terrorists, an NPC isn't likely to have much concern for the lives of others. If that same NPC was raised in a monastery, though, he will be an entirely different person.


Some NPCs are dedicated to a cause, either because they were brought up that way or were converted (or brainwashed) at some point in later life. A character's dedication to a cause depends on how strictly he was raised. A good GM can decide just what type of personality an NPC will have by quickly devising that



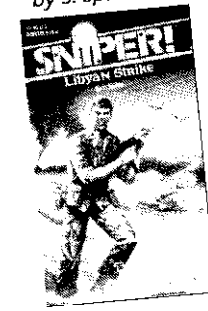
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NPC's background and deciding how past events have shaped his character. Such details in an NPC cannot be overlooked by the players, and they will surely enjoy role-playing their characters alongside a well-made NPC.

It is especially important for villains to be carefully constructed, using logic and reason. Villains are not merely killing machines. Consider the following example:

Mandrake is a mutated human with mediocre ability scores, the only exception being an intelligence of 14. He has 40 hit points and the following mutations: *economic genius capability*, *mental control*, *pyrophobia*, and *weather manipulation*. This NPC seems very weak and boring, with one defect for his three good mutations. Indeed, he could probably be destroyed by any self-respecting PC party and would probably not make a great villain. But let's put him in a capitalistic city and give him a history before we trash him as a villain.

Mandrake was born in the city of Hilmarsh, 27 years ago. When Mandrake was 12, a Purist wormed his way onto the throne and immediately ordered the destruction of all mutants, who at the time were a small minority in this particular city. This leader told all sorts of stories about a worldwide mutant conspiracy and how they planned to take over the Earth. The guards followed his orders and slew all of Hilmarsh's humanoids. Mandrake escaped the massacre and fled north, where he joined a barbarian tribe.

Over the next 15 years, Hilmarsh threw the Purists out of power and out of the city. At present, the mutant population is still struggling to rebuild its niche in this city. Recently, Mandrake returned as well, thinking that his humanlike form is a perfect disguise. To his surprise, he found that there were other mutants living in Hilmarsh, but he believed that they were mentally enslaved and discriminated against. Enraged by this, he vowed to exact revenge by creating an economic disaster. Using his special genius, he figured out a way to use his other mutations to spoil crops and turn incoming merchants away from the region. With his initial effects having proven successful, Mandrake has now satisfied his revenge, and Hilmarsh is having great economic troubles. Nevertheless, Mandrake continues to destroy crops and otherwise punish Hilmarsh.

Mandrake has now become a worthwhile villain (as well as good material for the Iron Society) and his motives are reasonable and understandable. He now presents the PCs with a fitting villainy — one which will require much effort from the PCs to overcome. The physical weaknesses of Mandrake no longer matter since he is shrouded in secrecy. Furthermore, the general direction the plot takes will depend completely upon how the PCs interpret the clues that you present regarding Mandrake's identity and plans.

Society, cities, and PCs

When PCs start off, they begin as two-dimensional sheets of statistics. As they go through adventure after adventure, however, they develop certain personal attributes and behavior patterns that make them individuals. When players create their characters, they usually have some idea ahead of time about what character type they wish to run. Some players prefer big, strong, bone-crushing combatants; others like the clever, golden-tongued con men; still others prefer the high-tech wizard. These and other personal traits become more evident as the player runs his character over a period of several adventures.

To help develop the personality of a character, it is a good idea to sketch out some details about the character's past life. To do this, you must decide upon several general details about the character. These details include: where the character is from; what type of social position the character's family holds; why the character took up adventuring; what the character hopes to gain from adventuring; how the character was brought up; and what occurred in the character's early life to affect his opinions, morals, and outlook.

To answer these questions, you must confer with the player and decide upon the answers with him. Players should not have to decide their pasts for themselves (if so, their PCs will probably come from a tech level IV communities and be the sons and daughters of the communities' leaders). By the same token, however, you shouldn't shoulder this task without the help and input of the PC; a GM has enough creative control in the entire campaign world. The PC, though, is the only creative outlet for the player. Consequently, the player should have the most input on what type of character he is playing.

If you have the time and the players are willing, it is a good idea to run each PC through two or three short solo adventures before that PC meets the others. This gives experience and knowledge that none of the others have, and it allows a group of characters from different cities and backgrounds to join together, each bringing memories of his past along.

The following are examples of what PCs with creative histories can be like at the start of the campaign. Each also shows the effects of society (and, in Bagard's case, city life) on that PC.

Arturo: Arturo is a Pure Strain Human who was born in a tech level I tribe of Pure Strain Human nomads who wandered the campaign area of Metrop. Arturo was taught by his warrior father that self-preservation was the key to life. During Arturo's 18th year, a group of Mutationists raided and wiped out his tribe. His animal instincts allowed him to survive. During his escape, he saw several mutants weeping over a fallen loved one. He cared little about the deaths of his parents and fellow tribe members, but was upset that he was

now on his own and it was because of a group of mutants.

As one might guess, Arturo hates all mutants and feels them to be weak of heart, remembering the mutants who mourned for their friend. His goals in adventuring are to survive as long as possible and to kill all mutants, ridding the world of the weak-hearted fools. He admires cities and high-tech installations, finding them to be easy and efficient methods of survival, but he prefers being a loner because he does not like endangering himself for the good of others.

In my campaign, Arturo played through two or three solo adventures, then tried to join the Purists. In the initiation, he was severely wounded and was thrown out by the Cryptic Alliance. He was starving and hurt when he was found and aided by the remaining PCs, three of whom were humanoids. Despite his original racial hatred and his desire to be alone, he soon became a member of the party and dropped his hatred of humanoids shortly after they had saved his life a few times.

Bagard Sorenson: Bagard Sorenson, a humanoid character, was born in a tech II city of mixed races, where wealth was all-important. Being of low strength, intelligence, and social class (but high in dexterity), he lived his early life as a thief, the same profession held by the rest of his family. When a new overlord decided to rid the city of thieves by increasing security and intensifying punishment, Bagard's parents and siblings were captured and hanged. Bagard quickly changed his ways and joined up with a caravan, running a shell game.

Bagard's player went through a few solo adventures as well. In the first adventure, he was caught cheating at his game and was chased away from the caravan by his victims. The next couple of solo adventures were built around his escape from his pursuers. When I decided to have this PC join the rest, I simply had him stumble across the party's path. They helped him when the mutant whom Bagard had cheated showed up, and he has adventured with the group ever since.

Bagard is not likely to have any particular racial prejudices, nor will he have strong opinions about any particular governments (except for the one that executed his family). It is likely that he would make a good scout and spy for the party. Sorenson also has a good knowledge of how the underworld works and can smell a con game a mile away.

Conclusion

The cities and societies of the Gamma World deserve important roles in all campaigns. If you take the time to flesh out several cities in your game world and set a few adventures in them, you'll see what I mean. The postholocaust society you envision, if carefully detailed, adds tremendously to the excitement and fun of your GAMMA WORLD game campaign. Ω

Up and Running in the Land of Mutants

Uprating your GAMMA WORLD® game characters

The third-edition GAMMA WORLD® game has a lot of unique aspects and additions. The mutated plant player characters add spice to parties of mutated adventurers. The most recent GAMMA WORLD game modules (GW6-GW10) have new creatures and races in them, along with new items, robots, and other essential game information. The game's combat and action-resolution system is more logical than the second edition's and can be played in either the short, easy way or using a longer version for those who prefer dozens of combat and action modifiers. In many ways, this edition is a definite improvement over the previous ones.

However, in its basic form, it is not presented as an "up and running" game — that is, a game in which the PCs in a campaign gain Ranks with any speed. As a matter of fact, the ascension of Ranks after the first few is slow enough to kill a mutie off from old age. This is fine if the GM wants to run an extremely low-tech game with few monsters (or a lot of low hit-dice creatures) or if the GM prefers a great deal of PC turnover due to death. But a GM who likes to offer a challenge to stronger PCs is left high and dry.

This article is intended to help the GM get his GAMMA WORLD game campaign up and running. Provided herein is a comprehensive PC generation system that should produce a PC having a good chance of survival. Suggestions are also provided for adjusting the current experience-points award system so that a more advanced campaign can be achieved.

Begin with step 1 to generate a PC, then continue from step to step as directed by the text or tables. The tables are num-

bered to match the steps in the character generation system.

Character Generation

1. PC racial type: Roll 1d10 on Table 1a to determine the PC's racial type. Go from there to the table or section noted.

If an alternate-race PC is indicated, roll 1d20 on Table 1b for the specific race. Racial descriptions are in the third-edition GAMMA WORLD Reference Book. When an alternate-race PC is rolled, there is a chance he may be slightly different from others of his kind. First, the player should roll 1d20; a 20 indicates an additional mental mutation, which should be rolled randomly later. Then roll another 1d20; a 20 indicates an additional physical mutation, which should be rolled randomly later. Finally, roll 1d20 for each Ability Score: 1 = 2 points less; 2 = 1 point less; 19 = 1 point more; 20 = 2 points more. Go to step 3.

If a mutated animal PC is indicated, roll

1d20 on Table 1c for the PC's animal type. The player then chooses a species within the family, and the GM modifies the PC accordingly. Then roll 1d10 on Table 1d, noting what body form the mutant has. Go to step 2.

If a mutated plant PC is indicated, the player rolls 1d10 on Table 1e to select the type of plant his PC will be. He is also allowed to choose what sort of plant within that category he wishes to play (e.g., if he rolls a tree, he may be an oak or maple). Go to step 2.

If a cyborg is indicated, check module GW10 *Epsilon Cyborgs* for details on PC creation. Then enter the PC into the game without further use of the PC generation system in this article.

2. PC characteristics: Consult Table 2 for the PC's statistics by type, except for an alternate-race PC with previously defined characteristics. The number under each ability is the number of six-sided dice the player rolls to determine each of his PC's characteristic scores. The player then takes the highest three dice

Table 1a
General PC Racial Types

1d10	PC racial type
1	Pure Strain Human (go to step 2)
2-3	Humanoid (go to step 2)
4-5	Alternate intelligent race (use Table 1b)
6-8	Mutated animal (use Tables 1c and 1d)
9	Mutated plant (use Table 1e)
10	Cyborg (use the Robot Generation Tables given in GW 10 <i>Epsilon Cyborgs</i> , pages 35-43)

and adds them together. Go to step 3.

3. Hit points: Roll a number of six-sided dice equal to the PC's CN score. Total the results from each die, then add an additional amount based upon the PC's CN modifier (e.g., a 15 CN gives +1 hp per die, or 15 more hp). If the PC is a Pure Strain Human, he gains an additional +1 hp per die beyond that.

Then, if the PC is a mutated plant or animal type, or an alternate race with an additional physical mutation, go to step 4. If the PC is of an alternate race with an additional mental mutation, go to step 5. If the PC is an alternate race with no new mutations, go to step 6.

4. Physical mutations: The types of physical mutations rolled for humanoid and mutated animals determine if they look like normal humans, normal animals, or mutated versions of either. Roll 1d6 on Table 4a, then turn to the Physical Mutations table on page 40 of the GAMMA WORLD rule book and roll 1d100 to determine each specific mutation. No PC should possess more than one defect, and duplicate mutations should be rerolled.

Each mutation has its own Mutation score. To determine a mutation's Mutation score, roll 3d6, discard the lowest die, and add the remaining two dice scores together; next, add the PC's PS modifier to the result. A PC's physical mutations may not possess a score higher than his PS score.

Table 1b Alternate Intelligent PC Racial Types	
1	Ark
2	Badder
3	Dabber
4	Hawkoid
5	Hisser
6	Hoop
7	Orlen
8	Serf
9	Sleeth
10	Wardent
11-12	Player's choice (with GM's approval)

The types of physical mutations rolled for mutated plant PCs determine what sort of plant each PC resembles. The play-

Table 1c Mutated Animal PC Racial Types	
1d20	Animal family
1	Marsupial
2	Simian
3	Ursine
4	Equine
5	Ruminant
6	Rodent
7	Land-evolved sea creature
8	Amphibian
9	Avian
10	Arachnoid
11	Insect (giant)
12	Reptilian
13	Feline
14	Canine
15	Musteline (weasel, etc.)
16	Any small mammal in giant form
17	Any large mammal in miniature form
18	Any small mammal
19	Any large mammal
20	Player's choice (with GM's approval)



Table 1d
Mutated Animal PC Forms

1d10	Mutated form
1-2	Retains normal animal forms of locomotion, communication, etc.
3-7	Animal is bipedal but very animalistic in appearance.
8-10	Animal is humanoid in form, has manipulative digits, and is able to speak.

Table 2
Characteristics by PC Racial Type

PC type	Dice rolled for characteristic					
	PS	MS	DX	IN	CN	CH
Pure Strain Human	4	3	4	6	5	5
Humanoid	4	5	4	4	5	3
Animal, normal*	6	3	4	3	6	3
Animal, bipedal*	5	4	4	4	5	3
Animal, humanoid*	5	3	5	4	4	4
Mutated plant	3	6	3	4	5	5

* As determined by Table 1d.

Table 4a
Physical Mutations:
Humanoids and Mutated Animals

1d6	Number of mutations
1	None
2	1
3-4	2
5	3
6	4

Table 4b
Physical Mutations:
Mutated Plants

1d6	Number of mutations
1	1
2-4	2
5-6	3

Table 5
Mental Mutations

1d6	Number of mutations
1	None
2-3	1
4	2
5	3
6	4

er may choose between two different types of mutated plant PCs: the *independent* lifeform that must reshape itself to gain functions, or the *symbiotic* lifeform that must inhabit an unintelligent, mobile creature to gain the benefits of free action. Roll 1d6 for either type's physical mutations on Table 4b. Then turn to the Plant Physical Mutations table on page 52 of the GAMMA WORLD rule book and roll 1d100 to determine each specific mutation. No PC should possess more than one defect, and duplicate mutations should be rerolled. See the previous notes on determining Mutation scores.

Once all physical mutations have been determined, go to step 5.

5. Mental mutations: All mutated PCs roll 1d6 on Table 5. Independent mutated plants add +1 to this roll; symbiotic mutated plants add +2. Then turn to the mental mutations appendices on page 46 of the GAMMA WORLD rule book and roll 1d100 to determine the specific mutations. No PC should possess more than one defect, and duplicate mutations should be rerolled. See the previous notes on determining Mutation scores. A PC's mental mutations may not possess a score higher than his MS score. Go to step 6.

6. Other statistics: All PCs begin the game at Rank 1, with no Status points and only 1 xp. Each PC also begins the game with a number of talents equal to his Tech Level plus one. The player may choose the talents from the Talents and Skills section, pages 84-92, of GW9 *Delta Fragment*. A PC may never have more talents and skills than his IN score. The PC starts with the Tech Level rolled on Table 6. An Optional Tech Level is also given for those GMs who want more advanced campaign PCs at the start. Go to step 7.

7. PC modifications: The GM should make sure that all mutation-related modi-

Table 1e
Mutated Plant PC Forms

1d10	Original plant stock
1	Tree
2	Bush
3	House plant
4	Exotic plant
5	Vine, creeper, or climber
6	Mushroom, mold, or fungus
7	Flowering plant
8	Weed or grass stock
9	Edible plant (e.g., cornstalk)
10	Any type of plant

fiers have been applied to the PC. He should then alter the PC as described in the appropriate following section.

Pure Strain Human

* Modify the PC's MS by -3, with a minimum score of 3.

* When rolling IN, CH, and CN, add 3 to each score, with a maximum score of 21.

* Add +1 hp per die when rolling hit points for the PC (this should have already been done in step 3).

* Grant full benefits from functioning medical devices.

* Note that most robots and computers will not harm Pure Strain Humans and may aid them if presented with the proper ID codes.

* Note that the PC is not mutated by radiation, but may suffer temporary mutation from biogenetic agents.

Humanoids

* Note that humanoids are of mutated human stock, and thus may use tools and weapons and communicate normally by speech.

* Allow humanoids to pass for Pure Strain Humans to robots or computers if the humanoids have no obvious mutations.

* Note that humanoids may mutate further if exposed to radiation, but that they are only burned by biogenetic agents.

Mutated animals

* Give each sort of mutated animal its own racial language. Mutated humanoid-form animals can speak "pidgin common."

* Allow mutated animals to use tools and weapons if they have manipulative digits (physical or mental).

* Decide on the natural abilities and limits of the original animal stock.

* Note that mutated animals cannot command artificial-intelligence machines and have an 80% chance to be ignored by them.

* Allow mutated animals to pass a security check (by a robot, android, etc.) only if classified as a "pet" by a Pure Strain Human or a PC believed to be a Pure Strain Human.

* Note that mutated animals may mutate when exposed to radiation, but are only burned by biogenetic agents.

Mutated plants

* Unless otherwise provided for by a mutation, note that no mutated plant can speak.

* Determine natural abilities and limits of the original plant stock, to be applied to the PC.

* Note that mutated plants cannot command artificial-intelligence machines and have an 80% chance to be ignored by them.

* Note that mutated plants cannot pass a security check unless carried by a Pure Strain Human or PC believed to be a Pure

Table 6
PC's Initial Tech Level

PC racial type	Tech Level	Optional Tech Level
Pure Strain Human	III	IV
Humanoid	II	III
Animal, normal*	I	—
Animal, bipedal*	I	II
Animal, humanoid*	II	III
Mutated plant	I	II

* As determined by Table 1d.

Table 8a
Sizes, Weights, and Movement Rates for PCs

Class I Mini			Class II Tiny			Class III Small		
Move: 6			Move: 9			Move: 12		
1d6	Height	Weight	3d6	Height	Weight	3d6	Height	Weight
1	56	8.5	3	71	11	3	112	24.5
2	58.5	9	4	73.5	12	4	114	26
3	61	9.5	5	76	12	5	117	27
4	63.5	10	6	79	13	6	119	28.5
5	66	10.5	7	81	13	7	122	30
6	68.5	11	8	84	13.5	8	124.5	31
			9	86	14	9	127	33
			10	89	15	10	129.5	34
			11	91.5	16	11	132	35.5
			12	94	17	12	134.5	37
			13	96.5	18	13	137	38
			14	99	19	14	140	40
			15	101.5	20	15	142	42
			16	104	21	16	145	43.5
			17	106.5	22	17	147	45.5
			18	109	23	18	150	47

Height is measured in centimeters; weight is measured in kilograms.

Table 8b
Sizes, Weights, and Movement Rates for PCs

Class IV Human (Male)			Class IV Human (Female)			Class V Large		
Move: 24			Move: 24			Move: 36		
3d6	Height	Weight	3d6	Height	Weight	1d20	Height	Weight
3	160	58.5	3	150	47	1	200.5	89.5
4	162.5	60.5	4	152.5	49	2	203	93
5	165	62	5	155	51	3	206	96
6	167.5	64	6	157.5	53	4	208	100.5
7	170	66	7	160	54.5	5	211	105
8	173	68	8	162.5	56	6	213	110
9	175	69.5	9	165	58	7	216	115.5
10	178	71	10	167.5	60	8	218	121
11	180	73	11	170	62	9	221	126
12	183	75	12	173	63.5	10	223.5	132
13	185	77	13	175	67	11	226	137
14	188	78.5	14	178	69	12	229	143
15	190.5	80.5	15	180	71	13	231	150
16	193	82	16	183	73	14	233.5	156
17	195.5	84.5	17	185	74.5	15	236	167
18	198	87	18	188	76	16	239	174.5
						17	241	181
						18	244	188
						19	246	195
						20	249	202

Height is measured in centimeters; weight is measured in kilograms.

Table 8c
Sizes, Weights, and Movement Rates for PCs

Class VI Large Move: 48			Class VII Huge Move: 60			Class VIII Giant Move: 72		
1d20	Height	Weight	1d20	Height	Weight	1d20	Height	Weight
1	251.5	209	1	302.5	354.5	1	353	632
2	254	216	2	305	364	2	355.5	650.5
3	256.5	223	3	307	374	3	358	669.5
4	259	230	4	310	384.5	4	360.5	689
5	261.5	237	5	312	395.5	5	363	709
6	264	244	6	315	407	6	366	729.5
7	267	251	7	317.5	418.5	7	368	750.5
8	270	258	8	320	431	8	371	772
9	272	265	9	322.5	443.5	9	373	794
10	274	272	10	325	457	10	376	816
11	277	279	11	327.5	470.5	11	378.5	838.5
12	279.5	286	12	330	484.5	12	381	862
13	282	293	13	333	499	13	383.5	885.5
14	284.5	300	14	335	514	14	386	909
15	287	307	15	338	529.5	15	388.5	934
16	289.5	314	16	340	545.5	16	391	959
17	292	321	17	343	562	17	394	984.5
18	294.5	328	18	345	578.5	18	396	1010.5
19	297	336	19	348	596	19	399	1037
20	300	345	20	350.5	615	20	401	1064

Table 6a
Armor

1d100	Type of armor	Armor class	Damage reduced
1-15	No armor	0	-
16-20	Heavy clothes/furs	1	- 5
21-30	Bark	2	- 10
31-40	Cured hide	2	- 10
41-50	Leather armor	2	- 10
51-57	Bone or wood armor	3	- 15
58-64	Sheath armor	3	- 15
65-71	Studded leather	3	- 15
72-78	Chain mail vest	3	- 15
79-84	Treated plant	4	- 20
85-89	Ring mail	4	- 20
90-94	Plate mail vest	4	- 20
95-98	Chain mail	5	- 25
99-00	Fiber armor	5	- 25

Table 9b
Shields

1d100	Shield type	Column Shift (CS) modification
1-47	No shield	-
48-57	Wood buckler	-1CS
58-67	Leather buckler	-1CS
68-74	Plastic or carapace buckler	-1CS
75-79	Leather or wood medium shield	-2CS
80-82	Metal buckler	-2CS
83-87	Plastic or carapace medium shield	-2CS
88-92	Leather or wood large shield	-3CS
93-95	Metal medium shield	-3CS
96-98	Plastic or carapace large shield	-3CS
99-00	Metal large shield	-4CS

Strain Human, and even then only if they do not possess hazardous mutations, such as the emission of radiation or poison.

* Have unintelligent animals ignore mutated plants unless they resemble part of the animals' diets, move in an unnatural manner (as in walking, not swaying in the wind), or attack the animals.

* Note that mutated plants may mutate when exposed to radiation or biogenetic agents.

* Allow mutated plants to go without food so long as there is sufficient soil, water, sunlight, and warmth.

* Allow limbs removed by crippling special effects (as per the rule book, pages 24-26) to be regrown with 1d6 weeks of complete rest.

* If a mutated plant dies, allow it to make a Constitution Check to regenerate from its roots, but it must begin again at Rank 1, and all its abilities suffer a loss of one point.

* Note that mutated plants are resistant to crushing attacks, and so reduce any damage suffered by crushing by -1RF.

* Allow the mutated plant to gain a bonus of +3 when grappling or wrestling (this does not apply to symbiots).

* Add 20 cm to a mutated plant's beginning height for every Rank attained.

* Allow a mutated plant not having hard bark (like trees) to reduce its size by 50% by compressing its form.

8. PC details: The GM must now determine the various final aspects of the PC: height, weight, movement rate, amount the PC can carry, and so on.

The player first rolls on the part of Tables 8a-8c appropriate for his PC (using

Table 9c
Weapon Types

1d10	Weapon	Table used
1-5	Another melee weapon	—
6-7	Pistol	9d
8-9	Rifle	9e
10	Energy weapon	9f

the proper die) to determine his PC's height in centimeters and weight in kilograms. These charts are segmented for easy conversion to feet, inches, and pounds. These statistics should be altered if necessary to take into account mutations that change the height and weight of the PC. The land-speed movement rate for these PCs is also listed (air speed is usually three or four times the land speed).

Methods of calculating special movement statistics follow and are further explained on pages 13-14 of the GAMMA WORLD rule book. These distances are considered to be the highest or farthest the PC can reach with his arms or paws. No DX modifiers are added to these unusual movements. Fractions are rounded up.

Jumping down: $\frac{1}{2} \times$ PS in meters, plus the PC's height.

Running leap: $\frac{1}{2} \times$ PS in meters, plus $\frac{1}{2} \times$ the PC's height.

Standing leap: $\frac{1}{6} \times$ PS in meters, plus $\frac{1}{2} \times$ the PC's height.

Vaulting: $\frac{1}{6} \times$ PS in meters, plus $\frac{1}{2} \times$ the PC's height.

Springing up, running: $\frac{1}{6} \times$ PS in meters, plus the PC's height.

Springing up, standing: $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total springing up, running score.

Encumbrance-related statistics are described as follows:

Weight carried, burdened: The amount of kilograms carried by a PC when he finally becomes burdened is equal to his $PS \times 2$. Any weight under this threshold does not slow him down or fatigue him. The weight of armor is evenly distributed over the entire body's frame and, for purposes of carrying, is considered to be one-quarter normal.

Weight carried, heavily burdened: The minimum amount of kilograms carried by a PC considered to be heavily burdened is his $PS \times 3$. Any weight less than this is either burdening or nonburdening.

Maximum weight lifted: A PC can lift his $PS \times 4$ in kilograms, but he cannot walk with it. This statistic is used for lifting grain sacks onto a wagon, lifting an iron gate, etc.

The GM should then determine if the mutant has an unusual hide or bark (naturally, not from mutation) and if it constitutes armor. If the latter is true, consult Table 9a and select the armor type that this natural protection most resembles.

The player should now pick an appropriate name for his PC. The GM should then assign the area from which the PC comes

Table 9e
Rifles

1d6	Weapon
1	Auto rifle
2-3	Percussion
4-5	Laser rifle
6	Stun ray rifle

and fill the player in on any pertinent campaign information the PC may have concerning his background, such as contacts, geographical knowledge, political knowledge, etc.

9. Equipping the PC: The GM can either assign the PC some equipment or have the player roll randomly on Tables 9a-9g. It is assumed in an "up and running" campaign that the equipment was handed down to the PC by his family, clan, or tribe and, despite whatever his normal Tech Level knowledge is, he knows how to use the equipment (if not always how to repair it).

The player should roll 1d100 once on Table 9a for armor, then 1d100 once on Table 9b for a shield. A shield alters an attack made against the shield-bearer by shifting it a specific number of columns to the left (-CS), making it more difficult to hit the victim.

The player should then pick a normal melee weapon and a normal range weapon from the Weapons Table (the Tech Level cannot exceed Level II). Then the player rolls 1d10 on Table 9c to determine if he has a special weapon (with an appropriate table). Any special weapon is considered to have full ammunition or power. The player rolls for the special weapon type on the appropriate table. If either Table 9d or 9e is selected, the player should then roll 1d6 for the specific weapon type. Each weapon comes equipped with a full clip, a full cell, or six bullets or shells, whichever is applicable. If Table 9f is selected, the player rolls 1d6 to receive a weapon equipped with a fully charged cell of the appropriate type.

Next, the player should roll a 1d6; 1-3 indicates the PC has one miscellaneous item, and 4-6 indicates he has two. He then rolls 1d100 to determine what the items are, using Table 9g. Some results on the table allow for extra rolls, but a new PC can never possess more miscellaneous

Table 9d
Pistols

1d6	Weapon
1	Auto pistol
2	Revolver
3	Laser pistol
4	Needler
5	Slug pistol A
6	Stun ray pistol

Table 9f
Energy Weapons

1d6	Weapon
1	Energy mace
2-3	Paralysis rod
4	Stun whip
5	Vibro dagger
6	New item (developed by GM)

items than one-half his CH score (rounded down); he may choose these from the total items he has rolled. Items may be used for barter if circumstances permit. Any item requiring a power cell or cells for use is considered to have only as many as necessary to use the item, but with all cells fully charged.

PCs start the game with $3d6 \times 10$ gp. A PC may purchase any item having the same Tech Level as his home village or base, as well as items of lower Tech Levels, providing that the GM has determined that such items are available in the campaign. The purchase of an item one Tech Level higher than the local area is possible, but the PC must roll his CH for a Yellow, Orange, or Red result on the Action Table; the item will cost double its normal price. The purchase of an item two or three levels higher requires a roll of the PC's CH with an Orange or Red result, and the item will cost three (Orange) or four (Red) times its normal price.

10. Final adjustments: The GM should make any final alterations in the PC which he feels will help balance the PC in relation to the campaign.

Revising experience points

"Up and running" campaigns are for GMs and players who prefer medium- and high-level PCs that accomplish more in combat, have more talents and skills, and so on. Therefore, it is necessary to adjust the experience-point award system so that experience points are given out much faster than in the original game. Some options follow which the GM can mix and match until he reaches what he believes is the right experience-point progression rate for PCs. The GM should compare these suggestions to the standard format on page 8 of the third-edition rule book.

Defeating opponents: Alter the experi-

Table 9g
Miscellaneous Items

1d100 Item gained

1	Accelera dose	46-50	A mount of the player's choosing, with tack (see GW6 <i>Alpha Factor</i> ; pages 40-41, for new mounts)	86	IR goggles
2	Antiradiation serum	51-52	Grenade, chemex	87	Writing kit
3	Cur-in dose	53-55	Grenade, fragmentary	88	Antigrav pods
4	Genetic booster	56-58	Grenade, teargas	89-91	One roll on a Random Loot Table from a GAMMA WORLD module of the GM's choice
5	Interra shot (two of them)	59	Grenade, energy	92-94	Two rolls on a Random Loot Table from a GAMMA WORLD module of the GM's choice
6	Mind booster	60-62	Grenade, poison gas	95-96	GM-created item, made specifically for the PC
7	Pain reducer	63-65	Grenade, stun	97	Player rolls again for two more items
8	Poison antidote	66-67	Micromissile	98	Player rolls again for three more items
9	Stim dose	68	Minimissile	99	Player gains any one item on this table of his choice
10	Suggestion change drug	69-70	Damage pack-small	00	Player gains any two items on this table of his choice
11	Sustenance doses (3)	71	Damage pack-A		
12	Unknown drug (GM creation)	72	Damage pack-B		
13	Medi-kit (with 1-10 drugs)	73	Fire extinguisher		
14	Energy field generator	74	Flamethrower		
15-16	Communicator	75	Flare gun		
17	Energy cloak	76	Kinetic nullifier fluid		
18	Fungicide doses (3)	77	Lexicon of player's choice.		
19-23	Glow cube	78	Neutralizing pigment-black		
24	Herbicide doses (3)	79	Neutralizing pigment-green		
25-26	Insect repellent (1 tube)	80	Neutralizing pigment-gray		
27-29	Chemical energy cells (1-4)	81	Neutralizing pigment-orange		
30-31	Hydrogen energy cells (1-4)	82	Neutralizing pigment-red		
32-33	Solar energy cells (1-4)	83	Pneumo-jack		
34-35	Atomic energy cell	84	Portent		
36-45	Normal survival gear of the player's choosing (rope, tent, canteen, etc.), up to 200 gp worth	85	UV goggles		

ence points earned from the defeated being's hit dice or Rank to the amount of hit points the defeated being has. This is the single greatest increase of experience points for a campaign.

Overcoming obstacles: Modify the multiplier by 1-10 xp per level of Difficulty.

Finding useful artifacts: Modify the multiplier from one to five times the Tech Level of the item for experience points.

Gaining treasures: Modify the award so it equals 1 xp per every 50 gp value of the item.

Completing quests: The GM should nev-

er award under 50 points for a completed quest. The maximum amount awarded depends on how long the quest lasted and how much was gained or lost during it. If the quest yielded plenty of booty and experience points, then the GM may wish to do something special in way of an award, like giving an automatic amount of Status points to the party members without having them spend experience points.

Healing rates

One major stumbling block in the GAMMA WORLD game is the healing

process, in that medicines work well on humans and only fractionally well on everyone else. In my campaign, which has been running off and on since the days of the first-edition GAMMA WORLD game, PCs have always been healed at the same rate. The only real exceptions to this are the mutated plant creatures, which are healed only with special medicine like fertilizer. GMs who want "up and running" campaigns should drop different healing rates and stick to a universal medicine and healing usage.

The "up and running" campaign

The result of the pumped-up experience points, healing changes, and stronger starting PCs is that the GM will have a GAMMA WORLD game campaign that is not bogged down in primitive societies and minor weapons. He will run a much more powerful party of PCs which can withstand longer journeys and greater quests. In effect, this system cuts out the first year or two of normal game play, when the PCs are grubbing for every morsel of food and sweating over every encounter. It also provides a better chance of survival, something that the current game structure does not seem to take into account. But more importantly, it means when the PCs are at higher levels, they can continue progressing at an exciting rate and not be bored with the months of play it requires to reach a new Rank. Ω

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