

APEX



AN OTHERVERSE AMERICA SOURCEBOOK

OGL

3.5 SYSTEM COMPATIBLE

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AN OTHERVERSE AMERICA SOURCEBOOK

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Final Layout Complete June 10, 2009, only a week after Dr. George Tiller's murder reminds us all that war I'm writing about as fiction is life and death fact for the courageous few.

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“Pro-choice and pro-life activists live in different worlds, and the scope of their lives, as both adults and children, fortifies them in their belief that their own views on abortion are the more correct, the more moral, and more reasonable.”

When added to this is the fact that should ‘the other side’ win, one group of women will see they very real devaluation of their lives and life resources, it is not surprising that the abortion debate has generated so much heat and so little light.”

-Kristin Luker, Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood (1984)

“There’s an alternative. There’s always a third way, and it’s not a combination of the other two ways. It’s a different way.”

-David Carradine

”There is no way to win a war that is not in your interests.”

- Lt. Gen. William E. Odom

*“Things are looking good from where I sit /
In the United States of Who Gives a Shit.”*

-Monster Magnet, Third Eye Landslide

January 23, 2091.
13 hours after the cessation of hostilities.
Boston, MA.

4 The field hospital was overloaded by a factor of forty or fifty, every spare inch of floor space given over to gurneys and badly wounded patients shivering in various stages of shock. The air stank of copper blood and astringent nano-tech, and the non-odors of the hospital set the old man's teeth on edge. He was almost glad he hadn't been allowed to bring his working dog into the clean suites. Experiencing the field hospital through his own senses was bad enough, experiencing it through his cyber-linked Lab's senses would have broken him.

He moved through the hospital like a wraith, still wrapped in the snow-camo ghile suit he was wearing when Artemis fell, his long-barreled rail rifle slung over his shoulder. Nobody paid him any attention. Soldiers weren't in short supply here and now, and he didn't seem to be walking wounded so the triage nurses ignored him. It took Rice four or five tries to find a nurse who could tell him where the patient he was looking for was. Most didn't even look up from the traumas they were tending to direct him. Most never even saw Rice, which he noted with something tired and bitter that tasted like irony. He practices stealth his whole life, and now, after the battle's over, Rice thought, I become more invisible than ever before without any effort.

They were still working on Newhope's arm when Rice finally found her. She'd waited until all the critical-case civilians had been treated, a heal-patch stuck to the bloody stump that used to be her left arm without complaint. A Lifer cyber hacker had used some kind of wi-fi smart-virus to redline her cyber-limb's power cells and blow it apart, taking a good chunk of her shoulder and upper back with it. Newhope was sitting nude from the waist up, serene with fatigue-zen as the surgeons worked on her.

Even though he couldn't see her the way a normal man could, Rice half turned to give her some privacy, which earned him a tired, wry smile.



Newhope reached up with her one remaining hand and pulled tiny earbuds down.

“You were good out there, Commander.”
The old man told the blood-splattered soldier.

“I know I was. What I want to know.... Is that thing really dead this time?” Newhope slid the earbuds into a belt pouch beside her holster, her cybernetic right hand trembling slightly. She looked up into the old man’s strange, not-quite-human eyes, her expression announcing she was ready for the bad news, ready to hear that it was all a mistake, that the Abortion War was still running hot.

He raises his black gloved fingers before his weary face. Wiggles them, and then clenches a gloved fist. “She’s dead, Maggie. I touched her. Artemis has a hole through her chest wider than your hand. They’re moving the body to the field command at Baltimore toni- this morning.”

She nods, satisfied at last, and her plastic and nano-steel fingers relax. The last glowing tell-tell lights that indicate she has charged weapons wink out one by one. For the first time in years, she powers down her defense network. Behind her, the cyber-techs trying to rebuild her shattered bionics relax visibly. She doesn’t notice; he does, but chooses not to say anything.

“It’ll take a few hours to get everything put back together... you gonna put me on the patrol roster for the morning, Nate? If you are, I’d appreciate a few hours sleep. I’ve been going for... shit, it’s Wednesday, right?”

He shakes his head wryly, still not facing her directly. He half laughs.

“Thursday now actually, but that’s not why I’m here.”

She raises an eyebrow and waits. She winces deeply as the cyber-tech touches a live nerve, but she keeps her soldier’s body perfectly still.

“I want you in APEX, Maggie.”

She jerks her thumb in the direction of her tattered red and brown uniform blouse, slung forgotten over a computer monitor. Nathan Rice doesn’t see them, but he knows that her hands are wrapped in the blood-red ribbons of a devout Choicer. “I’ve already got an outfit, Nate. A good one.”

“I know. I also know my battalion alone took nearly 75% casualties. We won, but APEX... its gutted. I need people I can trust to help me rebuild it.”

She shrugs with only one arm, earning an admonishment from one of the med-techs, which she ignores. “Why are you even asking me? I’ve got a commitment already. I’m Choicer, Nate. Just because this war’s over doesn’t mean I just stop being that.”

He nods, pauses, not sure how to proceed.

“Goddess, more than ever I have to be Choicer. I need to put things back together.”

“But is the Choicer Covenant really the way to do it? Really? I’m not asking you give up your politics. I wouldn’t. You know... You know who and what my mom was, Maggie.”

“You want me on the squad for what, so you have somebody who doesn’t mind pulling Christmas duty?”

He laughs, trying to cut the tension. She doesn’t.

“That’s an angle I hadn’t thought of, Maggie.”

“Where was APEX back in the ’30s when my people were getting slaughtered? If you Christians- if you wanted to, you could of stopped the Lifers before they got organized. You know the main reason the war lasted this long? Because of donations from you people. Because of every goddess-damned monotheist in the country sending their fucking pennies into the Enclaves and buying bullets

for those sons of bitches.”

Nathan nods. He can’t argue. The old man just nods, knowing history even better than the younger soldier. He waits her rage out. Technicians are pushing her back down into the surgical chair, tiny sparks flying from soldering irons.

“You’re asking me to come be the token pagan over in Christian country, Nate.

Her cybernetic fist clenches unconsciously. She’s shaking.

“Yes I am.”

“Why?”

“Because you’re probably the best trained combat type I’ve met in the last five years. Because you’ve got heart. And because all that shit you just shouted felt a little rote. Look, you’ve done your Choicer duty, said the things that need to be said, and you’re right about everything. APEX has screwed you guys nearly as hard as the Lifers did. But come on, Maggie, you were talking about putting it all back together.”

She settles back down, as the understructure of a combat-capable prosthetic is knit together out of the ruin of her shoulder. Diagnostic sensors clink and beep.

“I know you’re loyal to the Covenant, and that’ll always be your first loyalty. I wouldn’t be interested in you if you weren’t capable of that kind of loyalty. But I want you to work with us. We can use you, and frankly, the idea of having someone moderate and Choicer in with us appeals to me. The Bastians scare me as much as the Lifers do, and I know you feel the same.”

She raises that same eyebrow. “How you know that?”

He taps her, ever so gently on her wounded shoulder. His gloved hand comes back traced with thin blood. “Because you didn’t even kill the asshole who did this to you. He’s up in detention at the MLK High School gymnasium with an ID

bracelet ‘round his wrist right now. A Bastian would of taken her time with that moron.”

She laughs, a surprisingly easy sound from someone so combat fatigued.

“Maggie, the Bastians are pushing for genocide. They’re every bit as bad as the Lifers ever were, and they’re the one faction who came out of all this mess the stronger for it. Putting it all back together.... We need a check on them if we’re going to do that. We need to help the moderate Choicers consolidate, and keep them tight with America.”

“You mean, you want the ‘Christian-friendly’ Choicers, right. The ones most like you.”

He just sits silent, waiting with a sniper’s endless patience. Finally, the old man breaks his silence.

“I want to put America back together, Maggie. It’ll never be the same as it was before the War. Those days, they’re long gone. But it can’t be a Lifer America, and it can’t be a Bastian America either.”

Finally, reluctantly, she nods. She hates herself for compromising her ideals even the tiniest bit that nod requires, and suddenly, the red ribbons around her one remaining hand seem to weigh ten tons. Once again, Nathan Rice lays his hand on her wounded shoulder, feeling the heat of deep tissue trauma and the slickness of post-human blood. It’s a friendly touch, the kind of touch that soldiers who’ve survived together against all the odds share.

“Just consider it okay? I pulled a few strings with your CO, so you won’t be fully combat-cleared for a day or two. Take some rest.”

She nods, as he turns to leave, slipping back into the chaos of the field hospital. “I gotta get going, Commander. Other people to see.....”

After a few minutes, the wounded cyborg slips the earbuds back into her ear, drowning out the sounds of the technicians as they reassemble her arm.

America died on January 22, 2061.

After a long period of decline and fading imperial health, it was dealt a mortal wound by a well armed religious fanatic codenamed “Life Tank”. The country struggled valiantly, and was placed on life support after the Battle of Boston. Still fighting for survival, America’s affairs are run by its adult children: the megacorps and the military, who argue about the inheritance while keeping up the pretense their parent will one day rise from its sickbed.

As a whole, America doesn’t acknowledge at the nation is in its twilight years. Schoolchildren are taught the lie they are the citizens of a great nation, founded in 1776, a superpower more than three centuries old. The majority of American citizens live in politically neutral territory, where neither the Lifer nor Choicer pseudonations have been able to win a conclusive lock on political power. An American’s travel passes might declare a Lifer or Choicer leaning in the small line reserved for the bearer’s religious preference, but lack the state seal of either pseudo-nation. Unaligned Americans are free to travel, free to interact with friends, family and merchants in both Lifer and Choicer neighborhoods, but are visitors to both, citizens of neither.

Third Force: APEX America is a sourcebook for the Otherverse America campaign setting. While the Otherverse America core rulebook details life within the Choicer and Lifer pseudo-nations, this sourcebook details life within neutral-territory America, and focuses heavily on the 22nd Century’s premier military: APEX.

Chapter One: Engineered Humanity introduces several new human subspecies, all products of 21st and 22nd century science, many of whom were first decanted in APEX genetics labs.

Chapter Two: Undecided America details the politics and daily life of modern America, with a major emphasis on the mega-corporations that build the weapons, engineer the Powered heroes, and vie for political power with the Lifer and Choicer nations.

Chapter Three: APEX provides an in-depth look at the history, equipment and tactics of America’s foremost military force.

Chapter Four: APEX Advanced Classes premiers several new advanced classes common to the Otherverse America campaign setting, as well as the 5-level Tactical Commander Prestige Class, an option for gamers looking to create Pentagon-level decision makers, and the deadly and precise Combat Sniper prestige class.

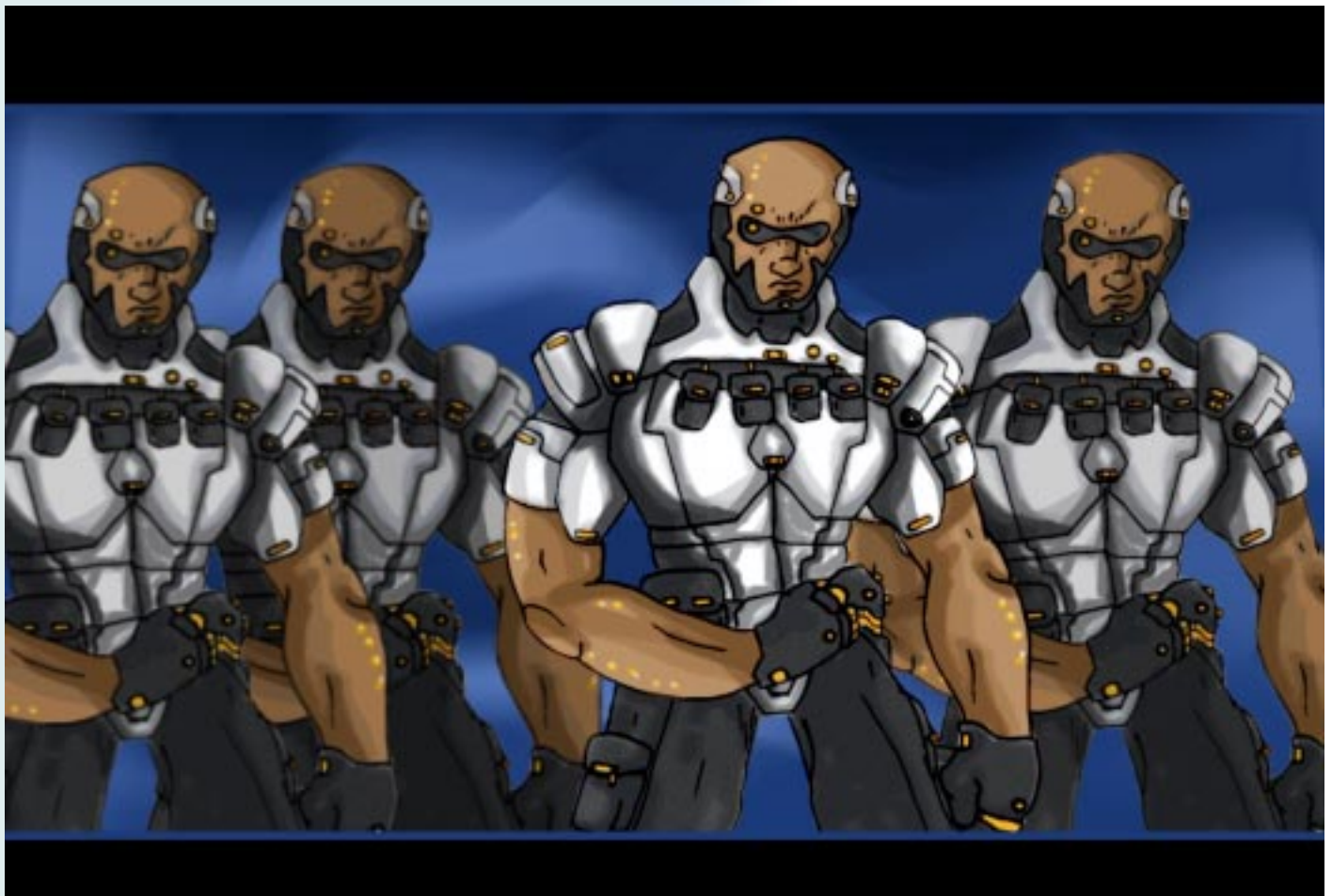
Chapter One: **Engineered Humanity**

“To make a contented slave, I have found it is necessary to make a thoughtless one.”
-Frederick Douglass

The Abortion War is a genetic war, as well as a social and tactical conflict. Both sides field vast armies of post-human believers and genetically superior supersoldiers. Both sides have fundamentally altered their evolution, and the evolution of humanity as a whole to win battles. Civilian genetic engineering is as common as tattooing, and each citizen of 22nd Century America is a species of one, custom designed to survive the rigors of a war-torn, segregated future.

New human races have emerged.

The world’s megacorps and America’s military elite began using in-vitro gene-cutting to custom build workers and combat troops as early as the 2030s. The same ‘genetic revolution’ that gave the world the AIDS cure, the first generation of engineered Poweredreds and laid the cornerstone of the Covenant pseudo-nation also gave birth to a new breed of slavery. A series of Supreme Court decisions during the 2050s freed many of the ‘engineered’ races, and forced an already overstressed America to come to terms with the myriad new sentient species now living among them.



Player Species: Aegis

Medium Humanoid (PL 7)

Aegis mutates are a relatively new engineered species, with the first members of the species decanted on New Year's Day, 2100 C.E., as part of the "New Century" celebrations. Aegis are designed to act as protectors and soldiers, serving in elite American and Choicer military units, and alongside the nation's police forces. Aegis protectors are often assigned as bodyguards to young Mediator diplomats, providing strength to match their sibling-species' willpower and intellect.

Creation of the Aegis mutates was controversial, even within the American government. Virtually every engineered human species had been recognized as fully sentient by the Supreme Court within a decade of their inception, removing them from the ownership of their creators. The Aegis program is a multi-billion dollar expenditure; naturally the US did not want to lose legal ownership

over their supersoldiers after only a few years of combat service.

Because of this concern, Aegis mutants are decanted as biological adults, with world information and tactical training implanted during their gestation. However, personality, emotional responses, imagination and the capacity for innovation are intentionally kept dormant during their in-vitro training. Newly decanted Aegis are stoic and unemotional, with fewer anthropomorphic emotions than a mid-range "dumb AI". Though capable, newborn Aegis mutates are closer to combat robots than sentient humanoids, and at least initially, cannot pass a Turing Test for sentience.

Aegis mutates do gradually become sentient- burning out their capacity for learning would have crippled the mutate species. Within 4-6 years of its awakening, an Aegis becomes sentient, and begins displaying human-like emotions. In-depth psychological testing for sentience occurs every few weeks, as part of the bio-roid's routine maintenance.

When an Aegis eventually does pass a Turing Test, he or she is removed from combat duty, granted citizenship and back-pay and allowed to choose his or her future path. Knowing little else, many newly emancipated Aegis continue to serve with their units as supersoldiers.

Appearance: Aegis resemble extremely large, muscular humans. Their size hints at their prodigious strength, which is a product of their superior metabolism and nano-enhancements.

Aegis mutates are completely hairless, and their entire bodies are covered in a millimeter-thin layer of nano-tech armor. Across most of their body, this armor is only visible as a plasticine sheen. This nano-armor is much more densely laid across the mutate's chest, spine and skull, taking the form of thin gun-metal grey plating. These nano-cybernetics are encoded into the Aegis genome, and visible from birth.

Aegis facial features were intentionally designed so as not to conform to any identifiable racial group. Their facial features and proportions are a mélange of traits from several major racial groups. An Aegis' skin tone shifts subtly several times a year, depending primarily upon what races the Aegis most closely associates with. An Aegis who spends time in a mostly Hispanic neighborhood will eventually take a light brown skin color, while the skin of an Aegis working with an Asian team will bleach and take on a faint yellow undertone. This process is completely unconscious, and takes several weeks to complete.

Reproduction: Aegis bio-roids can reproduce like their human cousins, but until they become sentient, few ever show any interest in sexuality. Aegis pregnancy is mostly identical to human pregnancy. Free-born Aegis, freed from the mem-plants that trained their parents, develop emotionally at the same rate as human newborns.

Names: Aegis are usually named for famous American military and political figures, and are identified by a serial number. Once sentient, some

Aegis discard their serial number and just use the 'human' part of their names. Tradition dictates that historical figures associated with either the Choicer Covenant or the Lifer AOG are not selected as namesakes.

Size: Large. As Large creatures, Aegis receive a +4 size bonus on Grapple checks, but suffer a -4 size penalty to Hide checks and a -1 size penalty to Defense. An Aegis can wield larger weapons than a medium humanoid, and his lifting and carrying limits are double those of a medium human.

An Aegis' base landspeed is 30 ft.

Ability Score Modifiers: +2 STR, +4 CON, +2 WIS, -4 CHA. Aegis mutates are phenomenally strong and durable, able to punch through a car door with a single blow. They have naturally keen senses and surprising reservoirs of common sense. However, Aegis mutants have virtually no sense of self, and even sentient Aegis find it very difficult to interact meaningfully with humans.

Racial Skills: Aegis mutates have keen senses, and receive a +1 racial bonus on Spot checks and Initiative checks, ideal skills for a soldier or body-guard.

An Aegis' military database provides it with a +2 racial bonus on Drive and Pilot checks, Knowledge: technology and Knowledge: tactics checks, all skills the cyborg being finds useful as a post-human soldier.

Nanonic Armor (EX): The symbiotic nano-colonies built into the Aegis genome provide the supersoldier with a +2 natural armor bonus to Defense. This thin, comprehensive protective layer does not interfere with the Aegis' ability to wear normal clothes or additional armor.

Efficiency (EX): An Aegis' musculature processes fatigue toxins more efficiently than human muscles. Aegis are immune to the effects of normal *fatigue*; an effect that would normally cause them to become *exhausted* merely causes them to become *fatigued* instead.

10 Aegis only need ¼ the food and water of a similarly sized humanoid, and can go several days without any food or water at all without complaint. An Aegis does not need to sleep or dream. They physically cannot enter the Dreamscape (described in State of the Otherverse: Smartlights). On magically active worlds, Aegis spellcasters still must rest for 8 hours to regain spells.

Aegis receive a +4 racial bonus on FORT Saves made to resist radiation and extreme environmental conditions, including the effects of 'space-sickness' caused by zero gravity, or ITF trauma.

Cyber Receptor (EX): As nano-tech enhanced bio-roids, Aegis mutates can withstand an additional 2 implants (or two points of Drain) before suffering the effects of negative levels. Most Aegis enhance their inherent gifts with cybernetic weapons and sensor systems.

Turing Choice (EX): Non-sentient Aegis mutates are immune to mind-influencing effects, as if they were robots.

However, non-sentient Aegis mutates cannot take the decisive action, nor focus their will-power enough to use action points. A non-sentient Aegis, even one with Heroic class levels, does not gain or use action points.

An Aegis mutate may choose to become sentient at any time. Doing so is a purely mental action. A sentient Aegis becomes vulnerable to mind-influencing effects, but gains and can use action points normally for a character of his or her level. The Aegis instantly gains the action point count appropriate to a newly created hero of his or her level.

Once this choice is made, it cannot be reversed. The Aegis mutate remains fully sentient. The player may choose to simply begin as a sentient starting character, and assume the Aegis 'awakened' at some point prior to the start of the campaign.

Enhanced Senses: Aegis mutates are equipped with low light vision.

Level Adjustment: +1. An Aegis is more powerful and gains levels more slowly than an unmodified human.

Player Species: Fluxminx

Medium Humanoid (Shapechanger) (PL 7)

The first generation of Fluxminx mutates were decanted in 2034, during the first flowering of the 'genetic revolution'. Like the Softling Healers, this attractive, sensual race of shapeshifters was designed and funded by the meta-porn industry. First-gen Fluxminx were exclusively sex-workers, programmed both genetically and psychologically to enjoy their role as servitors.

The first Fluxminx emerged from their womb-tanks fully grown, educated by explicit mem-plants and geisha-programs. From the mutates' first films during the long, hot summer of '34, to the 2053 Supreme Court decision that granted the species its freedom, none of the shapeshifters questioned their role. A few Fluxminx may have rebelled against cruel owners or sadistic pimps, but as a whole the species was 'content' with its servitude- they simply couldn't conceive of another way to live.

Mass-production of the mutates ground to a halt after 2054, at least in North America. Few North American porno-corps retain the technology (or the legal right) to breed new Fluxminx. Grey market "kitten factories" in Russia and Northern China engineer new Fluxminx from abandoned human fetuses, held in cryo-suspension. Imported across the world as a plaything and status symbol for the ultra-wealthy, a variety of legal dodges and 'voluntary servitude contracts' keep the shapeshifting escorts in the hands of their billionaire masters and mistresses.

Free-born Fluxminx account for the majority of the North American population of the species. These shapeshifters are born like an ordinary human, and without the erotic mem-plants used to sculpt

their ancestors' personas, they grow up almost normal. Teenaged Fluxminx are hotly recruited by the meta-porn industry, and the species has achieved a kind of symbiosis with their creators. Many free-born Fluxminx work for the same mega-corps who are paying their mothers and grandmothers reparations for their slavery decades ago.

Even those Fluxminx not involved in the porn industry are still stereotyped by the actions of their relatives. Fluxminx find it difficult to be taken seriously as soldiers or leaders, and often have to fight off demeaning advances.

One of 2107's most recognizable Fluxminx is the highly trained bodyguard codenamed "Jelly", who has served as the chief security officer for the Dacoveney family for two generations now. Despite the fact she's an integral part of the Lifer establishment, Fluxminx from both sides of the abortion line idolize their most famous sister. Jelly has become, much to her own displeasure, a celebrity, and a symbol of a strong, independent Fluxminx woman thriving outside a porn-corp's sphere of influence.

Appearance: Fluxminx are instantly recognizable in their natural state, much less so when shapeshifted. They resemble a humanoid mass of colorful organic polymers roughly the size of an unmodified human. A Fluxminx's slender body is translucent and light refracts through their glass-like skin in spectacular rainbows. A Fluxminx's amorphous internal organs are semi-visible through their skin, and like their 'sister-species' the Softling Healers, a Fluxminx'



organs seem to pulse with their own internal luminescence.

Some Fluxminx have colorful bodies decorated with random, always changing swirls of brilliant hues. These shifting fluid inclusions resemble the random imperfections and accents in blown glass. A plurality of Fluxminx have monochromatic bodies—the famous Jelly is decorated in a dozen shades of orange.

12 In their natural state, Fluxminx resemble polymer mannequins with blank, smoothly attractive faces and eyes that lack humanoid pupils. Their nose and ears are small and vestigial, as are their too-short tongues. When not shapeshifted to a more humanoid form, a Fluxminx' voice is garbled, due to deformities in their sinus cavities and vocal cords. Many speak in low mutters, except when speaking through imitated human lips.

Reproduction: Fluxminx reproduce much like humans, but are far more sexually adventurous and aggressive. The Fluxminx genome was encoded for seduction and near-nymphomania as the default emotional state. Fluxminx have no set breeding season, and their pregnancies last around 10-11 months.

Names: Fluxminx names follow human naming conventions; a plurality of Fluxminx have the fanciful, often erotic, punning names common to the North American porn culture as their birth names.

Size: Medium. A Fluxminx receives no special bonuses or penalties due to its size. A Fluxminx' base landspeed is 30 ft.

Ability Score Modifiers: +2 DEX, -2 INT, +2 CHA. Fluxminx are designed to be graceful and charming- the perfect million-dollar call girls. They were intentionally designed as less intelligent than an average human to be content in their servitude.

Racial Skills: Fluxminx are consummate shapeshifters and receive a +8 racial bonus on Disguise checks made to imitate another humanoid.

Fluxminx are surprisingly good at reading people, especially sizing up a potential client-mate's unspoken desires and secret fantasizes. The mutate receives a +3 racial bonus on Sense Motive checks made concerning sexual and romantic matters.

Fluxminx flexibility gives the creatures a +2 racial bonus on Escape Artist checks and checks made to escape a grapple.

Morphic Erotica (EX): Fluxminx can alter their bodies at will, as a full round action. A Fluxminx is a natural shapeshifter and has the Shapechanger subtype. The Fluxminx can alter its apparent age, race and control the minor details of its form, such as hair and eye color, the presence of scars and tattoos and the like. While shapechanging, a Fluxminx' distinctive voice pattern changes to imitate the creature mimicked.

When shapeshifting, the Fluxminx's size and gender do not change, though the creature can redistribute its mass slightly, and appear fatter, slimmer or more or less muscular, it is always a Medium creature. A Fluxminx can vary its apparent height by 4-6 inches in either direction.

After at least 5 minutes of conversation with any sentient humanoid who would be attracted to the Fluxminx' gender, the shapeshifter can attempt a DC 15 Sense Motive check. If successful, the Fluxminx can 'custom-design' an altered form specifically catering to the sexual desires and wishes of that person. The Fluxminx receives a +2 circumstance bonus on all CHA based skill checks made against the target while in that specific 'fetish form'.

A Fluxminx can remain in an altered form indefinitely. When sleeping or unconscious, the shapeshifter relaxes and returns to its natural form, as does a slain Fluxminx.

Amorphous Physiology (EX): A Fluxminx' internal organs are as flexible as their outer appearance. Fluxminx are extraordinarily difficult to kill, and can recover from damage that would kill an unmodified human. A Fluxminx' decentralized anatomy gives the creature some protection against critical hits. A Fluxminx has a 25% chance to ignore the effects of a critical hit, as if he had the *light fortification* feature.

Enhanced Senses: Fluxminx eyes are slightly larger, and have a greater concentration of rod cells than a humans, letting in much more light. A Fluxminx receives *low light vision*.

Starting Occupation: Narcissican Clone

Illegal 'kitten factories' around the world produce an assortment of sentient and semi-sentient sexual playthings for the hyper-wealthy and decadent. Using embryos bought or stolen from exo-womb facilities, the factories produce custom decanted sex slaves made to order. Even the ultra-secure Patriot Medical facility in Atlanta, GA, was discovered to be producing off-the-books Fluxminx and Narcissicans during a GAO (General Accounting Office) audit in 2102.

One of the most popular breed of sexual gene-toys is the Narcissican clone, a force-grown duplicate of the client educated through memory implantation. Sometimes these clones are gender-reversed, some times they are not, depending on the whims of their client.

Narcissican clones emerge from their exo-wombs with both the memories of their owners, and the knowledge they are the genetically programmed slaves of the man or woman whose genes they share. Even if they somehow manage to buy or win their freedom, most Narcissican clones find the conditioning and memories of their slave years difficult to fully lay aside.

Prerequisite: CHA 13+, Apparent age 12+. Despite the fact that many Narcissican clones are only a few weeks or month old when the campaign begins, they are usually decanted as adults or teenagers.

Skills: Choose two of the following as permanent class skills. If the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks with that skill.

Balance, Craft (visual art), Diplomacy, Gamble, Gather Information, Knowledge (business, popular culture, streetwise), Perform (act, dance, sing), Profession (prostitute, courtesan, ect), Sense Motive

Bonus Feats: Select one of the following: Acrobatic, Alertness, Deceptive, Gifts of Ecstasy, Trustworthy, Windfall

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2

Reputation Bonus Increase: +1

Player and Non-Player Narcissican Clones

If a Narcissican Clone is grown in game, the clone is considered to be an identical copy of an existing character, as they were at first level. The clone shares its genetic donor's species traits (including the extra human feat and skills) and starting ability scores. Usually, they are implanted with the memories of their genetic donors up to the time of donation, though a client can choose to implant the clones with memories only up to an earlier point, or choose to go with no implanted memories at all.

A Narcissican clone enters play as a first level ordinary or heroic character, depending on their status within the story. Often, a Narcissican clone's first character level is identical to their donor's, right down to their skill and feat choices, but there's nothing preventing the clone from taking another path.

Creating a custom-grown Narcissican slave requires a genetic sample and neural map of the client. Fast-growing one of these clones to physical maturity requires about 11 months, though most producers have a several year backlog. Narcissican clones have a base purchase DC 37 and are an Illegal (+4) item. It's cheaper to mass produce multiple copies of the same clone, for clients wanting an harem of Narcissican playthings. Each Narcissican purchased after the first has a base purchase DC 34.



Player Species: Nanofeaster

Medium Humanoid (PL 7)

Nanofeasters are a member of an engineered predatory species designed by the Lifer Army of God as a weapon against their Choicer adversaries. Unlike other engineered species, Nanofeasters have never been force-grown in womb tanks; all the members of this subspecies are the product of fetal genetic alteration performed on pregnant mothers who volunteered themselves and their children for the procedure.

The first generation of Nanofeasters were born just a few years prior to Life Tank's rampage, and spent the first years of their childhood sequestered at one of the AOG's many hidden bases. When these mutates first stepped onto the battlefield as teenaged killers, they were a terrifying shock for the Choicer military. Today, the engineering of new Nanofeasters is prohibited by the Treaty of Boston, and the mutagens used to create the creatures were supposedly destroyed after War's End. However,

new Nanofeasters are born with surprisingly regularity; cross-breeding Nanofeasters and other post-human children is a high priority for the current Lifer leadership.

Outside the Enclaves, Nanofeasters have few opportunities other than the military. Nanofeasters have been demonized by the Choicer media as dim-witted, instinct driven super-predators, and even the Lifer media emphasizes their combat prowess over less violent aspects of the species. Civilian jobs are hard for the mutates to find, because employers constantly worry what the mutates will do if a nanonic-enhanced Neo-Witch Midwife enters the jobsite. Even Nanofeasters working within APEX find themselves assigned to anti-Choicer squads- low glory, unpopular assignments like "Witch Watch" that are often career suicide.

Appearance: Like many Lifer mutates, Nanofeasters are large and designed for intimidation. They stand 5-6 inches taller than an unmodified

human, and weigh upwards of a hundred pounds more. Nanofeasters who top seven foot aren't uncommon. A Nanofeaster's skin is thick and dense, similar to motorcycle leathers rather than human skin. Regardless of the race of their human parents, Nanofeasters have a ruddy, reddish-bronze complexion.

Nanofeasters have extremely wide, flattened noses, which resemble a panther's. Their lip structure is intentionally modified with canine and ursine DNA. When the mutates are angry, their lips curl back into an animalistic snarl. Nanofeaster teeth are large and wicked, fully capable of biting through ballistic plastic.

Reproduction: Nanofeasters are designed for exponential growth. They reach reproductive maturity a year or two before their human counterparts, have relatively short (6-7 months) pregnancies, and give birth to twins at 2 to 3 times the rate of normal humans. Like humans, Nanofeasters enjoy sex for pleasure, and have no set breeding cycle. Some psychologists theorize a link between the Nanofeaster genome and a predilection for sexual violence (expressed as the Preferential Hunter feat), though most Lifers (as well as most Nanofeasters) dismiss the theory as thinly disguised racism.

Names: Nanofeaster names follow human naming conventions, especially the conventions of Evangelical Christian/Lifer America.

Size: Medium. As a medium creature, a Nanofeaster receives no special bonus or penalty due to its size. A Nanofeaster's base landspeed is 40 ft; the mutates are designed to quickly close with and over power their enemies.

Ability Score Modifiers: +4 STR, +2 CON, -2 CHA. Nanofeasters are exceptionally strong and durable, but are often outsiders, and are encouraged during childhood to use violence rather than persuasion to solve problems.

Natural Weapons (EX): A Nanofeaster's jaw muscles are strong enough to bite through ballistic armor. A Nanofeaster's bite is a secondary

natural attack which inflicts 1d8+STR modifier points of slashing damage. A Nanofeaster is considered armed and proficient when biting.

Nanofeast (EX): Nanofeasters take their name from their unique metabolism, which is designed to feed upon ingested nanotechnology. A Nanofeaster who destroys any external cybernetic implant based on nanotechnology using a natural weapon or unarmed strike, or inflicts a critical hit with a bite attack against a foe enhanced by a nanocolony completely consumes that nanotech. The Nanofeaster's body quickly breaks down the nanotechnology, and uses the bio-tech to enhance the cannibal mutate's own physical capabilities.

Each destroyed nano-cybernetic provides the Nanofeaster with 2d4 temporary Hit Points, and a +2 bonus to their STR score. These bonuses stack with themselves, and fade an hour after a nanocolony is consumed.

Enhanced Senses: Nanofeasters are as comfortable at night as they are under the noonday sun, and have lowlight vision and Darkvision with a 60 ft range.

A Nanofeaster can scent the presence of nanotechnology. They receive Smell Nanonics as a racial bonus feat, even if they do not meet the prerequisites.

Smell Nanonics (Psionic Precursor)

Hard experience has taught you the danger of concealed nano-weapons and stealth cyborgs. You've developed a sixth sense that allows you to detect concealed ultra-tech. Your brain has trained itself nearly imperceptible data and you experience this sub-psionic awareness as a distinctive 'mechanical' odor.

Prerequisite: Attentive

Benefit: *You are instantly aware of the presence of any nano-colony, nano-tech based genetic enhancement or soft-tech cybernetics, as well as all cybernetics and smartlights, including inactive devices. If you move within 60 ft of one*

of these devices, you become aware of their presence.

You may attempt a WIS check (DC 12 + the item's Restriction rating) to pinpoint the location of the device. If you succeed at the check by 10 or more points you gain a basic awareness of the device (s) purpose and capabilities.

Level Adjustment: +2. Nanofeasters are terrifyingly strong, and have the ability to boost their already impressive strength into the high superhuman range during combat.

They are much more powerful and gain levels more slowly than their human cousins.

Player Species: Neo-Sapient Mediators

Medium Humanoid (Psionic) (PL 7)

Neo-Sapient Mediators are an emerging engineered subspecies, born in the wake of War's End. Their creation funded by the federal government, Mediator mutates are designed to de-escalate the conflict between Lifer and Choicer and hopefully prevent another flaring of the Abortion War. Mediator mutates are a controversial, billion dollar initiative, a long-term eugenics and social engineering experiment that, circa 2107, is only just beginning to bear fruit.

Like most other mutate species, Mediators are created from abandoned embryos in long-term exo-womb facilities. To ensure the mutates are distributed widely throughout the population, the American government offers preferential adoption and tax incentives for parents choosing to adopt the genengineered fetuses. For the most part, Mediator mutates grow up normally, in human foster families, with only their intellectual gifts and relentless logic setting them apart from their human brothers and sisters.

Mediator mutates are destined for service in the Fed-Gov military and bureaucracy. The Fed-Gov has an aggressive recruitment and preferential hiring scheme to ensure that Mediators will filter into the top echelons of decision making. The near-humans are much less common among the Choicers-

not because of their politics particularly, but because the logical, often atheistic Mediators have little interest in the minutia of Choicer paganism.

Similarly, the Mediators are loathed by the Lifer nation, viewed as a living incarnation of the 'mark of the beast'. Mediator mutates are mistrusted, seen as brainwashed, Fed-Gov infiltrators. The near humans are one of the only species that are completely unwelcome in the Enclaves. Regular gene-scans of Lifer politicians and leadership ensure that Neo-Sapient Mediators can't infiltrate or influence the movement.

The first Mediators were born in late 2091 and early 2092, which means that they are in their late teens (at most) during the spring of 2107. The mutates mature quickly, and despite their relatively young age, many have already taken mid-level leadership roles. Some APEX squads are accompanied by Mediator hostage-negotiators and psychologists, and large numbers of the mutates serve as intelligence analysts for APEX, the CIA, NSA and other federal agencies.

Appearance: Mediator mutates are physically indistinguishable from unmodified humans. Their body language is slightly different- to humans, the mutates seem modest, retiring and passive. Even the most combative Mediator is likely to be much quieter, less prone to visual displays of temper than a normal human.

Reproduction: Neo-Sapient Mediators reproduce identically to unmodified humans. The two species can interbreed, in which case the Mediator gene-line is a recessive trait.

Names: Mediator names follow human naming conventions.

Size: Medium. As medium creatures, Mediators receive no special bonus or penalty due to their size. A Mediator's base landspeed is 30 ft.



Ability Score Modifiers: -2 STR, +4 INT, +2 WIS, -2 CHA. Mediators are physically weak and have a less defined ego and sense of self than a normal human. They are highly intelligent and good at reading people, with extraordinarily logical minds.

Racial Skills: Mediators are designed to do just what their name implies- act as a trustworthy peacemaker between Lifer and Choicer extremists. They might not be the most stirring speakers, but their patient, logical arguments can wear down (and win over) listeners.

Mediators use their INT score as the key ability for Diplomacy checks, not their CHA score. When speaking to someone with a declared allegiance to either the Lifer or the Choicer pseudo-nations, Mediators receive a +2 racial bonus on their Diplomacy check.

Psychologic (EX): Mediator neurology is designed around resistance to emotional extremes, deception and illusions. Mediators receive a +2 racial bonus on WILL Saves made to penetrate illusions and to resist mental domination, including psionic manipulation (an Ultra-Mind's class abilities) or magical effects (such as *Charm Person*).

Combat Philosopher (SU): Neo-Sapien Mediators are designed to, with their words, with their actions, with their art work, to deescalate the violence accompanying the Choicer/Lifer divide. The most tangible expression of this genetic duty is found in the synapse gaps of their unique brains.

Mediators naturally generate a low level field of psionic energy, which interferes with the manifestation of belief-based Object Philosophies. All allies within a 30 ft radius of the Mediator receive a +1 insight bonus on all saving throws against Object Philosophies and their effects. Mediators themselves benefit from this bonus.

Mediator neurology means that if the Mediator chooses he or she can select Object Philosophies without selecting the Neural Conditioning feat as a prerequisite. The Mediator must meet all the additional prerequisites of the Philosophy.

Mediators have the Psionic subtype, and may freely select Psionic Precursors and Psionic Feats.

Philosophical Support (SU): By touching willing ally, the Mediator allows that ally to use his or her WILL Save modifier (including temporary modifiers, but not ability score modifiers) on any WILL Save made to resist or negate the effects of an Object Philosophy.

Using this ability is a standard action which does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Racial Feats: Mediators are social creatures, and gain any one of the following feats as a racial bonus feat, reflecting their enhanced social skills and unique childhood education stream:

Confident, Creative, Deceptive, Educated (knowledge: behavioral sciences, history, current events or theology & philosophy only) Renown, Trustworthy.

Racial Weaknesses: Mediator brain structure incorporates miles of complex bio-circuitry to increase their intellect and problem solving abilities. Their neural mutations are similar to over-the-counter genemods like Compass and Diplomata. They are vulnerable to Gene Feats which target neural gene-mods.

Mediators cannot select any Lifer or Choicer allegiance as their primary allegiance, nor can they select any religious allegiance of any kind as their primary allegiance.

The Least You Need to Know: The Patriot Program

The Patriot Program was first introduced in Psi-Watch (2008, Otherverse Games), as a secret American project to breed psionic super-soldiers. The program also exists in the Otherverse America campaign setting, though the two least successful and most deforming mutant strains- Patriot Anvil and Patriot Boxer- have been long-since discontinued by 2107.

By the mid 2030s, the Patriot Program's existence had been de-classified, and the entire enhancement program had been subsumed under APEX jurisdiction. Today, Patriot Program geneticists work to build the next generation of military post-humans, and have successfully bred at least three new "Patriot" mutate species- the teleporting Couriers, the technopathic Mechanics and the space-adapted Wrench. Future breeds of Patriot mutates will be described in upcoming sourcebooks.

Player Species: Patriot Courier

Medium Humanoid (Psionic) (PL 7)

The first Patriot Courier mutates were revealed to the public during the spring of 2041, with the first members of the cloned species decanted from artificial wombs a decade prior. An outgrowth of the US military's ultra-secret "Patriot" supersoldier program, these genetically engineered soldiers quickly became a vital part of American tactical doctrine, especially when assigned as transport specialists for APEX's elite frontline combat units. Patriot Courier mutates have been an essential part of US military strategy ever since, participating in every major battle of the Abortion War.

Today, the Patriot Couriers remain the only stable, safe, planetary range teleportation method known to humanity. Through sheer force of will, these mutates can open a wormhole through the ITF Corridor- the same parallel dimension that allows human starships to cross the galaxy. Attempts to create mechanical teleportation systems inevitably



end in disaster; a living consciousness, in this case, the soul of a yellow skinned humanoid psion, is required to safely guide the passengers or cargo through 'jump space'.

The Patriot Courier genome and early childhood training regimen are closely guarded secrets; not even the US government's Choicer allies can force-grow their own Patriot Couriers. For additional security the Patriot Courier genome is 'encoded' through the addition of several dozen

additional base-pairs and their blood and bodily fluids are designed to rapidly decay outside their body.

Patriot Couriers are raised communally, in military schools where they are taught that service to America is a noble ideal. As in the case of many other engineered near-human species, the Supreme Court has remained intentionally vague on the legal status of these artificially bred humanoids. They are not necessarily considered property, and theoretic-

20 cally are free to refuse to enlist when they come of age and choose a civilian life, but few ever do. The number of Patriot Couriers who have retired from Fed-Gov service voluntarily, or who have refused to enlist at all, can be counted on two hands.

Appearance: Patriot Courier mutates are a near human mutate species. They are petite and lightly built; few Courier males stand much taller than five and a half feet tall. They are instantly recognizable thanks to their canary yellow skin and golden or silver hair. Their skin has a rough, sandpapery texture, not quite scales, but noticeably rougher than a normal human's.

A Patriot Courier's eyes are large and covered by an opaque black membrane, similar to the eye structure of the Half Grey, leading many biologists to conclude that Half Grey genetic material was used to create the teleporters. If a Patriot Courier is ill or depressed, his or her eye membranes gradually turn an ugly bruised purple-blue.

Reproduction: Patriot Couriers reproduce like humans, and like their human cousins, have no set breeding period and enjoy sex for pleasure. Pregnancies last 4-5 months, and are shockingly easy on the mother. Instead of a conventional birth, when a Patriot Courier female gives birth, she opens a short range portal from her womb into the open air, allowing the child to pass from her body without pain or injury.

The Patriot Courier gene-line is dominant. If crossbred with ordinary humans, the resulting child will be a Patriot Courier mutate, though their appearance may be slightly more humanlike than a typical Patriot Courier child.

Patriot Courier mutates are allowed to breed freely and begin their own families; their meta-human offspring are raised alongside 'tanked' Courier mutate children, in military schools. In addition to 'free' births, APEX decants 200-300 new Courier mutates each year. These new mutates are decanted as adults, having artificial memories and training programs downloaded into their developing consciousness while still in utero. "Tank-born"

Couriers enter active service within a few months of their birth.

Names: Patriot Couriers are assigned a first name during gestation, but do not usually use surnames. A Patriot Courier can use its military identification code and the name of the genetics lab which decanted him as a last name if needed.

Some Patriot Courier children are placed with military foster families, to be raised as a (mostly) ordinary human child; these 'free-born' mutates adopt the surname of their adoptive family. Owing to the shortened Patriot Courier childhood, the same few foster families have raised dozens of young mutates over the course of just a few years.

Size: Medium. A Patriot Courier receives no special benefit or penalty due to its size. A Patriot Courier's base landspeed is 30 ft.

Ability Score Modifiers: +2 INT, +2 WIS, -2 CHA. Patriot Couriers are highly intelligent, curious and perceptive. Their unique neural structure gives them near genius level intelligence. However, they tend to be shy, slightly subservient and agreeable, mostly as a result of their early childhood conditioning.

Racial Skills: Patriot Couriers have a natural aptitude for science and especially the study of the sub-quantum universe. This is only reinforced by their childhood training regimen, which is designed to make the most of their teleportation gifts.

Patriot Couriers receive a +3 racial bonus on Knowledge: physical science and Knowledge: tactics checks. The creatures have a keen sense of direction, reflected by a +4 racial bonus on Navigate checks.

Enhanced Senses: Patriot Couriers receive *lowlight* vision, thanks to the structure of their strange eyes.

Racial Feats: The ability to teleport is hardwired into the Patriot Courier genome. All Patriot Couriers receive the Remote Viewing and Wormhole psionic

feats, even if they do not meet the prerequisites. The feats were originally presented in the Psi-Watch campaign option, and are reprinted here. All Patriot Couriers have the Psionic subtype.

Remote Viewing (Psionic Precursor)

You are a psychic sensitive, who posses clairvoyant gifts that allow you to see through walls and perceive distant events as if you were there.

Prerequisite: Iron Will

Benefit: *You can concentrate on some locale and see as if you were there. Distance is not a factor but the locale must be known, either a place familiar to you or an obvious place, such as behind a door or around a corner. If you chose to use this power to view the interior of an opaque container, you perceive the contents as if the container's walls had become transparent, and are subject to local lighting conditions.*

Entering a clairvoyant trance is a full round action which provokes attacks of opportunity. You may maintain the clairvoyant trance for a number of minutes equal to one plus your WIS modifier (minimum two minutes). You may use this power at will; however, you can not enter a clairvoyant trance within an hour of ending a previous clairvoyant trance.

Wormhole (Psionic)

You can open dimensional portals that bend space-time, allowing you to step between continents as easily as you step between rooms.

Prerequisite: Iron Will, Remote Viewing, Knowledge: physical sciences 4 ranks

Benefit: *A number of times per day equal to one plus your INT modifier (minimum twice daily), you can tear open a glistening hole in space-time. Your warp portal is roughly 10 ft in diameter, and remains a stable, two way transit point*

for the duration of the effect. Gasses, ranged attacks and the like can pass through the portal, just as they could through an open door.

You may open a warp-portal to any place you know well, to an obvious location (such as behind a door or around a corner) or any place you have scanned with Remote Viewing or another psionic ability. You may create a portal to any place within 1,000 miles per point of your INT modifier.

The portal remains open for as long as you maintain concentration on it, and for 1d6 minutes after you cease concentrating on it. You can also close a portal you've created at any time, as a standard action.

You may attempt to widen your portal by succeeding at a DC 20 Knowledge: physical sciences check. If successful, the portal's diameter increases by 1 ft per point you beat the check by. A wormhole teleporter may attempt to close another teleporter's wormhole by succeeding at an opposed WILL save.

Racial Weaknesses: The Patriot Courier's early years are exclusively focused on military and espionage training, limiting their social interaction and early career choices. A Patriot Courier character can select a starting occupation only from the following list:

Adventurer, Criminal, Emergency Services, Law Enforcement, Military

Level Adjustment: +2. A Patriot Courier's teleportation gifts and keen intellect make them more powerful than most other humanoids, and they gain levels more slowly than their human counterparts.



PIOT 101

Player Species: Patriot Mechanic

Medium Humanoid (Psionic) (PL 7)

Patriot Mechanic mutates are trusted to keep the complex war machines of the 22nd Century running at peak efficiency. Their high intelligence and instinctive mechanical talents are reinforced with a psionic ability to manipulate metal and plastic. Unlike their Patriot Courier cousins, the Patriot Mechanic genome is well-mapped. Patriot Courier mutates serve with every faction- maintaining Choicer warplanes, upgrading Lifer combat cyborgs, overseeing American and Chinese sat launches, and ensuring APEX's guns don't jam during a firefight.

Patriot Mechanic mutates are one of the most common engineered-human species. While most are engineered in utero, decanted from a womb-tank and raised by a corporate or military foster family, a substantial minority of the species are born naturally, to fully human parents. Especially

among the American working class, engineering a gestating fetus into a Patriot Mechanic mutate is seen as a way to ensure the child's future prosperity. Patriot Mechanic births are even more common in India and Pakistan, where the governments have instituted a large-scale uplift program, to ensure their continued dominance of the 22nd Century's high tech economy.

Appearance: Patriot Mechanic mutates are nearly indistinguishable from their human cousins. A Patriot Mechanic's hands are sheathed in a millimeter-thin, slick silvery-grey layer of organic chrome. Their metallic 'gloves' continue up their forearms and shoulders as a fine network of circuitry. A Patriot Mechanic can easily pass for a full human just by wearing gloves.

Reproduction: Patriot Mechanics reproduce like humans, have no set breeding season and enjoy sex for pleasure. Patriot Mechanics tend to prefer their

own kind as lovers. When two Patriot Mechanics join hands, a minor electronic circuit is completed, which increases sensation and emotion. Linking hands plays a major role in courtship and sexuality among the near-humans.

Names: Patriot Mechanics follow human naming conventions. Since Indian and Pakistani Patriot Mechanics are extremely common, a plurality of Patriot Mechanics have names drawn from those cultures.

Size: Medium. A Patriot Mechanic receives no special benefit or penalty due to its size. A Patriot Mechanic's base landspeed is 30 ft.

Ability Score Modifiers: +2 INT. Patriot Mechanics are highly intelligent, learn quickly and have a natural talent for invention.

Racial Skills: Patriot Mechanic brains are engineered for problem solving ability, logic and mechanical aptitude. The mutants receive a +4 racial bonus on Craft (mechanical, electronic) and Repair checks.

All Patriot Mechanics specialize in a single technical skill, which becomes their signature area of expertise. Select any one of the following skills: Craft (any), Disable Device, Demolitions, Drive, Knowledge (technology), Pilot, or Repair. The Patriot Ivory may use the skill in a new way: he or she may always choose to take 10, or take 20 when using that skill. This chosen skill is always a class skill for the metahuman.

In addition the Mechanic may 'take-X' on the skill check, where X is a number between 10 and 20. For example, if the Patriot Mechanic knew she could succeed on a repair check by rolling a 14 or higher, she could "take 14". The skill check would then take fourteen times as long as performing the skill ordinarily.

Racial Feats: All Patriot Mechanics receive Gearhead as a racial bonus feat.

Mechanic's Telekinesis (SU): A Patriot Mechanic's telekinetic gifts are uniquely focused on manipulating metal and plastic. Merely by touching a Huge or smaller mechanical object for one minute, the Patriot Mechanic can perform routine cleaning and maintenance (such as cleaning and disassembling a gun, sharpening a blade, or degreasing an engine block).

The Patriot Mechanic can telekinetically manipulate unattended objects made mostly of glass or plastic weighing up to 20 lbs at will, as if using the *mage hand* spell. Patriot Mechanics can manipulate objects telekinetically within 30 ft.

A Patriot Mechanic can perform skill checks remotely at no penalty, due to the fine control the mutate has over inorganics, but suffers a -8 circumstance penalty if he uses this ability to launch an attack (such as by telekinetically firing a handgun).

Finally, as a full round action, a Patriot Mechanic can touch a Medium or smaller metal or plastic object and physically transform the object into any type of Improvised Tool Kit. Doing so destroys the object, ruining it for its original purpose.

All Patriot Mechanics have the Psionic subtype.

Player Species: Patriot Wrench

Medium Humanoid (Lifechained) (PL 7)

The Patriot Wrench were originally engineered at NASA's request during the late 2020s, as mankind took its first steps outside our solar system. The first generation of Patriot Wrench were human volunteers who accepted untested genemods in hopes of winning a berth on one of the early FTL starships, but every generation of Patriot Wrench since then has been freeborn, and rightfully proud of their heritage as early out-colonists.

The Patriot Wrench genemod is one of the most severe alteration of the human genetic code in existence. Patriot Wrench mutants incorporate Lifechained alleles recovered from space-born super

24 predators. These lines of alien genetic code give the Wrench-skinned mutants their ability to survive (and enjoy) hard vacuum. Further, their genetic heritage means that Patriot Wrench are comfortable in deepest, blackest space in a way few other Earth-born humans can ever be. Patriot Wrench are happiest on some massive starship heading towards Phallus Space and the Galactic Core; they're bored and claustrophobic on Earth, preferring the cold, austere beauty of the stars.

Patriot Wrench are relatively rare in Earth space. They might return to their planet of origin for a brief R&R stopover, and might even own an Earth-side house or two, but they spend 80-90 % of their lives 'out in the black'. They are a common sight in human and Stonecutter spaceports, and most Beanstalk shops and bars have learned to accept their quirks without complaint. The majority of Patriot Wrench in our Solar System call Jupiter's Solomon Station home, making their living servicing visiting star-liners. The Wrench union on Solomon is one of the out-colony's foremost political voices and has been since 2096, when a Wrench strike shut down intra-system travel for nearly three days. Needless to say, by the time the strike was over, the Wrench Union had got what it wanted.

Appearance: Patriot Wrench mutants are instantly recognizable thanks to their metallic, gleaming skins, which are as warm and supple as human flesh but have a silvery, gun-metal sheen. They are perfectly adapted for starship life. Their skins are tough enough to shrug off micro-meteorite punctures, and they are highly resistant to temperature extremes. Never cold, and rarely modest, most Patriot Wrench mutants go nude or nearly so, only donning clothes or a uniform when they absolutely cannot weasel out of it. When forced to wear anything more confining than a loincloth or sarong, they are uncomfortable and fidgety.

A Patriot Wrench's silvery smooth skin is covered with a complex, organic pattern of naturally luminescent birthmarks. The Wrench can alter the color and illumination provided by these glowing birthmarks with a thought, and a Wrench's pattern is



a good clue to his or her emotional state. A Wrench's radiance can dim to near invisibility, or can flare bright enough to be seen at orbital distances. Patriot Wrench astronauts use color-flashes to communicate with one another when performing EVAs.

Reproduction: Patriot Wrench mutants have no set breeding season and enjoy sex for pleasure. Despite their human-like shape, they cannot successfully interbreed with baseline *homo sapiens*. Patriot Wrench can only bear offspring with their own kind or another Lifechained humanoid.

Most Patriot Wrench prefer sex in zero gravity or hard vacuum conditions, and have little interest in sex when trapped in a gravity well. Most Patriot Wrench males suffer impotence while on a planet with Earth normal gravity.

Size: Medium humanoid. As a medium creature, a Patriot Wrench has no special bonuses or penalties due to size. A Patriot Wrench's base landspeed is 30 ft.

Ability Score Modifiers: None. Patriot Wrench are every bit as diverse as their human ancestors.

Racial Feats: All Patriot Wrench receive Zero-G Training as a racial bonus feat. They enjoy zero-g conditions and make excellent spacers.

Racial Skills: Patriot Wrench have direction finding organs modeled on bee and homing pigeon anatomy built into their neural tissue. They receive a +8 racial bonus on Navigate checks, and can always sense their distance and relative direction to their birth planet, regardless of how far they range.

Enhanced Senses: Patriot Wrench receive lowlight vision and darkvision with a 120 ft effective range.

Lifechained (EX): Patriot Wrench mutants are considered to have a single Lifechained feat for the purpose of predatory Lifechain abilities. They can sense the presence of, and general direction to, other Lifespawn within one mile.

As Lifechained creatures, Patriot Wrench may select the Awakened Heritage feat at any point during their careers, not just at first level. A Patriot Wrench may always take either the Thermonuclear Heart or Starleap Spaceflight Lifechained feats, regardless of whether she meets the prerequisites or not. These two feats represent natural evolutions of her already impressive engineered gifts.

Lesser Spaceborn (EX): Patriot Wrench do not need to breathe and are immune to the effects of suffocation, vacuum and radiation. They are immune to environmental heat and cold.

Starbright (EX): A Patriot Wrench's natural biological processes allow the humanoid to generate incredible amounts of light. The Patriot Wrench can produce light equal to that of a halogen spotlight (bright illumination in a 100 ft cone, shadowy illumination for twice that distance). The Patriot Wrench can reduce her light output to less than that of an illuminated watch dial.

As a standard action, the Patriot Wrench can create a blinding flash of light, similar to the effect of a flash grenade centered on her self. All creatures within 30 ft of the Wrench who can see her must succeed at a FORT Save (DC 10 + her CON modifier) or be blinded for 1d4 rounds.

In Psi-Watch

In Psi-Watch, Patriot Wrench mutants are a refinement of the earlier Shiftsteel Symbiote soldier-species. Patriot Wrench are less physically powerful, but more psychologically stable- they do not have to endure the alien dreams and implanted memories that plague Shiftsteel mutants. Every faction fields at least a few Patriot Wrench, because their natural gifts make them perfectly suited for exo-atmospheric work.

Psi-Watch itself has trained a small, elite Cadre of Patriot Wrench supersoldiers known as the Morningstar Brigade. Morningstar Brigade troops are trained in sky-diving and HALO operations, and a preferred tactic is to make a dangerous HALO jump from the edge of the ionosphere, using a Phobos suborbital as a mission platform. Morningstar Brigade is commanded by Major Samuel Jane, codenamed Starburn. The career Air Force pilot who accepted genetic reorganization after being shot down over Iraq. The Patriot Wrench mutation was Major Jane's chance to walk- and fly- again.



Player Species: Shy Minutemen

Medium Humanoid (Lifechained) (PL 7)

The Shy Minutemen were the fruit of a personal, highly classified and illegal genetic program begun by former Secretary of Defense Elliot Shy. When rumors of the species' existence finally broke, in early 2043, the resulting scandal brought down a Presidency, and ended Major General Shy's long career in suicide and disgrace. During his tenure as SECDEF, Shy grew more and more paranoid about the possibility of xeno-contamination. A deep terror of Lifechained horrors (as described in Guide to the Known Galaxy) guided his every action, including the actions that ended his life and career.

Early in 2038, Shy ordered the rouge elements within the US military to introduce a tailored retro-virus into random American newborns. The mutagenic virus altered its victim's genome, and laid dormant until puberty, often even longer. Shy's plan was to create an unwitting corps of 'minutemen' in key urban centers across the country, ordinary men and women who would transform and attack instinctively and involuntarily when a Lifechained threat was detected. The conspiracy was uncovered years before the first Minutemen 'expressed' at puberty, but the damage to the human genome was done, and Shy Minutemen mutates entered the biosphere.

The “Shy” genome is undetectable until it expresses at puberty, and the gene-mod is deeply recessive. Most Shy live as ordinary humans until their early teens. Children born to Shy parents are monitored closely during their childhood, and are often prescribed specially tailored hormone therapies to delay puberty or mitigate their hostility. Documented Shy mutates are subject to a host of legal restrictions and social stigma, and Shy are openly discouraged from breeding. They are marginalized as living weapons, designed to kill a specific class of post-humans.

Though Shy Minutemen are designed to prey on Lifespawn, and can easily sense the presence of these xeno-beings, they are not compelled to attack them without warning, as Shy had hoped his creations would be. Still, most Shy Minutemen view Lifespawn as targets, and have an instinctive hatred for their genetic adversaries, or even worse, a lust to stalk and murder them.

The Shy have some solidarity with the Nanofeasters, who suffer similar prejudice, but the presence of so many Lifespawn Powered in the Lifer Army has prevented the mutates from a closer alliance with the AOG. Shy are often recruited into APEX and the Choicer military, as a potent anti-Lifespawn expert, or serve a similar role aboard one of Earth’s starships. A surprisingly high number of Shy emigrate off planet, where their anti-Lifespawn talents are a boon rather than a curse- the mutates can make good money defending an out-colony.

Appearance: Shy undergo a startling physical transformation once their mutations express themselves at puberty. Their skins darken to a dull grayish black, which is as durable as ballistic cloth. Shy skin has a rough, sandpapery texture, similar to lizard-skin or a shark’s hide. White, pale blue, and light green stripes decorate their limbs. A young Shy’s hands grow dramatically in size and their fingers elongate into sharp talons.

A Shy’s facial structure changes slightly, with the mutate’s features becoming sharper and more angular. Shy eyes are a dingy green and lack a

visible pupil, and are significantly larger than a human’s, giving the mutates keen night vision. Most Shy are completely hairless.

Reproduction: Shy mutates reproduce identically to ordinary humans. The Shy genome is deeply recessive, and can lie dormant for generations before expressing. Shy are discouraged from breeding, and most voluntarily undergo sterilization or use contraceptive tech in hopes of allowing their mutant bloodline to fade into extinction. Even Lifer Shy rarely have children of their own, preferring to adopt or raise foster families.

Names: Shy names follow human naming convention.

Size: Medium. As medium creatures, Shy receive no special bonus or penalties due to their size. A Shy’s base landspeed is 30 ft.

Ability Score Modifiers: +4 CON, +2 WIS, -2 CHA. Shy have wolf-like senses and are shockingly hard to kill, but most are traumatized by their transformation into a post-human, and their emotional scars limit their effectiveness in non-combat situations.

Racial Skills: Shy are natural hunters, who receive a +2 racial bonus on Survival checks and on Hide and Move Silently checks made in urban settings.

Shy Minutemen have faint racial memories of the Lifechain and its creatures. They receive a +1 racial bonus on all Knowledge checks made concerning the Lifechain and Lifechained creatures.

The Shy are designed to combat Lifechained creatures. Shy receive a +2 racial bonus on Initiative checks while battling a creature with the Lifechained subtype, and receive a +1 insight bonus to their Defense score against any melee attacks made by a Lifechained creature.

Lifechained Immunization (EX): A Shy Minuteman is considered a Lifechained creature, even though the mutate has no actual Lifechained

feats. It is considered to have a single Lifechained feat for the purpose of predatory Lifechained Feats.

A Shy Minuteman can never gain Lifechained Feats, and receives a +4 racial bonus on saves made to resist the effect of hostile Lifechain abilities, such as the Scorpion Mirage's toxin.

Natural Armor (EX): A Shy's dusky hide is durable enough to survive small caliber gunshots. Shy receive a +1 natural armor bonus to Defense.

Natural Weapons (EX): A Shy Minuteman's claws are magnificent natural weapons. These talons inflict 1d6+STR modifier points of slashing damage on a successful hit. A Shy is always considered armed and proficient when attacking with his or her natural weapons.

A Shy's talons inflict an additional +2 points of slashing damage when used against any creature with the Lifechained subtype, including other Shy.

Enhanced Senses: Shy Minutemen have keen senses of smell, thanks to the introduction of bloodhound and pitbull DNA into their genome. They possess the *scent* special quality. A Shy with the Track feat may use it to track by scent alone.

Shy Minutemen can automatically sense the presence and direction to any Lifespawn creature within a 1 mile radius.

Shy have Darkvision with a 60 ft range.

Level Adjustment: +2. Shy Minutemen are slightly more powerful, and gain levels more slowly than an unmodified human.

Player Species: Softling Healers

Medium Humanoid (Psionic) (PL 7)

Softling Healers were one of the first fruits of the genetic revolution of the early 2030s. Building on the gene-cutting techniques involved in the Panacean Release, the first Softling Healers were designed to be healers and emergency medics. The species was designed as female-exclusive as a concession not only to the feminist pagans of the young Covenant, but also to the meta-porn financiers who backed the species' creation. The young species was instantly eroticized as seductive healers and pleasers.

Softling Healers were quickly recognized as fully sentient early in 2054, though the vast majority continued to serve their makers, either as meta-starlets or as priestess-midwives. As the novelty (and commercial prospects) for the mutates faded, large scale decanting of Softling clones trickled to a stop. Today, very few Softling Healers are decanted by mega-corps. Instead, the vast majority are born naturally to Softling mothers, living and working as free citizens within the Covenant.

Most of 2107's Softling Healers are concentrated in California, where both the meta-porn industry and the Covenant have their capitals, but the mutates have migrated across human space. They are in high demand on human out-colonies, and a Softling colonist can earn amazing wages acting as an out colony's medic.

Many Softlings have defected to the Lifer pseudo-nation, attracted to the faction's fertility worship and pro-life ideals. Like many exploited post-humans, Softling Healers tend to have a positive view of the Lifer nation's more moderate arm, remembering how the proto-Lifers of the 2030s helped the species gain its freedom. A fairly large Softling commune can be found on Solomon Station, the Lifer-flagged colony in Jupiter orbit.

Appearance: Softling Healers were designed as a work of art as much, if not more, than they were as a practical, viable species. The species was designed to look much more eye-catching and inhuman



than it needed to be; Softlings are visually non-human to a degree later mutates don't even approach.

Softling Healers are tall, blue-skinned humanoids. Their skins range from a pale blue so pale it's nearly white to a vivid, electric blue. Their entire bodies are covered in an intricate, web-like network of stark white lines. These birthmarks glow faintly at all times, clearly illuminating the mutates in darkness. A Softling's viscera glow with a similar, and even more intense chemical luminescence, and their organs are visible beneath the flesh of their

abdomen and torso as fleshy white masses.

Softling Healer facial structures blend elements of virtually every human racial group. The mutates have thick, curly hair, the ends of which luminescence like fiber optic cables. Their eyes are milky white and pupilless, and as a final whimsical touch by the race's designers, their ears are elongated and 'elven'.

Reproduction: Softling Healer mutations are only expressed on a double X chromosome. Male offspring of Softling mothers are fully human, though

they carry the mutation in their sperm as a recessive trait- their daughters will likely be Softlings.

Softlings have no set breeding season and enjoy sex for pleasure. Softling culture is sexually open and positive, even among Lifer Softlings. The mutants tend to be sexually aggressive and take a wide variety of lovers over the course of their lives.

Softling pregnancies are much shorter than human pregnancies, even humans with the Birth Breed genemod. Softling pregnancies usually last only 4 months, and Softling childhood is similarly truncated. A Softling child of 10-11 is emotionally and physically similar to a college age human.

Names: Softling Healer names follow human naming conventions, especially Covenant naming conventions. Softling names tend to be quirky and exotic, and blend anatomical terms, mythological and pagan craft-names with conventional American style names.

Size: Medium. As medium creatures, Softling Healers receive no special bonus or penalty due to their size. A Softling's base landspeed is 30 ft.

Ability Score Modifiers: +2 WIS. Softling Healers are natural empaths and healers- they are perceptive, compassionate and fairly strong willed.

Racial Skills: Softling Healers are genetically programmed with an innate gift for medicine, especially emergency medicine under battlefield conditions. They receive a +4 racial bonus on Treat Injury checks.

Stabilization (SU): By touching a wounded patient, a Softling Healer can send a surge of bio-energy which cauterizes wounds, clots blood and reinforces failing life systems. As a standard action, a Softling Healer can kiss or caress a dying lifeform (reduced to -1 HP and dropping) and instantly stabilize that creature, preventing further HP loss. This ability can also be used to end ongoing damage from blood loss, such as caused by a weapon with the *wounding* property.

Bio-restorative Touch (EX): Once per day, a Softling Healer can touch a wounded creature (or itself) and imbue it with a charge of biological energy. Doing so is a standard action, which instantly restores 1d8+ the Softling's CHA modifier Hit Points to the creature. The Softling can raise the touched's creature HP past its normal maximum total. Excess HP becomes temporary hit points, which fade after one minute.

In Extremis (SU): By touching a wounded creature, a Softling Healer can take its wounds into her own mutant body, sacrificing her own life energy to heal the wounded creature. For every three points of damage suffered by the Softling Healer, the wounded creature recovers 1 HP. The Softling cannot raise a wounded creature to higher than his or her normal maximum HP with this ability. Using this ability is a standard action, which provokes attacks of opportunity.

A Softling Healer gains the Psionic subtype.

Enhanced Senses: Softling Healers have keen noses, and can often diagnose illnesses or identify toxins just by sniffing a patient. Softling Healers have the *Scent* special quality, and Softlings who acquire the Track feat may use it to track by scent.

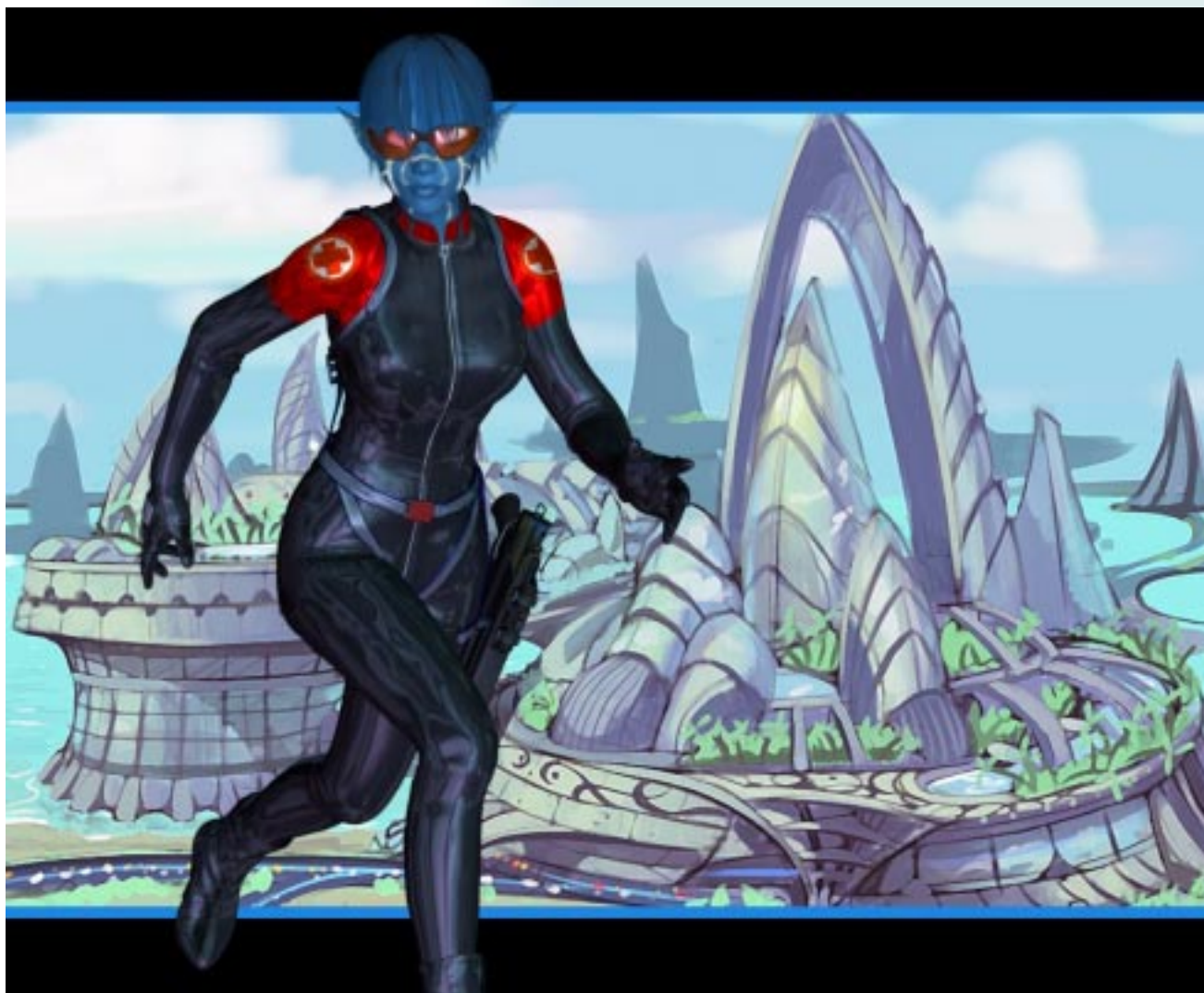


Table: Engineered Humanity				
Species Name	First Introduced	Creator	Subtype	Level Adjust-ment
Aegis	2100	US Government	None	+1
Fluxminx	Early 2030s	Meta-porn Industry, Freeborn	Shapechanger	+0
Mediator	2090s	US Government, Freeborn	None	+0
Nanofeaster	Mid 2060s	Lifer Army of God, Freeborn	None	+2
Patriot Courier	Early 2040s	US Government	Psionic	+2
Patriot Mechanic	Mid 2040s	Various Megacorps, Freeborn	Psionic	+0
Patriot Wrench	Mid 2020s	NASA, various megacorps, Freeborn	Lifichained	+0
Shy Minutemen	Early 2050s	US Government, Freeborn	Lifichained	+2

Chapter Two: Undecided America

The United States of America (Unaligned)

Progress Level: Mid PL Seven

Total Population (Earth): Approximately 625 million, not aligned officially with either the Lifer or Choicer pseudo-nations

Political Structure: Representative Democracy under military control

Current Leaders: Isaiah Courson, (Democrat, president), Susan Gaston-Chalmers (Dianic Rite Covenant, vice president), ticket elected 2104

States added since 2010: Puerto Rico (2012), Guam (2015), Jalisco (2018), Free Cuba (2021), Diana Station (2026), Tijuana (2031)

Average Educational Level: Equivalent to 1-2 years of college

Percentage of the Population below the poverty line: 14-16 %

Percentage of the Population who are combat veterans: 33%

Percentage of the Population with a felony record: 7-8%

Age of Consent: Sixteen

Age of Majority: Sixteen

Metahuman to Human Ratio: 1 in 322

Major Cities: Washington DC ; The Apex Metroplex, DC

Major Out-Colonies: Controlling interest in Diana Station, Earth's Moon, Mars Forward Observation Base II, US Embassy on Kor (Stonecutter homeworld)

The APEX Metroplex

Washington, DC

May 5, 2106.

The old man says nothing, his bearded face unreadable as ancient marble. The cyberlinked canine sitting at his feet senses his master's true feelings, though, and rumbled deep and low deep within his barrel chest. His master reaches down to scratch behind the dog's ear, quieting him gently. The old man's name is Major

Nathan Rice, and this isn't the first screwed up mission he's deployed on, and he knows that if his luck holds, it won't be the last. His poker face is impeccable, honed by forty plus years of active duty practice.

*The briefing room is the same one the squad has used for the past two years, small and dimly lit and comfortable, with good chairs and a decent smartlight projector system. The small classroom on Pentagon Sublevel c is **their** room in all but name, because soldiers, especially good ones, are allowed to be superstitious. Now, the room is filled to capacity, with soldiers in the uniform of the day, listening to the brief with distaste.*

Most of the older members of the strike team, like Major Rice, maintain a poker-face, keeping their feelings to themselves. The younger squad members don't even bother to maintain a pretense: Breakdown and Vigil trade quiet 'oh, fuck me' looks, and little, sexy serpent-gened Spar stares at the new comer to the briefing room, the reason for the squad's disquiet with barely concealed loathing.

There is an alien in the small, close, comfortable, familiar briefing room. She was born and raised on Earth, and is just as genetically human as any of the other soldiers around the oval, faux-wood table, but she is an alien none-the-less. Regina Moses is Lifer, a post-human soldier from a terrorist nation, an alien from another America. The black-garbed Lifer woman's left leg shakes nervously, and picking up on her nervousness, Major Rice's big war-dog whines plaintively. Moses clenches and unclenches her right fist, summoning and dismissing her psi-weapon as she listens to the brief, and tries to ignore the murderous, contemptuous rage coming at her from all around the table.

At the forefront of the small class room, the unit's Neo-Sapien Mediator intel officer finishes her brief. The petite brunette closes her smartlight windows, thinks of one final thing,

and looks up at the assembled troops. "Since we'll be coordinating with Atlanta's Lifer police department on this mission, if you need to wave someone off, please remember the word is 'scramble', not 'abort'."

Breakdown leans back in one of the almost-leather chairs and runs his fingers through his hair. He sighs in frustration "Fucking kidding me? These guys don't even--"

"It's not a word they use. Using the term will only confuse the situation."

"Fuck bags don't even speak English the right way...."

Finally the old man speaks. "Table it, Staff Sergeant. More important things to worry about."

The younger man accepts the rebuke, biting back his hate. He shoots a killing look at the Lifer liaison officer across the table, an obvious outsider in her sleek, black combat wear amid a sea of white duty uniforms.

Rice understood the younger man's rage, probably better than Breakdown did himself. For Breakdown, the Abortion War was something that ended when he was six or seven, not something he grew up living.... Not something that cost him his sight before he was even born, thanks to a Lifer bio-terror strike. Not something.....

Major Rice bites down the old, hateful thoughts, the worst combat-memories, and focused on the mission. He scratches his dog again, running his fingers through the retriever's shaggy blond/grey hair. He understood Breakdown's anger. And Vigil's and Spar's and all the rest. They were heading deep into an Enclave, and even though the Lifer government had asked them to be there this time, they were still an invading army. Even the most tolerant soldier can only take being called "babykiller" or "beast", or can withstand broken bottles

raining down against their combat armor for so long before it takes a toll.

The fact that APEX was actually being invited into the Atlanta Enclave was a sign of how serious the situation was. Nathan Rice rubs his useless eyes, tries to focus on the mission info streaming directly into his cyber-brain, and perfunctorily thanks the intel agent for her briefing. Business first, he tells himself, you have your orders.

He gestures towards the Lifer sitting across the table, motioning her forward.

"Mrs. Moses here has had the most contact with the xeno-threat. I'm going to remind you that the usual chain of command applies, so you won't be taking orders from her directly."

That last phrased specifically for Breakdown, mollifying him somewhat. Rice knows that Vigil is clasping his friend on the shoulder as he continues. Rice rises, walking to the podium, his canine partner trotting at his side. He motions for the black garbed woman wearing the stylized Virgin Mary sigil of the Lifer nation on her choker to join him.

"But she knows the area, better than we **ever** can, and she knows the threat. Mrs. Moses, come up here please. Give us what you got...."

He listens to her foot falls as she walks the three feet to the podium, memorizing her body's sounds and movement patterns for future use, just in case the squad meets her on less friendly terms some time down the road. She stammers, clears her throat, and then she begins to speak, laying out the mission profile....

The Basics: American Government and Territory

34 The American government resembles its pre-War counterpart; the basic structure of the Legislature and the process for electing a President are almost identical. The citizens depend on the federal and state government for civic services- education, utilities, police forces, road building and public welfare programs. The main difference is the degree to which the pseudo-nationals and corporations have become involved in the ordinary business of government. For example, The Coalition for Life has taken on the responsibility of providing veterans care to Lifer war vets while the Choicer government allocates millions of dollars of its own funds to provide police protection and infrastructure to its neighborhoods.

Both pseudonations run their own schools, each targeted to believing parents as a better alternative than overstressed, often theologically hostile public education industry. Megacorps have contracts to run important aspects of the government: private corporations administer health care and utilities, public schools, local welfare and food stamp programs, prison and probation. The government agencies which once administered these services have been reduced to skeleton crews, tasked with ensuring that the corporations now running things act responsibly and in the public interest, but most importantly of all, according to their contract.



America's military has maintained its power and global primacy, becoming the single largest federal employer. With the devastation of the last war still in mind, the average citizen is torn between a desire for disarmament and peace, and a knowledge that the only peace comes from the barrel of a gun. The American armed forces have built themselves to a technological and manpower peak; even as the country undergoes an acrimonious divorce, the American military is stronger and better equipped than at any other point in its history. Military service is common, and most American adults are veterans of at least one enlistment.

Critics complain that instead of being an instrument of policy, the modern American military, especially the superhuman warriors commanding APEX have begun setting national policy. Presidential elections may come and go, but a high level APEX general has the ability to make decisions which affect the country for the entire course of their careers, and often for decades beyond their retirement. APEX commanders today still complain bitterly about the strictures laid down onto the

organization after the controversial “Shy years”, while viewing the former Secretary of Defense with mingled awe and embarrassment.

The US military’s 22nd century policy of “fully integrated diplomacy” puts much of the burden of international diplomacy and trade negotiations in the hands of theater commander, allowing INCONUS military leaders similar latitude when dealing with the Lifer and Choicer pseudo-nations. The State Department and Department of Defense have integrated into a single cabinet level office, the *Department of International Policy*.

Posse comittus laws, which traditionally prevented the US military from performing operations on United States soil, were revoked during the very first days of the War. A military presence in major cities is an unremarkable fact of life for 22nd century Americans.

Army and Marine Corps soldiers patrol the streets, with additional troops deployed on protest days, Choicer holy days and whenever tensions flare after some media-reported atrocity. Military parades and displays of power are common. The sight of light tanks and APCs rumbling through a city street, flanked by Longspear gunner androids, is an unremarkable one for 2107’s citizens.

Marines and APEX “secondaries” in full power armor stand sentry at the checkpoints and travel barricades leading into and out of Lifer enclaves. The Air Force conducts over flights and combat air patrols over the city skyline, piloting everything from combat interceptors to Shell suits to unmanned ariel vehicles. Meanwhile, the Navy and Coast Guard patrol the coastline, protecting American and Choicer shipping from threats both foreign and domestic.

Boot Camp

One of the largest differences between the 22nd and 21st century American military involves training methods- especially the induction and training of new recruits. Recruit training has been centralized into one or two sites per service, with the

largest percentage of recruits being processed through San Antonio, TX. Both the Army and Air Force have their boot camps in the San Antonio metroplex, taking advantage of the city’s infrastructure and excellent military medical facilities.

Upon arriving at boot camp, recruits no matter their branch, undergo comprehensive genetic reorganization. Commercial genemods are implanted in the patient while they remain in an artificially induced healing coma. The first 7-14 days of a recruit’s military career are spent unconscious, while their bodies adjust to the gene-mods, and basic military knowledge is implanted into their dreaming subconscious. When the new recruits finally awaken, they are already in the best shape of their lives, thanks to their metabolic enhancements and have a basic understanding of military terms, values and culture.

The following mandatory genemods are implanted in all base-line human American military personnel during boot camp. There is no religious exemption for these genemods, another factor which keeps Evangelical Christians out of the modern American military, as they tend to distrust gene-tech. These genemods are discussed fully in the Otherverse America campaign setting.

- Athlete Gold, either Beowulf or Crisis (select only one), Cornucopia, Freshen, Genoreceptor, Lifeline, Marathoner, Nomad, Regen II
- Patients with Regen I are offered the option of upgrading to Regen II or keeping their current genemod active.
- **Summary of gene therapy results:**
+1 racial bonus on Jump and Tumble checks, some FORT Saves, +1 Initiative checks, +1 on either Spot checks or some WILL Saves, +4 racial bonus on FORT saves vs heat stress, gains the Run Feat, needs less food and water than an unmodified human, automatically stabilizes, recovers HP at twice the normal human rate.



Recruits are sorted into training platoons, and depending on the branch of service, initial training can last between 6 to 9 weeks after the recruit awakens. Recruits have far more freedom than their 21st Century counterparts, but are still restricted to base for at least the first $\frac{3}{4}$ of their training, with off base liberty offered as a reward during the last weeks of instruction.

Due mostly to the difficulty in blocking or censoring Dreamscape signals, recruits have unrestricted Dreamscape access while asleep, provided they complete some required Dreamscape GMTs (general military training courses).

New recruits are encouraged to blog about their experiences, both good and bad, during boot camp, in hopes of enticing their readers and friends into the military. Mil-Media offers Dreamscape-based writers workshops, ready to use stock images, and other aids to military recruit-bloggers.

Mexico

During the 2030s, a desperate Mexico ceded two of its most violent states to the United States, near collapse after decades of open warfare with the cartels. Jalisco and Tijuana became the 54th and 56th American states, respectively. More than a decade of street to street fighting brought an end to cartel influence in the two new states, and seasoned an entire generation of APEX combat types. Many veteran operatives, active when the Abortion War went hot, had their first taste of urban combat during the “Mexican Sweeps” of the early 2040s.

Despite their geographic closeness, demographic similarities, and fact that the two countries have peaceably exchanged territory in living memory, relations between Mexico and the United States are strained, at best. The resentment bred by the drug wars and virulent anti-immigrant rhetoric of the early 2010s still festers within Mexico. Mexican citizens still remember the racist words of the Becks, and Limbaughs and Bushes of a by-gone era, even if the average American has forgotten them.

Worse, Mexicans still harbor a fierce contempt for Americans, who provided (and continue to provide) such a rich target market for the cartels squeezing the life out of their country, and for the American weapons that filter across the southern border and into the hands of the cartels. The fact that Mexico is controlled as much by the mega-corps as it is by the cartels only adds to the resentment. Mexico's elected government is and probably always will be a fragile rubber stamp on the true powers behind the country.

The common perception of the USA is of a shift and ungrateful relative, who only visits when he wants something, whether that 'something' is good weed or cheap call-center labor.

While America's economy is driven by high-tech and military industry, as well as cultural exports, Mexico's economy is primarily service driven. The Mexican government does everything in its power to tempt big business into the country- offering the corporates everything from excellent tax incentives and some of the most 'employer-friendly' labor laws of the 22nd century, to nationally sanctioned union-busting *policia* raids. Most North American mega-corporations have their headquarters in overcrowded, hyper-urban Mexico City to take advantage of the Mexican government's financial laws.

Mexico's other major industry is tourism, and the need to bring in American Spring Breakers is a major reason behind the government's push to bring the cartels under control. The image Mexico wants to present is one of decadence, hedonism and just enough wildness to be exciting, without any real risk. Mexico wants to be seen as a larger and slightly lawless Las Vegas, where you can buy anything for the right price. Of course, the Mexican government uses memetic warfare techniques to ensure that 'anything' is rarely more controversial than a lot of beer, some good designer drugs, and maybe a wild night with a few cute out-call girls.

Mexico also attracts tourists of another kind. The country practices 'discretionary extradition', which makes Mexico an attractive sanctuary for American (and international) Powered criminals and

terrorists. Soured after the executions of dozens of Mexican citizens in the United States, up through the mid 2020s, Mexico simply stopped responding to requests for extradition by its northern neighbor. Today, Mexico will return an American fugitive to his native soil if he violates Mexican law or is considered a threat to national security. Otherwise, fugitives are allowed to begin a new life in Mexico.

Many wanted AOG terrorists fled to Mexico after War's End, where they have formed ad hoc 'Enclaves' of other Lifer ex-pats. Even ex-pats planning rescue-strikes over the border are left unmolested; Mexico doesn't care much if an abortion clinic in Texas or SoCal gets atomized, so long as the Lifers involved remain polite, non-violent and pay their taxes on time when residing in their adopted homeland.

APEX is not allowed to operate on Mexican soil, and known APEX members are prohibited from traveling to the country without specific permission from the Mexican Congress. If America's celebrity superheroes run a mission across the border, they must do it secretly.

Politically, Mexico tends to be moderately Lifer, though the nation does its best not to offend the Choicer pseudo-nation too badly. They want Choicer maidens walking the beaches in Cozumel and spending their money too. Abortion is illegal (as are some forms of gene-level contraception, like the Nymphette genemod) across the majority-Catholic country, though Choicer coven-houses are allowed to exist unmolested.

Neo-Witch Midwives are allowed to teach and lead religious ceremonies, though they must sign an official document promising they will not use their skills to actually perform abortions within the country's borders. Illegal abortions are an open secret across Mexico, as are cross-border excursions into the USA for the same purpose. Aside from a handful of high profile arrests and trails each year (usually ending in a fine and expulsion from the country), Mexican police tend to look the other way on the subject.

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As (relatively) welcoming as the conservative nation is to visiting Neo-Witches, tensions between American Catholic believers and their Vatican-sworn Mexican counterparts run hot. The State Department warns visiting Am-Cath tourists to keep their politics and affiliations to themselves. Street beatings and harassment of Am-Catholic 'traitors' are common, especially in Central Mexico, where foreign American Catholics rarely venture.

State of American Law: Drug Use

Drug use is still a crime in 2107, though it is far from the law's highest priority. Drug dealers and major suppliers are heavily prosecuted; anti-drug operations are one of APEX's major responsibilities, and drug interdiction remains one of the Navy's most important tasks. Misdemeanor drug use and possession are officially crimes, but are rarely prosecuted. Unless a local cop is desperate for a reason to hold a suspect, he'll usually toss small amounts of drugs found during an arrest rather than bothering with the paperwork for a conviction.

Many of the drugs common during the 21st Century have either been legalized or are considered so innocuous, in the face of more potent futuristic drugs, their use is no longer stigmatized. Drugs like marijuana and Ecstasy, along with many mild hallucinogens and euphoric are technically legal, but have fallen out of use in favor of modern drugs with longer durations and fewer side effects. In most cases Temp-Mod gene-treatments, minor Philosophies and tailored Smartlight viruses produce identical effects, without long term risk or lingering hangovers.



New Affiliation: The Familia

Founded: Mid 1950s, established in current form, late 2050s

The Familia controls most of Northern and Central Mexico. The citizens of the country know the truth of the situation- the Mexican federal government might claim to control the country, but its influence is strongest in the cities. The Familia controls the vast majority of the country, and in rural areas (which are still common, even in 2107), the Familia is the only entity meeting the obligations of

government. Familia schools, clinics and 'police' are often the only options for Mexicans living in remote areas, and usually provide more and better services than their government counterparts.

Over the decades the Familia has grown, both in wealth and influence. The Mexican Sweeps of 70 years ago only strengthened the organization, forcing itself through a brutally effective period of involuntary uplift. The Familia of today is much more efficient and tightly controlled than the gunslinging drug lords of a previous century.

To win the support of the populace, the Familia deliberately turned its back on the narco-violence of the past. Unnecessary violence against Mexican civilians is a death sentence, and crimes across the border are only undertaken with great deliberation, when the rewards far exceed the risks. They restrain their own troops, maintain a brutal parody of quality control over the end-stage dealers who distribute their products in the United States and abroad, and use legal maneuvering and memetic warfare to ensure their products are fully legal, or at least, not illegal yet. Though the cartels largest money-maker is a highly processed cocaine derivative, they constantly evolve new series of custom-tailored designer drugs and euphoric temp-mods.

The Familia maintains a large standing army of well trained mercenary post-humans and combat 'borgs, who contract with the cartel to provide protection and firepower for a specific period of time. The sale of military grade weapons (including tactical nuclear weapons) and combat-trained mercenaries to other Western Hemisphere nations (and to the pseudo-nations) are major money makers for the Familia. The cartel employs troops from around the world, especially from the United States and across Central and South America, but only native-born Mexicans are allowed to ascend to leadership positions within the organization.

The cartel's elite troops undergo military-styled training, including a 2-3 month long bootcamp, genetic upgrade program performed by top-notch Nexii geneticists, and standard equipment

issue. With their vast wealth the Familia troops are better funded and equipped than their federal counterparts, and at least as well equipped as the War-era Lifer AOG. The organization uses military rank, and each mercenary's place in the command structure is clearly defined in their enlistment contract.

Disobedience is punished harshly- beating and ritualized torture are common, and the punishment for treason is death, often of the offender's entire family. However, those who serve loyally are rewarded with profit sharing plans, secure retirement funds, and the best medical care and metahuman upgrade option packages money can buy.

Familia officers, as well as the organization's nobles are allowed to wear the group's ink, a tradition they picked up from the Yakuza. While most of the cartel's troops wear traditional Mexi-gang ink, only the most trusted members decorate their bodies with intricate, nano-active grey-wash, Aztec styled tats. Familia troops, especially the post-humans, revel in their strength and monstrous powers.

There is a greater percentage of physically altered post-humans among the cartel's mercs than in any other standing army, excluding (possibly) the Lifer AOG. Unlike the Lifers, who favor morbid, skeletal-style mutations, Familia loyalists favor mutations inspired by mythology- particularly Aztec and MesoAmerican myth. The "feathered serpent" and "combat jaguar" styled Combat Types and Powered Heroes first originated among the Familia, and than spread north, as Powered of every nationality and race copied the style. Some Familia meta-humans use stolen and reverse engineered Closer and Juggernaut Brute cybertech to transform themselves into cybernetic warriors.

Prerequisites: Mexican national, Speak/Read Spanish, Meaningful Ink, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Either Advanced Firearms Proficiency or Full Burst, Base Attack Bonus +3

Benefit: You are a trusted cartel NCO, a veteran of a dozen or more run n' gun battles with the *Norteamericano* DEA in the badlands between the two nations. You are known as a killer, and while you're restrained around the civilians, everyone who sees your grey tone nano-tats knows that you can slip from polite soldier to savage killer in a second.

You may add either your STR or DEX as an untyped bonus to Intimidate checks, whichever is higher.

The Druglord Advanced Class, found in *D20 Decade: the 1980s* (Otherverse Games, 2007) is a natural fit for Familia leaders. Druglords in the Otherverses America setting must have the Familia affiliation, in addition to the standard requirements of the class.

Otherwise, the class functions identically in the Otherverses, though its Illegal Army class feature is even more impressive in a world where every major American faction has access to military grade firepower and powered armor.

Familia Ink (General)

Your entire body is covered in intricate, grey-scale tattoos that indicate your status in the Familia, a narco-cartel which is effectively a government in its own right, and which controls most of Mexico and Central America.

Prerequisites: membership in the Familia, Mexican race, Intimidate 4 ranks, Knowledge: streetwise 4 ranks, Meaningful Ink

Benefit: You receive a +4 bonus to Diplomacy, Gamble and Intimidate checks made against anyone who recognizes you as a Familia enforcer.

In addition, you may spend an action point and reveal your tattoos to gain several minor combat benefits. Revealing your tattoos is a standard action which provokes attacks of opportunity.

- +2 morale bonus to Defense, which lasts for a number of rounds equal to your total character level
- +2 bonus on attack and damage rolls with any sword, which lasts for a number of rounds equal to your total character level.

- Fear: Ability to cast *fear* as a mage of your total character level
- Alacrity: Ability to cast *haste* as a mage of your total character level

New Affiliation: The Nails

Founded: 2092 in Detroit, Michigan

The Nails are a Detroit gang with chapters in cities across the nation, and one of the most powerful collection of rouge power armor pilots and meta-criminals in the country. The OG Nails got their start and their name from their theft of three dozen construction exo-frames from a secure Metamorphics North warehouse in late 2092. Within a few months, the gangsters had customized the stolen hardware into a surprisingly effective set of jury-rigged combat suits, altering the steam hammer and nail gun attachments on the left arms of their suits into a garage-built version of a railgun. They quickly rose to dominate America's chaotic, post-War criminal underworld.

Armed with these fearsome pieces of custom hardware, there wasn't a bank vault or armored car the Nails couldn't rip apart. The Nails were more than a match for anything the local cops or super-soldiers could bring to bear, and the gang bangers, many of whom had earned their stripes during the Abortion War as mercenaries quickly became self taught urban warfare experts.

Today, the Nails have fragmented into a dozen competing gangs, and violence between sets is epidemic. Locally, the Flint Nation Nails and the Iaccoca Avenue Nails battle for control of the drugs and robbery trade, while the Los Angeles based Fifty Murders Nails is attempting to unite the entire organization under its colors. The Texas Familia has united several Nail sets under their umbrella, and are using the Shell troops against Mexican Familia metahumans. The War between Texas and Mexican Familia branches has torn apart the Southwestern United States, with dozens of civilian deaths blamed on the feud.

Prerequisites: Knowledge (tactics) 4 ranks, Knowledge (streetwise) 6 ranks, Pilot 8 ranks, Intimidate 4 ranks, Vehicle Expert, Missile Volley

Benefits: When piloting any form of powered armor or mecha, any ballistic or piercing weapons built into your suit inflict an additional 2 points of damage, thanks to your Nail anti-armor training.

Gun Culture

“The Constitution of most of our states (and of the United States) assert that all power is inherent in the people; that they may exercise it by themselves; that it is their right and duty to be at all times armed.”

-Thomas Jefferson

Civilian ownership of guns, including light energy weapons is common, expected and to some degree encouraged. Twenty-second century Americans find nothing unusual about carrying a light laser weapon concealed under business attire, or about keeping a combat shotgun in the trunk of their mak-tic coupe. Weapons are often carried openly, though anyone allowed to own and use a weapon is by definition allowed to conceal that weapon.

Anyone honorably discharged from either the United States or Choicer militaries are allowed the option to carry weapons; active duty military and police are required to carry weapons at all time, even when off duty or wearing civilian clothes. Magnetic imaging systems in most public areas and ferro-responsive clothing (described in Otherverse America) make concealing weapons impractical, more a statement of politeness than an actual attempt at concealment.



Most civilians are not allowed to carry their weapons into secure areas, such as courthouses, government offices, and important Choicer buildings. Some businesses also restrict the carrying of weapons on the premises.

Secure, automated gun lockers are stationed near the entrance of areas where guns are restricted. Visitors deposit their firearms in an automated locker, which can then only be opened by their ID Wallet biometric data, though police and security forces can override the computer locks and enter the weapons. Once their business is done, the visitor simply retrieves their gun(s) on the way out the front door.

Unrestricted Carry (General)

You are licensed to carry firearms and other in most restricted environments.

Prerequisite: Personal Firearms Proficiency, cannot have any Lifer primary allegiance.

Benefit: You are allowed to keep any weapon with a restriction rating of Restricted (+2) or less in most secured environments, such as courthouses, police stations, prisons, and the like. You may or may not have to surrender weapons with a Military (+3) restriction rating, as determined by the gamemaster and the current situation. You are legally authorized to own and carry weapons.

In addition, a military 'dumb-AI' is assigned to track your movements, and automatically overrides most conventional weapons detection software. Most weapons scanners, as well as Ferro-Responsive clothing worn by you, will not alert if you are concealing a weapon on your person.

In ultra-high security environments, such as the Washington Metroplex, Aradia's Isle, One Eagle Tower, ect, the benefit of this feat may be disabled or restricted, at the game master's option.

Special: The gamemaster may rule that characters with the Elite Clearance feat and/or an active duty police or military affiliation receive this feat automatically.

Teenagers are not allowed to own or carry firearms or other weapons until they reach the age of majority- which has been lowered to 16 nationwide. One exception is a neo-pagan's atheme. To avoid going unarmed even the most devout Lifer kids will claim to be a Neo-Witch and offer the excuse that they're switchblade or molly-knife is an exceptionally practical atheme. It's an old dodge, but most local cops, especially in the Enclaves, will look the other way so long as the weapon's being used for self defense.

Lifer veterans, those with felony records and anyone a panel of federal judges designates a 'potential terrorist' are not allowed to own or carry weapons. Violating this law is considered a federal

felony.

Since many post-humans have abilities just as deadly as any manmade firearm, Powered's are always considered armed. Powered's who would normally be allowed to carry arms are allowed to live out their lives as they see fit, so long as they use their metahuman talents responsibly. Civilian cyborgs and Powered's without criminal records, as well as post-humans below the age of majority must submit to a genetic exam, or system scan at least every two years.

This testing is a fairly simple outpatient procedure performed at a military hospital, requiring several hours. During the testing process, the post-human's power level is charted, known weaknesses are measured and current biometric readouts are taken. If the metahuman uses any of their superhuman talents in a crime, hopefully the forensic traces left at the scene can be matched to a registered post-human in the federal database.

Lifer post-humans undergo a similar, but slightly more invasive scan at least once each year, usually during their birth month. Lifers suspected of active involvement with terrorist activities, as well as especially infamous activists and protesters are subject to greater restrictions.

In the case of cyborgs, weapons and electronic warfare systems are removed, and physical abilities are toned down from the 'punch-through-plate-steel' level which is the default baseline for a full conversion's strength. Combat trained Lifer post-humans have their metahuman talents suppressed by nano-toxins and restrictor implants.

Any Powered who is deemed a threat to the public or national security can be involuntarily committed indefinitely by the majority vote of a federal review panel. Dangerous Powered's are usually kept imprisoned until their abilities can be safely and permanently removed. These tribunals are not secret, and the accused is allowed to present evidence in mitigation and prepare a defense.



Judges for the panels are selected randomly from federal and military courts across the country, empanelled for a single review, and communicate only by teleconferences and Mesh links. To prevent the possibility of bias or psionic tampering and mitigate the risk of assassination, judges on these tribunals are selected from different federal districts.

MegaCorp America

As the influence and importance of the American government declines, corporations and the military rise to fill the power vacuum. In addition to being defined by religion, the American political landscape, circa 2107 is dominated by corporate interests.

Starting Occupation: **Megacorp Trainee**

Instead of a going to a traditional high school, you apprenticed with one of the world's most important and influential megacorps. You studied on a corporation run campus, learned the basics of your future career path and served as an intern since your early teens. You have knowledge of business and corporate science that is second to none.

Prerequisite: Age 23+

Preselected Feat: Megacorp apprenticeship emphasizes extensive financial planning and wealth management. All Megacorp Trainees must select Windfall as one of their starting feats at 1st level.

Skills: Choose three of the following as permanent class skills. If the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks with that skill.

Computer use, Craft (chemical, electronic, mechanical, pharmaceutical, structural), Diplomacy, Knowledge (business, civics, earth & life sciences, physical sciences, technology), Profession (any white collar or scientific), Research, or select a new Speak or Read/Write language.



Bonus Feats: Select one of the following: Builder, Elite Clearance, Educated, Gearhead, Investment Portfolio, Medical Expert, Renown, Trustworthy.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +3

Reputation Bonus Increase: +1

New Affiliation: Anvil Financial Group

Originally presented in Guide to the Known Galaxy, Otherverse Games, 2008

Earth Incorporation Year: 2063

Corporate Motto: Two worlds united.

The Anvil Financial Group is the largest and wealthiest non-Terran mega-corporation on Earth. Incorporated under Earth law during the early 2060, the Anvil Financial Group is a coalition of Stonecutter investors who use the vast resources of their species' interstellar trading consortium to dominate Earth's promising new markets. Anvil Financial dominates the interstellar shipping and xeno-tech industries. The Anvil Group trades Stonecutter

technology in exchange Earth's cultural exports, raw materials and land. The Anvil Financial Group is a major lender, offering start up capitol to human-ran businesses, as well as lending to Stonecutters born on Earth.

The Anvil Financial Group is one of the leading advocates for global trade, pushing the world's government to end protective tariffs and legal impediments to international and interplanetary trade. The alien megacorp is a familiar target for anti-capitalist and anti-globalization protesters, and spends billions of dollars annually on humanitarian causes or humanitarian tech donations to offset the negative press.

Prerequisites: Speak and Read/Write Stonecutter, Knowledge: business 8 ranks, Knowledge: civics 6 ranks, Knowledge: technology 4 ranks.

Benefit: Earth based members of the Anvil Financial Group can purchase technology and weapons from Progress Level Eight with only +2

Purchase DC modifier, thanks to the advanced technology provided by their Stonecutter backers. You only receive this benefit when making purchases through the Financial Group or it's approved trading partners.

Normally, for a PL 7 society like Otherverse America, technology from PL 8 would have a +5 Purchase DC modifier, if it is available at all.

New Affiliation: Baby, Belly, Blankets

Originally presented in the Otherverse America campaign setting, Otherverse Games, 2009

Incorporation Year: 2024

Corporate Motto: Everything for the most beautiful babies in the world.

Baby, Belly Blankets Inc is one of the largest, and wealthiest Lifer run megacorporations on the planet, and make record-breaking profits each year by attending to the special needs of the Lifer nation. The corporation's franchise stores are a common sight in Lifer neighborhoods- elegant baby boutiques and value-conscious discount clothing and necessity stores, all decorated with free floating smartlight displays of smiling babies playing inside of computer generated smoke bubbles.

Baby, Belly Blankets stores sell the biggest names in children's clothing, the brands that are status symbols for Lifer parents. Though the company has never funded terrorism directly, it is enmeshed firmly in Lifer culture. The company gladly accepts the Coalition For Life's veteran benefit cards, and local stores provide supplies of disposable diapers, formula and other consumables to new parents free of charge.

Corporate lobbyists contribute millions to the Lifer cause each year, and Baby Belly Blankets stores are filled with mild and mostly inoffensive anti-abortion literature as well as anti-contraception pamphlets labeled 'pro-motherhood'.

Prerequisites: Knowledge: popular culture 4 ranks, Creative

Benefit: Employees at all levels of Baby, Belly, Blankets are trained to use ad techniques and memetic triggers specifically tailored to urban Lifer psychology. Talking to a committed BBB employee is often a confusing exchange of buzzwords and sanitized pro-life talking points rather than a real dialogue.

BBB employees receive a +2 bonus on Diplomacy and Profession checks made against or in reference to anyone sharing any pro-life or Lifer allegiance.

New Affiliation: Devon Scholastic

Incorporation Year: 2023

Motto: Life is Learning

Devon Scholastic is an educational mega-corp which, since the mid 2070s, has contracted with the federal government to provide pre-K to grade five education for nearly 60% of unaligned America's children. Most of 2107's adults passed through a Devon-school during their youth, and neither the mega-corp's supporters or its fiercest detractors can deny its lasting effects.

Devon Scholastic pioneered the use of psi-based learning, using Smartlight tutors, psionically gifted and Philosophy trained teachers to implant needed skills in their young charges during early morning meditation periods. Classroom time was spent reinforcing implanted information, applying it practically through a series of experiments, games and fieldtrips. The technique was revolutionary in the mid-2020s, but is common today.

Devon Scholastic curriculum stresses social interaction, politeness and group cohesiveness. It also emphasizes practical job training, with much classroom time given over to tours of local businesses, factories and military bases. Critics deride Devon's lesson plans as subtle propaganda, designed to create generation after generation of well behaved wageslaves, not innovating iconoclasts.

As America moved closer towards Abortion War, Devon Scholastic hewed closely to the Choicer pseudo-nation. They were already under evangelical fire for their excellent science and early childhood sex education programs, and for their

psionic 'brainwashing' techniques, and saw the Choicer market as an untapped, and still-viable resource. Devon Scholastic schools are virtually unknown in the Enclaves today, as most Lifer families boycotted the corp-schools en masse years before the first shot was fired.

Prerequisites: Trustworthy, Knowledge (any two at 6 ranks each)

Special: Members of this affiliation cannot have selected the Preferential Hunter feat.

Benefit: Your training with Devon Scholastic has made you an excellent teacher, and you can quickly break down complex skills to educate novices. Each time you roll a natural 19 or 20 on any skill check, make a check mark on a sheet of scratch paper. With a few minutes of effort to explain that specific skill, you can transfer this check to another character as a Lesson. Once a checkmark is expended as a Lesson, it is gone. Keep track of checkmarks and Lessons separately for each skill.

After a certain number of Lessons, your student receives a rank in the skill you are attempting to teach her. This bonus skill rank does not allow the character to exceed maximum ranks per level in a particular skill.

- If a character has 0 ranks in a skill you are attempting to teach her, it requires three Lessons for her to gain her first rank in the skill.
- If a character has 1-4 ranks in a skill you are attempting to teach her, it requires five Lessons for her to gain an additional rank in the skill.
- If a character has 5 or more ranks in a particular skill, she is proficient enough in its use that your tutelage can't provide much additional benefit.

New Affiliation: Farrar Armaments, LTD

Incorporation Year: 2067

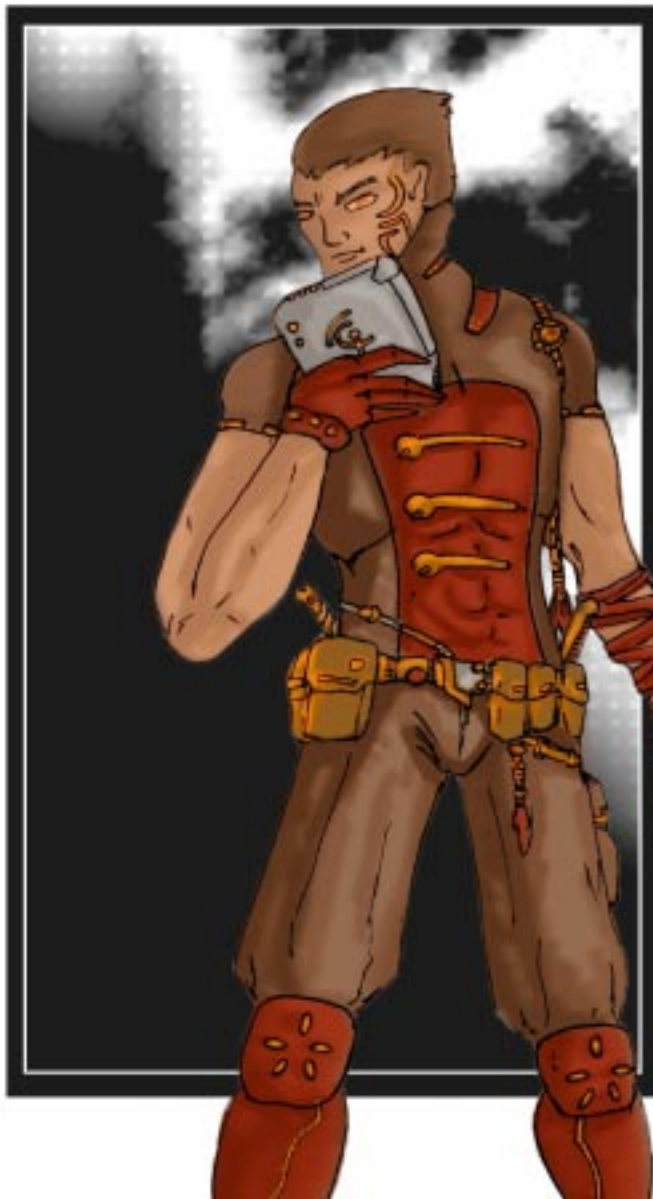
Corporate Motto: Victory Near at Hand

Farrar Armaments is a relative young Scottish weapons design firm. The company is unique in that it only hires psions. Edinburgh, Scotland has become a mecca for young, promising Patriot Mechanics from around the world, who sign million-dollar, four year contracts with Farrar as master gunsmiths. The work at the Farrar facility is hard, the hours long and regimented, but living conditions are lavish. Farrar's development facility is an odd place- for all the high-tech work done there, few computers can be found in the buildings. The psi-capable engineers and designers do most of the work in their head, downloading design specs and CAD-CAM instructions to one another with a handshake, and controlling fabrication machines simply by touching them.

Despite their high overhead, Farrar has turned a profit every year of its existence. Farrar holds the contract to produce weapons for Great Britain's military, and recently won the right to produce firearms for Germany, Unified Bosnia, Czechoslovakia and Greece. During the early 2070s, Farrar went global, winning a contract to upgrade the Choicer pseudo-nation's aging stockpile of Valiente small arms. Lifer interdiction efforts destroyed hundreds of Scottish flagged cargo ships, but now, with the War laid to rest (even an uneasy rest), more secure supply lines to North America have only increased Farrar's reputation for innovation and dependability.

Prerequisites: Patriot Mechanic player species, Circuit Neurology, Gearhead, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Craft (electronics) 4 ranks, Knowledge (technology) 4 ranks

Benefit: You may add your CHA modifier as an untyped bonus on all Computer Use checks, and computer-aided Craft checks made using your neural electronics. You add your CHA modifier to the effective Purchase DC of your circuit neurology, making it possible to develop truly impressive wetware, far superior to most 'hard-tech' computer systems.



New Affiliation: The Lestada Group

Incorporation Year: 2030

Founded By: Beth Lestada and others

Corporate Motto: Holding Crimson Hands Tightly

The Lestada Group was founded in 2030 to provide medical malpractice and property insurance to abortion provider when other insurance carriers deemed the professionals an unacceptable risk due to Lifer harassment, vandalism and tactical lawsuits. When Beth Lestada founded the insurance carrier at the dawn of the Powered Age, it was a political gesture, not a profit seeking one. Lestada had undergone an abortion years before the company's genesis, a fact that allowed her to have a career as a high level stock market player.

Forming The Lestada Group was a high dollar side-project, a way to preserve that same option for other women. The Lestada Group has backed the Choicer government since its inception, providing financial support and a subtle vote of confidence from their Los Angeles offices.

The insurance carrier is one of the Top 50 companies on the Fortune 500, having expanded into the major insurance carrier for the Covenant pseudonation, handling policies for everything from new construction to routine auto insurance. The Lestada Group could easily be a first tier mega-corp. The only thing stopping it from doing so are self imposed philosophical strictures laid down when the company was founded. Though a for-profit company, strict controls limit the salaries of top executives, dictate corporate policies and return a major chunk of the group's profits to the Choicer community. The Lestada Group has its own vast armies of lobbyists and memetic warriors, of course, but aside from ensuring that abortion remains safe and accessible and the Covenant remains solvent, it has little political agenda of its own.

Naturally, the Lifer pseudo-nation's own financial institutions wage constant war on The Lestada Group- quiet, paperwars that aren't without casualties. The fact the company has such a close relationship with the Choicer Woven Council helps insulate the group from these threats. To date, the group has fended off myriad hostile takeover attempts and lawsuits from Lifer rivals.

The Lestada Group has a large reserve of intelligent, experienced accident and arson investigators on staff, many of whom were former Choicer intelligence agents or homicide detectives. Lestada Group investigators are an expected sight at any crime scene involving Choicer property or a Neo-

Witch Midwife. Group investigators work closely with local police and APEX to solve crimes, specializing in bringing legal action against Lifer cells when criminal sanctions can't be used. Most investigators are certified as Freelance Investigators by the FBI, giving them full crime scene access and their testimony expert weight in court.

Prerequisites: Knowledge (business) 6 ranks, Knowledge: (theology & philosophy) 2 ranks, Knowledge (earth & life science) 2 ranks, Investigate 6 ranks

Benefit: Your Lestada Group training has given you insight into how Lifer saboteurs and rescue-killers think and operate. You receive a +2 insight bonus on Bluff, Sense Motive, Gather Information, Intimidate and Survival checks made against or concerning any character who has chosen the Termite or CFL Kid starting occupations.

New Affiliation: Metamorphosis North

Incorporation Year: 2012

Corporate Motto: Precision is Beauty

Detroit is home to one of the highest concentrations of metahumans, psions and combat trained post-humans in the United States, second only to the pseudo-nation capitals of San Francisco and Boston. The impoverished city's already overstressed, overworked and outgunned police force is now forced to cope with an endless horde of super powered thugs and gangbangers. With the city and surrounding communities impoverished by the failure of the US auto industry and left a foreclosed wasteland by the 'sub prime' housing crunch, Detroit is forced to rely on corporate donations for much of its operating budget.

In many ways the city of Detroit is wholly owned and operated by the Metamorphosis North, an international munitions manufacturer which produces some of the deadliest and most advanced military weapons and vehicles the world has ever seen. Founded during the summer of 2012, Metamorphosis North was one of the first megacorps to take advantage of Half-Grey technology found in a long abandoned colony deep beneath the lunar

surface. Reverse engineering Half-Grey technology allowed the corporation to pioneer the development of Mac-Tik propulsion, which in turn led to the death of the conventional automotive industry. By 2025, Metamorphosis North had become one of the largest and wealthiest Fortune 500 companies, and grown into Michigan's largest employer.

As of 2107, Metamorphosis North is officially recognized as a pseudo-nation. However, unlike the Lifer and Choicer nations, Metamorphosis North is not interested in dictating social policy. While they lack the political punch of the ideology based pseudos, Metamorphosis North more than matches either in terms of sheer size and wealth. Metamorphosis North owns Michigan in all but name, and often uses its wealth and influence to sway state political debates in the company's favor.

Metamorphosis North owns huge tracts of Detroit itself, as well as smaller suburbs like Flint, and several hundred square miles of wilderness land stretching across both sides of the Canadian border. The housing crunch allowed the arms manufacturer to buy up huge tracts of land within Detroit itself, transforming hundreds of abandoned city blocks into a huge 'urban warfare' training center and proving ground for new weapons systems. "MN Proving" is a top of the line facility, which offers smartlight opponents and scenarios, as well as several billion dollars of disposable combat drones for live fire exercises. American and Choicer squads have to fight and bargain for time on the MN Proving range, and spending a few hours firing at MN target drones is a lofty dream for most APEX grunts.

In return, despite working for one of the poorest urban areas in the nation, the Detroit police force's front line officers are some of the best armed and equipped in the country. Metamorphosis North donates millions of dollars in body armor, advanced firearms (including energy weapons, combat robotics and advanced non-lethal devices) and powered armor to Detroit Metro. The cops are given the gear they need to survive going up against metahuman opponents; Metamorphosis North gets to see how

its products will hold up in actual combat, cutting months off the design and development cycles.

The arrangement has kept the embattled, impoverished city relatively stable for more than two decades now. There are persistent rumors, especially among peace advocates, civic reformers and Metamorphosis North's political enemies that Metamorphosis North imports and equips metahuman criminals entering the Detroit region, in order to keep its 'proving ground' filled with a constant stream of post-human targets. No matter what the truth of the urban conspiracy porn really is, Lifer rescue cells often go into battle wearing MN body armor or carrying MN energy pistols, and the Ann Arbor Enclave is one of the centers for the illegal Lifer weapons trade.

Prerequisites: Craft (either mechanical or electronic) 4 ranks, Knowledge: tactics 2 ranks, technology 8 ranks, Repair 4 ranks, Pilot 1 rank, Aircraft Operation

Benefit: The corporation believes that the only way to design cutting edge weapon systems is to walk in the shoes of the soldiers who will eventually use them. Metamorphosis North shell pilots are among the best in the Western Hemisphere, and all MN engineers undergo a comprehensive tactical air combat college.

When piloting any suit of powered armor produced by Metamorphosis North or its subsidiaries, you receive a +1 insight bonus to initiative checks. If your armor has a flight mode, its airborne maneuverability is increased by one category, thanks to your increased familiarity with its systems.

New Affiliation: MN Development²

Development² is the most elite R&D division within an already elite organization. Only the best, most imaginative and top performing engineers are allowed onto the team. Development² is responsible for some of the most innovative Shell designs of the last decade.

Prerequisites: Metamorphosis North affiliation, Elite Clearance, Gearhead, Craft (either mechanical or electronic) 8 ranks, Computer Use 4 ranks, Repair 6 ranks

Benefit: You are used to working under pressure. When making a Craft (mechanical or electronic), you may cut the time necessary for the job in half by taking a -4 penalty on the check.

New Affiliation: Nexii Genetic Clinics

Originally presented in Otherverse America Campaign Setting, Otherverse Games, 2009

Incorporation Year: 2033

Motto: New, better, and safer.

Nexii Genetic Clinics are a well-run chain of commercial genetic engineering boutiques, who perform innovative genetic alterations and reproductive medical care in an outpatient setting. There are nearly 200 Nexii clinics across America, each owned by a reputable genetic physician who is only allowed to use the Nexii brand name after extensive franchise training and safety inspections. The first and largest Nexii clinic is located in Boulder, Colorado, and services an exclusive clientele.

Nexii uses proprietary, unconventional methods of genetic resequencing, allowing their staff to perform the minor genetic alterations that are their bread and butter safer and less painfully. Nexii's methods are efficient enough for the genetic engineering giant to have won a defense contract, attending to the needs of genetically enhanced APEX super soldiers.

Prerequisites: Knowledge: earth & life sciences 9 ranks, Treat Injury 4 ranks, Medical Expert, Educated

Benefit: When performing any genetic alteration, your patients receive two free successes on the FORT saves necessary to survive the process, which stacks with the free successes provided by Gene-safe, if that chemical is used.



New Affiliation: Soft Palace Meta-Naturals
 Originally presented in Otherverse America Campaign Setting, Otherverse Games, 2009
Incorporation Year: 2019
Corporate Motto: Beauty Beyond Imagination.

Soft Palace is one of the largest adult entertainment houses on the planet, which has achieved fame, and come to dominate Mesh and Dreamscape pornography by specializing in metahuman, extraterrestrial and full cyber conversion sex. By catering to the public's lust for the unusual and the post-human, Soft Palace has succeeded as a

brand in a highly competitive field where most companies are unknown and interchangeable.

Soft Palace plays a surprisingly important role in Powered culture. Most adult metahumans receive an invitation to star in a Soft Palace vid-shoot or to allow their image to be licensed for CGI dating sims within a few weeks of their empowerment. Soft Palace offers young, unaligned metahumans specialized medical care, genetic testing and access to cutting edge civilian genemods and luxury cybernetics in exchange for a lucrative career as a contract boy or contract girl.

Affiliation

Prerequisites: CHA 13+, Renown, Knowledge: popular culture 4 ranks, some type of

post human abilities, age 15+

Affiliation Benefit: Powered working for Soft Palace can make excellent money as adult entertainers, courtesans, high dollar prostitutes or even by licensing their unique genetic code to interested buyers. By working through a Soft Palace broker, the Powered receives a discount on commercial genetic engineering, cybernetic treatment and medical care, reducing the total Purchase DC of the service by -2.

Soft Palace porn starlets receive a +2 bonus on Profession (sex worker, courtesan or similar checks) and Knowledge: popular culture checks made concerning other post humans in the entertainment industry.

New Affiliation: Symbol of Victory Realty

Incorporation Year: 2093

Motto: Reclaim and Redeem This Bloodstained Earth

Symbol of Victory is a highly specialized realtor catering to the wealthiest sub-strata of Lifer culture. The nationwide company does its best to buy up properties which once hosted an abortion clinic, now closed, which the realtor can sell to a Lifer home-buyer or business owner at a premium. Owning an SoV property is the ultimate status symbol among wealthy Lifers, and SoV homeowners brag endlessly about the bloody history of their property, crowing that no more abortions will be performed on this ground. Businesses located on SoV properties usually thrive on the curiosity and Lifer-pride factor alone, and housewarming parties held at a newly uncovered SoV mansion are major social events in the Enclaves.

Symbol of Victory properties are rare, and finding acceptable properties requires endless hours of research, combing through property records going back more than a century in most cases. In some branch offices, SoV realtors comb through pre-1973 police reports and emergency room records, hoping to find an existing private dwelling that was used for pre-Roe illegal abortions. SoV realtors have become (by necessity) some of the best historical researchers in North America, who know the hidden history of their cities better than many near-immortals.

When actual clinics are not available, SoV realtors also attempt to buy up the former homes of abortion providers, Neo-Witch Midwives and other Choicer activists. The murder sites of slain providers also command a premium, but lack the prestige of a true "Symbol of Victory"

Prerequisites: Knowledge: business 4 ranks, Knowledge: history 4 ranks, Research 4 ranks

Benefit: You receive a +4 insight bonus on Knowledge (history) checks made concerning abortion or Choicer culture in general. When selling a SoV property, you may attempt a DC 22 Knowledge: history check. If successful, you receive 10% more wealth from the sale or commission than normal.

Former abortion clinics are potent places of power in Choicer superstition as well. Choicer realtors work closely with Covenant backers to prevent decommissioned Choicer clinics from falling into the hands of a Symbol of Victory realtor. A few Choicer realtors have even attempted to follow SoV's lead, with little success, and sell 'woman sanctified' properties to new generations of Choicer homeowners, and especially to up-and-coming Choicer physicians.

Their attempts have mostly ended in bankruptcy court. The market for former abortion clinics, as opposed to all other medical and light industrial properties, is a miniscule one SoV has cornered very effectively. Some landlords have made a tidy profit by sparking a bidding war between SoV and its Choicer nemesis.

New Affiliation: Valiente Arms

Incorporation Year: 2051

Corporate Motto: None

Valiente is justifiably famous for the development of the VEWS (variable encounter weapon system), widely regarded as the best squad support weapon of the last 60 years. It's a feat that is especially impressive considering the San Diego based company originally started with three employees, childhood friends who started scratch-building advanced firearms in a three room apartment in between pimping hovercruisers for local lowrider competitions and catching waves.

52 Valiente grew quickly, in part because the Choicer government wanted its own weapons industry in place before the inevitable Abortion War began. The contract that led to the creation of the VEWS was inked during a Lammas street fair, the deal based more on the company's potential and a shared Choicer ethos than its actual production capability. Against all odds, Valiente was able to expand to meet production quotas.

Today, Valiente employs over 200 full time designers and nearly 12,000 assemblers and support staff, making it one of the largest non-military employers in the San Diego region. It retains some trace of its original, familial atmosphere- the company sponsors several local car clubs, and still occasionally closes its production floor for a day of surfing and beach barbecues.

Prerequisites: Craft (electronic) 4 ranks, Computer Use 4 ranks, Knowledge (business) 4 ranks, Knowledge (technology) 4 ranks, Speak/Read Spanish, Personal Firearms Proficiency, either Advanced Firearms Proficiency or Full Autofire

Benefit: Valiente armorers are masters of miniaturization and multi-function compact design. When designing any firearm, you may add the Compact gadget from D20 Future without increasing the Craft check DC or base Purchase DC.

When firing any ranged weapon with the Compact gadget, your increased familiarity and comfort with the weapon provides you with a +1 insight bonus to attack rolls.

The Minor Megacorps

The following minor corporations play less of a role in global politics, but still employ thousands of Americans and provide goods or services for millions more. Though wealthy (all of these corporations can be found on the Fortune 500), they have not achieved pseudo-nation status, and are not expected to any time within the next century. These minor megacorps don't provide an affiliation benefit- their employees are usually ordinary men and

women, not metahuman heroes and terrorists.... Or at least, their job and their heroic vocations rarely intersect.

4LuckGaming: 4LG is a Mesh-based gambling site operating out of Mexico. It's an open secret that 4LG is a front for the Familia, the prime way they launder money throughout North America, but it doesn't stop 4LuckGaming from being one of the most visited sites on-Mesh. 4LG coordinates betting on the tens of thousands of high school and college football, baseball, basketball and soccer games played across the country. The US and Mexican governments have tried to eradicate 4LG for decades, but court challenges from cunning Familia lawyers and computer support from psi-capable hackers have kept the site safe.

Caterpillar Logistics: Caterpillar Logistics handles transportation and urban planning, especially traffic-flow planning. The megacorp has won public transport contracts for hundreds of cities across the nation, including both San Francisco and Boston, not to mention New York, Houston, and nearly two dozen other American "alpha" cities. The company's AI-piloted multi-axel buses rumble across American streets, carrying nearly 2 million passengers a day. Caterpillar Logistics works closely with the nation's Department of Urban Planning to ensure a smooth flow of commuters, as well as working with APEX and NEST to ensure that its buses and monos are safe and secure.

Crimson Coast: Crimson Coast is one of the largest non-metahuman porno-corps on the West Coast. Headquartered in Los Angeles, the company employs more than 1,200 full time contract boys and contract girls, who produce custom scenes to be distributed on-Mesh. Crimson Coast is unique in the degree they have fetishized Neo-Witch Midwives, and to a lesser extent the abortion act itself.

Even their non-cybered performers often dye or tattoo their arms a bloody red, to imitate the seductive, sexually voracious Midwife/priestesses who are stock characters in their sims. Their subsidiary Crimson Hours employs more than 2,500

Crimson Horae, specially trained, cyber-enhanced prostitutes with simulated nano-limbs and a deep understanding of Covenant culture. The elegant Horae are companions as well as prostitutes, as urbane and cultured as any samurai-era geisha. The life of a Crimson Horae is a glamorous, privileged one, but not without its dangers: a pair of Horae were gunned down by a Lifer extremist in 2104 as they idled at a stoplight. The terrorist had mistaken them for actual abortion-priestesses and opened fire.

Do'Urden / Pets Plus: The merger of two major pet-care chains in 2103 has let the resulting megacorp in better financial shape than before. Before the merger, Do'Urden Exotics was the leading breeder of genetically engineered spider pets in North America, and provided goods to more than 75% of all Spiderfarm hobbyists. Meanwhile, Pets Plus handled the importation of minor xeno-species to Earth as exotic pets, clearing protective tariffs and filing the necessary environmental impact statements so the very rich could have an animal from the Stonecutter homeworld or points farther out. Now, the conglomerate handles both aspects of exotic pet ownership, and their (sorta) cuddly living products are in more than half the homes in North America.

Horizon Biotechnology: This venerable bio-tech firm patented the first version of the Age-Well genemod during the early 2020s, and has been reaping the profits ever since. They are a leader in the geriatric comfort industry- producing medicines and genemods tailored to the needs of America's elderly, as well as producing low-cost vaccines for shipment to the developing world, especially vaccines for hemorrhagic fevers.

Nakamoto Limited: Headquartered in Los Angeles, this starship-design firm produces hyper-space engines. The corporation has begun allying itself with the Lifers more closely over the last few years, manufacturing low-quality, low-cost engines for Lifer space-lift companies. In addition, Nakamoto dabbles in dimensional research, attempting to use the same technology that allows them to breach the ITF corridor to open a doorway into heaven, in hopes of finding concrete proof of the

existence of fetal souls.

Starwyld: This small but influential Washington-state company has produced ritual implements for neo-pagans for longer than the Covenant has existed. Today, in addition to continuing to produce candles, athemes, cauldrons and other ceremonial implements, Starwyld also acts as inspectors of third party goods coming into the Covenant. They work closely with the Covenant's munitions supplier to ensure that Choicer weapons, armor and equipment are fabricated in accordance with Covenant religious belief.

Three Kings Produce, Kris-Mart and Appolyon: These three major Lifer run grocery chains dominate the agri-business, retail grocery and big-box retail niches respectively. The Coalition for Life funnels money into the Lifer community through these three agricultural giants, providing discount cards, meal vouchers and welfare programs veterans, Lifer families and Block Mothers. The garish, purple, white and gold logos of these three companies are everywhere in the Enclaves, and they are major Enclave employers.

Year of the Panda: This national chain of mid-priced Chinese buffets is owned by the Dacoveney family, and is original source of their wealth. Though the food is good, most Choicers won't step inside a Panda restaurant, and the chain doesn't even bother to advertise in Choicer-dominated markets. The cheerful, holographic dancing panda logo of the franchises are omnipresent in the Enclaves, however.

Modern Megacorps

Most of the familiar name-brand megacorporations dominating America's commercial districts and strip malls are alive and more profitable than ever in the 22nd Century. The omnipresence of mega-brands like Wal-Mart, McDonalds, Target, Starbucks and a hundred other familiar names is a major factor in the architectural homogeny of unaligned America.

Most unaligned American cities are drab, corporate-dominated and inoffensive. Brand names are everywhere, and every inch of free space is utilized with an eye towards corporate efficiency and aesthetic standards. Local color is a thing of the past. It doesn't matter if you're in Phoenix or Pensacola, New York or Seattle, or some obscure suburb- the architecture is mostly the same, the streets have similar names, and the same businesses can be found in the same (or nearly the same) places.

On one hand, this familiar, monotonous drab style is a comfort to unaligned Americans, a tonic after the intense, alien aesthetics of the Choicer district and the militant poverty of the Enclaves. Conversely, ordinary Americans are attracted to the color and fury of the pseudo-nations precisely because their own lives seem sterile and off-white by comparison.

The Faiths of Unaligned America

"Whatever we once were, we are no longer just a Christian nation. We are a Jewish nation, and a Muslim nation, and a Buddhist nation, and a Hindu nation, and a nation of non-believers."

-President Barack Obama, 2005

The Abortion War had its genesis in a fundamental, inescapable conflict between liberal and conservative, between Evangelical Christian and Pagan. But what about the other American faiths? Where do they fit into this conflict? In many cases, American Jews, Muslims, Buddhists are forced to

take a side with one camp or the other, driven by personal convictions or the bonds of friendship. In other cases, the members of these non-Christian, non-Pagan faiths remain outsiders by choice, remaining unaligned (and often unnoticed) by the warring pseudo-nations.

The American Catholic Church: During the mid 2020s, a plurality of Catholic diocese broke with Rome, forming a uniquely American, liberalized branch of the Catholic Church. The schism was a deliberate, and long-expected response to escalating tensions between American parishes and the Vatican, spurred on by a succession of unpopular Popes, the mishandling of the pedophile priest cases of the previous decade, and by a radical difference of opinion on birth control (and to a lesser extent, abortion). Catholics of both the American and Roman Catholic variety may oppose abortion, but unlike the traditionalists in the Vatican, American Catholics view reliable and available contraception as one of the best ways to prevent abortion in the first place.

The American Catholic Church is modeled on the hierarchy and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church; the two faiths share similar rituals and almost identical ceremonies. The American Papacy is located in New York City, with the American pontiff elected by a majority vote of all adult American Catholics, not simply the new Church's Cardinals. American Catholics comprise a majority of all Catholics within the Country; by 2107 less than a quarter of American believers follow Roman rule. American Catholics see their faith as dynamic and progressive, disdaining Rome as tradition bound, misogynist and intellectually stagnant.

Catholics from both traditions were instructed by their respective Popes to remain neutral and non-violent during the War. Both Catholic Churches oppose abortion, but loathe the war and terrorism with equal fervor. Joining the Army of God is considered grounds for excommunication in both religions. Many parishes joined with moderate groups on both sides to negotiate peace treaties, supervise prisoner exchanges and ensure that

“Sunday Truces” – temporary cease fires – were obeyed.

A handful of Catholic churches became sanctuaries for captured Choicer priestesses: the American Catholic Church was allowed to take custody of imprisoned Neo-Witch POWs during the War’s early years. To the Lifers, this compromise ensured that the captured abortion providers would be kept under house arrest, unable to perform any more procedures. To the Choicers, the same compromise provided a safe haven for its captive sisters, out of Lifer hands.

In Both Camps (General)

You grew up in a blended family or mixed neighborhood somewhere on the frontlines of the Abortion War. You are as familiar with Choicer customs as you are with Lifer beliefs, you are as likely to be found at a Christmas Eve Mass as you are at a Beltane celebration, and you are at least tolerated by both sides.

Prerequisites: Character level first only, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 2 ranks

Benefit: You may select freely from among both Lifer and Choicer object philosophies, affiliations, feats and advanced classes. You need not meet the affiliation prerequisites for any of these



character-building options, so long as you meet all other prerequisites.

You receive a +1 insight bonus on Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks made against anyone with either a Choicer or a Lifer allegiance, due to your intimacy with both cultures. You receive a +2 bonus on all Knowledge: history checks made concerning America or the Abortion War.

The American Catholic church is cognizant of the lessons of history, and does not want its modern church harmed by the actions of fanatics

56 within its own ranks. American Catholic churches had their fill of Inquisitions and Crusades even before the Abortion War began, and three decades of conflict only reinforced the church's commitment to tolerance and moderation.

The American Vatican, unlike its Roman counterpart, does not maintain an official post-human military, but does have access to a deep well of trained combat volunteers. Metahuman talents are viewed as gifts from God, and responsibilities to live up to. Am-Catholic churches often call their post-humans to service, using their abilities to provide humanitarian aid to the needy, as well as protection for the weak. During the War, Am-Catholic Powered's acted to protect ordinary humans caught between the two warring pseudo-nations. While Am-Catholics fought (and died) as bravely as any Choicer clinic defender or Lifer rescuer, they rarely began fights, only entering battle when innocents were threatened.

Today, the American Catholic church has standardized and codified the behavior it expects from believing meta-humans: a modern day knight's code emphasizing a commitment to non-violence, courage in defense of others and charity. Young post-humans are offered comprehensive training in the use of their abilities- a curriculum every bit as good as anything provided by RESCUE International or RAINBOW Liberty. Am-Catholic Powered's are allowed to operate with the church's sanction, provided they uphold its mission.

Am-Catholic trained Powered's often accompany APEX troops, even occasionally working with Choicer combat types to bring down theological terrorists, especially those hailing from within the Church. Their primary duty is to ensure that no-one dies on a mission they accompany, not even the criminal, no matter what his crimes.

Paladin Tactics (General)

You have received training and sanction from the American Catholic church. Your training recognizes the danger that unrestrained use of meta-human talents can cause, and you have learned to pull your punches effectively. Am-Catholic urban warfare training is so highly regarded that many non-Catholic soldiers and law enforcement officials undergo the course at their own expense.

Special: Candidates for this feat must be interviewed and personally approved by the Am-Catholic bishop of their diocese prior to beginning training. Characters with the Anointed Cleric feat are automatically assumed to have diocese approval to begin training.

Prerequisites: Knowledge (theology & philosophy) 4 ranks, Knowledge (tactics) 2 ranks, Trustworthy, Defensive Martial Arts

Benefit: You may strike to inflict non-lethal damage with any unarmed strike or natural attack, including through innate Spell-like, Supernatural and psionic abilities, without penalty.

If your non-lethal attack roll exceeds your target's Defense score by five or more points, you may choose how much damage to inflict. Roll damage normally. Once damage is determined, you may choose to either inflict the rolled damage or any lesser amount, down to a minimum of 1 point of subdual damage.

Normal: You suffer a -4 penalty on attack rolls when attempting to inflict non-lethal damage with a weapon not specifically designed for that purpose.

Judaism: Abortion has long been seen as a matter of individual conscience among American Jews, especially more moderate members of the faith. As such, Jewish participation in the Abortion War was chaotic and hard to quantify; individuals joined the side which suited them best, or remained neutral as they saw fit. Many American Jews chose to remain separate from the War, using the ongoing violence as a teaching tool, an example of the dangers of religious fanaticism. Jewish children were taught to

find a better path, and many became active in the peace movement.

A generation of younger Jews, particularly Jewish metahumans, served heroically with the Choicer forces, viewing the Lifers as modern day successors to the Nazis- religious hardliners willing to kill anyone they thought of as inferior, and perfectly capable of genocide in the name of faith. As many Lifer cells shared hereditary links to the 21st century militia and white supremacist movements, Jewish post-humans had good reason to be concerned.

Few Jews actively served in the Lifer AOG, and the majority of those who did were usually recent converts to the Lifer faith. Despite this, Israel was one of the few countries to officially recognize the War-era Lifer AOG as a pseudo-nation. The

Israeli government had long benefited from the support of hard-line American Evangelicals, who considered the nation's continued survival and military power as a vital component to End Times Prophecy. Though diplomatic relations were strained, at best, Israel secretly funneled arms and money to the Lifer AOG, often in exchange for genetic samples from Lifer Powered or short term mercenary service. Many Israeli metahumans were built using genetic templates provided willingly by Lifer soldiers, binding the two nations by blood.

Hiring Lifer Powered and Closer meta-soldiers for deniable strikes against Arab targets became a common Israeli tactic during the 2070s, further destabilizing the Middle East. Today, MOSSAD- Israel's brutally efficient intelligence service- maintains cordial relations with the Lifer pseudo-nation and with its Powered.

57



58 **Islam:** Islam's role in the Abortion War was limited by the prejudices of the previous decades. Imams from liberal mosques offered prayers of support and joined inter-faith gatherings to protest the War, but military aid to the Choicer nation and its clinics simply was almost non-existent. Few Muslims, no matter how liberal or Americanized, would allow themselves to serve in a military commanded by an openly pagan, proudly feminist faith, so Muslim soldiers remained all but unknown within the Choicer military. The few Muslim Powereders who actively joined the Choicer cause tended to be young and female - iconoclasts who allied themselves with the Pagan nation to win greater freedom for themselves and their sisters within their own faith.

There is a long history of mutual hatred and prejudice between conservative Christianity and Islam, dating back years before the election of George W Bush. This mutual distaste prevented Lifer from recruiting Islamic hardliners for their Army of God. The Lifer Army's mercenary service for the Jewish state of Israel only added fuel to the fire. There are unconfirmed rumors, circulating through the black ops community, of truly unlikely alliances between Choice Squad Four and the remnants of Al Queda and Hammas working to bring down Lifer metahumans serving in the Middle East.

The Asian Faiths: Buddhism and Hinduism are the statistically smallest faiths in North America, and Shinto and Confusism are barely on the demographic radar. These ancient faiths prosper across the world, claiming billions of believers in hundreds of countries, but have seemed to stagnate in war-torn America. Buddhism and its geographic relatives are seen as religions for old people, for stubborn traditionalists and new immigrants, a philosophy of life that doesn't hold much value outside of a city's China-town or Little Tokyo. Worse, this stereotype is as common among Asian teens as it is among their white and Hispanic peers.

The fact that the Asian faiths maintained their traditions during the tumult of the War, and held true to their core beliefs in the wake of continental civil war is ironically one of the main causes of the

religions' decline. These ancient traditions are almost completely ignored by the media, in favor of the flash and color of Pagan combat types and Lifer cultural heroes. These upstart American faiths seem to change by the minute, and have a passion and brutal energy the staid teachings of the Buddha or the parables in the *Rig Veda* just can't seem to match.

The American Catholic Church has made huge inroads into the Asian community, with Chinese-Americans finally supplanting Hispanics as the fastest growing demographic within the religion. Evangelical missionaries have had similar success in winning converts, though few have accepted the most extreme tenants of the Lifer ethos. Most new Asian converts are fairly moderate Lifers, more suited to protest and prayer than terrorism. There's a fad among the cosplay community, so enmeshed with Asian youth culture, for Lifer uniforms and combat armor, but this is more a quirk of fashion, not a symbol of deep commitment to the movement.

As a non-evangelical faith, the Covenant hasn't made any organized attempt at winning new Asian-American converts, though a few have trickled in, and many more blend traditional beliefs with neo-pagan magic and traditions. The Covenant has always had a small nucleus of believers who defined their paganism in terms of Indian mythology. Kali, in all her myriad forms, is a common Neo-Witch archetype, one of the most famous symbols of Woman as destroyer and redeemer. Likewise, a handful of Neo-Witch Midwives, most claiming Japanese descent, blend the duties of Shinto priestesses and temple maidens with their service to women.

"If a fanatic is willing to give his life for a cause, he's probably willing to give yours as well."

-David Gerrold

Atheism and others: The country suffered through a thirty year civil war over faith, and its no surprise that a strong, politically savvy and justifiably angry anti-religious movement emerged from the wreckage. Non-believers, including atheists, agnostics, some deists and emerging philosophers account for a small, but relatively powerful minority.

Scientific rationalism is on an upswing, rejecting both Lifer young Earth creationism and neo-Pagan magick rituals as equally pointless and fraudulent. Parapsychology (*the organized study of psychic phenomena, including the object philosophies that allow believers to command the storms or raise the dead*) has evolved into a legitimate, cutting edge science. Parapsychology has grown hand in hand with the rise of atheism and scientific rationalism, as the two movements continue to find the answers to mankind's oldest questions by looking within the human psyche.

To modern science, miracles and magick are just two different expressions of the same psionic gift.



Debunking has become a Mesh hobby, with the most scathing critiques getting millions of downloads. Amateur debunkers and cynics compete among themselves for the right to take on the biggest 'dinosaurs' - those religious and urban myths that just won't go away no matter how many times they're disproven.

Many of 2107's top rated shows debunk old myths and superstitions, attack the historical authenticity of both Wicca and Christianity, and explain the science behind even the most 'magical' of meta-human talents. God Lie . Mesh and the

Burning Joke Dreamscape server are two of the best known debunker blogs. God Lie . Mesh rips into Evangelical Christianity with relish, while the Burning Joke spends its time disproving the Neo-Pagan concept of the Burning Times.

On a more serious front, nearly a quarter of all APEX troops have either 'no religious preference' or 'atheist' encoded onto their dog-tags; many consider it their duty to protect ordinary Americans from religious fanatics on both side. New atheist philosophies are emerging, which blend anti-religious thought and nationalism, and which criticize religion

as unpatriotic and morally toxic, no matter if that faith is Covenant Neo-Wicca or Lifer Christianity.

Politically, various non-religious groups are among the harshest critics of the Treaty of Boston. These groups feel that giving a specific pair of religions their own sovereign territories is a fundamental violation of the Constitution, in effect establishing a pair of rival state religions. To compete with the religious horde, atheist groups have developed a strong grass roots network of like-minded groups and allied political factions. Despite their relatively small numbers, atheist political action committees have made impressive gains in restricting the power of the two pseudo-nations.

New Affiliation: Non-Believer.ORG

Formation Year: 2071

Motto: Reason Equalizes

Non-Believer is a major atheist and deist organization, one of the rising political stars of the early 22nd Century. Non-Believer's Dreamscape sites attract millions of visitors annually, and though very few Non-Believer politicians have been elected to public office (and those who have are typically stalled at the local level), they have been a factor in every major campaign since the Treaty of Boston.

Non-Believer activists have been a deciding factor in the last two Presidential elections. They usually steer the debate and reluctantly back Choicer candidates, whose breed of theocracy is a little more tolerable than the misogynist, anti-scientific oppression a Lifer regime would entail.

Non-Believer includes a unexpectedly large number of combat capable post-humans among its members. The organization teaches a unique combat style designed specifically to take down Philosophy enhanced believers from the two pseudo-nations. These atheist-samurai are often members of APEX or national police forces, and provide the post-human muscle necessary to make them a credible political entity.

Non-Believer has pioneered the Change Agent Object Philosophy, which they view as tangible proof of their ideology- a person can be as heroic, and as psionically powerful as any Neo-Witch or Closer without putting their faith in some fictional deity.

Prerequisites: Change Agent Object Philosophy, Knowledge (theology & philosophy) 1 rank, Knowledge (history) 1 rank, cannot have any religious allegiance

Benefit: When targeting any Philosophy-capable creature with either a religious allegiance, all save DCs associated with your natural attacks, including spells, psionic abilities and Philosophies are increased by +1.

You receive a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks made against any character with an allegiance to either the Choicer or Lifer pseudonations.

The Defection Generation

"This eagerness, this enthusiasm for apocalypse, is theologically malodorous, but it is also politically dangerous. Here again are [LeHaye and Jenkins] and their 50 million readers cheering for entropy, celebrating calamity, wars and rumors of war as the confirmation of their desires, and railing against peace and progress as setbacks to this consummation for which they devoutly wish. They believe that things must fall apart and the center must not hold, because even now the beast is slouching toward Jerusalem.

They want this to happen. And, whenever they can, they vote for it."

- Fred Clark, essays on the Left Behind series, www.slacktivist.com

The farthest-right Evangelical Christians abandoned American culture even before the War began. Retreating into their fortified, politically insular Enclaves, the proto-Lifers utterly rejected an America they considered fundamentally sinful, too corrupted by Satan (in the form of pro-choice,

liberal political ideals) to ever be salvaged. When the War actually began, and Lifer Christians formed their own nation, no one who knew the culture was actually surprised, even if many on the fringes of the culture were pained by this defection.

In 2107, anyone who declares themselves an American Christian is automatically assumed to be Lifer. The concept of the non-violent, pro-choice Christian was one of the many causalities of the Abortion War. The most-hardline Christians became the Lifer AOG, while most of America's burgeoning Pagan population became the Covenant of the Goddess Universal. Moderate and liberal Christians are oddities, and have lost much of the political and social dominance they enjoyed during the previous centuries. Anyone who didn't align themselves with one of the new pseudo-nations was by definition, one of "the great middle-of-the-roads", a part of Unaligned America.

To many moderate, unaligned Christians, the mass Lifer defection was not just a political statement, a rejection of an increasingly pagan America, it was a personal rejection. Like all civil wars, the Abortion War broke apart families and divided friends. Many Americans of the pre-War generation consider the Lifer nation traitors, the American equivalent of *mujahadeen*.



Most members of the American military, whatever their personal feelings on abortion, take an even harder stance than their parents. Just because the majority of unaligned America's soldiers remain at least nominally Christian, they have little political sympathy for the hard-line Evangelical Enclaves. The American soldiers who agreed with the Lifers defected *en masse* before the War began- those who stayed chose to do so out of a deep commitment to the ideals of America. Even today, nearly two decades after War's End feelings within the American military about the Lifer defection still run hot.



Lifer citizens are allowed to serve with APEX, but the background checks and security clearances required rule out all but the most determined and honorable. Most Lifers serving with APEX are relatively young and moderate, a new generation of often rebellious metahumans who never served during the War, and have little interest in joining a rescue-cell. Other Lifer-aligned APEX supersoldiers want to redeem the name of their movement, and their faith, by serving courageously and patriotically.

Still, prejudice within the ranks is epidemic, and Lifers within the military face an uncertain future. Effectively, any Lifer making the choice to enter federal service must cut ties with everything they've known. To those they left behind in the Enclaves, a

Lifer citizen who joins APEX is a tool of the Anti-Christ, who willingly accepted the Mark of the Beast for a government salary and benefits package. To their new comrades within the military, Lifer soldiers are infiltrators and saboteurs until proven otherwise.

A similar long-term plan for betrayal and period of infiltration prefigured the Abortion War. Beginning just a few years after September 11, 2001, the early proto-Lifer Army of God took advantage of the Bush-era political shift to seed ultra-conservative Christians into local and federal law-enforcement as 'deep sleepers'.

Deep sleepers within the newly formed Department of Homeland Security, as well as the FBI and Border Patrol were able to shift their

agency's focus from Christian-based domestic terrorism to the new 'brown terror' originating from the Middle East.

These agencies spent the 2010s and 2020s chasing jihadist ghosts and leftist terror cells, including eco-terror squads like ELF (Earth Liberation Front). Thanks to deep sleepers inside the national security apparatus, the newly formed Covenant of the Goddess Universal was marked as an emerging terror threat- it was not legitimized as an actual religion until APEX's formation.

The early mistrust between Homeland Security and the Covenant spurred the Covenant to establish its own intelligence organs. The deep sleepers within Homeland Security abandoned their posts the morning of January 22nd, 2061, just as the Life Tank began his rampage across South Dakota. In the wake of their disappearance back into the Enclaves, their agencies were gutted. Worse, the infiltrators disappeared with nearly 40 years worth of tactical data gathered on their Choicer opponents, while not even leaving behind the *name* of the new Lifer force besieging the nation.

Homeland Security was not officially disbanded until the mid 2070s, but its useful life ended as the War began. Today, its domestic security responsibilities are part of APEX's jurisdiction. The old and often maligned FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), which had been subsumed into Homeland Security, evolved into NEST (National Emergency Support Teams).

NESTs are stationed in every major city in the nation, at least five per state, and often more. NESTs receive federal money and are trained to a high uniform standard, which includes comprehensive training in civil engineering, emergency medicine, crisis management, anti-metahuman tactics, and bio-terrorism. However, NESTs are under state control- they can be deployed by the governor of their home state as needed, and when not actively involved in riot control or emergency rescue, assist the local government with urban and contingency planning. In peace time, NEST agents work closely with the DEA, Customs and other federal agencies.

NESTs, especially those stationed near the Metroplex, are trained to APEX standards, and the two agencies are intended to complement one another. APEX is a military force, designed for attack and power projection. NEST is a defensive force, designed to protect America from terrorist reprisals.

New Affiliation: NEST

Official Designation: National Emergency Support Teams

Formation Year: 2081

Headquartered: Field offices in major American cities, at least five per state

Motto: varies by state and jurisdiction

You are a trained member of a NEST, tasked with responding to natural and manmade disasters anywhere in your assigned state. You are trained to survive and overcome any imaginable catastrophe, from a cat 5 hurricane to detonation of a starship's fusion reactor, and to help others do the same. You are extensively trained in emergency medicine, crisis management and counter-terrorism tactics in addition to more mundane disaster relief skills.

Prerequisites: Knowledge: tactics 5 ranks, current events 2 ranks, physical sciences 2 ranks, Repair 2 ranks, Treat Injury 2 ranks, Personal Firearms Proficiency, either Gearhead or Surgery

Benefit: Your training gives you partial immunity to many lethal toxins and environmental conditions, through a program of regimented micro-exposures and proprietary genemods. You treat any irradiated area as being one 'step' less irritated, and receive a +2 bonus on FORT saves made to endure a dangerous environment or resist inhalation toxins.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation

Like Homeland Security, the mass Lifer defection of 2061 gutted the FBI. However, the seeds of the organization's downfall were laid decades prior- the Abortion War may have been the straw, but the camel's back was bending long

64 before. For decades before the Abortion War began, the FBI had been suffering a crisis of missions. The venerable crime fighting organization had too many responsibilities, all of them vital, and too few budget dollars.

Was the organization's primary mission anti-drug ops? Fighting organized crime? Anti-terrorism duties? Policing the emergent metahuman community? Investigating governmental abuses and cybercrime? Tracking serial murderers and sexual predators? Maintaining the nation's VICAP database? Training state and local law enforcement? All too often, it was all of the above, which meant the agency ran itself ragged trying, and often failing to live up to its self imposed mission. Once the War began, the problems only escalated, as the FBI was forced to put other obligations on hold to act as intel analysts for the joint Choicer-American military machine.

As the FBI rebuilds in the wake of War's End, it has reduced its mission dramatically, like a desperate surgeon removing infected limbs. Other agencies have taken over chunks of the old FBI missions, leaving 'the new FBI' lean, streamlined and efficient. Freed from *posse comittus* restrictions, APEX and NEST share responsibility for anti-terror and anti-organized crime efforts, using military firepower and highly lethal metahuman soldiers against international criminals and revolutionaries. NEST also has taken over the FBI's training and data mandates. State NESTs train local officers, while maintaining the VICAP database.

Today, the FBI's primary mandate is investigatory. They track serial predators (especially metahuman criminals) across state lines. For all the simplicity of the FBI's new mission statement, their job is large and challenging as it has been at any point in their history.

Especially during the height of the War, America's police forces had little time and few resources to expend investigating sex crimes and child abuse cases. Faced with a choice between tracking down human sexual predators or dealing

with metahuman terrorists capable of annihilating entire cities, American law enforcement chose to pursue the more obvious threat.

Most of the sexual offender databases, victim advocacy initiatives and psycho-forensic knowledge of the previous century was simply lost during the War-era. American law enforcement was only able to begin recovering its lost expertise after the Treaty of Boston was signed, but even then, they faced an uphill climb and a continual battle for resources and expertise.

The organized and highly efficient nation-spanning police forces of the 21st Century disintegrated into a motley collection of competing jurisdictions and ideologies in the 22nd. Sexual predators and other serial predators gained a freedom of movement unmatched since the pre-VICAP days of the early 1980s. A serial rapist or child molester could evade detection for months, even years, simply by hop-scotching between various Lifer and Choicer jurisdictions, confident that the rival police forces won't (or can't) share data with each other and connect his crimes.

The Choicers have worked closely with the FBI and APEX, not to mention local police agencies, to rebuild the nation's ability to investigate sexual crimes. All FBI field offices include at least one trained Neo-Witch Midwife on staff, with specialized training in collecting serological evidence and gently interrogating traumatized victims.

Forensic Feats

Forensic investigation has become an entire genre of adventure fiction, and death investigation is likely to be a major part of modern crime and espionage campaigns. The following feats expand upon the uses of the Investigate skill, providing an assortment of new talents and techniques perfect for a CSI-inspired Otherverse campaign.

Crime Scene Cleaner (General)

You know just enough about forensics to cover your tracks, using your own forensic training

to make later investigations into your criminal activities difficult, if not outright impossible.

Prerequisites: Investigate 4 ranks, Search 4 ranks, Knowledge: earth & life sciences 1 rank

Benefit: You gain a new use for the Investigate skill. While at a crime scene, you may make an Investigate check of your own. If the check result is fifteen or higher, it becomes the base check DC to analyze clues left at that scene. You may take 10 or take 20 on this Investigate check.

Normally, sanitizing or contaminating a crime scene requires at least one minute and access to either a basic evidence kit, medical kit or pharmacist's kit.

If you have access to genetic material or other physical evidence tied to a specific person, you can attempt to frame that person for the crime, by planting this evidence at the scene. If your Investigate check result is 20 or greater, you plant the evidence at the scene, but do not completely eliminate the presence of other criminals. Thus, it appears the person you are trying to frame may be an accomplice. If the Investigate check result is 30 or greater, you successfully eliminate evidence of the real criminal (or criminals) and replace that evidence with the planted material.

If you modify a scene in this manner, it is not considered 'disturbed' and it requires a DC 25 Investigate check for a forensic specialist to realize the crime scene has been modified. If you wish, you can obviously disturb the crime scene to make it even more difficult to Investigate.

Normal: It requires a base DC 15 Investigate check to analyze clues found at a crime scene.

Special: This feat is a class-based bonus feat for the Infiltrator advanced class.



Cold Case Expert (General)

You are extremely skilled at re-investigating poorly collected or preserved evidence, as well as investigating long undiscovered crime scenes.

Prerequisites: Attentive, Forensic Pathologist

Benefit: If you or another investigator fails the Investigate check made to collect evidence at a crime scene, you may use unusual methods and innovative procedures in an attempt to glean evi-

dence from the botched crime scene. The base Investigate DC to re-collect evidence from a crime scene is DC 25. Each month that passes since the original evidence collection imposes a +2 modifier on the Investigate check DC (maximum +10 modifier).

When investigating a crime scene for the first time, you do not suffer a circumstance modifier on the Investigate check based on the time lapsed since the event occurred.

Normal: Evidence cannot usually be recollected. You suffer a +2 DC modifier on Investigate checks at a crime scene for each day since the event has occurred.

Forensic Interrogation (General)

You combine forensic knowledge, in depth training in criminal psychology, interrogation tactics. You can use technical knowledge recovered at a crime scene to verify information gained during an investigation, separate fact from fiction and force criminals to confess.

Prerequisites: Forensic Pathologist, Intimidate 4 ranks

Benefit: When interrogating a suspect or witness to a crime scene you have personally investigated, you receive a +2 insight bonus on Bluff, Sense Motive and Intimidate checks made against the target for each clue you successfully analyzed at the scene, with a DC 15 Investigate check.

When interrogating a suspect or witness connected to a scene you have personally investigated, you gain an enhanced insight- almost a sixth sense about how well the subject's statement matches up to the forensic evidence recovered at the scene. You are aware if you fail any Sense Motive checks against the suspect. You must have successfully analyzed at least one clue at the crime scene to use this aspect of the feat.

Normal: Sense Motive checks are rolled secretly, so you do not know how successful your check really is.

Forensic Pathologist (General)

You have received special training in death investigation, and through careful study can determine how a given person died. Your expert testimony is widely respected in court.

Prerequisites: Investigate 8 ranks, Knowledge: behavioral science 4 ranks, Knowledge: earth & life sciences 8 ranks

Benefit: You make a DC 10 Investigate check as a full round action to determine the general manner of a person's cause of death. For example, you could tell if a person died of disease or natural causes, was killed with a specific type of weapon, died of suffocation or some environmental condition, or died as a result of a poison or spell with only a cursory investigation. However, the specifics of the creature's cause of death would have to be determined by a full autopsy.

You can perform an autopsy on a creature (a surgical procedure requiring a well equipped pathology lab, which requires 1d6 hours). By performing the autopsy, you receive a +8 circumstance bonus on all Investigate checks made to determine the creature's killer and the killer's behavior at the crime scene and a +2 competence bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy and Profession (lawyer) checks made to convict the killer in a court of law.

Special: This feat is considered a class-based bonus feat for Smart and Dedicated Heroes, as well as the Investigator and Field Scientist advanced classes.

Predator Forensics (General)

One of the most controversial programs in the modern FBI is the "Predator Apprentice" program, which trains promising, but predator-gene positive pathologists to turn their lethal impulses and sadistic lusts into an investigatory edge.

Predator-positive investigators are naturally rare, and often mistrusted by their 'predator-clean' partners. They are allowed greater latitude in accepting or rejecting cases than ordinary investigators, so as to best maximize their emotional 'connection' to the crime. However, these investigators are



closely supervised, never left alone with either evidence or a suspect.

Prerequisites: Predator Alleles, Forensic Pathologist

Predator Apprentices are extensively trained and under months of grueling psychological conditioning, which helps them remain focused on a case, even as their lust for victim or offender helps them solve the case.

Benefit: You receive your Predator Allele bonus on all Investigate checks, Treat Injury and Knowledge: earth & life sciences checks made when investigating a crime where either the victim or a suspected offender meets at least 3 of your six criteria.

When forensically investigating a victim who meets at least 3 of your criteria, you are trained to indulge your lusts, using forensic evidence gathering as a substitute for typical sexuality. When taking 10 or 20 on any Investigate checks made against a victim how makes your criteria, you may add your CHA modifier as an untyped bonus on the check.

Sex Crimes Investigation (General)

You are especially skilled in unraveling sex-related crime scenes, examining serological evidence, profiling sex offenders and effectively interrogating emotionally traumatized witnesses and victims.

Prerequisites: Forensic Pathologist, Diplomacy 2 ranks

Benefit: You receive a +4 competence bonus on Diplomacy and Gather Information checks made against or concerning the victim of a sexual assault or sex crime. You receive a +4 competence bonus on

Investigate checks made to collect or analyze serological evidence- typically blood, semen or vaginal fluids.

Finally, since sex-related crimes often reveal insights into the criminal's personality, if you are investigating a sex crime, you receive a +2 bonus on the DC 15 Gather Information and Investigate checks made to generate a profile of the suspect. Special: This feat is considered a class-based bonus feat for Smart and Dedicated Heroes, as well as the Investigator, Field Medic and Field Scientist advanced classes

Sudden Inspiration (General)

You have an amazing memory, and often recall previously forgotten facts and minor details that allow you to break important cases wide open!

Prerequisites: Concentration 1 rank, Investigate 4 ranks

Benefit: A number of times per day equal to your WIS modifier (minimum once daily), you may concentrate for one minute, and trying to remember some previously forgotten clue. This ability allows you re-roll any failed Knowledge check made within the last 48 hours.

If, at the gamemaster's discretion, have performed some mundane, non-heroic task relevant to the Knowledge check, (for example by playing video games with your kid for a Knowledge: technology check), you receive a +2 insight bonus on the check.

You may reroll a failed Investigate check to Analyze a Clue, as described in the skill's description, effectively closing your eyes and picturing the crime scene in your head. However, since you are not physically present at the crime scene, you suffer a -4 penalty on the re-analysis check.

Normal: You may not retry failed Knowledge or Investigate checks.

Toxin Expert (General)

You have studied virtually every form of drug, chemical and poison on the planet, making you an expert on the subject.

Prerequisite: Medical Expert, Craft: Chemical 1 rank, Treat Injury 4 ranks, Knowledge: streetwise 1 rank

Benefit: By examining a character and succeeding at a DC 15 Treat Injury check, you can deduce any and all drugs and poisons the character is currently under the influence of or has been exposed to within the previous 24 hour period, including chemicals the subject successfully resisted the effects of. You are aware of the names and effects of these drugs.

The examination requires at least one minute and requires the use of a medical kit.

Your knowledge of drugs and bio-chemistry provides you with a +2 bonus on Craft (chemical and pharmaceutical) checks, Knowledge: streetwise checks related to drug culture, and Treat Injury checks made to treat poison.

Special: This feat is considered a class-based bonus feat for Smart and Dedicated Heroes, as well as the Investigator, Field Medic and Field Scientist advanced classes

Freelancers

America has a population of over one billion, circa the 2104 Federal Census, and the FBI has a staff of less than 25,000 nation wide, a number which includes active agents and support staff. No one really knows how many serial rapists and killers prowl the segregated future, or how many of them have manifested some type of post-human talent. By the very nature of their crimes, and their mobility these predators make it difficult to track their movements. Some of the nation's most fearsome predators are purely theoretical beasts, whose presence can only be inferred by suspiciously regular patterns of missing persons cases and a chilling, trickle-down effect on street crime.

To help cope with these invisible threats, the police forces of 22nd Century America have accepted the presence of bounty hunters and private investigators to the greatest degree in the nation's history. Licensed, civilian investigators are allowed access to crime scenes, FBI and local police databanks, and work closely with American law enforcement in other ways.

Freelance Investigators in the Campaign

The whole concept of freelance profilers is an intentionally gamable one. It allows player characters to have FBI level expertise, training and crime scene access without requiring a federal affiliation, and makes diverse, politically mixed game groups possible. Like APEX' command structure, this degree of autonomy for private investigators makes more story-telling and dramatic sense than it does real-world legal or tactical sense.

It would probably be a pretty bad idea in real-life, but works really well as a springboard to action around the game table. Originally, Freelance Investigator was going to be a class rather than an affiliation. However, it seemed like too simple a rewrite of the D20 Modern Investigator class. Making it an affiliation also allows it to be chosen by a better variety of character types.

New Affiliation: FBI Freelance Investigator

Program Inception: July, 2094

Freelance criminal investigators are allowed to access crime scenes, utilize police and FBI files and interrogate witnesses. Their testimony is given expert weight in American courts of law. Freelance Investigators are vetted with a full FBI background check, and to prevent evidence tampering or coerced confessions, are implanted with a searchable neural auto-diary submitted with every conviction package.

Freelancers are paid based upon their capture and conviction rate, some of the most experienced and most trustworthy pull down salaries equal to anyone on an APEX primary team. Freelance investigators are like trophy hunters- they venture out into the urban wilderness to hunt the great beasts, constantly looking for the demographic and forensic signs of their prey. Freelancers are the ones looking for missing prostitutes and vanished children, because that's a sign that their prey is active. In many cases, freelancers hunt serial predators that local police don't yet even suspect the existence of. They troll missing persons cases and work to link dumped bodies to a specific criminal.

Many freelancers work independently, or with hand-picked strike teams, while others work for private police forces and forensic recovery firms. Others, especially proven investigators with hundreds of successful closed cases under their belt, contract with city and state governments to assist the cops with special cases. 'Special cases' is usually defined as either high profile, attention grabbing crimes, or in the case of freelance investigators with

post-human combat talents, crimes involving criminals with more firepower than the local cops.

Prerequisites: Elite Clearance, Investigate 8 ranks, Knowledge (streetwise) 4 ranks, Treat Injury 1 rank

Prerequisite Cybernetic Implants: Auto-Journal, Facial Recognition Optics

Benefit: You are allowed to investigate crime scenes, and have FBI-level crime scene access, as well as authorized access to police files. You have legal authority to make arrests, carry fire arms, and perform police-like functions, despite not being an official member of any police force.

You receive a +2 competence bonus on Research checks made when accessing any police or military database. Finally, you may select any Forensic Feat in place of a class-based bonus feat regardless of your actual character class.

New Cybernetics: Auto-Journal (PL 6)

A smartlight seed is implanted in the cyborg's brain, which acts as an unalterable record of the cyborg's thoughts and experiences. The implant interfaces with the cyborg's unconscious mind and language center, giving it nearly limitless storage capacity.

The Auto-Journal provides a text-based, first person readout of a cyborg's experiences and thoughts on a specific subject when queried either by the cyborg herself or an authorized outside user. The readout is written in the style of a journal entry, dictated by the cyborg's unconscious mind. Additionally, the cyborg can also dictate entries to the journal consciously.

Auto-Journals are often implanted in police officers, and especially freelance investigators and used to provide a record of their actions during a case. Anti-tampering software prevents false reports and authenticates the implant's readout.

Drain: 0.5

Type: Internal

Hardness/Hit Points: -/- This implant ceases to function 30-60 days after the cyborg is killed. It can be backed up to an external storage medium if recovered before that time.

Base Purchase DC: 18

Restriction: Restricted (+2)

New Cybernetics: Facial Recognition Optics (PL 7)

The cyborg is equipped with a comprehensive database of mugshots, photographs and biometric data, similar to the files used by police and FBI agents in the course of their duties. New files can be uploaded to this bio-chip database wirelessly.

In addition, advanced facial recognition software is uploaded directly to the portion of the cyborg's brain responsible for pattern recognition. An AI forensic artist subroutine allows the cyborg to predict the appearance of known suspects or missing persons as they age, while bone density scans, facial proportion comparisons and other advanced forensic ID techniques allow the cyborg to easily penetrate most disguises.

Benefit: The cyborg receives a +8 equipment bonus on Spot checks made to see through a suspect's disguise. The cyborg can pull up a complete criminal and personal history on any subject within his or her field of vision, assuming that person's records are on file with the cyborg's parent agency.

Prerequisites: Implanted cellphone, Mesh link or similar device.

Drain: 0.5

Type: Internal

Hardness/Hit Points: -/- This implant ceases to function when the cyborg is killed.

Base Purchase DC: 31

Restriction: Restricted (+2)

Arrogance and Fascination:

America and the Covenant

Susan: "You make her sound helpless. I thought witches could summon powerful energy?"

Erika: "We can.... But we still have to eat, shit and die like the rest of you. We just look good doing it."

-Blair Witch 2: Book of Shadows, Artisan Entertainment (2000)

America is the Choicer Covenant's closest ally, both politically and geographically. The two countries have grown together, like symbiotes, making it difficult to say where one nation's sovereignty and culture ends, and the other's begins. America has protected and supplied the Choicer nation since its inception, contributing trillions of dollars and millions of lives to the fighting of the Abortion War.

The reasons why are not as simple as the average American, on either side of the abortion line believes. First and foremost, the American government aided the Choicers because the Lifer pseudonation was (and remains) a threat to American sovereignty. The majority of unaligned Americans are at least mildly pro-choice, and liberal enough not to want to live under an evangelical Lifer theocracy. By aiding the Covenant, ordinary Americans protect their own interests, and ultimately, their own freedoms. Most War-era politicians quickly realized that the Lifer nation was as hostile to them as it was to the Choicers, writing off pretty much all non-Lifer politicians as pawns of the Beast.

Second, during the early days of the War, both Choicer and American media were successful in framing the perception of the war. A memetic war began with the first gunshot, and images of attractive young priestesses and physicians lying dead before the feet of some Lifer FCB were the bullets. Phrased as an appeal to chivalry, to help protect the women of the Covenant, both militaries were able to recruit impressive numbers of passionate young soldiers. (Ironically, this meme helped establish the

stereotype of the frail, pacifistic and hyper-feminine Choicer activist, and to spur the development of the taboo Lifer deathplay fetish culture.)

Finally, ordinary Americans have always held a fascination with the Covenant. Coven-houses and pagan districts are a part of almost every American city, but not yet an unremarkable part. Choicer neighborhoods are oasis of alien beauty within otherwise homogenous, corporate, American cities, and the Choicer pseudo-nation's California strongholds are as different from mainstream America as India or the Stonecutter homeworld would be.

Americans, especially unaligned Christians, only have a basic understanding of the inner workings of the Covenant and the intricacies of its faith. An ordinary American might know that a Coven of Bast believer is a different animal than a Dianic Rite Wiccan, but telling the difference between a Persephone-Child and a Hectate-Sworn Neo-Witch is far beyond them. Americans always poke their head up when a Covenant Neo-Witch walks by, though, as fascinated by the neo-pagan's strange dress, fetishes, their atheme and their unique bionics as they are concerned if they're standing next to a target.



Americans are intensely curious about the 'witches next door'. When times are good, the Covenant's 'Crimson Coast' (Covenant territory stretching from Washington state down through American Tijuana) is a popular vacation destination. Ordinary Americans have a chance to walk through a technological utopia, visit Covenant museums, see great art, all without (technically) leaving the safety and security of their birth nation.

A hundred different Mesh dramas and entertainment programs allow ordinary Americans a view inside the Covenant, even if it's a distorted, simplified view. The Covenant, especially Neo-Witch Midwives and priestesses, are idealized and eroticized, rendered as stock characters in romantic movies and on-Mesh soap operas.

72 The prototypical priestess in one of these dramas is young and pacifistic, far more fragile than a true Midwife, and their pagan faith is often sketched, shorthand, by a series of quirky sketch phrases, superstitions and mini-rituals, often to the detriment of actual character development. As many neo-pagans complain, "just shouting out "Goddess" doesn't make you one of us."

While Americans may enjoy Covenant art and fashion, there is still an undercurrent of mild smugness. American sitcoms poke fun at Choicer stereotypes, and reveal a slightly darker American opinion of the Covenant pseudo-nation. The Hypothetical Witch of 22nd Century media fame is similar to the Stock Wiccan of 21st century television: a cute girl who walks barefoot through the world, lots of candles and incense marking her hippish path through life. The Covent is a matriarchical theocracy, and as such it is mistrusted by the masculine remains of America, both on Constitutional grounds and out of sheer sexism.

There is a strong undercurrent in American thought that regards the Covenant as a completely separate caste of humanity. Put simply Americans are Americans and the Covenant, while attractive and intriguing is something fundamentally alien to American experience. Joining a Choicer covenhouse for a few years is an expected, stereotypical act of teen rebellion for American kids, especially girls.

American boys joining a coven are either assumed to be following some cute girl into paganism, and if they aren't, their masculinity is questioned. New converts of both genders, even adult converts have their dedication, religious maturity and reasons for joining subtly criticized and questioned by their neighbors. Sooner or later, their American

Christian friends say, they'll mature enough to put aside whatever grievances they had with Christianity, and return to the dominant social paradigm.

American Obsessions

"To look backward for a while is to refresh the eye, to restore it, and to render it the more fit for its prime function of looking forward."

- Margaret Fairless Barber

Even the citizens of a segregated, post-human future need their diversions. America spends billions of dollars each year on its hobbies and entertainment. Americans enjoy Dreamscape MMORGs and self-scripted erotica, visit full sensory theaters to watch the latest blockbuster films targeted at specific religions. Sports are as big of business in the 22nd Century as they were in the 21st.

Americans have always loved sports, though in the early days of the 22nd Century, professional sports are falling out of favor for amateur, particularly high school sports. Every high school in the country fields its own football, basketball and soccer teams, and some sponsor other sports, from the common (like baseball) to the more controversial, (like Tac-Sim Paintball), even Dreamscape military sims, whose raids encompass thousands of players on each side. During the economic crunches of the 2010s and 2060s, Americans began drifting away from their hero-worship of highly paid pro athletes, in favor of the less polished, but much more personal world of community sports.

High school football actually divides neighborhoods along school lines, but binds cities together when a local team does well. Most high school matches are streamed live on the Mesh, and some of the best games get nearly as many views as the Superbowl. Memorabilia sales, both to local parents and to fans across the country, fund many local school districts. As in many other areas of competition, rivalries between Lifer-dominated schools and Choicer teams are always fierce and passionate, and occasionally violent. Most of the

hardest fought games end with the bleachers cleared and a massive, 'crimson versus purple' brawl underway at the 10 yard line.

The Champion Advanced Class is described in *Adrenaline Surge* (LPJ Designs, 2006). As originally written the Champion is a modern-adventure take on a professional, highly paid, bankable athlete- an NFL Superbowl champion, Final Four center, or star MLB pitcher. However, as these franchises dwindled and amateur sports rose to fill the gap, its easy to imagine a modified Champion who is a star high school or college athlete.

Adrenaline Surge also includes the Punk Idol, Blogger and Porn Star intermediate classes, which are a good fit for the highly sexualized, media driven near future. It's an older sourcebook, but one worth checking out, especially if you want to play a character who is more social or competitive than combat-oriented. Enjoy.

The Abortion War may officially be over, but America remains a nation fascinated with combat. A new sport takes advantage of this obsession, and the archetypically American hobby of 'armchair general-ship'. Tac-Sim is a popular variant of paintball. Tac-Sim courses are a series of reconfigurable walls, tunnels and platforms, able to shift themselves to replicate the layout of most environments. The main difference between modern paintball competitions and Tac-Sim is the fact a session's objectives (and course layout) are based on famous battles of the War.

Some battles are scripted by low-end military AI- not intelligent enough for actual battlefield use, but more than smart enough to build a compelling mission for some weekend warriors. Others are scripted by human armchair tacticians, and the 'what-if' alternate history aspects of the

hobby are as popular and compelling as the battles themselves. Mesh-based Tac-Sim leagues create entire alternate histories, where the course of the Abortion War is decided and re-decided by national rankings.

Starting Occupation: Tac-Sim Warrior

You grew up running simulated paint-ball wargames dreamed up by a military AI. It's not exactly APEX boot camp, but you've absorbed enough of the rudiments of tactics, firearms discipline and shooting skill to be a fairly decent soldier. There's even a few Mesh-sites out there focusing on your ongoing alt-history campaign. Who knew all those hours sweating in a set of badly fitting paintball pads would of proved so damn useful?

Prerequisites: Age 14+

Skills: Choose two of the following as a permanent class skill. If the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks with that skill.

Climb, Computer Use, Hide, Jump, Knowledge (history, popular culture, tactics, streetwise), Listen, Move Silently, Spot, Treat Injury, Tumble

Bonus Feats: Tac-Sim warriors receive Personal Firearms Proficiency as a bonus feat.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +0

Reputation Bonus Increase: +2



Another American passion, which combines nostalgia with a love of military history, is the current fascination with the first American Civil War and the Reconstruction period. The people of the 22nd Century have a fascination with the lives and struggles of those living in the late Nineteenth.

74 Biographies of Civil War leaders, heroes and martyrs fill bookshelves and Mesh-servers, and fiction set in the 1860s and 1870s has been a consistently huge seller since the turn of the century. Elaborate, plantation-era styled dresses are red-carpet staples for 2107's most glamorous women. Steampunk and Victorian-flavored alternate histories have produced some of 2107's best selling movies and Mesh dramas.

Dreamscape Civil War battles and live action re-enactments attract millions of fans, drawn to the nobility of the North and the stubborn courage of the South. The 22nd Century black community busily retraces its roots, telling the stories of both real and fictional freedman and slaves. These cultural icons are popular not only for nostalgia's sake, because the atrocities of the first Civil War have been sanitized by two centuries distance, but also because they provide a window into how the nation survived its first period of reconstruction.

Quilting has become a popular American hobby. Inspired by stories of Underground Railroad 'quilt codes', which conveyed tactical information within their color and patterning, modern quilters compete with each other fiercely. Designing a pattern that is both widely copied, and conveys some unspoken political message in its color is a major goal of most 22nd Century quilters. Homes and businesses are decorated with handmade quilts, made from spider-silk and genengineered spider-wool. Self appointed national regulatory bodies assign specific patterns and color choices to specific groups, cities and factions, and a new uniquely American of heraldry is emerging in 22nd Century America's on-Mesh quilting circles.

Spurred, in part by this obsession with all things Nineteenth Century, and partially by the Covenant's consolidation of gynecological care in their hands, home birthing and midwifery are making dramatic comebacks. Less complicated pregnancies can easily be handled at home, especially now that over-the-counter, nanotech based birthing kits are available to expectant mothers. Americans practice homebirth and holistic gyno-remedies partially because of a fascination with low-tech options (or at least, the appearance of low-tech options) and self reliance, and partially out of a desire to remain slightly independent from the Covenant.

Of course, most births are still tended by Neo-Witch Midwives, though regardless of their politics, most mothers-to-be (even Covenant ones) spend at least a little time in a Lifer run baby boutique. After all, the deals and free gifts are too good to argue with.

New Affiliation: Black Dream

Official Designation: None

Formation Year: 2093

Founded By: Dr. Jackson Chess, in Baltimore, MD

Black Dream is a growing power within the American military, an emerging new political party defined by phenotype, not faith. Black Dream is a black power movement that has only grown more powerful in the years after War's End. Black Dream has done something similar movements has never been able to do. They have inspired a large, mainstream following, and attracted members who are highly placed in American art, entertainment and the military. Black Americans of all walks of life consider themselves Black Dreamers, and black politicians of all factions must deal with Black Dream and their issues on the group's own terms or lose elections.

Founded by a former APEX gene-cutter, many of Black Dream's central tenants are eugenic. According to Chess, the Negroid genotype is well adapted to warfare, and can be gene-cut to a degree the other racial phenotypes can't. Ironically, like some white supremacist groups, Chess believes



that his phenotype's anatomy makes them superior athletes and warriors, but unlike the white supremacists, Chess doesn't believe that his intellect or culture is inferior. Chess believes exactly the opposite, that while black culture and mainline American culture have grown side-by-side, black innovation and imagination is the engine which drives America.

Chess's clinics offer genetic reorganization and metahuman conversion to believers and aligned combat volunteers. Unlike other gene-franchises, Black Dream emphasizes known human donors, not idealized genemods or genetic material from anonymous donors. Black Dream genemods are engineered from the genetic code of famous (or at least genetically interesting) figures from the 20th and 21st Centuries. Genetic traits from black politicians, athletes, artists, soldiers and early metahumans are used as the inspiration and source-code for genetically superior 22nd Century post-humans.

Like many Americans, Black Dreamers are obsessed genealogists, with a fascination with the wartime and pre-war deeds of their parents and

grandparents. However, the history of their purchased genetic-forebears entwines with the history of actual ancestors. Twenty-second Century genealogical charts include not only standard solid and broken lines which denote births and marriages, but also color coded lines which indicate when a particular gene-mod entered the family tree. "Lineage" is a Black Dream obsession, and a gene-line from some storied icon, even if that gene-line provides the same benefit as a more typical 'undifferentiated' genemod, can fetch millions of dollars.

Chess has attracted an impressive following in the military, which has always had a strong black presence. His thesis that black blood and sweat built America resonates especially strongly with highly trained supersoldiers in units whose history stretches back before integration- the 10th Cav especially. Many soldiers, unmodified and post-human alike, wear matte black aluminum dog tags as a quiet symbol of their solidarity with Black Dream.

76 In the civilian world, Black Dream is seen as the party of black business and artists, of black intellectuals. The party provides low-interest loans and business training to small business owners in predominantly black neighborhoods. More glamorously, the Dream is name dropped in rap and Mesh dramas, while seductive meta-porn starlets decorate their lithe, brown bodies with Black Dream nano-tats.

Black Dream's major goals are political. First and foremost, Chess wants his new party to act as a check on the Hispanic community's lock on political power. Second, Black Dream is seen as a way for black Americans, who are historically Christian, but rarely hardliner Lifer, to regain some of the political capitol stolen from their community by the two pseudo-nations.

Chess maintains a distance from the Covenant, because they define themselves sexually, not phenotypically, but also because of a deep personal revulsion towards abortion, especially that of viable black embryos. Chess encourages the women of the movement to bear large families- like the Lifers he hopes to breed his way into political superiority in the coming generations.

Black Dream has made some progress in establishing a series of fetal cryo-storage centers- the first of which came on line in Baltimore in 2103. However, Black Dream's exo-wombs are a shadow of RESCUE International's better funded, higher tech program. Unlike RESCUE, Black Dream cannot afford to offer this service free of charge, and relatively few 'berths' make cryo-freeze an option only for a well-connected handful of Dreamer mothers-to-be.

As a geneticist, Dr. Chess also seeks to preserve the black phenotype, opposing cosmetic and racial alteration gene-therapy such as Otherskin that obviously deforms the body. He urges that black germ-lines should be used as genetic templates for most physical enhancement programs, claiming using African-descent DNA produces superior post-humans. Chess also opposes full

cybernetic conversion as emotionally unhealthy, making combat cyborgs a relative rarity in this faction.

In Chess' eyes FCBS are fundamentally unstable, as much from the ongoing emotional stress of their artificial bodies as from the abuse that created them. As such, Chess has called several times for the retirement of all FCBs in active service, and for the banning of the technology. His cries for 'de-cyborgization' only get louder and more mainstream after the Lesbos Island Incident in August 2107.

Prerequisites: Knowledge: earth & life sciences 2 ranks, Treat Injury 4 ranks, CON 13+, CHA 13+, Geno-receptor genemod

Benefits: You can easily recruit followers and allies from within the Black Dream community. Your effective character level for the purposes of the Squad Leader feat is increased by +1 when recruiting other Dreamers.

You are well connected to Dr. Chess' gene-cutting franchise. You may purchase over-the-counter genetic therapies from a Chess Clinic at -1 Purchase DC. Chess Clinics do not offer genemods which dramatically alter the patient's appearance. They do not offer Otherskin, gene-level sex changes, or similar procedures.

Old Man Buffalo

APEX is concerned about the Black Dream, and not just because a racial supremacist organization within the ranks has become almost mainstream. They're worried because some of the eugenic theory Chess is pushing is disturbingly close to one of the nation's oldest, best kept secrets. Officially, Dr. Marlene Barron was the first Earth-born metahuman, who became Lifechained after a near death experience in 1996. However, top secret files indicate the government knew of at least one metahuman who was already over a century old when Barron awakened from her coma.

Gayle Beauchamp, a Lifechained eventually codenamed Buffalo, first joined the US Army just a few years after the Civil War. The former slave was the first metahuman soldier in human history, quickly removed from his assignment to the Rough Riders and answerable only to the President. Though Buffalo never manifested the more exotic talents of today's post-humans, his incredible strength, endurance and agility served him well. In his prime, Old Man Buffalo could lift over a ton, and over the course of his long, unheralded career, he survived more than 350 gunshot wounds.

Buffalo served in every conflict of the 20th Century, acting as a behind the lines saboteur and advanced scout in the trenches of WWI, performing assassinations during WWII, fighting in Korea, Vietnam, Somalia, Bosnia and Iraq. Eventually, Buffalo was so successful the term 'black ops' was coined, not just for the secretive nature of the missions, but for the color of the nation's most successful agent's skin.

By the dawn of the 21st Century, Buffalo had effectively retired from active duty into a well-deserved and comfortably paid obscurity. Though nearly 150 years old, he seemed to be a healthy man in his sixties, and has still strong enough to lift a motorcycle, even if upending a pick-up truck was a



feat he couldn't manage anymore. He returned to active service briefly in the wake of 9-11, but quickly disappeared below the radar once again.

When the genetic revolution of the 2020s introduced the world to true Combat Types and other supersoldiers, military geneticists used Buffalo's genome to custom-cut an entire generation

78 of metahumans. Buffalo himself had little interest in the origin of his abilities, preferring to remain in semi-retirement. Stories about Buffalo leaked out, leading to a series of TV series and print on demand manga about the hero during the 2040s, which thanks to some memetic trickery from APEX faded into almost complete obscurity by the time the Abortion War began. By 2061, Buffalo was just another hard-to-disprove urban myth, like Area 51 or the Illuminati.

The current fad for Reconstruction-era tales has lead to a resurgence in Buffalo stories. Likewise, most military Black Dreamers don't care if Buffalo is a myth or not, viewing his century of solid service as a benchmark to measure up to.

With the conspiracy surrounding him inactive for almost a century, the government has no real reason to continue its campaign of secrecy. Through a dizzying maze of licensors and dummy corporations, Mil-Media is producing a top rated series of 15 minute long, CGI animated webisodes focusing on his post Civil War-exploits. As is to be expected, pulp action is much more important than accuracy, but the production gradually gets the public used to the whole idea of a secret metahuman history. Current plans call for a complete declassification of the Buffalo files in 2120.

Buffalo himself is still alive in 2107, a wizened little raisin of a man who stands only five foot and change. Buffalo is the weakest he's ever been in all his long years- only about as strong and fit as a healthy high school jock. He's close to three centuries old, looks ninety, but can still fight like a man in his twenties. He owns a small adobe house in Arizona, and spends his days puttering in his garden, enjoying the Tucson sun. Despite the fact he hasn't thrown a punch in 50 years, he's still well respected by the world's more knowledgeable metahumans.

The little ex-soldier has no problem offering advice to any young post-human who'll listen, figuring anyone who can find him is worthy of at least a few minutes of his time. He doesn't hesitate to give his frank opinions on politics or military

matters- two and a half centuries of combat service has left him a cagy, sneaky SOB. He's planned deniable ops for the Choicers, gave a second look to APEX deployment orders, even been invited to the White House to advise a succession of Presidents. He even tried to steer General Shy into doing right by APEX when the Minuteman scandal broke, for all the good it did. To this day, Old Man Buffalo sneeringly refers to the late General as 'a weasely shit-lipped little bast'd.'

CHAPTER THREE: APEX

APEX is America's most elite metahuman strike force, which operates independently of the Choicer pseudo-nation, and is based in the Washington D.C. Metroplex. APEX was founded during the 2020s, so the United States military would have access to a post-human army equal to anything fielded by other nations, terror groups and independent operators like RAINBOW Liberty. APEX is a check on the ever growing numbers of metahuman vigilantes, non-governmental organizations, terror cells and private security teams.

APEX troops are among the best trained and best equipped in the Americas, drilled extensively in urban tactics, counter-terrorism, and anti-Powered warfare. In addition to exemplary training, APEX troops are enhanced with military grade genemods, combat focused object philosophy indoctrination and the best cyber-enhancement protocol money can buy. A single veteran APEX super soldier is designed to be a match for a full enemy light platoon, despite the huge costs involved in training and molding a soldier to that level.

APEX is the smallest and most prestigious of all the US military branches, and will typically only accept recruits after they have proven themselves during at least one tour of duty in another branch, as a police officer or federal agent. APEX recruits from the Choicer military as often as it does the American military, and the two forces train together regularly. Despite the closeness between the two militaries, APEX maintains its independence as a secular (or at least mildly liberal Christian) force, not a military



theocracy like the Covenant. The pre-deployment rituals, battlefield shrines and combat 'white workings' common to the Covenant seem strange and superstitious to an APEX soldier serving in a joint-op.

Rarely APEX will recruit respected Powered without military history, or chase the latest 'hot' young Powered, but these situations are the exception, not the rule. APEX commanders typically view a candidate in terms of what he or she brings to the force, in addition to their powers. Skill sets, contacts and a cool head under fire are as important, if not more so, than genetic enhancements.

APEX is divided into Primary teams, Secondary teams and support staff. Primary teams consist of combat ready cyborgs and Powered combat types; Secondary teams are highly trained human and cyborg troops who act as backup and

fire support. Only trustworthy combat veterans are assigned to an APEX Primary team.

APEX employs more than 150,000 Powered as soldiers and front line support staff, which are deployed to bases worldwide. APEX is the world's second largest employer of metahumans- only the meta-porn industry tops APEX in terms of sheer numbers of post-humans on staff, though APEX supersoldiers tend towards the higher end of the power curve.

APEX squads are headquartered in The Metroplex, a mega city sprawling across most of the District of Columbia and Virginia, encompassing the old "Beltway" region. Base housing for primary team members includes a dramatic view of the Mall and Reflecting Pool, and is within walking distance of the

80 Capitol and National Mall. APEX members have little time to enjoy their luxury accommodations; they spend the majority of their time in the field.

APEX maintains four primary response teams designated Alpha through Delta, one of which mans the agency's duty desk 24 hours a day. The four squads rotate through day and night duty, and a pair of squads (either A and B, or C and D) serves as the Primary Element for two weeks. While a pair of Squads are Primary Element, they are responsible for deploying on combat missions. Meanwhile, the Secondary Element spends its two week stand-down period training and recovering after their missions.

Squad assignments are fairly fluid, with members moving between units in response to the needs of a particular mission. APEX's primary team, often referred to as "APEX One" is composed of some of the best trained, most experienced metahumans in the world. Assignment to this unit is reserved for the best, most capable operatives in the world.

APEX as a Heroic Organization

APEX is large enough, with a diverse enough mission and deep enough pockets to act as an ideal backer for most game groups.

APEX is a military/espionage and peace-keeping organization with a worldwide mandate. APEX is allowed to operate within America, conducting anti-terror operations and performing law enforcement functions. One of the organizations largest ongoing tasks is fugitive retrieval- especially when the fugitive is a Powered or post-human. The agency's mission gives it worldwide jurisdiction, allowing APEX members to operate openly almost anywhere in the world, or to conduct covert operations or assaults when they're not welcomed openly.

Though APEX has a rigid military hierarchy, and its members are subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, it is an ideal organization for military gamers. APEX squads are small and highly mobile- usually composed of 4-10 highly trained specialist

metahumans, a Hammerhead android recorder, and an assigned Patriot Courier teleporter (which is a perfectly gamable size).

APEX squads have the kind of operational freedom that makes for great games, but would never exist in a real-world military. Individual units are given wide discretion in how they conduct their missions; as long as the soldiers accomplish the mission objectives, minimize civilian casualties and file the correct after-action reports, they can do their job with no interference from the chain of command.

APEX also provides gamers with an easy way to indulge in troupe-style play, where each player controls several characters. If you want to emphasize the tactical, urban warfare aspect of Othervers America, you can simply assign each player control of a small squad and see how many of their boys survive the night's session. Alternatively, players can build a diverse roster of post-humans, with varying abilities, diverse power levels and specialties. Specific player characters are called to duty as the situation calls for, reinforcing the idea that APEX is a huge group of specialists, ala GI Joe (a major inspiration for the organization).

A simple suggestion is for a group of 5 players and a GM would be that each player is allowed 20 levels with which to build his or her players. Players can use any combination of race, templates, class levels and upgrades to build their character or characters, so long as the sum total adds up to 20 levels.

The player might want to build a single 20th level demi-god, someone who is a world shaking Othervers power, someone who sits on the Mayflower Board or is a Playmaker, and who has been an active hero since back in the Barron days. Alternatively, the player might build a huge assortment of 2nd and 3rd level rookies. The 20th level character might get less screen time, only appearing when the GM decides that Epic level play is the order of the day. Alternatively, though the rookies are at greater risk on missions, their sheer number ensures that the player who controls them gets lots of 'screen time' - they're a minor but interesting part of every squad and mission.



Depending on who you ask Elliot Shy is either the General Patton of the 21st Century . . . or the General Custer. He was a career military man, commissioned just after the turn of the century and proved himself during the “Long War on Terror”, serving in hot-spots across the Middle East. By 2028, the ambitious young officer was a Pentagon-level general, and one of the leading proponents of a smaller, more capable military branch designed specifically to deal with emerging metahuman and extra-terrestrial threats.

When the young Covenant of the Goddess Universal unveiled its RAINBOW Liberty strike-force, giving a non-governmental entity access to a level of military power previously reserved for first world nations, the United States military finally agreed to General Shy’s dream. Within a year, the government had established APEX, first as an arm of the Department of Homeland Security, and then as its own independent entity within the Department of Defense.

Foundation and the Shy Years

APEX was established in late 2029, less than a year after the RAINBOW Liberty strike-team was formed. The organization was the brainchild of one man, the legendary and still controversial Major General Elliot Shy, who fought for the organization’s creation and steered it through its first two decades of life.

During the first five years of APEX’ existence, the organization grew from a well-funded, highly trained combat cell into an entire new branch of the US military. APEX pioneered a host of post-human enhancement programs, most of which are now considered standard 22nd Century military doctrine. APEX fielded the first true Combat Types, began the first large-scale full cybernetic conversion program, and pioneered the science of object philosophies. A host of battle-field successes and

impressive anti-terror ops around the world proved APEX worth, as well as the validity of General Shy's concepts.

Elliot Shy rode APEX fame into the White House, serving two terms as Secretary of Defense under the Greyforth Administration. APEX flourished under his care, enjoying a massively enlarged budget and expanded mandate. No longer the 'little brother' of the other four branches, APEX became America's first line of defense, with the elder four branches of the military acting as support for America's post-human supersoldiers.

When the teleportation-capable Patriot Courier mutates were unveiled to an amazed America in 2041, APEX became a truly worldwide fast-response force, capable of projecting American military power **anywhere** in the Inner Solar System within a matter of minutes. Questions about the legal and moral implications of custom-decanted a new human subspecies were brushed aside by the sheer utility of these new supersoldiers. First-gen Patriot Courier were media darlings, featured in recruiting campaigns, Mesh-dramas and video games, as were the APEX soldiers they ferried into combat zones.

While America fell in love with Patriot Courier post-humans as they had with the sensual and mystical Softlings and Fluxminx a decade earlier, the seeds of Shy's downfall were laid in the creation of another metahuman engineered species. In 2043, bloggers revealed the existence of another mutate species- the Minutemen. By the early 2040s, General Shy's long standing dread of Lifechained incursions into Earthspace had become full-blown paranoia, possibly even psychosis. Shy began a secret eugenics program, seeding random American children with the Minutemen genome, in hopes of creating an army of anti-Lifechain super predators.

With the secret program exposed, its tactical potential vanished, and Shy's career crumbled. All of Shy's secrets, many of them even more damning than the illegal creation of the Shy Minutemen, rapidly come to light. Shy committed suicide in the wake of the resulting scandal, but even his death

wasn't enough to save the Greyforth Administration. President Greyforth was impeached in 2046 and left office in disgrace, taking most of 2040s Washington with him.

The ill-will and paranoia engendered by the revelation of Greyforth and Shy's crimes only helped the Lifer pseudo-nation recruit dissatisfied American Christians, and helped bring the War that much closer. The debacle also gutted APEX, turning a beloved new agency into a laughing-stock and embarrassment.

Reconstruction

The late 2040s and early 2050s were lean years for APEX, as the organization tried to shake off the unquiet ghost of its founder. The organization barely survived the Congressional hearings that brought down Greyforth, and was decimated. The organization's roster and budget were reduced to their 2029 levels, and then pruned even closer. The APEX primary team was reduced to just a handful of highly trained metahumans, and the team's mandate was restricted to short term anti-terror strikes.

APEX began the long, torturous process of rebirth only about five years before the Abortion War began, in 2061. By 2055, the formation of the Lifer pseudo-nation had reached a critical mass that made the War impossible to prevent. The federal government knew the War was coming, no matter what cheerful, integrationist sound bites their spokespeople provided the media. America needed a well trained military force to stand alongside the Covenant, both to ensure America honored its military commitment to its pagan ally, and so that, when the dust finally settled, America could provide a military check on the Covenant's ambitions.

When APEX was reinstated to full service during the Fourth of July celebrations in 2056, it was with the understanding that the agency would soon have to fight a new, and especially dirty kind of war. APEX veterans were recalled to active service, while new Powereds were actively recruited or

created en masse. America's Powered population blossomed in the years leading up to the War, while APEX grew exponentially. By the time the first shot was fired, APEX was larger, stronger and better funded than it had been at any point in its history.

Everything was going according to plan.

New Affiliation: "The Playmakers"

Official Designation: Department of International Policy Sub-Cabinet VI

Formation Year: Believed to be 2050

Motto: None

*"I move a man to move his men to kill a man;
It's such a bloody game a mechanism
With parts that bleed and die. I could not do it
In Minos's grasp alone, there was nowhere to
stand;
Between two kings, there is leverage."
- John M. Ford*

January 20th, 2105.

Washington DC.

The White House; Sub-Bunker 16-F

The President addresses the empty room.

"You knew I'd swing Diana. That'd I'd beat Dacoveney there and that'd give me the votes I needed."

Aside from the fading echo of the President's words, there is silence in the deep bunker. The room is comfortable and sterile, outwardly, it's just another luxury hotel suite, designed for a forgettable, blandly pleasant extended stay. Inwardly, the room is one of the most secure areas on the planet, shielded from all forms of harm. The polished, walnut door is bullet proof, capable of dissipating the impact of a rail gun round. The pleasant off white walls, durable enough to withstand the hellish pressure wave of a nuke strike, or the acidic entropy of an anti-matter burst. The room's oxygen has never touched the outside world's sky, and is filled with invisible swarms of protective nano-machines, which settle on the President's suit like summer humidity.

The newly sworn-in President is alone in the room. He hesitates for a moment before speaking, again, to empty air. He feels somewhat foolish, like a



priest addressing a God he isn't sure is there anymore.

"Thank you for that."

The President pulls off his thousand dollar, eggshell blue tie, and lets it dangle over his shoulders. He sighs, his tired eyes crawling across the prints recessed into the heavily armored, off white walls.

".....Are you even here? Winters?"

The President waits thirty seconds, eyes locked on his gold Rolex. He slips his tie into his pocket, looks around the luxurious deep bunker one last time, and all of a sudden he isn't alone in the room anymore. The President feels the hair on the back of his arms stand on end, and the presence of alien energies set his heart racing, makes his mouth taste like a dentist's tools, and makes him so erect it hurts.

The room is bathed in cool blue light, from somewhere beyond reality, and two male shadows are cast upon the carpeted floor and the tasteful off-white walls. One of the shadows is the President's. The other shadow comes from somewhere distant. Whatever Collin Winters has become, he has chosen to manifest as only a shadow, formless and cold in a secret room that nothing should be able to enter.

"The vast majority of my sentience is.... I am elsewhere, Isaiah, but there is enough of me present to hold a conversation. Congratulations on your victory. Enjoy your day. You'll have much work ahead of you- a hard term of office."

The President scowls. His hands shake.

"The Abortion War again? With all your power, why don't you actually do something about it? Instead of just.... I don't know, just fanning the flames from time to time. Seeing what happens. Just end it, one way or the other."

The un-cast shadow does not speak. Faint wisps of blue fog swirl through the quiet, comfortable room. Ice is forming on the plastic lampshades,

and the President's breath steams in the suddenly frozen air. The President sighs again, and wishes his hands would stop shaking, wishes his heart would slow.

"The Abortion War is painful for you Isaiah, and will call for great sacrifices on your part, but it is necessary to the transformation of America. It all means something, even if you can't see the ultimate pattern the way I do."

Blue light strobes.

"The end result.... is glorious, Isaiah. The end result of this war perfects this universe. We win the world, at the end."

Out of the corner of his eye, the President catches a glimpse of the man that General Collin Winters used to be, back when he was only a mortal human. Whether the half-second mirage is his own imagination or something that Winters has chosen to show him, he doesn't (and can't) really know. The President breathes in slowly, through his nose. Waiting

"Enough of that for one night, Mr. President. Enjoy your evening, it was an excellent campaign and you've certainly earned your Inaugural Ball. I would like to address your new Cabinet within the next month or so, and would like to speak to you and Dacoveney privately within the week. We have much to do."

Reluctantly, the new President nods. The other shadow nods too, and disappears. The comfortable suite warms again, and the President feels his heart slow as what used to be Winters leaves the galaxy.

For a moment, the President stands alone in the deep bunker. He takes one last look around, and re-activates his smartlight locator beacon, to alert his Secret Service protectors that he's returning to the surface levels. And then he utters the worst profanity he knows, quietly, once. And the President leaves the room, and the lights automatically dim in his wake.

The Playmakers are unknown to anyone who isn't Cabinet level or above- most Senators and members of Congress don't have the first clue they exist. The Playmakers are a coalition of generals, Cabinet undersecretaries and senior theater commanders who steer the nation's military policies from within the ranks. Presidents may come and go, shaping the world for at most, eight years at a time, but a Playmaker can write history for the length of his career and beyond. Sitting Presidents are forced to bargain with the Playmakers as equals if they want policies implemented.

Simply ignoring the Playmaker cabal, or worse acting against them, results in a single term presidency (for the lucky) or an assassin's bullet. In October 2071, when Vice President Clarissa Calderone was assassinated by the Lifer terrorist Hungerstrike while on a diplomatic mission to the Boston Lifepoint, it was the Playmakers who set the assassin in motion and provided the intel support necessary to penetrate her security cordon.

The Playmakers extend their membership by invitation only, and have never allowed the membership of anyone below the rank of O-6. Anyone who they deem unworthy of membership unlucky enough to discover conclusive proof of their existence dies efficiently, within days at the hands of whatever enemies they've managed to acquire.

Under the Playmakers' direction, America has emerged from the ashes of the Abortion War a stronger, more militarized nation. The Playmakers manipulate the media and public consciousness through their control of Mil-Media, while negotiating with the megacorps (through a series of dummy corporations, third-parties and lobbyists) to decide the working conditions of 22nd Century America. APEX is only one limb of the Playmaker's far reaching plans, and far from the most important or effective.

The Playmakers were forced to concede the existence of the Choicer and Lifer pseudo-nations, theocratic entities too powerful to be wished or manipulated away. Instead, the Playmakers work to limit their power, and eventually, to force their

succession from the union. Their social engineering protocols call for the succession of the Covenant from mainline USA by 2215 at the latest, and the collapse of recognizable Lifer Enclave culture a few decades before that. The Playmakers are more than willing to sacrifice some US territory- the 'pink states' - in exchange for the peaceful removal of unpredictable, "un-American" elements from within the nation, especially if the resulting new nation-state is on friendly terms with militarized America.

Towards this end, the Playmakers have subtly urged the Bastian faction within the Covenant into power. The Bastians have the least love for traditional, Christian-born America as a whole, but for all their righteous pagan fury, they are the innovators within the Covenant. Bastian philosophers have pushed the Covenant farther into its growth as a unique culture than it would have otherwise progressed. On the home front, the Bastian vision of the Covenant may fascinate unaligned Americans, but its not a place that most Americans would like to live. Promoting Bastian ideals helps create a clear division between the Choicer Covenant and liberal America, driving a wedge the Playmakers hope will one day result in a clean, bloodless segregation.

The Playmakers were founded informally, initially just as a semi-formal gathering of the most influential military leaders of the early 2050s. Many of the early members of the conspiracy were Shy loyalists, who owed their career to the disgraced SECDEF, but whose careers had stagnated by association with the man. The most influential Playmaker is also the one who started the conspiracy, General Collin Winters, the former APEX operative codenamed Gravity Grave. Gravity Grave was one of the legendary Inaugural Six (along with famed supersoldiers PinPoint I, Coil, Rotor, Staci Feathers, and Vigor). Gravity Grave was the first member of APEX and his ever stranger perception of time has showed him glimpses of a Deep Future where he is the last.

Under Gravity Grave's direction, the Playmakers evolved from executing policy to suggesting it. Possibly immortal, Winters has steered

the group since its inception, and sees the group as a way to shape the evolution of his country, down through all the long centuries into his Deep Future, where the Choicers are their own nation, and the Lifers patrol the darkness between the stars, sworn to finally defend **all** life.

86 As far as the general public knows, Gravity Grave has retreated deep into Phallus Space, abandoning a world he has little emotional connection to. The immortal energy being's few 'official' visits to Earth are planetary media events, and usually turn into impromptu American holidays as the people welcome back the legendary Powered demi-god. Gravity Grave returns to Earth far more often than anyone suspects, creating galactic distance teleport corridors bridging the light years to conduct Playmaker business. The American public is only aware of one of every 20 or 30 visits, at best.

Though lead by Gravity Grave, the Playmakers are a coalition of equals, with all important long term goals decided democratically. A 2/3 majority is necessary to change Playmaker policy or begin a new campaign, which makes jockeying for position and the exchange of favors a major component of Playmaker business. Winters can veto any decision of the assembly, leading some members of the conspiracy to wonder how to kill an immortal.

The Playmakers rarely act directly. With the intelligence assets of the entire United States military at their disposal, they rarely need to. Instead, the Playmakers can easily arrange leaks, manipulate deployment orders, order police sweeps, and betray an adversary to their enemies, all without directly revealing their existence. A Playmaker death mark is subtle, but its far more certain and much quicker than any sentence handed down by a Fed-Gov judge.

During the War, the Playmakers accepted Lifer general staff officers into their ranks, mostly out of necessity. The vast majority were purged from the ranks during the War, either due to the natural attrition of combat, or by design, but a handful survive.

Franklin Wasiheed, the psi-capable terrorist codenamed Emir, remains an active member of the Playmakers despite his incarceration in a Nevada supermax. He communicates through his lawyers, or for more important matters, psionically. Acting on orders they don't understand, but can't question, Emir's keepers occasionally shut down the psi-dampers locking down the telepath for minutes or hours at a time.

Emir has never read Gravity Grave's mind, and is unsure if he can, and after his experiences piecing together Artemis' shattered psyche, he is reluctant to enter the mind of another high-level Lifechain. As such, the telepath has no idea the future Gravity Grave has foreseen for his nation. Emir is smart enough to realize that Gravity Grave grows more distant from humanity with every passing day, and recognizes that the immortal soldier is manipulating the Lifer Nation for his own ends.

For the most part, decades of imprisonment have worn down Emir's Lifer resolve, and he participates in the conspiracy mostly for the thrill of manipulating power on a scale that even field command of the Lifer Army of God couldn't provide him, though he occasionally throws his one-time allies a political bone with a Playmaker policy choice. For now, he lives with Gravity Grave's grand schemes and allows himself to be kept, like a pet, knowing that it's in his best interests to do so.

Prerequisites: All five levels in the Tactical Commander prestige class, Decorated Veteran, Windfall, Knowledge (business) 12 ranks, Knowledge (civics) 4 ranks, Knowledge (history) 4 ranks, Knowledge (popular culture) 1 rank

Benefit: You are a member of the Playmaker conspiracy. You gain the following military feats, if you do not have them already, as bonus feats: Censored History, Command Airstrike, Elite Clearance, Satellite Recon, Unlimited Carry, Windfall (cumulative).

You are allowed to address the Playmakers, vote on policy, and influence the course of American history from behind the scenes. The true scope of this affiliation is subject to game master discretion, but your character is one of the most influential military leaders on the planet, equal to a high level Scion of the Pilgrim. You may address the Mayflower Board or similar groups. You lose the benefit of this affiliation, and are targeted for execution if you betray the Playmakers, are deemed a threat to their secrecy or act contrary to their interest.

Finally, by spending an action point and succeeding at a Diplomacy check (DC 20) against the other members of the Playmaker conspiracy, you may issue a strike order against a specific character.

Famous Apex Squads and Special Units

As one of the planet's premier militaries, APEX has a long history of military excellence. Its units have made history a dozen times over, with many of the most well known squads becoming media heroes. Other units serve in the shadows, but are no less heroic for their anonymity. The following APEX affiliations are a representative sample of the hundreds of units serving within the organization, and showcase the organization's diversity of missions, tactics and personalities.

Designer's Note: Gamemasters are encouraged to create their own affiliations and contribute to the military history of Otherverses

America. Anyone who wants to can submit their affiliations (for APEX or any other faction) to me at either www.otherversesgames.blogspot.com or at christopherafield@hotmail.com. Please include your full name for accreditation. Once I have a good selection of fan-made affiliations, I'll release them as a Free20 PDF at the usual sales sites. All submissions will be considered Open Game Content and credited to their author.

1. APEX One
2. Big Vegas
3. Jutland's Dreadnaughts
4. Long Jump
5. Patriot Medical
6. The Pinpoint Sisterhood
7. Seven Scout
8. Snake Squad
9. Witch Watch

"APEX One"

Official Designation: APEX Primary Response Squad, Global

Headquartered: Washington Metroplex, Washington DC region

Formation Year: 2024

Motto: Courage, Service and Integrity

APEX One is the most media-friendly, celebrated APEX squad. Composed exclusively of highly trained, veteran members, APEX One is responsible for counter-terrorism and peacekeeping operations across the planet. Their successes have been many, and well documented. In order to provide the American public with heroes and create a positive perception for APEX and the US military machine as a whole, the media has been given wide, but closely supervised access to APEX One.

The appearances and callsigns of current primary team members are licensed to everything from action figures to combat simulations; long running documentary series examine famous APEX missions in depth, and American kids dream of heroic careers as APEX combat-types thanks to a cunningly marketed action cartoon and video game franchise.



Only the top 1% of America's military are even considered for APEX One membership. Prospective members must display military excellence, have outstanding service records, and have served in active combat. In addition, prospective members must be comfortable on camera and in the public eye. Members of the squad must be attractive, charismatic and marketable, in addition to being top-notch soldiers.

Prerequisites: Elite Clearance, Renown, Knowledge: tactics and one other of choice at 6 ranks each, Diplomacy 4 ranks, Base Attack Bonus +5, CHA 15+

Benefit: APEX takes good care of its celebrity superheroes. You may add your Reputation bonus as an untyped bonus when requisitioning equipment from APEX. Additionally, you receive a +1 competence bonus on Knowledge: tactics checks, thanks to your extensive training in counter-insurgency.

“Big Vegas”

Official Designation: Desert Warfare Unit Bravo, International

Headquartered: Las Vegas, Nevada

Formation Year: 2022

Motto: Playin' In the Sand

Big Vegas is one of the oldest and most storied APEX units, actually predating the official formation of the faction by almost eighteen months. Big Vegas is the headquarters of America's most elite desert survival school. Big Vegas' 180 day training cycle is grueling, with the majority of applicants washing out before the course midpoint. Big Vegas holds to the high standards of its first instructors, all of whom were proven by decorated service in Iraq, Afghanistan and various other Middle Eastern conflicts.

Big Vegas serves as a desert based, APEX equivalent to the US Navy Seals or British SAS. Members of the squad operate in the harshest environments known to man, often behind the lines and without support. In addition to special operations, members of Big Vegas serve as combat advisors, helping train allied militaries.

Prerequisites:

Survival 9 ranks, Knowledge: earth & life sciences 2 ranks, Treat Injury 2 ranks, Combat Martial Arts, *SERE Training*, Guide, Run. Must possess the Nomad Genemod, Planetary Adaptation or similar racial traits.

Benefit: You are one of the best desert warfare experts on the planet. You receive a +4 bonus on Survival and Hide checks in desert terrain, and may use the Hide skill even when observed, assuming you are in a desert environment.

“Jutland’s Dreadnaughts”

Official Designation: 10th Calvary (Light Mechanized)

Formation Year: Early 1800s

Headquartered: Ft. Sam Houston, San Antonio, TX

Motto: Fire First, Fire Best

The Dreadnaughts are an elite Shell infantry squad, under the command of CWO2 Darris Jutland, a career military officer whose previous assignment was teaching combat air tactics at the Metamorphosis North proving ground. Jutland is



widely considered one of the best shell pilots alive today, and his squad is trained to that same legendary standard. The Dreadnaughts provide close air support to fed-gov missions running out of San Antonio, which means they often go into battle alongside Snake Squad, and see plenty of action in the Southeast’s sprawling Enclaves.

CWO2 Jutland’s force of personality and combat record have allowed him enormous latitude in how he runs his squad. The Dreadnaughts accept highly skilled pilots of all phenotypes, at least officially, but its an open secret that the Dreadnaughts’ inner circle is solid black, and all Black Dreamers. He’s used the Dreadnaughts to settle personal business before, and has enough pull with the chain of command to get away with it, and its rumored that the Dreadnaughts have taken off the books missions in South America a few times.

Prerequisites: Black Dream affiliation, Knowledge: tactics 6 ranks, Pilot 8 ranks, Exotic Firearms Proficiency (any heavy weapon)

Benefits: Membership in the Dreadnaughts makes you one of the best trained and most efficient powered armor pilots in the world. Jutland's tactics focus heavily on coordinated, overwhelming fire power. You inflict an additional die of damage with any exotic firearm mounted to your powered armor, or used while piloting a suit of powered armor.

When flanking an opponent in conjunction with another member of Jutland's Dreadnaughts who has this affiliation, the bonus provided is +3, not +2 as normal.

"Long Jump"

Official Designation: Rapid Transport Operations Study Group

Formation Year: 2076

Motto: We're already there!

Long Jump is an experimental program designed to improve the already impressive teleportation abilities of Patriot Courier humanoids. Several generations of young Patriot Couriers have been pushed through the program. During early childhood, these mutants are inoculated with a specially tailored vitamin and retroviral regimen, and their early childhood training is reinforced with concentration exercises and meditation periods.

Teleporters who perform above average are rewarded with new toys and games, (as well as additional psychic training disguised as even cooler games) by developmental psychologists within the study group.

Despite the expense of this long term, difficult training program, the Long Jump study group has achieved truly impressive results.

Prerequisites: Member of the Patriot Courier species, Iron Will, Knowledge: physical sciences 4 ranks, Concentration 4 ranks



Benefit: Your wormholes are at least 20 ft in diameter, rather than the 10 ft diameter of your less capable Patriot Courier siblings. In addition, when opening a wormhole, you can set any destination up to 1,500 miles away per point of INT modifier, rather than the standard 1000 miles per INT modifier. As normal for a Patriot Courier, you may still attempt to increase the diameter of one of your portals with a successful Knowledge: physical sciences check.

New Affiliation: "Patriot Medical"

Official Designation: US Army Genetic Research and Enhancement Laboratory (USA-GREL)

Headquartered: Atlanta, GA

Formation Year: Classified, believed to have been in operation since the mid 1970s.

Motto: Our humanity is our shield

The Patriot Medical program is a genetic engineering initiative going back more than a century.

Patriot gene-cutters are responsible for breeding the overwhelming majority of APEX' post-human troops, and for pioneering the science of military genetic engineering. Many of Patriot's successes are classified and exempt from the Freedom of Information Act- the unit's scientists toil in obscurity, doing work that would earn any other geneticist the Nobel Prize a dozen times over.

In the wake of the Treaty of Boston, the Patriot Medical program works out of Atlanta, within walking distance of the Center for Disease Control. Security analysts were against putting one of the US government's most secure gene-labs a literal stone's throw from the Atlanta Enclave, but the allure of Atlanta's excellent advanced medical infrastructure was just too tempting to pass up.

The Patriot Medical facility stretches across nearly 10 square miles of an ultra-high security. All the campus's buildings are hardened, and protected beneath mac-tik force shields, and each building has its own independent life support and fusion stack. A huge garrison of Powered soldiers and combat shells patrol the facility.

Ironically most of these 'hard' protections are unnecessary- while infiltrating the facility is a top priority for the Lifer government, they consider the Patriot Medical labs a 'no-go' assault target. The campus is home to hundreds of Softling, Patriot Courier and other mutant children, and the largest exo-womb cyro-tank facility in the world outside of RESCUE International's Dallas facility. Most Lifers simply won't risk an assault on the facility, out of an awareness of the PR disaster it would be for them, if not out of ethical concern for child casualties.

Prerequisites: Knowledge: earth & life sciences 8 ranks, Knowledge: tactics 2 ranks, Treat Injury 10 ranks, Medical Expert, Surgery, Elite Clearance

Benefit: You are a highly skilled military gene-cutter, and provide all patients with +2 additional successes to withstand genetic engineering. If you have the Nexii Clinic affiliation benefit, the effects stack, making you one of the most in-

demand geneticist in the world.

When genetically engineering any member of one of the new "Patriot" species detailed in this sourcebook, the patient does not need to make FORT Saves to accept a genetic therapy. The patient merely has to wait until the minimum recovery period for the genetic alteration ends before he or she can manifest their new abilities. Your on-going medical training with the Patriot Program has given you unmatched familiarity with the most commonly encountered post-human genetic codes, allowing you to perform otherwise risky gene-cutting procedures safely and routinely.

"The Pinpoint Sisterhood"

Official Designation: None, non-military group

Formation Year: Mid 2020s

Motto: None

*"God bless our troops, especially our snipers."
- bumper sticker, circa 2009*

The Pinpoint Sisterhood is a heroic legacy stretching back more than 80 years to CPL Eliza "Pinpoint" Cardona, a Marine Corps sniper/observer slain while serving in Iraq. One of the first female Marines to serve in active combat, her nickname became a popular call sign among female fighter pilots and snipers who wanted to show solidarity with their fallen colleague. Over the years, the call sign fell out of favor among the fighter crowd, becoming a badge of honor awarded to the country's best female snipers.

During the early days of the War, many current and former "Pinpoints", inspired by the feminist military traditions of their counterparts in the Choicer military banded together to create a semi-formal 'band of sisters'. Membership in this elite sisterhood is limited to female snipers, and is by invitation only.

In addition to gaining the right to use the callsign "Pinpoint" an inductee becomes eligible for line of duty insurance provided by the nonprofit Pinpoint Sisterhood, designed to care for the sniper's dependants and provide for their children's education if she is ever killed in action. Membership in the Pinpoint Sisterhood has less obvious benefits,

from finding a good table the base's officer's club to a fast career track.

Prerequisites: Soldier Name (Pinpoint), Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Dead Aim, Farshot, *Patient Sniper*, Spot 6 ranks, female gender only.

Gender and Sexuality

Unlike the military circa Spring of 2009, the 22nd Century American military is sexually de-segregated. Women are allowed to serve in all combat roles, and their participation on the battlefield has been an accepted part of military life since the mid 2020s. As of 2107, APEX's roster is roughly 56% female, as the Covenant's feminist-military tradition encourages female enlistment in all American militaries-Lifer, Choicer and unaligned.

Homosexuality is no longer grounds for dismissal from military service, and most members (like most 22nd Century Americans) no longer stigmatize gays. Gay and lesbian service members are allowed to serve openly, and their spouses receive the same benefits (and fill out the same tedious paperwork) as straight military spouses. Transsexual service members are allowed to remain on active duty, and are barracked with their preferred gender, provided they accept genetic reorganization or full cyborgization. The military considers surgical sex reassignment unnecessarily risky and barbaric, and would rather get a TS soldier back to active duty with a week long chromosomal reorganization than risk losing him/her for a months long surgical recovery period.

However, there is a culture wide distrust of the Bi-Shift genemod within the military community. Gay or straight, if you are as you were born, you are accepted within the ranks. However, those who voluntarily alter their sexuality with drugs and genemods are looked down upon as hedonists, emotionally unstable, and possibly untrustworthy. Part of the distrust of Bi-Shift comes from Black Dreamers within the ranks. Along with cyborgization, Bi-Shift and other trans-humanist treatments have earned Dr. Jackson Chess' personal distrust.

PINPOINT, APEX TWO SNIPER LEAD
CDR. MAGGIE NEWHOP





“Snake Squad”

Official Designation: Insurgent Response Squad, Southern United States

Headquartered: Kelly AFB, San Antonio, Texas

Formation Year: 2068

Motto: Swift and Silent Strikers!

APEX’s “Snake Squad” is a highly trained covert ops unit whose members consist of post-humans specifically modified for stealth and urban warfare expertise. Many of the founding members of Snake Squad were modified with reptilian traits to increase their combat effectiveness; even those without cobra or mamba DNA soon adopted the stylized serpent design of the unit as a unit patch and personal *mon*. Despite the fact that many of the ‘old reptiles’ of the unit retired after the Treaty of Boston was signed, young and proud young metahumans still adopt the snake as their personal symbol.

Snake Squad’s area of responsibility includes Texas, Arizona and New Mexico, as well as

the Gulf of Mexico and the Florida panhandle. As such, Snake Squad often comes into conflict with Pensacola-based terror cells, making the veteran unit one of the most despised APEX squads among the Lifer pseudonation. The civilian identities of current and former Snake Squad members are a closely guarded secret. Snake Squaddies never deploy on a mission without being fully hooded and masked, since there are high dollar bounties on the heads of most senior members.

Prerequisites: Elite Clearance, Burst Fire, Intimidate 8 ranks, Knowledge: tactics 6 ranks

Benefit: Snake Squaddies cultivate a reputation for fearlessness and brutality, especially among the lethal Lifer terror cells they regularly encounter. The Squaddies receive a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks made against Lifers, as well as Knowledge: tactics made to concerning the composition, tactics or behavior of Pensacola based Lifer units.

“Seven Scout”

Official Designation: 7th Tactical Recon Unit (K-9)

Headquartered: APEX Metroplex, Washington, DC region

Formation Year: 2058

Motto: Nose to the Ground

Seven Scout works closely with the Secret Service, patrolling the Metroplex, securing areas where VIPS will be visiting (which is virtually all of the Metroplex) and screening visitors to high security zones. A small platoon of experienced Seven Scout dog teams is permanently assigned to the President’s personal security detail.

Other Seven Scout dog teams perform less glamorous but just as important work. Like all working dogs, Seven Scout canines are trained to sniff out hidden threats, and are often deployed to missions deep in the Enclaves. Seven Scout dogs are usually trained to detect hidden Lifechains, and the fierce, disciplined dogs have little fear of the powerful mutates.

In fact, fear is a foreign concept to the brave canines tasked to Seven Scout- they are some of the few animals on the planet who will accept Shy Minutemen partners without hesitation. Drawn into Seven Scout by both a chance to utilize their natural gifts, and a promise to finally find a loyal friend, a surprisingly large number of Shy mutates join the unit’s ranks.

Prerequisites: Dog Handler, Handle Animal 6 ranks, Investigate 6 ranks

Benefit: Your canine is even braver and more powerful than typical thanks to specialized training, diet and a regimen of enhancement drugs and genemods.

Your canine gains the Toughness feat, as well as a +1 morale bonus on WILL Saves made to resist fear and all FORT saves.

If your canine partner is slain, this benefit applies to your next canine.

“Witch Watch”

Official Designation: Emergent Threat Assessment Squad, North Western United States

Headquartered: Seattle, WA

Formation Year: 2096

Motto: Equity and Justice, Guaranteed through Vigilance

Witch Watch is an under funded political football. Its mandate is to monitor the Covenant military and internal Choicer politics, ensuring that the pseudo-nation remains an American ally, and that they continue to respect American borders. One of Witch Watch’s primary missions is to prevent the Bastian faction from consolidating its power or achieving control of the movement. Simply put: they want a moderate, Christian-friendly Choicer neighbor, not a hardline Bastian theocracy.

Witch Watch is not a frontline combat unit, and doesn’t have the resources to be. Operating out of a dilapidated federal building in Seattle, Witch Watch is primarily a reporting and analysis agency. It combs news sources, Mesh blogsites and develops human intelligence within the Covenant, as well as funding and coordinating counter-Bastian lobbying efforts within Choicer territory. One of Witch Watch’s favorite tactics is to back moderate Choicer politicians and play internal politics against the Bastians.

Prerequisites: either *Ad Campaign* or *Blackmail*, Deceptive, Bluff 4 ranks, Knowledge: civics 8 ranks, Research 4 ranks

Benefit: You receive a +2 competence bonus on Knowledge: civics and Research checks made about or concerning the Bastian faction.



The Watchfloor

The APEX Watchfloor is manned 24-7, and occupies three entire floors within the Pentagon. Despite the importance of the work done there, Watchfloor duty isn't a very prestigious assignment. Most of the Watchfloor's desks are staffed by E-6s and below, supervised by a rising young officer of the deck. A tour of duty as a Watchfloor OOD, with all the stress and pressure that goes with it, is virtually required to rise much higher than O-4 within APEX.

The Watchfloor maintains constant real time communication with all APEX squads deployed in the field, with individual squads each assigned to a specific desk. When multiple APEX squads are active, the Watchfloor transforms from quiet government office to seething cauldron of barely controlled chaos, with desk operators struggling to coordinate air support, UAV overflight and scan APEX's databases for known threats.

The Watchfloor is dominated by a massive smartlight display of the Earth, nearly the size of a two-story home, floating just above eye level. Clickable hot-spots on the globe display details on every APEX squad accessible to the user's security rating, as well as coordinating surveillance data from thousands of sources under high-end AI supervision, to give Watchfloor staff a constantly updating lock on the location and movement of every known post-human criminal, terrorist and independent operator in APEX' database. A major part of Watchfloor duty is scanning the globe for emerging threats, and dispatching APEX strike teams, local or federal police, allied military units or surveillance drones as needed.

The Metroplex

The Metroplex stretches across nearly one hundred miles of dense urban sprawl, encompassing the capitol and most of the old corridors of power. When the War erupted, the entire Beltway region was placed under military control, and declared an ultra-high security area, vital to the national defense. With the entire region now considered a federal preserve, the actual creation of the Metroplex completed a demographic and social shift that began in the wake of September 11, 2001.



The Metroplex encompasses the Capitol, the White House, the Pentagon, FBI, CIA and NSA headquarters, not to mention nearly one hundred smaller military bases, making it the ultimate 'target-rich' environment. Mac-tik forcefields improved from Choicer designs protect the entire Metroplex. Within seconds of a combat alert, the entire region can be sheathed in a glittering dome of electromagnetic force durable enough to withstand a high-megaton nuke hit. The Metroplex' forcefields are an order of magnitude more powerful than the similar technology protecting Choicer clinics.

Every inch of the Metroplex is under constant electronic scrutiny. Cameras operated by advanced security-AI and UAV over flights observe everything- every handshake, every meeting, and every passing vehicle that enters the Metroplex. Secret Service operatives and APEX metahumans are free to search any vehicle or person entering the Metroplex, and the 4th Amendment has been

suspended within the mega-city, allowing police to enter any Metroplex business or residence without a search warrant. High grade police AI scan the world's telecommunications systems constantly for potential threats, and are designed to alert a human agent if certain criteria for deeper surveillance are met.

There are few civilians living 'on Metroplex'. Most of the private homes within the Metroplex are owned by government officials and their families, or are used as military family housing. Federal employees working within the Metroplex usually commute in from densely populated bedroom communities and planned suburbs just outside Metroplex jurisdiction. The gentrification of the Metroplex eliminated the crime and gangster culture that had become endemic to the nation's capital, but also drove all but the wealthiest Washington elite out of the city itself. Racial animosities stirred up by the creation of the Metroplex still linger, even after more than forty

years, and are a sore point for Black Dreamers serving within APEX.

The Metroplex has a relatively low population density, and because of the historic nature of many of its buildings, is much less urbanized than the surrounding sprawl zone. The planned communities just outside the Metroplex are often built vertically, to maximize the available resources. Skyscraper nearly two miles tall encompass homes, businesses, shopping archaeologies, and like San Francisco's Rhinehart Tower are nearly cities in their own right. Driving into the Metroplex is like passing through a steel and glass mountain range encircling a stately, Greco-Roman valley.

The Guide Holos

The Metroplex hosts millions of visitors each year, one of the main reasons for the intact preservation of the area's historic architecture. In addition to human tour guides, AI smartlight mannequins walk the streets assisting tourists and pointing out historic sites.

These (often glitchy) AI holograms are modeled on famous American political and military leaders, and though limited to 'dumb-AI' status, these holograms convincingly mimic sentience as they describe Washington of ages past and the accomplishments of the American who inspired their image.

Metroplex residents rarely give these holographic ghosts any real thought. A native might ask an Abe Lincoln or Bill Clinton hologram when the next monorail is scheduled to arrive, but anybody who has grown up in the Metroplex has heard all but historical spiels a hundred times already. Most just walk right through the hologram, and infiltrating the municipal Smartlight network for some fun with these holograms is a time honored rite of passage for young Metroplex hackers.

Even in the security conscious Metroplex, where most offenses are punished with amazing harshness, screwing around with the guide-AIs is still only a minor misdemeanor, especially if the hack was especially witty. Bizarre computer pranks (such as last year's code-hack that made all the AI guides

completely naked and...impressive) involving the Guide AIs are part and parcel of 22nd Century Washington, DC's local color.

Reborn Again

When 2100 rolled around, and the 21st Century became the 22nd, it marked a new era for APEX. The US military unveiled its "New Century Initiatives", as part of the larger, nation-wide celebration of the new century. Seven years into the Initiative, the results are mixed, but APEX continues its commitment to force transformation.

In 2100, APEX unveiled its Aegis and Mediator Neo-Sapien mutants, the hulking Jugger-naut Brutes, designed to survive direct engagements with Lifer Closers, the Sky Panther fighter, "Nathan Rice" class Powered Armor and more than 250 new policies, weapon systems or professional programs. APEX has used the Initiatives to put its War-era past behind it, hoping to create an even more media-friendly unit, one untainted by Lifer accusations of war crimes. Recently, APEX has banned the use of the G.N. Stream energy weapon, as well as begun making plans to mothball its fleet of Sky Hydra heavy bombers- two controversial but effective weapon systems responsible for massive civilian casualties.

APEX is building a younger and leaner force. Many Abortion War veterans are nearing their 20 and retiring. A younger generation is being promoted through the ranks, a generation of soldiers for who didn't grow up with the War. Slightly more open to detente with the Lifer pseudo-nation than their mentors, this new generation accepts the New Century Initiative's weapon systems (and the rationale behind them) without complaint. APEX has begun active recruitment within the Choicer pseudo-nation, trying to strengthen the bonds between America and the Covenant, and at the same time, moderate young Covenant soldiers through exposure to an integrated American military.

98 To remaining War-vets, the New Century Initiative is a colossal failure, a way for the megacorps to make money off fat new defense contracts. Shell pilots especially despise the N.C.I- the loss of the G.N. Stream almost lead to mutiny. One of the best tank-buster weapons of all time, shelved because it worked too well? Because the Lifers didn't like it? Unthinkable. Traditionalists within the military complain endlessly, as soldiers always do, and do their jobs as best they can under the newly laid strictures.

Celebrity and Service

"CNN is one of the participants in the war."
- Arthur C. Clarke

APEX is more than just a military operation. It is also a multi-billion dollar merchandizing empire that exports American patriotism and military culture to every corner of human space. The US military,

through the *Mil-Media* media empire, has an enormous and omni-present media presence.

Mil-Media is a brand created in the 2040s, specifically to manage the US military's image and licensing issues, and to attract promising young recruits though a slick, well-crafted and multi-prong ad campaign. Mil-Media has grown exponentially, its success inextricably linked to APEX' growth. At the start of the 21st Century, the military commissioned rock songs to play over National Guard websites, but the dawn of the 22nd, Mil-Media is a major recording label, handling hundreds of artists, in a diverse array of genres.

Starting Occupation: Military Artist

You began your entertainment career as a Mil-Media apprentice. Part of your commitment to Mil-Media obliges you to perform for active duty troops, allow the government liberal use of your



work in its advertisements and conform to a (mostly unspoken) patriotic, pro-military style. Military artists run the gamut from rock groups touring war-zones to CAD/CAM sculptors working on making sure the web-belt and ammo clips on the latest Pinpoint action figure are accurate down to the last grommet.

Prerequisite: Age 16+, at least one of your allegiances must be towards America, a military group, or a similar faction. Cannot have a primary allegiance to either the Lifer or Choicer factions.

Skills: Choose two of the following as permanent class skills. If the skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks with that skill.

Craft (visual art, writing), Computer Use, Gather Information, Knowledge (art, behavioral sciences, business, popular culture, history, tactics), Perform (any) or select a new Speak Language choice.

Bonus Feats: Select one of the following: Ad Campaign, Athletic, Creative, Educated, Renown, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Trustworthy, Windfall

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2

Reputation Bonus Increase: +2

Mil-Media is one of the top Dreamscape advertisers, running first person shooter dreams for millions of American teens as they sleep. Most 22nd Century recruits got their first taste of military life during a Dreamscape fantasy session. Mil-Media reinvigorated the reality and 'cops' style reality show concepts.

A top-rated Mesh-stream runs heavily edited Hammerhead footage of APEX missions, integrating flawless-CGI recreations of the events leading up to the mission, as well as the aftermath, and interviews with the squad members involved. Selectable AI commentary tracks offer insight into the tactics, weapons and biology of the Powered soldiers involved. Mil-Media also produces several animated series based upon APEX, ranging from photo-realistic CGI dramas, to traditional action anime with

a military sci-fi vibe, to high energy cartoons featuring anthromorphic versions of the heroes, targeted at pre-schoolers.

Mil-Media handles every aspect of military licensing, from the sale of Army and Marine Corps t-shirts and sweat suits, to the marketing of an official line of highly detailed and ultra-accurate APEX action figures. Other branches of the licensing giant supervise the ROTC and NJROTC curriculums at in public schools and colleges. Though APEX regulations prohibit involvement with the meta-porn industry while on active duty, Mil-Media usually acts as an agent and middle-man for discharged metahumans looking to license their bodies, or APEX troops on long-term leave wanting to supplement their income while recovering from a particularly grueling mission. Militarized meta-porn is a billion dollar part of the trillion dollar meta-porn industry as a whole.

The Warname Legacy Center

The Warname Legacy Center is funded through the Department of Veterans Affairs and maintains a comprehensive database on every Warname used by an American or Choicer soldier since the late 2030s. The Warname Legacy Center preserves the eight decades of proud APEX heritage, and is revered as the memory of the organization.

The Center maintains an impressive military museum just a few minutes drive from Arlington National Cemetery. Permanent displays commemorate the history of the APEX organization, and tell the stories of the post-human soldiers who helped build its reputation. Rotating displays focus on the exploits of specific Powered supersoldiers, specific metahuman bloodlines and famous battles. More than three million visitors pass through the Center's doors each year, from school children on a day-trip to learn about their nation's celebrity superheroes, to grad students researching a doctoral thesis.

100 As impressive as the museum is, it's only a small part of the Warname Legacy Center's work. The Center maintains complete records of every registered American and Choicer Warname going back more than 90 years, and has partial records of callsigns and permanent op-codes for the decades leading up to APEX' formation. The Center also maintains an impressive collection of data on known Lifer and AOG warnames and code-idents, and often serves as a reference for government investigators. Historians and Powered-watchers can spend days sifting through the Center's online records.

The Warname Legacy Center acts as a central repository for 'freedom of information act' requests for biographical data on current and former military Powered. In the case of Powered soldiers whose identities are public, the center will provide family members and next of kin with complete, unclassified service records. To members of the general public, the center keeps a record of each Powered, searchable by either Warname or birth identity, which includes a brief biographic sketch detailing career highlights, dramatic high-resolution costume photographs, and a brief description of the soldier's metahuman talents.

Other Powered, especially current APEX members assigned to covert squads, have much shorter entries. In many cases, their entries simply consist of a notation that a particular Warname was registered to a specific soldier, identified only by first name. Records are usually declassified within 20 years of a metahuman's death or discharge, unless compelling reasons exist to keep them classified.

Finally, some entries only state that a specific Warname has been registered with the US military or Choicer government, but not when or to whom. These stub-files indicate a Powered engaged in ultra-secret activities, someone who is never intended to be in the public eye.

APEX Codenames

"Norman: I'm also told you're quite toyetic.

Songbird: What?

Norman: Toyetic. It's a word the media people use. It means your image and abilities easily suggest toys based on you. "

- Warren Ellis, *Marvel Comics' Thunderbolts*

Front line combat troops, as well as many Patriot Courier transporters, are given or allowed to choose a unique codename and callsign upon joining their squad. APEX soldiers are recognized and marketed by their codenames, while it's possible to find a squaddie's civilian name with some Mesh research, most Americans would instantly recognize the latest Pinpoint or Coldfront without giving Major Maggie Newhope or General Colin Winters a second thought.

Codenames may be a traditional super heroic one, a Mesh handle, or a Soldier Name proclaiming the soldier's political ideals. At the gamemaster's option, characters may receive the Soldier Name Object Philosophy as a bonus feat (even if they do not meet the prerequisites) upon induction into any APEX squad, reflecting the vital role codenames play in the organization's culture.

Soldier Name (Object Philosophy)

Personal identity is subsumed into the needs of your cause. You give up your birth name and your previous identity remaking yourself as a warrior utterly committed to your beliefs.

Choicer activists might take the name reflecting their patron goddess, or rename themselves Choice or Salem, assuming a portion of the identity of their most famous exemplars. Lifer soldiers adopt the non-identity of Never-Born or the Ghost, an utterly committed soldier for the preborn.

Prerequisite: Meaningful Ink or Personal Coda, Renown

Benefit: During a public and militaristic ceremony attended by others sharing your allegiance, you legally change your name to a code-name symbolizing your beliefs. This code-name may incorporate elements from your movement's history or reference the names or call signs of your allegiance's greatest champions.

You receive a +5 bonus to your Reputation score among those sharing your allegiance, making you an influential voice in the movement. This bonus stacks with the more general bonus provided by the Renown feat.

A number of times per day equal to one plus your CHA modifier (minimum twice daily), you may declare your soldier name and allegiance on the battlefield. Doing so is a standard action which does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Any sentient creature hostile to your primary allegiance within 30 ft you can clearly see and hear you must succeed at a WILL Save ($DC 10 + \frac{1}{2}$ your character level + your CHA modifier) or be overcome by debilitating thought-virus.

For 1d3 rounds, any enemy who fails his or her save fights sloppily, and during that time, all actions they take during battle always provoke attacks of opportunity.



Restricted and Retired Soldier Names

APEX legally owns and closely regulates the Soldier Names of its most famous Powered operatives. In most cases, new recruits are either assigned a code-identity based upon their powers and talents, or allowed to create a new code-identity, which cannot be similar to any Soldier-name on the organization's 'restricted/retired' list.

Famous code-identities of especially beloved APEX heroes are usually restricted for acts of battlefield heroism, especially after the death of a Powered soldier. Code-names like Pinpoint, Blindside, Gravity Grave, Buffalo, Rotor and Coil are badges of honor within the organization, having decades of legends behind them. Being allowed to register one of these restricted code-names is one of the highest honors the organization can bestow upon one of its soldiers.

New code-identities are added to APEX' restricted list as a posthumous honor. A character that dies heroically, in the line of duty, might have their codename restricted to honor their sacrifice.

To claim a restricted Soldier Name, a character must meet some fairly high requirements: the character's total Base Attack Bonus must be +6 or above, the character must possess the Elite Clearance and Soldier Name feats, and character must meet any additional prerequisites of the specific code-identity, if any.

If the character meets all these requirements, she must still succeed on a DC 22 Diplomacy check, convincing APEX command staff of her worthiness to assume the restricted Soldier Name. If this check fails, the soldier cannot retry until he or she gains at least one level.

Occasionally APEX completely retires a Soldier Name, completely removing it from the list of acceptable code-idents. Sometimes, a Soldier Name is retired after the death of the holder, on the grounds that no new soldier could ever match the deeds of the fallen Combat Type who originated the code name.

In practice, however, code-idents are usually retired when their holders disgrace the name, and APEX. Fully 90% of all retired codenames once belonged to traitors, accused war criminals, Shy appointees, and Lifer members of APEX who defected en masse during the first days of the Abortion War.

Reactivating a retired Soldier Name is virtually impossible, and is usually only attempted by someone wanting to clear the name of a fallen and disgraced relative. The Diplomacy Check to reactivate a completely retired Soldier Name is DC 32.

The following events provide a circumstance modifier on the Diplomacy check made to claim the Soldier Name. These modifiers are cumulative.

Table: Claiming a Restricted/Retired Warname	
Circumstance	Diplomacy Check Modifier
Claim a Restricted Warname	Base DC 22
Claim a Retired Warname	Base DC 32
Soldier is a relative or descendant of a prior holder of the restricted Soldier Name	DC -5
Soldier has an affiliation with APEX One	DC -5
Soldier has similar talents, abilities or post-human Powers to a prior holder of the Soldier Name	DC -2
Soldier has previously been decorated for courage and valor	DC -2
Soldier is returning to active duty after being wounded in combat	DC -2
Soldier has the Elite Clearance, Squad Leader or similar military-focused social interaction feat (cumulative benefit per each feat)	DC -1 (cumulative)

The benefit of claiming a restricted Soldier Name, or reactivating a retired one is primarily an issue of in-game and out of game bragging rites, though there are game-play benefits to doing so.

Characters with a restricted or retired Soldier Name receive a +2 bonus on all CHA based skill checks made against those aware of their identity. They may always Take 10 when attempting to requisition equipment from APEX.

Beasting

“Beasting” is a psychological warfare technique APEX borrowed (read: stolen) from the Bastian intelligence community. The Lifer pseudonation is steeped in Christian mysticism and united by a belief in End-Times Bible prophecy. Most Lifer soldiers believe they are living in the End Times, and that their defeat at Boston marked the beginning (or mid-point, or final phase, depending on who you ask) of the Great Tribulation before Christ’s return. As such, they are constantly on the watch for Choicer and American figures- especially Powered- who may, secretly be the Anti-Christ. They are just as leery of potential Anti-Christ and collaborators within their own ranks.

Beasting takes advantage of this culture wide obsession. Specific APEX recruits, chosen based upon their psychological profile, are given modified costumed identities and implanted power-sets which are designed to conform to Lifer prophecies. Sometimes these concessions to prophecy are obvious- a non-humanoid Powered whose seven horns crowned with energy discharges. Other times “Beasting” costume modifications are as subtle as a Warname with numerological significance to End-Times believing Christians, or a codename or regular use of a false identity inspired by a passage in Revelations or Ezekiel.

The goal of the “Beasting” program is to hopefully produce issue-fatigue in the Lifer nation, and to make their beliefs seem even more ridiculous and less appealing to potential converts. APEX “Beasters” are used as intimidation agents against captured Lifers- just by sitting in on an interrogation



104 a known Beaster agent can break even the strongest willed Lifer prisoner. Beaster Powered's are the terror of the battlefield, but at great risk to themselves. Lifer troops will usually mass fire on a known Beaster in preference to other threats, even those who dwarf the Beaster in terms of threat level. Friendly contact with a Beaster agent is just as damaging as facing one on the battlefield, as Lifer extremists shun any pro-lifer moderate enough to actually talk to a Beaster operative.

Beasting carries career risks in addition to the tactical ones. The modern APEX organization hopes to build bridges to the Lifer nation, and as a result, few Beaster soldiers will ever achieve command status. In addition, Beaster Powered's are never allowed to register a restricted or retired Warname.

Beasting (General)

You've been selected to assume a Beasting identity, one designed specifically to terrify and intimidate Lifer soldiers by manipulating their religious beliefs. Your costumed identity, power-set and code-ident are intentionally designed to mark you as a potential Anti-Christ.

Prerequisites: Knowledge: theology & philosophy 8 ranks, either Meaningful Ink or Soldier Name

Benefit: You receive a +4 bonus on Intimidate checks made against anyone with a Lifer or Evangelical Christian allegiance.

As a standard action, you can attempt an DC 12 Intimidate check. If successful, any sentient creature with a Lifer or Christian allegiance and an INT score of at least 5 who is within 30 ft and clearly able to see and hear you will attack you in preference to non-beaster targets. If the Lifer attacks a non-beaster instead of you, as long as you remain a viable target, he or she is considered *shaken* for the duration of the encounter.

Any sentient creature with a Lifer or Christian allegiance who has friendly contact with you suffers a -2 penalty on all CHA based skill checks among those who share his or her allegiance, if the contact is widely known. This penalty remains in

place for 1d4 days after the contact.

Drawback: You suffer a -2 penalty on all CHA-based skill checks, except for Intimidate, against anyone with a Christian or Lifer allegiance. You cannot register a restricted or retired APEX War Name.

APEX Combat Styles

APEX is probably the best trained, best equipped military in human history. Only the Choicer military comes close to the standard APEX sets... mostly because run joint training-ops with their American counterparts at every opportunity. APEX offers its soldiers a comprehensive training and enhancement program.

Even baseline human troops have access to unique combat martial arts and specialized training, designed to keep them alive on a battlefield dominated by post-humans. In addition to the feats below, APEX troops usually select from the military and espionage focused feats described in the Psi-Watch campaign setting.

Unmatched Solidarity

As a faction, APEX' greatest strength is how well its individual members work together. While designing the various Otherverses America factions, I tried my best to create a unique cultural identity and set of tactics for each military. The Lifers are huge and brutal, using overwhelming firepower delivered by jury rigged equipment; the Choicers use sleek, expensive, top of the line technology and feminist Philosophies based on pagan magical theory.

By contrast, APEX fields some of the highest technology in the game, including the best and most omni-present combat robots. Most APEX feats and Philosophies emphasize the player's role within the team, within the squad and as a member of a well defined chain of command. Other feats blend man and machine, allowing APEX pilots and heavy gunners to perform incredible, physics-defying feats. But as impressive as APEX' toys are, their teamwork is their greatest advantage.

Action Bank (General)

You know when to act decisively, and are capable of performing heroic feats with amazing regularity.

Prerequisite: Heroic Surge, any other feat or class ability which requires an action point to activate

Benefit: When you take this feat, you gain a permanent action point that refreshes each day. Thus, you always have at least one action point.

Special: You may take this feat multiple times. Each time you do so, you gain another permanent action point.

Anti-Personnel Explosives (General)

You know all the tricks to creating improvised explosive devices designed to kill the maximum number of victims, and know how to throw grenades with deadly accuracy.

Prerequisites: Disable Device 8 ranks, Gearhead

Benefit: Any explosive device you construct or place, or any grenade you throw threatens a critical hit on all victims within the blast radius on a roll of natural 20. In the case of placed explosives, if you roll a natural 20 while arming and placing the device, it is considered to threaten a critical hit when it finally detonates. Roll to confirm the critical hit (s) separately for each creature within the blast radius.

Normal: Explosive devices do not have a critical threat range.

Special: You can take this feat up to three times. Each time you do, your explosive's threat range increases by one. If this feat is taken twice your explosives have a critical range of 19-20. If taken three times, the threat range becomes 18-20.



AWACs Fire-Control (General)

You can take remote control of an allied pilot's onboard weapons systems, increasing accuracy and lethality.

Prerequisite: AWACs Operator

Benefit: As often as once per round, you may substitute a Computer Use check result for an attack roll made by any receiving pilot. You may use this ability as often as once per round, even when it is not your turn. You must declare the use of this ability prior to rolling the check.

AWACs Operator (General)

You are an aircraft weapons lock/radar operator, trained to operate advanced military sensor systems and relay the data in real time to other pilots in your squadron.

Prerequisite: Aircraft Operation (including power armor) Computer Use 4 ranks, Pilot 4 ranks

Benefit: You can only utilize the benefit of this feat while piloting a military vehicle with any type of radar or advanced sensor systems. You may use this feat while piloting a suit of power armor, provided it is equipped with advanced sensor systems.

While airborne, you can transmit data from

your sensor systems, as well as advice and firing solutions to any allied vehicle in up to a 10 mile spherical radius, provided your communications network extends that distance.

While providing AWACs data to any aircraft, you may substitute a Computer Use check result for the Initiative check or REF Check made by any receiving pilot. You may use this ability as often as once per round, even when it is not your turn. You must declare the use of this ability prior to rolling the check.

As a full round action, you can transmit real time data from your sensor systems to any receiving pilot, allowing them to benefit from your vehicle's sensory capabilities. The receiving pilot sees exactly the same data you do.

Special: Cyborgs with internal sensor systems, as well as metahumans and aliens with advanced senses can benefit from this feat, so long as they can transmit to allied units.

AWACs Scout (General)

You can provide real time tactical data to units dozens of miles away.

Prerequisite: AWACs Operator



Benefit: You may transmit AWACs data to any allied unit within a 100 mile radius, provided your communications systems can cover the distance.

Normal: You transmit AWACs data to any allied unit within a 10 mile radius.

Number of Action Points Spent	Type of Bonus Die rolled
1 action point	D6
2 action points	D8
3 action points	D10
4 action points	D12
5 action points	D20

Audacity (General)

You've made a career of doing the impossible, and somehow surviving the insane risks you take.

Benefit: When spending an action point, you can choose to spend additional action points to increase the size of the bonus die you roll. This feat supercedes the rule that you can only spend a single action point per round.

Normal: When adding an action dice, you roll d6 and add the result to the die roll.

Battlefield Mobility (General)

You are skilled at maneuvering on the battlefield, and are constantly in motion, shifting and moving to make it more difficult for an opponent to lay hands upon you.

Prerequisites: DEX 13+, Dodge

Benefit: If an opponent's action allow you to perform an attack of opportunity, you may choose to take a 5 ft step rather than making your attack. Using this feat counts as one of your attacks of opportunity for the round.

Bodybuilder (General)

You live in the gym, train constantly, sacrifice much all to sculpt your physique into a thing of hard, chiseled perfection.

Prerequisite: STR 15+, Athletic, Iron Will

Benefit: You may add your STR modifier as an untyped bonus to all Diplomacy checks made against someone who would find you sexually attractive, and on all Perform (dance) and Profession (bodybuilder, athlete or similar) checks.

Bleeding Slash (General)

You are an expert knife fighter and fencer, able to cause wounds that don't close naturally, and can potentially bleed a victim to death in minutes.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus 5+, Weapon Focus (any slashing or piercing weapon), Treat Injury 1 rank

Benefit: When wielding any slashing or piercing weapon, any successful attack which beats your opponents Defense score by 5 or more points inflicts a bleeding wound in addition to normal damage. Opponents damaged in this manner continue to bleed, losing 1 HP per round until they receive any amount of magical or psionic healing, or receive a DC 15 Treat Injury check. The effects of multiple bleeding slashes are cumulative.

Breach Expert (General)

You've received police or military training in urban warfare and 'dynamic entry' - blowing through walls and doors to get at the enemy.

Prerequisite: Demolitions 4 ranks, Disable Device 4 ranks

Benefit: You halve the time required to perform Disable Device or Demolitions checks. In addition, you receive a +2 competence bonus on STR checks made to force a locked door or simply knock it down.

Capeopria (General)

You've studied capeopria, a flashy, dance like martial art that had it's origins in South American slave colonies. Your combat technique incorporates taunts, leaps and amazingly quick and brutal footwork.

Prerequisites: Acrobatic, Combat Martial Arts, Base Attack Bonus +3, Tumble 8 ranks, Perform: dance 1 rank

Benefit: When using the full attack action, you add your CHA bonus (if positive) on attack rolls, Tumble checks and REF saves. Your attacks are incredibly flashy, incorporating verbal and spoken taunts and insults, and you are instantly recognizable by your unique combat flourishes and body language.

Capeopria Stickyfoot (General)

Only a fool would try and knock you off your feet, because you can easily turn their clumsy trips and blocks against them.

Prerequisites:

Capeopria, Improved Trip

Benefits: If an opponent attempts to trip or disarm you and fails, you may make an automatic trip or disarm attempt in retaliation. This retaliatory strike takes the form of a series of snap kicks and feints, and you receive a +2 circumstance bonus on the check. Even if your check fails, you may not be tripped or disarmed in return. You must have at least one leg free to use this ability.

MAJ. DENISE YHATAGAHN, RAZOR'S EDGE
APEX-TWO COMBAT EXPERT



Close Quarter Combat Training (General)

Though you barely seem to move, your blows are powerful enough to knock down walls. Your combat style emphasizes control and efficiency.

Prerequisites: Combat Expertise, Improved Combat Martial Arts

Benefit: When grappled, or fighting any space smaller than 10 ft square, you receive a +2 bonus on grapple checks made to damage your opponent and on unarmed attack rolls.

Combat Telepresence (General)

You are extremely skilled at remote combat operations, and know how to get the most out of the combat drones and robots you pilot.

Prerequisites: Remote Operations

Benefit: You use your INT modifier and ranks in the Computer Use skill in place of the combat drone's own BAB when piloting it remotely, allowing you to get maximum performance out of the machine. The robot still adds its own STR modifier to melee attack rolls.

Combat Driver (General)

You're an expert driver, capable of pushing your vehicle to its design limits.

Prerequisites: Vehicle Expert, Drive 4 ranks

Benefit: When driving any surface vehicle at Highway Speed or faster, you receive an additional +2 competence bonus to Defense. You receive a +2 bonus on all Drive checks made to regain control of a vehicle.

Normal: The DC of a Drive check to regain control of a vehicle is 15.

Combat Drill Master (General)

You are part of a comprehensive military training program, capable of training raw recruits into effective soldiers.

Prerequisite: Drill Sergeant

Benefit: By spending an action point and at least 8 hours in training, you can permanently imbue any sentient student (who must have an INT score of at least 5) with any one of the following feats as a bonus feat. The student must meet all prerequisites of the feat.

Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Brawl, Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, (Full Autofire), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot

Limitation: You must possess a feat yourself to teach it to others. You may only train a student whose base attack bonus is +3 or lower.

Combat Medic (General)

Thanks to your military training, you are able to perform surgery quickly and under horrific battlefield conditions.

Prerequisites: Treat Injury 4 ranks, Surgery

Benefit: You can perform surgery with only a First Aid kit, though you take a -2 penalty on the Treat Injury check. In addition, you may halve the time it takes to perform surgery (minimum 30 minutes).

Normal: Performing surgery requires at least 1d4 hours and requires a surgery kit.

Comms Expert (General)

You are a communications expert, familiar with a wide variety of military grade radios, cell systems, sensors and comms gear.

Prerequisite: INT 13+, Gear Head, Computer Use 4 ranks

Benefit: You multiply the range of any communications device you are using, either as a transmitter or receiver by 1.5 (a 50% increase). You double the effective range of any sensors you are using.

You receive a +2 bonus on all Computer Use checks related to telecommunications as well as a +2 bonus on all Decipher Script checks made to decode encrypted transmissions.

Command Airstrike (General)

You can call in over the horizon air strikes, pulverizing fortified targets with massive firepower, either from helicopter gun ships, fighter-bombers, offshore artillery or space-based weapons.

Prerequisite: Squad Leader

Benefit: You must be in some form of real time communication with friendly/allied forces to benefit from your feat. As a full round action, you can attempt to call in an airstrike, feeding the fire team your target location over the link.

To call in the airstrike, you must succeed at a DC 21 Knowledge: tactics check. The DC increases by +10 if the target is in an urban area, risks civilian casualties or friendly forces or strategic assets.

If the check is successful, you must expend an action point, and the air strike occurs on the targeted position within 10 minutes, minus one minute per every 2 points you beat the check DC by (minimum one minute). The air strike occurs on your action in the final round of the minute it is scheduled to appear.

Once deployed, the airstrike may be aborted at the gamemaster's option, but it cannot be redirected to a new area. An airstrike inflicts 20d20 points of damage. Half of the damage is fire or electrical damage (chosen when the airstrike is called); the remainder is slashing damage from shrapnel. You can deploy the airstrike either against targets in a 10 ft x 100 ft line or in a 100 ft radius sphere. Those within the blast radius may attempt a DC 25 REF Save for half damage.

An unsuccessful check cannot be retried during that encounter. If the Knowledge: tactics check is unsuccessful, you are not required to sacrifice an action point.

Controlled Burst (General) **Replaces Double Tap and Burst Fire**

You know precisely how many bullets it takes to do the job, and you are able to fire off a withering burst of fire quicker than most creatures can react.

Prerequisite: DEX 13, Point Blank shot

Benefit: During your action you may choose to fire a double tap (two

bullets fired simultaneously), or a short burst of three to five shots at a single target. A double tap imposes a -2 penalty on the gunman's attack roll, but if the attack hits, does an additional die worth of damage. (Thus a fire arm that normally inflicts 1d8 damage would inflict 2d8 points of damage. Firing a three to five round burst imposes a -4 penalty on the attack roll, but if successful inflicts an additional two dies worth of damage.

Limitation: Controlled bursts can only be preformed with semi auto or full auto fire arms, and can only be preformed if enough bullets remain.

Normal: An autofire burst requires at least ten bullets and affects a 10 ft by 10 ft area. If you attempt a burst against a single target, it only counts as a single attack and additional bullets fired are simply wasted.



Normal: An autofire burst requires at least ten bullets and affects a 10 ft by 10 ft area. If you attempt a burst against a single target, it only counts as a single attack and additional bullets fired are simply wasted.

Contingency Planning (General)

Before a mission, you spend hours studying photographs, blueprints and intelligence reports, preparing for the unexpected.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (tactics) 8 ranks, Craft (structural) 1 rank

Benefit: If you spend at least 4 hours studying blueprints or recent (within 1 month) photographs of a targeted building's layout, you receive the following benefits during your raid on the building: +2 bonus to Hide, Move Silently, Search, Spot and Listen. These bonuses come into effect the moment you begin your assault on the target building, and last for a number of minutes equal to your INT modifier (minimum one minute).

Additionally, you may spend an action point at any time while these primary benefits remain active, you use your knowledge of the building's layout to grant you a +2 competence bonus to Defense while at that location. Furthermore, any cover you utilize during the assault is improved by one 'step'. These secondary bonuses last for a number of minutes equal to your INT modifier (minimum one minute).

Crosstrained (General)

Your training regimen emphasizes diversity of skills and on the interrelation between different fields of study.

Prerequisite: WIS 15+

Benefit: You receive a +3 synergy bonus on all your interrelated skills. This feat applies retroactively to all synergy bonuses you acquired before gaining this feat, and applies to any synergy bonus you would earn in the future.

Normal: When you have more than 5 ranks in a particular skill, you receive a +2 synergy bonus on a related skill.

Decisiveness (General)

You know the importance of striking first

and crippling resistance before it can be mounted.

Prerequisite: Spot 4 ranks, Knowledge: tactics 1 rank

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus on Initiative checks and Spot checks. In addition, the first successful attack you make during a surprise round deals one additional die of damage. This feat applies to melee, ranged and unarmed damage, as well as spells, supernatural abilities and psi-talents.

Drill Sergeant (General)

You are a true master of the martial arts, and can pass on your lessons to your students.

You've served as a military drill sergeant, and are capable of instructing new recruits in the basics of combat and military culture.

Prerequisite: Full Autofire, Combat Martial Arts, Educated, Iron Will, base attack bonus +4

Benefit: You can temporarily give some of your melee combat feats, gun combat feats or base attack bonus to a willing student. By spending at least one minute teaching your student, you can temporarily remove some of your feats or combat talent and transfer it to the student. You may sacrifice one feat or point of base attack bonus per point of your INT modifier.

The student can then use your combat gifts as innate abilities for a number of hours equal to your INT modifier. You cannot voluntarily reverse the transformation; once the abilities are given away, they remain gone until the full time period elapses. While the student is enhanced, he or she can use the feats or BAB freely, as if they were innate abilities. The student must meet all the prerequisites for any feats granted.



Elite Clearance (General)

You are a trusted government operative.

Prerequisite: Employment or patronage of a government or political body.

Benefit: You receive a +4 competence bonus on Diplomacy, Gather Information and Research checks made concerning the government or agency you work for. You may legally purchase Illegal, Licensed or Restricted equipment through your agency without suffering a Purchase DC modifier.

Special: You can select this feat multiple times, each time you do it applies to a different government or government agency. You lose the benefit of this feat if you act in a manner contrary to your patron's wishes or code of ethics.

Emergency Surgery (General)

In a few frantic, blood soaked minutes of work, you can save a dying patient's life, but at incredible cost.

Prerequisite: Surgery, Treat Injury 8 ranks

Benefit: You can use extremely risky surgical techniques to keep a dying patient alive a little while longer. When performing surgery on any helpless or dying patient, you may choose to use a risky technique that permanently lowers one of the patient's attributes by 1d4 points. The surgeon chooses which attribute is lowered; the patient receives no saving throw to resist the ability drain.

Each time you do so, you may either of the following benefits:

- Automatically stabilize the dying patient
- Receive a +5 circumstance bonus on your next Treat Injury check made to revive the patient.

You may use this feat once per round. Once any attribute is reduced to zero, the patient is irrevocably dead. Until you stop working on the patient, he or she is not considered dead for the purposes of using the Field Medic's medical miracle class feature. If you stop performing surgery for longer than a single round, your patient is considered dead.

Experimental Medicine (General)

You practice cutting edge surgical and chemical techniques, pushing the limits of modern medicine.

Prerequisite: Surgery, Treat Injury 4 ranks, Craft: pharmaceutical 4 ranks, Research 1 rank

Benefit: If you try a medical technique and it fails to aid the patient, you learn from your mistakes. Each failure (assuming the patient survives) gives you a cumulative +1 modifier on all future Treat Injury or Craft: pharmaceutical checks made to aid that patient. The maximum possible bonus is

equal to one plus your INT modifier (minimum two points).

Fast Rope Training (General)

You've trained extensively in mountaineering, rappelling and zip line rappelling, and are skilled at making dangerous ascents when under fire.

Prerequisites: Climb 4 ranks, DEX 13+

Benefit: You do not lose your DEX bonus to Defense and are not considered flatfooted while climbing. When using a rappelling harness to quickly descend, you may move at up to double your normal movement rate as a move round action, which only requires a single Climb check to successfully complete.

Normal: Climbers lose their DEX bonus to defense, and making a double move while climbing is a difficult, risky proposition.

Field Mechanic (General)

You know how to get the most utility out of discarded parts and junk technology. Your sputtering, broke down creations might not be pretty, but they get the job done.

Prerequisite: Gearhead

Benefit: When you use the Repair skill to jury rig a broken machine, your repairs last for one day per point by which your Repair check result beat the DC. When the machine does inevitably break down, it still must be fully repaired before it can function again.

Normal: Jury-rigged repairs only remain functioning until the next encounter.

Free Runner (General)

You've spent your life running from cops, darting along rooftops and leaping from fire escape to fire escape. You are trained in parkour, and can perform amazing acrobatic feats, making jumps that even Olympic champions would find impossible.

Prerequisites: Acrobatic, Jump 8 ranks, Climb 2 ranks, Tumble 2 ranks

Benefit: You may make a vertical leap without needing to make a running start. However, if you can make a running start of at least 20 ft, you receive a +4 bonus on the Jump check. In addition,

you receive a +2 competence bonus on Climb and Tumble checks made in urban environments.

Normal: A running start is required to make a vertical leap.

Full Autofire (General)

Replaces Advanced Firearms Proficiency and Strafe

You have spent enough time on the range to safely fire a gun on full auto.

Prerequisite: Personal Firearms Proficiency

Benefit: You may fire any gun set on autofire without penalty. When using a firearm set on autofire you can choose to strafe the area, raking fire across a 20 ft line, and inflicting full damage on all creatures in the target area, unless they make a REF save (DC 15).

Normal: Characters suffer a -4 penalty when firing weapons set on full autofire. A fire arm set to autofire normally affects a 10 by 10 ft area.

Genetic Chameleon (General)

APEX makes wide use of genetic alteration to strengthen its troops. You were implanted with a special retro-viral strain which gives you limited control over your genetic structure. Through bio-feedback exercises, you may change your assortment of genemods to suit the current mission.

Prerequisites: Genoreceptor and any other 2 genemods, Elite Clearance, Treat Injury 4 ranks, CON 13+

Benefit: You gain an additional 'slot' representing a temporary gene-mod. You may select any genemod described in the Otherverse America campaign setting to fill this 'slot'. Each day, you may meditate for around an hour to change which genemod fills this variable slot. If you do not meditate, you retain the previously chosen gene-mod indefinitely.

Gonin-Gake Karate (General)

You are at your best when fighting outnumbered, moving from one adversary to another with brutal efficiency, and leaving no corner undefended.

Prerequisite: Defensive Martial Arts, Mobility, Cleave, base attack bonus +4

Benefit: No adversary can gain a flanking bonus against you in melee combat.

Normal: Adversaries that are flanking you and their nearby allies gain a +2 bonus on their attack rolls against you.

Handload (General)

You handcraft your own ammunition, not trusting anyone else to touch something that's going into your guns.

Prerequisite: Weapon Focus (any firearm), Base Attack Bonus +3, Craft (armorer) 2 ranks

Benefit: When firing hand loaded ammunition, your specially formulated, specialty ammo ensures you do additional damage. You receive a +1 on attack and damage rolls with any fire arm when firing ammunition you've hand loaded yourself.

Hotwire (General)

There isn't a vehicle on the planet that you can't steal quickly, quietly and efficiently.

Prerequisite: Gearhead

Benefit: When you use the Repair skill to hot-wire a vehicle, you receive a +4 circumstance bonus on the skill check, due to your familiarity with various vehicle electrical systems. You can hotwire a vehicle as a standard action.

Normal: Hot-wiring a vehicle is a full round action.

Jujitsu (General)

You are adept at using an opponent's strength and overconfidence against him.

Prerequisite: Defensive Martial Arts, Balance 4 ranks

Benefit: When making a Trip, Disarm or Grapple check, you may use your opponent's STR modifier in place of your own if it is greater.

Krav Maga (General)

You practice the brutal martial art pioneered by Israel's MOSSAD agency, a hard style focusing on quickly killing or incapacitating attackers.

Prerequisite: Power Attack, Streetfighting, Base Attack Bonus +4

Benefit: Any time your attack roll defeats your opponent's Defense score by 5 points or more, you inflict an additional 1d4 points of damage. This bonus damage stacks with additional damage gained from sources such as the Streetfighting feat, class abilities or supernatural effects, and is multiplied on a critical hit.

Local Hero (General)

You are a local celebrity, extremely well known in a specific city or neighborhood.

Prerequisite: Knowledge: local 4 ranks

Benefit: You may choose any small city or neighborhood within a larger city that you have lived in for at least a month. Your reputation bonus is doubled within this area. Additionally, you receive a +2 competence bonus on Spot and Search checks within the area. You are so attuned to the neighborhood; you can easily detect the unusual.

Night-fighter (General)

Through hard-won experience and dedication, you have become as comfortable fighting during the dark of the moon as most men are fighting under the noonday sun.

Prerequisites: Spot 5 ranks

Benefit: You gain low light vision with a 60 ft range.

Official Sanction (General)

You have the full support of a government or pseudo-nation, have legal powers and privileges usually reserved for senior agents and generals, and enjoy the financial and logistical support of your patron government.

Prerequisite: Elite Clearance

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on all CHA-based checks made against member of your patron's government military, police or combat volunteer forces.

Additionally, as often as once per day, you may spend an action point to gain temporary access to a +6 Wealth bonus increase, drawn from your government's funds. You must expend these resources before 24 hours elapse, or they are lost



without effect. Alternatively, if you do not already possess the Squad Leader feat, you may act as if you possessed it for 24 hours after expending the action point.

Parental Demeanor (General)

You have a comforting presence and calm demeanor that serve you well when dealing with young soldiers

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks made against any one in a younger age category than yourself.

Patient Sniper (General)

You are willing to wait hours, even days if necessary before making that one lethal shot that just might change the course of history.

Prerequisites: WIS 13, Far Shot Weapon Focus (any ranged)

Benefit: Before making a ranged attack, you may take a full round action to line up your shot. This grants you a +2 bonus on your next attack roll. Once you begin aiming, you cannot move, even to take a 5 ft step until the next attack is resolved, otherwise the benefit of the feat is lost. If your concentration is disrupted, or you are attacked before your next attack, the benefit of aiming is lost. A sniper may use any type of ranged weapon or spell when making this attack.

Reconstructive Surgery (General)

You can re-knit muscle, repair shattered bone and rebuild scarred faces, returning your patients to physical normality after crippling injuries.

Prerequisites: Treat Injury 8 ranks, Surgery

Benefit: When this feat is first chosen, you specialize in treating injuries to any two of the following attributes: STR, CON, DEX and CHA. You may use your skills as a surgeon to remove permanent ability drain related to that ability. By making a Treat Injury check (DC 15 + the number of points worth of ability drain), you can restore some or all of the patient's physical capabilities. This check requires surgery and hospitalization, and requires at least 1d4 hours plus a number of hours equal to the number of ability points drained. Thus a patient who has suffered 3 points of STR damage would require 1d4 + 3 hours to treat.

A successful check restores 1d4 points of ability drain, plus 1 point for every three points by which the surgeon beat the Treat Injury DC. A character's attributes can never be raised higher than their original totals with this skill, and reconstructive surgery can only be attempted on a character once in a 24 hour period.

A patient who undergoes surgery is fatigued for 24 hours, minus two hours for every point above the DC the surgeon achieves. The period of fatigue can never be reduced below six hours in this fashion.

Special: You may select this feat twice, to become proficient in treating various kinds of injuries.

Remote Operations (General)

You are trained in combat robotics and remote-piloting, and can take direct command of a linked android, mecha or combat drone.

Prerequisites: Gearhead, Comms Expert, Computer Use 6 ranks

Benefit: As a full round action, you can take direct control any combat drone, android, mecha or vehicle you are in real-time communications with and which is rigged for remote piloting.

While remotely piloting the drone, you act as if were present at the drone's location, perceiving the world through the drone's sensors. You may perform complex skills through the drone, assuming it has the physical capability to do so. However, skills are difficult to perform due to occasional signal lag and lack of fine motor control, imposing a -2 circumstance penalty on all skill checks made remotely.

The combat drone uses its own Base Attack Bonus while being remotely operated by you. You may attempt a DC 20 Computer Use check each round.

If the check succeeds, you may add your INT modifier as a competence bonus to the drone's BAB, which may increase the drone's number of attacks for that round.

Satellite Recon (General)

You can request real-time data from any of the hundreds of spy satellites orbiting the planet.

Prerequisite: Squad Leader

Benefit: When outdoors in any area which has a mostly clear line of sight to the sky, you may request satellite coverage. You must have a real time communications link to your patron government to activate this feat. Because of the technical limitations of satellites, you cannot use this ability under dense cloud cover, or during a rain or snowstorm, a blizzard or more intense weather conditions.

By succeeding at a DC 20 Knowledge: tactics check, you can route a satellite to provide coverage of your immediate vicinity. You can request an immediate copy of a tactical map, five miles on a square, centered on your current location. This tactical map is downloaded in PDF or JPG form to your gear, and is generated within 10 minutes, minus one minute for each 2 points you beat the check DC by (minimum one minute).

Once you have successfully requested a tactical map, you may also expend an action point to receive real-time satellite coverage and guidance of an area. By doing so, a satellite operator remains in constant communications with you, advising you

about the target area's dangers. Once the action point is expended, the satellite remains in close orbit over the targeted 5 mile x 5 mile area for 20 minutes plus 1d8 minutes, before the spy sat's orbit takes it out of the area.

You receive a new tactical map every minute for the effect's duration, and the satellite operator will provide real-time information about troop movements and activity within the covered area. You (and any team members in real time communication with you) are not considered flat-footed as long as the satellite provides data about enemy troop movements. The assigned satellite operator (s) has a +18 Spot check modifier to detect hidden foes, and the satellite effectively negates distance penalties.

The satellite operator can also be directed to search for or follow a specific target which must be size Medium or larger. While following a target, the satellite cannot provide per-minute tactical mapping or tactical spotting.

An unsuccessful check cannot be retried during that encounter. If the Knowledge: tactics check fails, you cannot route any satellites to assist

you for the duration of the current encounter.

Savant (General)

You are exceptionally gifted, able to learn new skills quickly and effortlessly, and excel in your chosen field.

Prerequisite: INT 13+

Benefit: When you select this feat, you must choose either to be either a physical savant (specializing in STR, DEX or CON based skills), or an intellectual savant (specializing in INT, WIS or CHA based skills). You may place skill ranks within your chosen specialty as you see fit, with no level based cap on skill ranks.

Normal: Skill ranks are limited to your total character level + 3.

Special: You may select this feat twice to become both a physical and intellectual savant.

Set the Pace (General)

You know how to control the momentum of a battle, how to use distractions and perfectly timed feints and counterattacks for maximum tactical benefit.



Prerequisites: Combat Reflexes, Decisiveness, Improved Initiative, Knowledge: tactics 8 ranks

Benefit: By spending an action point, you can force the battlefield to conform to your time table. You force all sides involved in a battle, including yourself, to reroll initiative. Using this feat is a free action, which may be preformed at any time, even during another creature's turn. With proper timing, you can use this feat to deny an enemy a chance to act.

Because you know this shocking reversal is coming, you receive a +4 bonus on your initiative check, which stacks with the bonus from Improved Initiative, and you can extend this bonus to a number of allies equal to your INT modifier. The round immediately after this ability is used is considered a surprise round.

Silencing Strike (General)

With a quick strike to an opponent's throat, you render him incapable of speaking or calling for help.

Prerequisite: Combat Martial Arts, Improved Combat Martial Arts

Benefit: When you successfully make an unarmed or melee attack against a subject, if your attack roll beats his Defense score by more than 5 points, in addition to dealing damage, you have *silenced* the victim with a sharp jab to the throat. The victim cannot speak or make any vocal sounds for 1d4+1 rounds. A DC 12 Treat Injury check can quickly restore the wounded creature's ability to speak. You may also spend an action point to activate this feat on any successful hit.

Smoke Eater (General)

You've trained extensively in firefighting, search and rescue and damage control.

Prerequisite: Great Fortitude or Endurance



Benefit: You receive a +1 bonus on Spot, Survival and Demolitions checks. Additionally, you no longer suffer concealment penalties associated with smoky environments, and can see almost normally even through the thickest smoke.

You receive a +1 competence bonus on FORT saves made to resist tear gas or inhalation toxins.

Special Forces Training (General)

You have undergone extensive guerilla and unconventional warfare training, and know how to operate behind the lines without supplies or support. Your training encompasses raising popular support or spreading fear through terror tactics, as well as survival combat expertise.

Prerequisites: Knowledge: tactics 6 ranks, Survival 4 ranks, Base Attack Bonus +3

Benefit: Your training emphasizes stealthy, silent and tactically perfect assaults. As often as once per encounter, you may reroll any failed checks with the following skills: Demolitions, Disable Device, Hide or Move Silently.

You may also choose to reroll melee attack damage made against any living creature with a reasonably normal anatomy. This reroll takes no time, and is considered part of the failed check. You must accept the result of the reroll, even if it is worse than the first.

Special: If used in conjunction with the Squad Leader feat your effective character level is raised by +1 for the purpose of recruiting follows and cohorts from the local population.

Spec Ops Stealth (General)

Your elite military training allows you to move quietly and attack unnoticed even when carrying the backbreaking load all infantrymen carry.

Prerequisites: STR 13+ Hide 4 ranks, Move Silently 4 ranks

Benefit: You do not suffer from armor check or encumbrance penalties on Hide and Move Silently checks, no matter how much gear you are forced to carry.

Normal: You cannot use stealth effectively when heavily encumbered.

Squad Leader (General)

You are a skilled commander, able to lead and inspire troops. You can attract bodyguards and personal champions, as well as an array of followers.

Prerequisite: Elite Clearance, Knowledge: tactics 9 ranks, CHA 13 +

Benefit: You can take command of small and mid-sized military units, as well as attracting a personal champion, bodyguard and aide de camp. The size and skill of the units you can assume command of is determined by the Squad Leader's total character level. Certain circumstances and feat

choices can raise or lower the Squad Leader's effective character level for the purposes of this feat.

You may select a single cohort/personal guardian. Your cohort is an NPC whose total character level/challenge rating is no more than 60 % your own. Working in conjunction with the gamemaster, you may design this NPC, using any combination of racial levels, templates, and basic and advanced classes, so long as the resulting combination of factors has a CR no greater than 60 % of your own.

No cohort, no matter your Squad Leader level, can ever have a CR/ECL greater than your own. If your cohort is slain, retires or is released from service, you may replace the cohort within 1d4+1 months.

Your cohort can potentially be any class, race or species, though the cohort cannot be personally opposed to you or your goals. Your cohort is considered a party member, and affects the distribution of XP during battles. In addition, you (or your patron organization) are responsible for the upkeep and salary, if any, paid your cohort, as well as for equipping the cohort. Your cohort is typically trustworthy, and will follow your orders under normal circumstances, but is an individual with his or her own opinions and goals.

If your effective character level for the purposes of the Squad Leadership feat is 10th or greater, you can also recruit small and mid-sized squads of less skilled individuals. These individuals are built using Ordinary class levels, and are equipped as normal for NPCs of their class level. These followers have allegiances and goals similar to your own, but may occasionally question your orders or disobey, especially if mistreated, and possess average attribute scores.

If you or your patron maintains a standing army, you can activate and prepare your squad for movement within a few hours, sometimes less. If you personally recruit followers, the process can take weeks or months. The game master determines

transport and mobilization times based on particular circumstances and common sense.

You can recruit 5 character levels worth of Ordinary followers per each Leadership character level. You may assign these Ordinary character levels in any way you see fit. As a 10th level Squad Leader, you could recruit one follower with 5 character levels, or 5 1st level followers. In contrast, a 15th level Squad Leader could recruit upto 25 character levels of followers: five 5th level veterans, or a squad of 25 1st level recruits, or any other combination.

Various factors can raise or lower your effective character level for the purposes of how powerful of a cohort and how many followers you can command. These modifications to your Squad Leader level only apply to this feat, not any other calculation of effective character level.



Table: APEX Squad Leadership

Leader's Traits	ECL Modifier	Leader's Traits	ECL Modifier
Has the Renown feat	+3 ECL	-	-
Leader legally uses a Restricted or Retired Warname	+2 ECL	Recruits a cohort of an opposed allegiance or a racial/species enemy	-4 ECL
Leader has a military focused social interaction feat (such as Trust Worthy, Elite Clearance, ect)	+2 ECL per feat	Recruits a cohort from one of the pseudo-nations, either Lifer or Choicer	-2 ECL
Each point of CHA modifier past +2	+1 ECL	Reputation for cruelty, incompetence or non-professionalism	-2 ECL
Wide reputation for fairness and good leadership	+1 ECL	Caused the death of a previous cohort of large numbers of followers, especially needlessly	-2 ECL Cumulative
Known for sacrifice and courage in defense of troops	+1 ECL	Leader rarely trains, interacts or addressees the squad	-2 ECL
Has a military-related affiliation	+1 ECL	Recent high profile failure or public humiliation	-2 ECL
Recent high profile victory or major success	+1 ECL	Leader has Lifechained abilities or subtype	-1 ECL

Stranglehold (General)

You know how to apply lethal pressure, quickly knocking out or killing a grappled adversary.

Prerequisites: Brawl or Combat Martial Arts, base attack bonus + 2

Benefit: If you pin an opponent while grappling, and maintain the pin for one full round, at the end of the round the victim must make a FORT save (DC 10 + $\frac{1}{2}$ your total character level + your WIS modifier). If the saving throw fails, your opponent falls unconscious for 1d4 rounds.

If you maintain the stranglehold, you must begin suffocating, and must begin making Constitution checks each round to avoid death. See pg 213 of the *D20 Modern* campaign setting for additional details.

Truthseeker (General)

You are especially committed to bringing secrets to light and bringing justice to criminals.

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus on Investigate and Sense Motive checks, and on WILL saves to resist illusions.

Urban Warfighter (General)

You are skilled at navigating mazelike streets, fighting from cover, and surviving sniper fire from unseen insurgents.

Prerequisites: Knowledge: tactics 4 ranks, Knowledge: streetwise 2 ranks, Alertness

Benefit: Once per day, you can add your ranks in Knowledge: tactics as a bonus on any of the following rolls: Spot, Navigate, Hide, Move Silently, or Initiative checks. If you are attacked by a sniper, and have not yet used this class feature for the day, you add your skill ranks as a bonus to your Defense score, which often keeps you alive long enough to seek cover.

Limitation: This feat only offers a benefit while you are in an urban area.

Veteran's Benefits (General)

You have served in one of the 22nd Century's militaries and have been honorably discharged. You have been rewarded for your service financially and socially, and receive quality medical care from your former employer.

With more than 1/3 of all adult Americans having at least a few years of military experience, this feat is extremely common- even more so among the civilian population than among adventurers.

Prerequisites: Military or Law Enforcement starting occupation, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Profession (military) 2 ranks

Benefit: You reduce the Purchase DC of any medical care, including the implantation of cybernetics and gene-mods by 1d4+1 when receiving treatment from a military hospital. Your Wealth Bonus and Reputation score both increase by +1.

If making real-estate purchases, you may arrange loans and land grants through your former employer, reducing the Purchase DC by 2.

Depending on your branch of service, you might receive other minor in-game benefits, such as the right to shop at tax free base exchanges, qualification for loans, and the like.

Wheelman (General)

Nobody's better at driving the crew to or from a dangerous job than you.

Prerequisite: Vehicle Expert, Drive 4 ranks

Benefit: When making a Hide check to lose a tail in traffic, or making a Bluff check to misdirect pursuit towards a dead end, receive a +6 bonus on the checks. Additionally, you receive a +2 competence bonus on all Drive checks made to attempt a Stunt with a specific category of ground vehicles (ie: all sports cars, all sedans, all trucks, all SUVs, all panel vans, semis, any motorcycle, ect).

Wholesome Image (General)

You've carefully maintained your image to appeal to the profitable conservative, middle American demographic.

Prerequisite: CHA 13+, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 4 ranks, any non Choicer allegiance

Benefit: When interacting with any sentient character with an allegiance towards good, to any conservative religious or political group or to law, you may add ½ your ranks in Knowledge: theology & philosophy (rounded down) as a bonus on all Diplomacy, Gather Information and Perform checks.

Special: If you act in a way contrary to your public image or act openly in a manner contrary to your audience's ethics you lose the benefit of this feat.

Special: A character cannot select both this feat and Beasting.

Medical Clearance

One aspect of service in an elite military unit that's difficult to square with the stylized reality of D20 Modern is the concept of medical clearance. In the real world, any injury or illness, no matter how seemingly trivial can be enough to have a soldier pulled from a mission. The rationale is that a minor malady that's an annoyance at home can either become or grow into a deadly distraction in the field.

Gamemasters wanting a bit more realism in their campaign might try including this variant rule. If a character suffers damage equal to 25% of her total Hit Points in a single mission, is reduced to 0 HP or fewer, suffers exposure to poison, radiation or ability score drain or damage is medically sidelined until the damage heals.

Regaining full combat status requires a comprehensive medical exam from a military physician. These exams usually take the better part of a day, and are exercises in role-playing and bureaucracy. Including medical clearance as an aspect of the campaign will probably make players more cautious, and force them to strive for 'perfect' missions, where they aren't wounded, in order to avoid missing the next mission.

Dog Handler Feats

The military has used working dogs since the later days of World War I, when specially trained canines were used to sniff for unexploded landmines and ordnance. Today, every military and police force on the planet uses keen-nosed, highly intelligent dogs to detect drugs and explosives, while forensics experts and Search and Rescue crews use working dogs which can sniff out human bodies, alive or dead.

APEX trains its troops to work closely with their canine partners. Bomb-sniffing and Power-detection canines are common- at least one working dog team per three or squads. APEX working dogs, especially the Brain Dog subspecies, are bred for intelligence and long-life. Most live nearly as long as their human partners, and are as intelligent as a human child.

The bond between one of the most legendary figures in modern APEX, Major Nathan "Blindside" Rice and his combat dog, Kirby epitomizes the bond that man and animal share. APEX assigns each canine to a specific handler early in the dog's life. Unless one membership of the partnership is slain before then, the partnership lasts the length of the handler's enlistment and beyond: working dogs 'retire' when their handlers do.

Since gene-cutting a working dog is a major expense, and the bond between man and canine is so irrecoverable, assignment to an APEX k-9 unit is a plum assignment, only offered to troops with at least one enlistment completed. Accepting the assignment means reenlisting for at least 6 years.

Canines who fall in the line of duty are buried with full military honors at a cemetery just outside Arlington. It's a testament to the bond between the partners that surviving human handlers are lobbying to allow slain canines to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery itself.



Combat Dog Master (General)

You have trained your dog to fight, defend you in battle, and bring down fleeing suspects.

Prerequisite: Dog Handler

Benefit: Your working dog has been trained to be an especially effective combatant for its size. Thanks to an excellent exercise regimen and scientifically formulated diet, your canine partner's Hit Dice improve by +1, possibly increasing its size and combat statistics. Your canine is fiercer and more aggressive than normal, and will fight to the death to defend you or a creature you designate.

As a move-equivalent action, you can direct your canine in combat through shouted commands and gestures, telling your dog exactly where to bite and how hard. Doing so allows you to substitute your Handle Animal check result for your canine's melee attack or grapple roll. You may only use this ability once per round, and may not use this ability if and when your animal makes a full attack action.

Special: If your original canine partner is slain, you may apply the benefit of this feat to a new canine companion.

Special: A Soldier, Body Guard or Investigator may select this feat as one of her class-based bonus feats.

Dog Handler (General)

Thanks to months of exhausting training, you have developed a working partnership with a specially trained canine. Your canine partner is trained to sniff out hidden dangers, contraband and enemies, and acts as an extension of your will.

Prerequisites: Animal Affinity, Handle Animal 4 ranks, Search 1 rank

Benefit: You select a specific canine or wolf partner, which must have 3 or fewer Hit Dice, which serves you loyally as a scout and trusted companion. When your canine partner is within 30 ft of you, both members of the partnership receive the benefit of the Alertness feat.

In the Otherverses America setting you may choose from genetically or cybernetically altered canines, such as Brain Dogs (detailed in the Otherverses America campaign setting), or Smart Wolves (detailed in State of the Otherverses: Smartlights). In other settings, the gamemaster might allow you to select canine-like aberrations and magical beasts, such as Krenshars, Howlers or even stranger creatures. Ask before expending the feat slot though.

You can train your canine to seek a specific item using its scent ability with a successful DC 15 Handle Animal check. Unlike an animal trained by someone without this feat, your specially trained canine partner always realizes it is seeking a specific object. Typically dogs are trained to seek out drugs, explosive residue, human bodies (either alive, as in the case of a fugitive hunting canine, or dead in the case of a 'corpse-dog').

In the Otherverses America setting, working dogs may also be trained to sniff out Lifechained creatures, concealed cybernetics and creatures with the Psionic subtype.

Your canine partner receives a +1 competence bonus on Survival checks made to find one specific type of item by scent, chosen when the trick is learned.

Finally, your close bond with the dog and knowledge of its behavior allows you to provide guidance and reinforcement instantly. You may always substitute a Handle Animal check for one of the dog's Survival checks made to track by scent or a WILL Save made by the canine.

Special: If your canine partner is slain, you may raise and train a new working dog; doing so requires 6-8 months of work. A new canine partner must be a superior breed, and these smart, fierce and loyal puppies have a Purchase DC of 20 (Licensed, +1).

Special: A Soldier, Body Guard or Investigator may select this feat as one of her class-based bonus feats.

Fierce Canine (General)

Your canine partner is especially large and strong, thanks to the care you've lavished upon it.

Prerequisite: Dog Handler

Benefit: Your canine partner advances, gaining 2 additional Hit Dice. No matter how many HD the canine gets in this manner, it cannot grow larger than one size category larger than its original size.

Special: If your original canine partner is slain, you may apply the benefit of this feat to a new canine companion. You may select this feat multiple times; its effects stack.

Special: A Soldier, Body Guard or Investigator may select this feat as one of her class-based bonus feats.

APEX Object Philosophies

"How do you memorize a razor?"

-Repairman Jack, F. Paul Wilson's

Conspiracies

APEX parapsychologists pioneered the science of Object Philosophies, establishing many of the mental techniques now common on 22nd Century battlefields. In addition to Philosophies unique to their faction, APEX troops often master Choicer object philosophies, learned from their pagan comrades during joint operations.

Quite a few frontline troops have also taught themselves a version of the Lifer Anti-Evolutionist philosophy, not out of political sympathy, but because the Philosophy provides an unbeatable edge when going up against Lifechains and other Combat Types. Others have mastered a unique, atheist-derived Philosophy, which gives them a phenomenal edge against the Philosophy-practicing believers of the two pseudo-nations.

All Object Philosophies require the Neural Conditioning feat, described in the Otherverses America campaign setting, in addition to the prerequisites listed below.



Atheistic Fortress (Object Philosophy)

You understand the psychological basic of combat Object Philosophies better than most, and aren't swayed by the semi-religious rhetoric most Philosophers attach to their power. You have utter confidence in your abilities, and this confidence, combined with low level predatory psionics disables nearby Philosophy students.

Prerequisite: Tactical Razor

Benefit: You generate a constant, low-level anti-psi energy field which makes it almost impossible to manifest Object Philosophies near you. You may raise or lower this field as a standard action. While this field is active, it extends in a 30 ft radius from your body.

While the Atheistic Fortress is active, it requires a full round action to manifest any Philosophy, other than those with Change Agent as a prerequisite. Maintaining an ongoing Philosophy for more than a single round is impossible within this area.

Automatic Sentence (Object Philosophy)

To better resist psionic control, you can 'turn off' your higher brain functions, in a method similar to catminding, and function in a mentally reduced, but psionically immune state.

Prerequisites: Practical Psi-Defense, Concentration 6 ranks

Benefit: A number of times per day equal to your WIS modifier (minimum once per day), you can alter your brain chemistry to enter 'automatic sentence mode', reducing

your intelligence but rendering you immune to mind influencing effects. Doing so is a standard action, which provokes attacks of opportunity.

While in AS mode, your INT score is reduced by -4, or to a maximum of INT 10, whichever is lower. While in the AS trance state, you cannot speak, cast spells, use psionic powers, or use any INT or CHA keyed skills. However, you become completely immune to mind influencing effects.

You can maintain an AS state for a number of minutes equal to your WIS modifier, or regain full sentence prematurely, as a free action.

Battlespace Dominance (Object Philosophy)

You manipulate probability auras in the immediate vicinity, making your squad luckier while clouding the minds and dulling the reflexes of an

opposing squad. Your team moves with reckless abandon through the battlefield, taking risks that would get lesser soldiers killed quick.

Prerequisite: Heroic Surge, Squad Leader, CHA 15+

Benefit: By spending an action point, you grant yourself and a number of allies equal to your CHA modifier (minimum one ally) the ability to act recklessly on the battlefield without risk. For two rounds after this ability is activated, your chosen and allies do not provoke attacks of opportunity by their actions or movements. Your allies must be within 60 ft of you when this power is activated, and must remain within 60 ft of you for the duration of the effect.

You may only activate this ability on your turn; doing so is a move-equivalent action.

Blastsweep (Object Philosophy)

Improvised explosives are one of the deadliest threats facing modern soldiers, spawning the development of a Philosophy specially designed to nullify undiscovered explosives. With a moment's concentration, you emit a spherical pulse of psychokinetic energy, which disrupts the electro-chemical structure of undiscovered ordnance.

Prerequisites:
Disable Device 4 ranks,
Knowledge (physical sciences) 4 ranks, Cautious

Benefit: By spending an action point, you send out a visible pulse of energy which deactivates and nullifies all bombs, explosives, grenades and extinguishes any open flames within a 60 ft radius. Unexploded ordnance affected by this pulse remains non-functional for a number of minutes equal to your INT score, and is highlighted by a brightly glowing aura during

this time, making it easier for bomb-disposal teams to spot.

You may affect even yet-to-be-launched missiles, up to and including nuclear weapons, with this feat, assuming the weapons are unfired and their warheads are within your range when you activate this power.

If a piece of ordnance is activated or triggered during the dampening period, it will explode immediately once this effect ends, unless it is defused or disabled first. Activating this ability is a full round action, which can only be performed on your turn.

Breach Sight (Object Philosophy)

There is little more dangerous than charging into an unknown, fortified location. Being the first man through a door, when anything from a combat psi to a full conversion Closer might be waiting in the shadows beyond, is a quick way to a military funeral. This combat oriented Philosophy ramps squad members senses up into the superhuman range, allowing them to literally see through walls to the threats hiding beyond.



Prerequisites: Vibratory Scan, Squad Leader, WIS 13+

Benefit: By spending an action point, you can extend your *Tremorsense* ability to a number of squad members equal to one plus your WIS modifier (minimum one member). As long your squad members remain within 30 ft of you, they gain *Tremorsense* with a 60 ft radius. Squad mates from 31 ft to 60 ft of you gain a lesser sensory enhancement, receiving a +4 insight bonus on Spot and Listen checks.

Activating this ability is a free action, which can be performed at any time, even when it is not your turn. This enhancement lasts for a number of minutes equal to your WIS modifier (minimum one minute).

Change Agent (Object Philosophy)

“For action is no gift from some big spirit in the sky / it’s reducible to flesh, mind and bone.”
- *Bad Religion, At the Mercy of Imbeciles*

You are a self described agent of change, a firm believer in your own ability to influence the world. Your confidence and will power allows you to tap your latent psionic potential to amazing effect.

Prerequisites: Renown, CHA 13+

Benefit: When acting in accordance with your allegiances and working towards any important personal goal, you may spend multiple action points to enhance a single check result, increasing the bonus you get in proportion to the action points spent. You can spend a number of action points per round equal to one plus your CHA modifier (minimum two action points). You add the sum of your multiple action dice together.

Normal: You may spend only a single action point per round, unless specifically noted otherwise.

Desperate Victory (Object Philosophy)

Sometimes, even a brush with absolute failure can become victory. You manipulate probability to undo disaster through sheer will power and confidence.

Prerequisites: Action Bank, Change Agent

Benefit: Once per day, when you roll natural 1 on any D20 roll- usually for a skill check, saving throw or attack roll, you may declare that you instead rolled a natural 20. Your potential failure instead becomes an impressive success.

Special: You may select this feat multiple times. Each time you do, you gain another daily use of this ability.

Discordant Strike (Object Philosophy)

You have mastered an extremely deadly style of Philosophy-enhanced martial arts, which focuses on channeling your anger into a focused psionic strike, which exploits microscopic weak points in your target’s defenses. One of your blows can cut straight through even the most heavily armored opponent, killing in a spray of vaporized blood and crackling telekinetic discharges.

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +4, Power Attack, Weapon Specialization (any melee weapon, or unarmed strike)

Benefit: When attacking with a specialized melee weapon, or with an unarmed strike, you may spend an action point to activate this feat. Doing so is part of your attack action. For a number of rounds equal to one plus your CHA modifier (minimum two rounds), you gain the ability to inflict ‘discordance’ damage.

Any time you roll the maximum possible result on the weapon’s damage die, (rolling 4 on d4, 6 on d6, 8 on d8 and so on), you roll the damage dice again and add the results to your original damage total. If you roll maximum damage on this reroll, you may keep rolling indefinitely, until you roll something less than the maximum.

Enlightening Mindlink (Object Philosophy)

Your mental link with other minds increases the intelligence and sharpens the perception of all members of the psychic symbiosis. A continual stream of data passes between link-members, sharpening the wits of all.

Prerequisite: Symbiotic Mind Link

Benefit: While your symbiotic mind link is active, all participants in the link use the INT modifier of the most intelligent group member. The enlightening mindlink remains active as long as the linked minds remain within one mile of each other. If the most intelligent member of the group dies or moves farther apart than that, this link simply dissolves.

The remaining members of the link use the INT modifier of the next most intelligent member, or use their own INT modifier if there are no other linked minds within range.

This feat's intellectual enhancement does not provide bonus skill ranks or languages, though it may provide the ability to manifest additional subminds or perform other intellectual feats.

Historic Changer (Object Philosophy)

You are utterly confident in your ability to act decisively when the right tactical moment comes. You can pull off stunts that change the course of history, proving your personal theory that history is written by the elite few.

Prerequisites: Change Agent

Benefit: When spending action points, you may also choose to sustain a number of points of temporary ability damage to your WIS, STR and CON scores, each in one point increments. When spending an action point (or multiple action points when using your Change Agent feat), you may multiply the bonus provided by the Action Dice by the number of points of ability score damage you choose to suffer.

(Since ability score damage is inflicted at the same rate to all three attributes, if you suffer two points of damage to all three attributes, you multiply your action die by x2, not x6.)

Your action will likely be successful, though at great cost to you. Such an effort leaves you mentally and physically exhausted.

Imagined Armory (Object Philosophy)

You can imagine every microcircuit and every micron of electro-chemical muscle fiber of a suit of powered armor, and call it into being around you. You create a web of psionic energy around your body, which warps gravity and twists molecular structures until ambient pollution becomes ultra-dense armor and fully loaded weapon systems.

You are never truly unarmed, never really unarmored. Rogue agents who have mastered this philosophy are usually summarily executed rather than imprisoned, because anyone who can summon a Shell suit into being by sheer force of will probably can't be held even by the hardest super-max.

Prerequisites: Reinforcement Aura, Knowledge: technology 6 ranks, Pilot 8 ranks, Repair 8 ranks

Benefit: By spending an action point you summon a fully loaded and completely functional suit of Powered Armor around you. This powered armor can either be a stock model, or a custom designed suit, whose total Purchase DC is equal to DC 33 + your INT modifier. You choose the armor's design upon selecting this feat, there after the conjured armor always appears in the same way. You may alter your imaginary powered armor's design only upon leveling up, or any time you permanently increase your Intelligence score.

Each time the armor is summoned, it appears with full hit points, full ammunition and in peak repair. If the armor is destroyed while it is manifested, this feat cannot be used for 48 hours, due to the pilot's neural trauma. Manifesting this armor is a full round action, which provokes attacks of opportunity. Once manifested, the armor remains in existence for an hour. You may spend additional

action points during this period to increase the effect's duration. Each additional action point increases the armor's duration by an additional hour.

Improved Tactical Hivemind (Object Philosophy)

You have sharpened the resolution and comprehensiveness of your tactical mindlink, to the point you can instantly share vital battlefield information.

Prerequisite: Tactical Hivemind

Benefit: When you or any other member of your tactical hivemind is flanking an opponent, all other members of the hive are also considered to be flanking that opponent, regardless of their actual position on the battlefield.

Intelligent Gunspray (Object Philosophy)

You have been trained to telekinetically guide a wall of depleted uranium rounds, fired at 600 rounds per second, towards their target with sniper-like accuracy.

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus 5+, Telekinetic Aim (described in Psi-Watch), Either Strafe or Full Autofire, Weapon Specialization (chosen firearm)

Benefit: When firing on full autofire, you may spend an action point to increase your accuracy. For a number of rounds equal to your CHA modifier, when making a ranged attack using a firearm set on full autofire, you may select a number of targets within the area of effect equal to your CHA modifier (minimum one target).

You automatically hit these chosen targets without the need for an attack roll, regardless of their Defense. You roll a D20 when attacking those targets only to check for the possibility of a critical hit. The targets you choose must not have greater than 50% cover or concealment from you. Attacks against other, un-selected targets within the area of effect are resolved normally.



Maneuvering Sheath (Object Philosophy)

By using your latent telekinetic abilities to help vector your vehicle's thrust and make incredibly precise adjustments to its control surfaces, you dramatically increase the vehicle's in-air maneuverability, and your own chance to survive a dog-fight.

Prerequisite: Reinforcement Aura, Pilot 8 ranks

Benefit: When piloting any aircraft you are enhancing with your Reinforcement Aura, you may add your CHA modifier as an insight bonus to the vehicle's maneuverability score.

Any aircraft enhanced by this feat gains the ability to hover, regardless of its normal movement capabilities.

Practical Psi-Defense (Object Philosophy)

Practical psi defenses are taught by 22nd century military and police forces, and are also an accepted part of most near future self defense courses and martial arts regimens. These piece-meal psionic defenses will not hold up in the face of a determined, high-level psychic assault; instead they are designed to give an ordinary victim of psi-crime just enough freewill to call for help or flee the scene.

When you are under psionic assault, you have been trained to instinctively erect a barrier of chaotic, random thoughts, nonsense rhymes and disturbing mental imagery. For an invading psychic, your mind seems as inhospitable as a field of barbed wire.

Prerequisite: Iron Will, Concentration 4 ranks

Benefit: When you are subject to any psionic or magical mind influencing effect, if the effect is generated by a sentient creature, that creature must succeed at a WILL save (DC 12 + your WIS modifier) or immediately suffer 2d6 points of subdual damage from psychic feedback.

Whether or not the attacking psion takes damage, you are affected normally by the power. Hopefully however, if attacked by a weak-willed psychic, the damage might cause the psion to drop concentration and lose control of the power.

Psychometric Tactician (Object Philosophy)

By touching an object and exploring its psychic traces, you gain insight into how the object's owner fights.

Prerequisites: Psychometric Touch

Benefit: You receive a +1 insight bonus on melee attack rolls and your Defense score when facing any creature whose possessions you have scanned with your Psychometric Touch ability. This bonus increases to +2 if the object you scanned is a weapon or piece of ammunition.

Reinforcement Aura (Object Philosophy)

You have learned to channel your latent psionic energy through vehicles you pilot. Your energy aura encompasses the vehicle, reinforcing its molecular structure and making it harder to knock your plane out of the sky.

Prerequisites: Gearhead, Vehicle Expert CHA 13+

Benefit: You may add your CHA modifier as a bonus to the Hardness of any vehicle, mecha or suit of power armor you pilot. In the case of larger vehicles, such as starships or naval vessels, you must be in primary control of the vehicle, and physically touching the controls, in order to activate this feat.

Sniper's Hivemind (Object Philosophy)

You can share sensory data with platoon-mates over incredible distances.

Prerequisite: Improved Tactical Hivemind

Benefit: The effects of your Improved Tactical Hivemind extend to all members of the hivemind within one mile. As such, this feat dramatically improves the effectiveness of psi-linked snipers and artillery experts.

When attacking a target with cover or concealment, the target's cover or concealment is reduced by one 'step' if any member of your tactical hivemind has a clear line of sight to the target.

Soldier's Versatility (Object Philosophy)

While you might have one or two favorite weapons, you are a combat generalist, who is just as effective with any weapons that happen to be available.

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +5, Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization

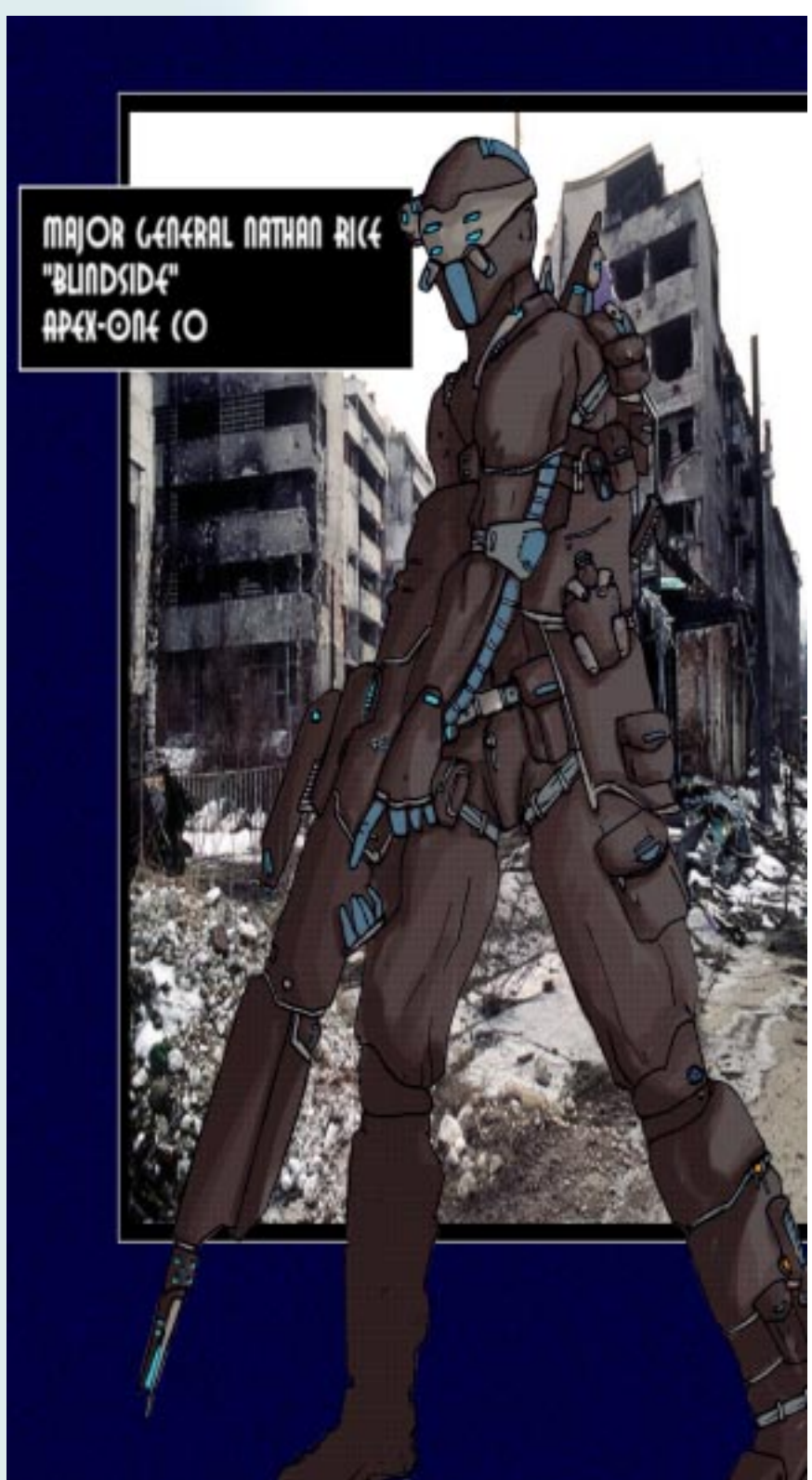
Benefit: Once per day, you may spend an hour practicing with any weapon you are proficient with and apply the benefits of your Weapon Focus and Weapon Specialization abilities to that weapon. This increased familiarity with the weapon lasts until you next sleep.

Object Philosophy:
Impulse Personification

Impulse Personification is a school of Object Philosophies designed to partition the human mind. The earliest example of the Impulse Personification object philosophy was found in pro-anorexia chat rooms in the last days of the 20th century, where young women would often personify their eating disorder as ‘my friend Ana’, allowing them to speak euphemistically about their disease, as well as project self destructive impulses into an imaginary scapegoat, a fictional third party.

Impulse Personification allows a student of the philosophy to undergo a voluntary disassociative state, creating a secondary personality, a submind. By creating a variety of subminds (effectively minor alternate personalities similar to those found in schizophrenics) designed to cope with a variety of different tasks, practitioners of this philosophy can thrive in a variety of difficult situations.

Once created, a personified submind cannot be dissolved without severe damage to the primary mind’s psyche. Combat focused personified impulses are an accepted part of 22nd Century warfare. Retired soldiers who have created active ‘war-minds’ are registered with local law enforcement, since the almost sociopathic soldier mentality is a deadlier weapon than any handgun.



Submind, Military Grade (Object Philosophy)

You can create military grade subminds that provide direct tactical aid, and seem to take over your body in a crisis situation, transforming you into a nearly unstoppable soldier.

Prerequisite: Submind Personification

Benefit: When you create a submind, you can craft military grade sub-personalities which directly enhance your combat abilities. A military submind is created just like a commercial submind, and counts against the total number of subminds you can manifest.

A military submind provides a +2 insight bonus on any two of the following combat statistics: armed or unarmed attack or damage rolls, Initiative checks or Defense. You may activate your combat submind a number of times per day equal to one plus your INT modifier (minimum once daily).

The military submind remains active for a number of rounds equal to your total character level. Once your submind deactivates, you are considered *shaken* until the end of the current encounter.

Unlike conventional subminds, you do not suffer an Initiative or WILL save penalty when using a military submind, though you may if you use a standard submind in conjunction with the military submind.

Normal: When crafting a submind, the submind only enhances skills, not combat statistics.

Submind Personification (Object Philosophy)

You have learned to partition your mind, creating a small 'team' of helpful subminds (imaginary friends) who assist you in a variety of ways, from romance and workplace interaction to battle-field survival.

Prerequisite: Creative, INT 13+, Concentration 4 ranks

Benefit: You have 'partitioned' your sentience, creating an assortment of imaginary subminds, each designed to aid you in a specific situation. You may create a number of subminds equal to one plus your INT modifier (minimum two subminds). Once created, your selection of subminds cannot be destroyed or 're-programmed'.

If your INT modifier is ever permanently increased, you may elect to create new subminds. If your INT score drops, either temporarily or permanently, you lose access to a randomly selected submind until the damage heals.

The submind remains mostly dormant when not in use, but may communicate with the core personality- offering advice, taunts, companionship or temptation. The submind automatically becomes active when needed, when performing an action or confronted with a situation that falls under the submind's purview, returning to dormancy immediately after the situation ends.

Crafting a Submind

When you gain this feat, you need not create all the subminds you are capable of imagining. Crafting a submind is a purely mental action which only requires 6-8 hours of rest or meditation. Once created, a submind comes on line after you next sleep or rest.

Subminds are endlessly customizable, and a submind can be created with virtually any task or situation in mind. During basic training, soldiers imagine subminds which steady their aim and help them detect the minor clues of ambushes. Children, with their parent's help script imaginary friends that act as tutors and psychological babysitters, which remain a life time companion. Professionals of all stripes build a secondary personality which works in conjunction with them on the job.

Each submind provides an insight bonus on one or more closely related skills. Military grade subminds (created with the Military Submind Feat) provide combat bonuses, increasing attack rolls or

providing a minor bonus to Defense or Initiative checks. Once a submind's purpose is chosen, it cannot be changed.

A submind can provide up to a +4 total bonus to any combination of skills. The chosen skills must all be keyed to the same attribute. A submind can be designed to upgrade four separate DEX keyed skills, for example, or could be designed to provide a +4 bonus on any single skill.

Skill-enhancing subminds are standard commercial thought-tech. Your submind automatically activates any time you attempt to use one of the skills. While the submind is activated, your personality may change in minor ways, in accordance with the quirks and desires of the sub-mind's personality. However, you retain full control over your actions, and your allegiances and alignment do not change.

While your submind is dominant, you are easily distracted and vulnerable to psionic attack, suffering a -2 penalty on Initiative checks and WILL Saves. In essence, while your mind's processing power is occupied with 'running' the submind, your Iron Will feat deactivates.

Submind Psychokinesis (Object Philosophy)

Your subminds are exceptionally well developed, with more complete and realistic personalities and their own goals. Drawing on the latent psionic potential in the human mind, you can draw upon your subminds to perform minor telekinetic tricks.

Prerequisite: Submind Personification

Benefit: By working in conjunction with one of your subminds, you may move objects telekinetically as a standard action. You may move unattended objects weighing ten pounds per point of your INT modifier. You may utilize this ability at will, directing the object (s) as a standard action, which provokes attacks of opportunities. Open hand telekinesis can affect all objects within line of sight in a 60 ft radius. You may affect one object per point of INT modifier simultaneously.

You may perform Craft and DEX based skills using telekinesis, but suffer a -4 penalty on all skill checks due to lack of sensitivity. You may throw objects telekinetically, but suffer a -4 penalty on attack rolls.

Thrown objects inflict 1d4 points of subdual damage per 10 lbs. Edged objects inflict 1d4 points of lethal damage per 10 lbs. Inhalation poison telekinetically thrown in an adversary's face or nose inflicts a -2 circumstance penalty on the unfortunate victim's FORT saves. Telekinesis cannot be used directly against living beings or objects in another creature's possession.

***Designer Note:** This feat is virtually identical to the Open Handed Telekinesis feat, found in the Psi-Watch campaign setting. The core attribute is INT based, rather than CHA based, to better fit with the other feats in the Submind tree.*

Submind Reorganization (Object Philosophy)

With intense concentration, you can rebuild your subminds, changing their form and function when the existing artificial personality is no longer useful to you. Your subminds are more diverse and versatile than normal mental constructs.

Prerequisite: Submind Personification

Benefit: By spending an action point, you may dissolve an existing submind. You may then create and activate a new submind. In addition, when creating a skill enhancing submind, you may select any combination of skills, not just skills keyed to the same attribute.

Normal: Once created, a submind cannot be destroyed or repurposed.

Disadvantage: Flawed Submind (PL 6)

Many parents develop a 'conscience' submind during a child's early development, using the artificially induced multiple personality as an imaginary babysitter. Infant subminds are designed to evolve as the child grows and matures emotionally, transforming from a childhood imaginary friend to a real-world asset. Some subminds, especially those 'programmed' by well meaning amateurs fail to make the transition. Those cursed with flawed thought-ware have to endure a lifetime of guilt and irritation, never measuring up to the harsh (or just plain quixotic) standards of the voice wired into their heads.

The flawed submind counts against the character's total possible number of subminds, and cannot be removed, destroyed or repurposed. The submind is programmed with behavior standards it tries its best to enforce. A character with a Flawed Submind is always considered *shaken* for the first 1d2 rounds of combat, as the submind urges against violence and goes into panic mode.

The sufferer also is considered *shaken* for an hour after a sexual encounter, after a battle ends, or after using any form of drug or alcohol. Even immunity to typical fear effects does not aid the character in resisting this neural 'glitch'.

Special: The character must have the at least one Impulse Personification Object Philosophy Feat to select this disadvantage. By selecting this disadvantage, the character may choose an additional feat that he meets the prerequisites for.

Symbiotic Mind-link (Object Philosophy)

You create a subtle but unbreakable mindlink between yourself and one or more sentient creatures you share an intimate relationship with.

Benefit: You may choose to forge a loose hivemind with a number of specific persons you share intimate relationships with equal to one plus your INT modifier (minimum one mind-link). These people may be other player characters or may be NPCs. Forging a mind-link requires at least 6-8 hours of rest or meditation, and all parties involved in the process must remain in close proximity during this time.

As long as you have friendly contact each day with this person or persons (which can be as casual as an e-mail or phone call), and your relationship remains friendly and mostly unstressed, the mind link remains active.

You can always sense the general status and emotional state of other minds in the link, as well as an idea of relative distance and direction between the other minds in the link, regardless of the distance between you.

When within 60 ft of another person sharing your mind link, you can communicate through a silent telepathic channel.

Tactical Hivemind (Object Philosophy)

You've learned how to focus your psionic mindlink to the point it provides tactical benefits, binding a team of well trained soldiers into a single organism.

Prerequisite: Symbiotic Mind-link

Benefit: As long as the members of your symbiotic mind-link are within a 60 ft radius of each other, you and the other link-members are not considered flanked or flat-footed unless you all are.

Tactical Razor (Object Philosophy)

You have disciplined your mind and focused the force of your will into a deadly psi-weapon. You focus your scorn for religious fanatics of all stripes into a psionic dagger which can cripple or kill less disciplined Philosophy practitioners.

Prerequisite: Change Agent, Knowledge: behavioral sciences 6 ranks, Knowledge: theology & philosophy 1 rank, cannot have any religious allegiance

Benefit: At will, you can manifest a psionic dagger, the appearance of which is determined subconsciously, when you first manifest the weapon. The Tactical Razor inflicts no damage to most creatures or objects, passing through them like smoke, but can be deadly against creatures with the Neural Conditioning feat, and thus, the capability to manifest Object Philosophies.

Against a Philosophy capable target, the Razor inflicts 1d4 + your CHA modifier points of damage. It scores a critical hit on a natural 19-20, and inflicts double damage on a confirmed critical.

The tactical razor cannot be used to parry or make a disarm attempt, nor can it be sundered or disarmed.

In addition, once a creature is struck by the dagger, she suffers an additional 2d6 points of damage every time she activates any Object Philosophy. Each round she maintains an ongoing Object Philosophy, the target suffers 2d6 points of damage. Once struck, a victim's Object Philosophies are 'locked down' for a number of minutes equal to your CHA modifier (minimum one minute). Successive strikes increase the duration of the effect.

Special: Your power comes from your denial of religion-based Philosophies; you lose the benefit of this feat if you select any Lifer or Choicer Object Philosophy or gain an allegiance to any religion, cult or church.

Tactical Resonance (Object Philosophy)

You have been trained to tap and exploit the human collective unconscious, becoming more precise and skilled when in the presence of highly skilled experts. You can tap the skill-memories of those around you to increase your own tactical versatility.





Benefit: Each day, upon awakening, you select any two skills. Until you next rest, you receive a +2 competence bonus on these skills if any living creature within a 60 ft radius has at least 8 ranks in either skill. You need not be aware of a creature's presence to gain a skill bonus in this manner, and this ability ignores considerations such as line of sight and line of effect to the target you are 'mimicking' skill ranks from.

If three or more creatures within your area of effect have 8 or more ranks in a selected skill, your minimum result of a skill check when within the area of effect is 10. Treat a die roll of 1-9 as a 10 when using the enhanced skill.

APEX America: Color Schemes

The Lifers and Choicers described in *Otherverse America* don't look like any other fighting force in sci-fi. Their uniforms are blood red and royal purple- they carry wooden fetishes and energized athemes, wear anti-abortion bumperstickers on their flak vests and scar themselves to show their politics. By contrast, APEX troops and hardware would fit seamlessly into most futuristic first person shooters, and have a more 'traditional' appearance.

The majority of APEX hardware is grey, white or some shade of black, giving the supersoldiers a sleek; professional but somewhat sterile appearance. Unit patches and oddly colored, post-human skin provide the only spots of color (and individuality). Blue and white are present in almost every design, calling United Nations peacekeepers to mind, and visually implying that APEX is a neutral force, not aligned with either the Choicer or Lifer armies.

Uniform Standards

As members a military organization, APEX meta-humans are held to uniform standards, though not to the degree real world soldiers are. APEX troops are required to be neatly groomed and professionally dressed when on duty, though what that means differs a bit from 21st Century concepts of military dress.

Facial hair is allowed, though beards and mustaches must be neatly trimmed and kept fairly short. Long hair for both males and females is acceptable, though hair must be kept pinned up or worn in a top-knot when in uniform. Minor facial tattooing is acceptable, and but is more common among troops enlisting from a Choicer neighborhood. Piercings are allowed when off duty, though given the preponderance of telekines and mango-kinetics APEX go up against, soldiers are required to remove metallic piercings before deploying on a combat patrol.

Plastic piercings, provided they fit close to the skin, are allowed in uniform, though frowned on by combat veterans. After having their non-metallic nose stud ripped out during a brawl, most troops forgo piercings entirely for practical reasons. Cybernetics must be kept in good repair and full conversion 'borgs are required to keep their hulls smooth, sleek and polished.

APEX's working uniform consists of a set of slacks, durable undershirt and light jacket, and is similar to the uniform of the day for most of the other services. Aside from rank insignia on the collar and a name badge over the breast pocket, the uniform is fairly spartan. The color worn on the soldier's left shoulder and collar indicates the soldier's assignment within APEX. It's permissible to remove the jacket in the office, or while performing manual labor, but it otherwise must be worn at all times.

For formal occasions, APEX members simply trade their every-day blouse for a longer and more elegant jacket. Medals are worn over the left breast, and squad commanders, officers and NCOs (characters with the Squad Leader feat) wear a

short golden braid on their right shoulder. Members of "APEX One" wear a blue and white 'honor' braid. Elite troops are allowed to wear a light cloak slung over their shoulder, a tradition picked up from their Choicer allies.

Choicer troops are allowed to wear crimson gloves or hand-ribbons as a political symbol while in uniform, and members of the Covenant are allowed to carry an athame in their belt. Troops who enlist from the Choicer pseudonation have the option of wearing a blood-red crest on their right shoulder, in place of the traditional white crest worn by APEX members (or the black crest worn by members of a Special Operations group). APEX has no provision for soldiers enlisting from the Lifer pseudo-nation to wear the purple, despite repeated requests by the few active-duty Lifer service members to allow the practice.

On the battlefield, APEX troops are allowed wide latitude in their armor, weapons and gear choices. In most cases, the organization realizes that individual soldiers best know their needs and capabilities, and can best choose gear to maximize their strengths and shore up weaknesses. The organization's quartermasters provide soldiers with a wide assortment of gear- almost anything a player might want to equip their characters with. Frontline grunts are usually issued more standardized gear, with more elite units receiving more and better weapons, powered armor and ammunition. Members of APEX primary squads wear personalized body armor.

APEX body armor is designed for marketability and recognizably, as well as comfort, tactical utility and survivability. New members of an APEX squad are assigned a dedicated tailor-AI, which helps them custom-build a costumed look.

The American military uses proven, durable, and easily repairable technology, and fields some of the best armed, best equipped and best maintained suits of Power Armor on the planet.

“Champion” Physical Enhancement

Suit: The Champion PES is not considered a suit of power armor. The Champion is a Kevlar II and polymer body stocking, which can easily be worn under uniform or civilian clothes. In addition to its role in military service, Champion enhancement suits are common in heavy industry, search and rescue and other commercial applications. The bodysuit covers the entirety of the wearer’s body, with the exception of the palms of the hands and the face, and lacks the life-support feature common to modern shell technology.

The Champion is impregnated with shapememory polymer fibers, which flex and release in coordination with the wearer’s movements, applying necessary tension to increase the wearer’s strength and endurance. The Champion is a completely non-electrical suit, using stored kinetic energy and chemical reactions within the suit’s artificial muscle fibers to provide strength enhancement, making it ideal for stealth service.

The Champion body stocking has a slick, plasticine sheen, and is, and is equipped with color shifting polymers which allow it to change its deco and patterning according to the wearer’s whim. Hard plastic ballistic plates attached to the armor’s spine, thighs, knees, groin and upper chest provide additional protection.

The degree of strength enhancement a Champion suit determines its cost.

Strength Bonus:

- +1 enhancement bonus DC 23
- +2 enhancement bonus DC 25
- +3 enhancement bonus DC 27

If the suit is designed to provide an untyped bonus to the wearer’s strength score, increase the base Purchase DC by +2. This increases the item’s restriction rating by +1, to Restricted (+2).



Hastati Overarmor: Exactly as the name implies, Hastati Overarmor is designed to be worn over conventional body armor, providing additional tactical protection (and limited life support) with only minimal additional weight.

The Hastati system can be worn with any other suit of tactical or concealable body armor, and is usually worn in conjunction with the Champion PES, or the Covenant's iconic Sanguine III suit.

The Hastati provides additional torso and spinal protection. The armor features a retractable helmet, which collapses into the armor's bulky collar when not needed. When worn with compatible armor, the Hastati provides full environmental protection. It is sealed against chemical and biological weapons, poisons, radiation and hard vacuum, and has a 4 hour independent oxygen supply, as well as atmospheric filters.

The Hastati's equipment bonus to Defense and armor check penalty stack with those of the worn beneath it, and the Overarmor applies the listed penalty to the wearer's maximum DEX bonus to Defense.

Riot-Strike Armor: This black and grey suit of body armor is designed for intimidation as much as it is for survivability. The wearer is made faceless by a fully enclosed helmet. Images of police in Riot Strikes wading into a Lifer protest dominate the evening news, and the sheer brutality associated with the armor has given it a sinister cast.

Riot-Strike Armor provides full environmental protection and includes an 8 hour independent oxygen supply, in addition to atmospheric filters. The wearer is protected from chemical and biological weapons, poisons, radiation and hard vacuum.



While wearing a suit of Riot-Strike armor, the wearer becomes immune to subdual damage, thanks to the armor's insulation layers and multiple redundant safety systems. The wearer receives a +2 circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks made while armored.

American Body Armor	Type	Equipment Bonus	Nonproficient Bonus	Max DEX Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed (30 ft)	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction Rating
Champion P.E.S.	Medium-Concealable	+4	+2	+4	-0	30 ft	3 lbs	23-27	Licensed (+1) or Restricted (+2)
Hastati Overarmor	Tactical	+2 *	+0 *	-2 *	-2 *	30 ft	4 lbs	23	Licensed (+1)
Riot-Strike Armor	Heavy-Tactical	+8	+3	+0	-6	20 ft	25 lbs	25	Military (+3)

APEX Weapons

Having the best equipment in the world, price no object, has been a part of US tactical doctrine since the 1960s. APEX troops are equipped with impressive, dependable weapons. APEX systems tend to be larger and heavier than comparable Choicer guns, and have a higher price point, which balances their superior firepower. APEX squads also commonly use Choicer gear, especially the Valiente VEWS, which is one of the most popular squad support weapons in the world.

There is a cultural bias in the military against Lifer weapons- no matter how good they shoot, no APEX troop will ever willingly carry a Lifer weapon. Lifer guns are derided as low quality, quirky and unreliable, and are only used for deniable operations.

ARPL -06 Plasma Pulse Rifle: The ARPL-06 is a new generation of energy weapon, built using heat resistant composites and miniaturized chemical coolant systems, designed with the express purpose of marrying the damage dealing capability of a heavy energy weapon with the rate of fire of a modern assault rifle.

The ARPL-06 is a relatively blocky and non-ergonomic weapon, and the cooling systems built into the heavy, rectangular cowling trade accuracy for firepower. Unlike conventional assault rifles, the ARPL-06 is usually treated as a squad

support weapon, a relatively lightweight alternative to bulkier heavy weapons.

Farrar 5.7mm SMG: Farrar Arms produces its iconic submachine gun for US Military as well as the Choicer government. Opinions differ as to which is the better gun- the Farrar 5.7 or the MN-14, with both guns having their merits. Comparing the two weapons is a popular topic around military shooting ranges.

The Farrar is a sleek, bullpup model submachine gun, a 21st Century replacement for the revolutionary but aging FNP-90. The Farrar is an ultra light submachine gun, designed for comfortable one handed use either left or right-handed shooters. It is composed exclusively of non-metallic compounds, with the majority of the casing composed of vat-grown cellulose.

The light and comfortable Farrar is always considered a masterwork weapon, providing a +1 equipment bonus on ranged attack rolls. The Farrar mounts a single shot grenade launcher under the main barrel. This miniature launcher holds a single micro-grenade.

MN-14 Wyvern SMG: The Griffin is an old and reliable Metamorphosis North slug thrower, first introduced in the mid 2060s. The light weapon is designed to fit comfortably in the hand, and includes folding stock and miniature pneumatic stabilizers which keep the gun steady as it fires. The Wyvern is common to APEX breaching squads and X-SWAT units.

The weapon offers superior aim, and is always considered a masterwork quality weapon, providing a +1 masterwork bonus to attack and damage rolls.

MN-18 Stormblade Ion Pistol: This handheld weapon is barely larger than a .22 Beretta, but fires a beam of charged ions powerful enough to scorch through tank armor. One of Metamorphosis North's newest designs, the Stormblade might actually be too powerful for its intended purpose as a holdout weapon. It's difficult to aim, and the ion stream is risky to use in an enclosed environment.

The Stormblade imposes a -1 penalty on ranged attack rolls, due to its over-charged design. On a roll of a natural 1 with the weapon, energy 'backsplash' inflicts 1d6 points of electrical damage to the wielder.

MN-20 Manicore Machine Pistol: The Manicore is a small, sleek, and completely non-metallic machine pistol developed for US military Special Forces. Most of the weapon's frame is composed of high-density plastic, and the barrel is made from a genetically engineered, heat-resistant cellulose. The Manicore's action is as simple and reliable as it is possible to make an automatic, and is designed for easy cleaning and field repair. This reliable weapon is the default gun for most American military squads.

MN-602AP Werewolf: The Werewolf is one of the most impressive and fearsome long-arms ever devised, advertised as the world's ultimate sniper rifle. In reality, the Werewolf is basically a starship weapon miniaturized to the point it is (nearly) man-portable.

From the tip of the long, tapering barrel to the heat sinks at the rear of the weapon, the Werewolf is nearly 8 ft long when fully extended, and weighs almost 500 lbs. Only full conversion cyborgs and superhumanly strong Combat Types can carry the weapon unassisted; human soldiers usually mount the Werewolf on a light truck or APC.

The weapon's heart is a micro-fusion reactor, one high-yield enough it could be jury-rigged to provide electricity for an entire city block. Thanks to its onboard power supply, the Werewolf's particle stream maintains cohesion for a much greater range than a conventional weapon, allowing the Werewolf's user to effectively snipe at targets far over the horizon. The Werewolf makes use of constantly up-dating, real time satellite telemetry and GPS location finding to hit targets several miles out.

Remington Rangecleaner Spool Shotgun: The Rangecleaner is a 22nd century re-imagining of the shotgun. Rather than shells, the weapon's ammunition is a small spool of ferrous wire, which is cut and fired by magnetic repulsion. Emerging from the blunt, triangular barrel of the weapon, the ultracompressed wire quickly flattens out, and projected at Mach 3, shears through any target unfortunate enough to be within range.

A single hit from a Rangecleaner can cripple a combat Shellsuit and can slice an unarmored human into two roughly equal pieces. For their product demonstration in 2096, when Remington won the contract to produce this fearsome weapon for the military, the shooter used his weapon to slice a half dozen hanging beef carcasses with a single trigger pull.



The rapidly expanding wire-shot inflicts full damage on the primary target and half damage on all targets in squares adjacent to the primary target. Secondary targets can attempt a DC 18 REF Save for no damage.

SFAA-1404 “Safety”: The Shoulder Fired Anti Armor missile launcher has been a standard part of APEX loadout since the 2070s, and the weapon is responsible for hundreds of downed Lifer Shells and aircraft. Nicknamed the “Safety” this short barreled rocket launcher is designed for minimal weight, and maximum destructive power.

The Safety includes a fairly good quality on-board AI, which rotates the weapon’s second barrel into position as soon as the first launch tube is cleared, reloading it automatically. The onboard AI also assists in targeting, and acts as a basic IFF (identification friend/foe) system.

The Safety’s AI provides the weapon with a +2 bonus on ranged attack rolls. However, the rocket warhead cannot arm when fired at a target within 50 ft of the shooter, nor can the weapon be fired at an allied vehicle or mech. The onboard AI uses its scope camera to identify ‘friendly’ targets visually, and is capable of instantly matching camo and paint patterns, unit symbols, uniforms and vehicle make and model.

The Safety’s warhead detonates when it strikes a target, dealing full damage to the target and all other creatures and objects within a 10 ft radius of the blast. Secondary targets caught in the blast radius can attempt a DC 15 REF Save for half damage. The warhead’s shaped charge is designed

to penetrate armor, and ignore the first 10 points of Hardness or non-magical Damage Reduction it strikes the initial target. This doesn't apply to the secondary targets caught within the blast radius.

Additional rockets for the Safety come in cases of 4 and are Purchase DC 17. They have a Restriction Rating of Military (+3).

Firing a Safety requires the Exotic Weapons Proficiency (rocket launchers).

AS-55 "Glasser" Grenades: Glasser grenades are a very new part of the APEX arsenal, with the chemical formula only cracked in late 2105. Glasser grenades use 'energized smoke' containing specially charged nano-bots to weaken the molecular structure of objects caught within the cloud.

When the Glasser is thrown, it functions exactly like a tear gas grenade (pg 105, D20 Modern core rulebook). Any inorganic matter caught within the cloud has its Hardness or non-magical Damage Reduction reduced by 2d6 points. This effect persists as long as the inorganic material remains within the cloud, and for one round after it is removed from the cloud. Troops usually follow up a Glasser grenade with massed small arms fire, to bring down a now vulnerable cyborg or mecha.

Glassers are extremely expensive. A box of 6 Glasser grenades has a Purchase DC 23 and has a Military (+3) restriction rating.

F-Stick Tac Nukes: Fusion Stick tactical nukes are one of the deadliest man-portable weapons ever devised, and they are so devastating their use has been banned by the Treaty of Boston. F-Sticks are rarely issued to APEX troops, and only in the most extreme situations, when a squad is facing a metahuman so powerful that without access to tac-nukes, the target is a threat to the planet as a whole.

APEX has only used F-Sticks three times since the Battle of Boston, and only once on Earth. Even the Lifers are hesitant to use these ultra-lethal, city killing bombs.

An F-Stick is a small cylinder slightly longer and thinner than a soda can, but extremely heavy for its size. The weapon's casing conceals an unstable fusion reactor, which is designed to overload within a predictable period and detonate. An onboard computer controls the time till detonation. Once set, the F-stick can be programmed (via a smartlight interface) for immediate detonation (which occurs 1 round after it is placed), or for a delayed detonation, at any time up to 24 hours after the weapon is placed. A designated user can attempt to abort the detonation by entering a specific code, unique to each F-stick.

Deactivating an F-stick without the code is virtually impossible, requiring a DC 40 Disable Device check. Failure indicates the F-stick detonates immediately. All EOD personnel on the planet dread these devices, and rightfully so.

An F-Stick's explosion inflicts 20d10 (average 110) points of fire damage to everything within a 500 ft radius, and half that damage to everything in a 1,000 ft radius. Anything caught within the blast radius remains *heavily irritated* for 2d6 hours after the detonation.

An F-Stick is a small object but weighs more than 25 lbs. A single F-Stick has a purchase DC of at least 43, and is an Illegal (+4) restricted item.

Ranged Weapons	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	ROF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction Rating
ARPL-06 1996 Plasma Pulse Rifle (PL 7)	2d8 fire	20	60 ft	Full Auto	30 cell	Large	14 lbs	26	Mil +3
Farrar 5.7 mm SMG (PL 7)	2d8 ballistic 5d6 slashing (grenade)	20/x2 none (grenade)	40 ft	Full Auto/- Single	60 round box, 1 grenade	Medium	4.25 lbs	20	(+2) Restricted
MN-14 Wyvern SMG (PL 6)	2d6+1 ballistic	20/x3	50 ft	Full Auto	30 round box	Small	3 lbs	18	Restricted (+2)
MN-18 Stormblade Ion Pistol (PL 7)	2d8 electrical	18-20/x2	60 ft	Single Shot Only	10 round cell	Tiny	1.5 lbs	20	Restricted (+2)
MN-20 Manticore Machine Pistol (PL 6)	2d6 ballistic	20/x2	40 ft	Full Auto	30 round box	Medium	5 lbs	18	Restricted (+2)
MN-602 AP Werewolf (PL 7)	4d10 fire	20/x4	1500 ft	Single Shot Only	Unlimited	Huge	525 lbs	28	Military (+3)
SFAA-140- 4 "Safety" Rocket Launcher (PL 6)	8d8 fire	20/x2	100 ft	Single Shot Only	2 Internal	Medium	22 lbs	17	Military (+3)
Remington Rangecleaner Spool Shotgun (PL 7)	6d6 slashing	20/x3	10 ft	Single Shot Only	6 round box	Medium	7.5 lbs	19	Military (+3)



Air to Air: Optional Airborne Combat Rules for D20 Modern

I've never been satisfied with the D20 Modern vehicle combat rules, especially rules for air combat. The D20 system can do a lot of things, but as written, it doesn't model tactical air combat with any accuracy. Air duels in D20 Modern are simplistic at best, and most gamers never bother to include air combat in their games, simply because the rules don't effectively support them.

When designing a set of air to air combat rules, I had three main design goals.

1. All the new rules elements had to fit within 10 pages or less.
2. All the new rules and systems must integrate fairly seamlessly with other D20 modern elements.
3. The new rules must add a high degree of tactical choice without slowing down play or requiring a lot of complex calculations.

Tactical Air Combat

D20 Modern aircraft combat rules are modeled on the D20 modern vehicle system, which is a fairly serviceable system for modeling car chases, but breaks down when attempting to describe a three dimensional environment. The following optional rules add some 3-D movement and tactical options to the system. None of the new rules presented below supercede the rules for

vehicle combat found in the D20 Modern core rulebook. Instead, they add additional elements to aircraft combat, many aspects of which are modeled on existing rules for flying creatures.

Once movement becomes three-dimensional and involves turning in midair and maintaining a minimum velocity to stay aloft, it gets more complicated. Most aircraft have to slow down at least a little to make a turn, and many are limited to fairly wide turns and must maintain a minimum forward speed. Each aircraft has a maneuverability category, as described on the table below. The entries on the table are defined below.

Unless otherwise noted, Huge aircraft have average maneuverability, with flight handling dropping one category for each size category past large. Gargantuan aircraft, such as jumbo passenger jets, heavy bombers, cargo haulers and troop transports are always Clumsy fliers.

Minimum Forward Speed: If an aircraft fails to maintain its minimum forward speed, it must land at the end of its movement. If it is too high above the ground to land, the aircraft **Stalls** and falls straight down, descending 150 feet in the first round of falling.

If this distance brings it to the ground, the stalled craft and passengers take falling damage. If the fall doesn't bring the aircraft to the ground, it must spend its next turn recovering from the stall, which requires the pilot to succeed at a DC 15+1d6 pilot check (DC 16-21). Otherwise it falls another 300 feet. If it hits the ground, it takes falling damage. Otherwise, the pilot has another chance to end the stall, at a randomly determined DC on his next turn and all succeeding rounds until impact.

While Stalled, an aircraft is considered helpless, and does not benefit from its pilots DEX bonus to Defense.

Hover: The ability to stay in one place while airborne. Despite their maneuverability category, all helicopters (and most mac-tik aircraft) have this capability.

Move Backward: The ability to move backward without turning around. Few fixed wing aircraft have this capability, which is common to helicopters. Despite their maneuverability category, all helicopters (and most mac-tik aircraft) have this capability.

Reverse: An aircraft with good maneuverability uses up 50 feet of its speed to start flying backward. Helicopters and other highly maneuverable aircraft, such as mac-tik powered armor, use up only 30 ft of their speed when flying in reverse.

Turn: How much the creature can turn after covering the stated distance. The pilot can attempt a Pilot check (DC 12 + 1d6- ranging from DC 13 to DC 18) to attempt to halve this distance. Failure means the pilot must make the turn in the required space. Failure by five or more results in a stall.

Turn in Place: An aircraft with average or better maneuverability can use some of its speed to turn in place.

Maximum Turn: How much the aircraft can turn in any one chase scale square.

Up Angle: The angle at which the aircraft can climb.

Up Speed: How fast the aircraft can climb.

Down Angle: The angle at which the aircraft can descend.

Down Speed: An aircraft can fly down at twice its normal flying speed.

Between Down and Up: An average, poor, or clumsy aircraft must fly level for a minimum distance after descending and before climbing. Any aircraft can begin descending after a climb without an intervening distance of level flight.

	Maneuverability				
	Perfect	Good	Average	Poor	Clumsy
Minimum forward speed	None	None	Half	Half	Half
Hover	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Move backward	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Reverse	Free	-5 ft.	No	No	No
Turn	Any	90°/50 ft	45°/50 ft	45°/50 ft.	45°/100 ft.
Turn in place	Any	+90°/-50 ft.	+45°/-50 ft.	No	No
Maximum turn	Any	Any	90°	45°	45°
Up angle	Any	Any	60°	45°	20°
Up speed	Full	Half	Half	Half	Half
Down angle	Any	Any	Any	45°	20°
Down speed	Double	Double	Double	Double	Double
Between down and up	0	0	50 ft	100 ft	200 ft

For Space-Scale combat, simply multiply distances by 10 and replace all references to “chase scale” squares with similar references to “space scale” squares.

Yes, doing that ignores some of the complexity of zero-g dog-fighting, but it’s a quick and usable system.

Six O Clock Kills

The optimal kill-shot for pilots is to fire from directly to the rear of a target aircraft, with the nose and main guns of your aircraft pointed directly at the engines and tail rudder of the opposing craft. Pilots receive a bonus on ranged attack rolls when firing directly at the ‘six o’ clock’ position on an enemy aircraft, and most duels are struggles to get into position to lob a volley of heatseeker’s right up the other guy’s tailpipe.

If firing into an enemy aircraft’s six, you receive a +1d4 bonus on the ranged attack roll. This bonus remains in effect until the enemy manages to shake you off his tail, by any means.

Dog Fighting Maneuvers

By succeeding on Pilot checks, an aircraft’s operator can eke extra performance out of her machine, and gain the advantage in lethal, high-speed air-to-air duels. Some common stunts and air-warfare tactics are described below. Any time a pilot fails a stunt, he or she suffers a penalty described in the stunt’s description. If the pilot fails the check by ten or more, the aircraft *stalls*.

Stunt: Air Brake: The pilot completely kills the aircraft’s thrust, hopefully allowing pursuing planes to overshoot, right into her gun sights. By succeeding on a Pilot check (DC 15 + the DEX modifier of the pursuit pilot), the pilot immediately reduces her aircraft’s forward speed to the minimum speed necessary to maintain level flight.

The pilot receives a +1d4 bonus on ranged attack rolls against the pursuit plane, if this sudden deceleration forces the pursuer into her 12 o clock. This is in addition the more general bonus received for firing at an enemy’s six.

Failure: Your aircraft suffers 2d6 points of damage, from stress on the airframe, and you do not change position.

Stunt: Nimble Defense: By succeeding at a Pilot check at the beginning of each round, the DC of which is equal to 10 + ½ the damage the aircraft sustained on the previous round, the pilot may add her DEX bonus to Defense to the aircraft’s Defense Score.

Note that this stunt is unnecessary in Powered Armor, which is responsive enough to allow the pilot to use some or all of her DEX bonus normally.



Failure: The aircraft loses 1d4+1 chase scale squares of movement, due to poorly chosen tactical moves.

Stunt: Power Dive: This is the aerial equivalent of a charge, and does not require a Pilot check to accomplish. The pilot trades altitude for speed and momentum. To use this stunt, the aircraft must descend, using its entire movement in this round. Doing so bleeds off altitude, but gives the pilot the momentum necessary to pull off impressive maneuvers next round.

While power diving, the aircraft cannot use its pilot's DEX bonus to defense, and suffers a -2 penalty to Defense.

On the next round of combat, the aircraft's speed is temporarily increased by +2d4 chase scale squares, and the pilot receives a +1d6 bonus on all Pilot checks made in the next round and ranged attacks made with the aircraft's weapons.

Stunt: Speed for Accuracy: You use your aircraft's superior speed and maneuverability to set up a kill-shot on a slower, clumsier foe. By succeeding at a DC 20 Pilot check, you can sacrifice chase

scale movement squares to gain any of the following benefits.

For every 2 chase scale squares of movement you sacrifice, you gain a cumulative +1 bonus on ranged attack rolls with your aircraft's weapons.

You may sacrifice a number of chase scale squares equal to your DEX modifier. The sacrificed speed and benefit remain in effect until the beginning of your next turn. Remember,

if the aircraft fails to maintain minimum forward speed, it goes into a stall.

Failure: Poor tactics mean you can't attack on the following round of combat, though you can still maneuver as you wish.

Nosecone Girls

Sexy nosecone art has been a military tradition since WWI, and it's a tradition APEX pilots, including Powered Armor pilots, have embraced wholeheartedly. Twenty-first century notions of political correctness aside, nosecone art seems to dramatically improve unit morale, and more importantly to Mil-Media, provides an eye catching visual 'hook' for the marketing and sale of toy warbirds.

Almost every flight capable vehicle and drone in the APEX arsenal has a sexy pin-up girl painted on the nosecone or wing. APEX combat shells have similar artwork adorning their maneuvering wings or the armor's spinal plating. Nosecone girls have become traditional though a few gay male or straight female pilots paint beefcake nosecone boys on their machines, most pilots, regardless of gender or orientation stick with old-school nosecone girls.

By succeeding at a DC 20 Craft (visual arts) check, which consumes at least 8 hours of work, a pilot can decorate their aircraft with eye-catching, sexy nosecone art. The pilot must personally decorate his or her own aircraft, and can only have one aircraft 'marked' at a time. If the pilot switches planes, he or she doesn't receive this benefit with the new plane until painting some nosecone art on it. Switching back requires touching up the first aircraft's nosecone art, which requires just an hour or two of work, and no additional Craft check.

The pilot receives a +2 morale bonus on Pilot checks and a +1 morale bonus on ranged weapon attacks when piloting a specially painted aircraft.

Demon Bat Close Air Support Helicopter (PL 7)

The Demon Bat is a dependable work-horse. A Demon Bat CAS copter accompanies every APEX mission into hostile territory, circling the battlefield to scout, eradicate hidden foes with its impressive weapons array, and pull the troops

out if all goes wrong. As the large-scale engagements of the Abortion War give way to the counter-insurgency of the Post-Treaty era, the Demon Bat has become the centerpiece of APEX air strategy. Cheaper to fly and maintain than the EagleHawk, the Demon Bat is also better suited for urban and anti-armor missions.

Demon Bat crews are adept tank-killers, and are more than a match for most modern suits of Powered Armor. APEX maintains endless fleets of Demon Bats at combat readiness- one of the largest logistical challenges is finding enough spare parts to keep a majority of 'Bats flying. These sleek, wasp-like crafts are a common sight in 22nd Century America, performing routine overflights of virtually every major city in the nation, as well as engaging in the efficient and lethal combat missions that show up on the evening news more days than not.

Demon Bat CAS Helicopter

Crew: 2

Passengers: 8

Cargo Space: 5,000 lbs

Initiative Penalty: -4

Maneuver Penalty: -2

Top Speed: 430/43

Defense: 7

Hardness: 10

Hit Points: 50

Size: Gargantuan

Purchase DC: 48

Restriction: Military (+3)

Weapon	Damage	Crit	Range Increment	ROF	Magazine
DB-15 Mini-Gun	4d6 ballistic	20/x2	800 ft	Full Auto	1,000 round drum
DB-17 AA Missile Launchers	10d6 fire	20/x2	1,000 ft	Single Shot	8 internal
DC-21 AP Laser Battery	4d6 force	20/x3	500 ft	Full Auto	Effectively unlimited

EagleHawk Suborbital Troop Transport (PL 7)

The EagleHawk suborbital troop transport is the 21st Century answer to the archaic C-130, a hulking warplane that can carry a complete squad and all their gear anywhere in the world in a matter of hours. The wedge shaped, multiple winged craft was one of the most advanced aircraft in the world when it debuted in 2055. Constructed from shapememory polymers, the vaguely insectoid craft is capable of limited metamorphosis, and can alter its aerodynamic profile ‘on the fly’.

Larger than a football field, the massive plane is surprisingly nimble, and can take off from a short runway, as well as use its magnetic levitation engines to hover in place or make VTOL hops. The EagleHawk’s rear doors iris open for loading cargo, or when inserting troops by air-drop.

As the EagleHawk has aged, its role within the military has expanded. Hundreds of EagleHawks are equipped with full surgical suites and are used as emergency medivac platforms.

Variants: The Lifer AOG stole the EagleHawk’s design specs, and their “Rescue Hawk” transport is virtually identical to the American VTOL. The Rescue Hawk is equipped with a battery of mid-range particle beams, while the EagleHawk mounts a “Talon III” depleted uranium mini-gun.

EagleHawk Suborbital Troop Transport

Crew: 3

Passengers: 15

Cargo Space: 45,000 lbs

Initiative Penalty: -6

Maneuver Penalty: -4

Top Speed: 2,200/220

Defense: 6

Hardness: 10

Hit Points: 60

Size: Colossal

Weapon	Damage	Crit	Range Increment	ROF	Magazine
Eagle Hawk "Talon III"	4d6 ballistic	20/x2	800 ft	Full Auto	1,000 round drum
Rescue Hawk particle beam	5d6 fire	20/x2	1,000 ft	Semi Auto	Effectively Unlimited

Purchase DC: 43

Restriction: Military (+3)

Flying Rhino Heavy Troop Transport (PL 7)

The Flying Rhino is slower and less maneuverable than the EagleHawk, but much more heavily armored and equipped with a suite of anti-armor weapons. The Rhino is an unattractive, bee-like craft whose dorsal surface is studded with heavy-duty Mac-Tik emitters and maneuvering verners. The Rhino is deployed only during the most dangerous airborne insertions, when an EagleHawk would be cut to ribbons by incoming flak.

When airborne, the Rhino is surrounded by a semi-tangible mac-tik forcefield, which helps deflect small arms fire as well as improve its otherwise abyssal aerodynamic profile. Referred to as ‘the soap bubble’ by Rhino pilots, this light forcefield is a lifesaver for crew and plane.

The Flying Rhino’s forcefield provides it with Damage Reduction 10 against ballistic damage, which stacks with the vehicle’s Hardness. This forcefield is only active when the vehicle is airborne. The Rhino is a clumsy flier, but does have full hover capabilities.

The Rhino has one final quirk, which makes ideal for APEX insertions. The troop bay at the rear of the aircraft, which resembles an insect’s bulbous thorax, is made from a one-way polymer. Opaque from the outside, the troop bay’s walls and floors are completely transparent when viewed from within. Flying in the troop bay takes some getting

used to, but its 'transparent' construction makes it an ideal launch point for Patriot Courier teleporters, who have a good, clean line of sight to their target zones on the ground.

Weapon Notes: The Flying Rhino is equipped with a Gamma/Neutron stream. This fearsome weapon ignores natural and equipment bonuses to Defense as well as hardness, making it an ideal 'tank-killer'. Those struck by the GN stream are considered to have been exposed to a highly radioactive environment for one round.

Crew: 2
 Passengers: 14
 Cargo Space: 4,500 lbs
 Initiative Penalty: -6
 Maneuver Penalty: -4
 Top Speed: 190/19
 Defense: 6
 Hardness: 15
 Hit Points: 75
 Size: Gargantuan
 Purchase DC: 42
 Restriction: Military (+3)

Sky Hydra Heavy Bomber (PL 6)

The Sky Hydra is an old, proven design that first saw active service during the Mexican Sweeps of the 2040s, raining death down on Familia coca fields and strongholds. Over its long service life, the Sky Hydra has seen service in the Middle East, across Asia, and even over Lifer America, dropping thousands of tons of high explosives and fuel/air bombs on fortified Enclaves.

APEX hopes to retire its fleet of Sky Hydrae by 2125, and is in negotiations with Metamorphis North and other defense contractors to build the next-gen heavy-bomber. The Sky Hydra is capable of suborbital flight, and can easily make a Lunar hop under its own power, though its lack of any kind of FTL drive limits its range to near-Earth space.

In addition to its conventional weapons, which the Sky Hydra crew use to protect the craft during missions, the bomber can unleash devastating bombardments. When fully loaded, the Sky Hydra can unleash up to 16 Airstrikes (see the Command Airstrike feat for details). Each Airstrike requires a full round action to deploy. The Sky Hydra can choose to dwell over a target long enough to unleash

all 16 Airstrikes against a single area, if necessary, a barrage that nothing on Earth can survive- not even Lifechained star-gods.

When fully loaded with Airstrikes, the Sky Hydra has no additional cargo capacity. Each Airstrike weighs in at about 1,000 lbs of ordinance.

Crew: 3
 Passengers: 8
 Cargo Space: 16,000 lbs
 Initiative Penalty: -6
 Maneuver Penalty: -8

Top Speed: 380/38
 Defense: 6
 Hardness: 15
 Hit Points: 80
 Size: Colossal
 Purchase DC: 44
 Restriction: Military (+3)

Weapon	Damage	Crit	Range Increment	ROF	Magazine
Rhino III chain gun	4d6 ballistic	20/x2	800 ft	Full Auto	1,000 round drum
Rhino II GN Stream	6d6 fire	20/x3	1,000 ft	Single Shot	Effectively Unlimited
Rhino I Missile Launcher	4d6 fire/slashing	20/x3	500 ft	Single Shot	12 internal

Sky Hydras are one of the iconic weapons of the 22nd Century, but thanks to their actions during the Abortion War, they have a dark reputation. At several points during the War, they unleashed devastating bombardments on the Enclaves. A Sky Hydra bombing run reduced the Charleston Enclave to rubble in 2073. In 2068, Pensacola was carpet bombed, killing more than 200,000 inhabitants. While the strikes had tactical purpose- usually to kill a high level metahuman or deployment base protected by human shields- the airstrikes invariably resulted in massive civilian loss of life.

Inside the Lifer nation, Sky Hydras have become a metaphor for sudden, undeserved death. Lifer rappers spit rhymes about the Four Horsemen riding their Hydra chariots. Lifer artists paint heavy, terrifying Sky Hydrae looming over innocent children. Lifer mil-fiction and suspense Mesh-dramas use Sky Hydra crews as sociopathic stock villains.

It's this reputation, as much as the worry about aging airframes that has lead the Pentagon to begin searching for a next-gen heavy bomber.

Weapon	Damage	Crit	Range Increment	ROF	Magazine
Sky Hydra "Talon VII"	4d6 ballistic	20/x2	1,000 ft	Full Auto	1,000 round drum
Light Laser Battery	3d8 fire	20/x2	1,000 ft	Full Auto	Effectively Unlimited



F-400 Sky Panther Air Superiority Fighter (PL 7)

The F-400 Sky Panther entered active military service in late 2100, making it one of the newest weapons in the APEX arsenal. The Sky Panther is a sleek, single-man fighter incorporating the revolutionary “Amelia Airhart” piloting AI which acts as a co-pilot and integrated weapons and electronic officer.

Weapon	Damage	Crit	Range Increment	ROF	Magazine
Sky Panther Missile Launcher	4d6 fire/slas- hing	20/x2	800 ft	Single Shot Only	8 internal
Sky Panther "Talon VII"	4d6 ballistic	20/x2	1,000 ft	Full Auto	1,000 round drum
SP-104 Rail Gun	8d8 ballistic	19-20/-x2	1,200 ft	Single Shot	100 round drum
SP-105 Ion Cannon	3d6 electric	20/x2	8,00 ft	Full Auto	Effectively Unlimited

The Sky Panther is a sleek, dart-shaped fighter. Its shape-memory polymer wings change configuration during a flight. The fighter’s wings elongate for higher altitude, lower speed cruises, and shorten for dog-fighting and low-altitude flight. Combined with powerful mac-tik emitters and conventional fusion-powered ram jets, the Sky Panther is capable of amazing agility- they are nearly as flexible and maneuverable as a combat Shell suit!

The Sky Panther’s onboard AI has the following statistics, and acts as a co-pilot. It can even pilot itself if necessary, though the plane is prevented from taking off or arming weapons without outside authorization. The pilot can personalize the AI’s persona with a few minutes of work. Though the Sky Panther’s AI is designed for easy reconfiguration, most pilots simply leave the default settings intact.

Sky Panther AI:
INT 16 (used as key attribute for Pilot checks)
WIS 12
CHA 11

The AI has the following skills:
Pilot +13, Navigate +13, Spot +11

Crew: 1
Passengers: 0
Cargo Space: 150 lbs
Initiative Penalty: -2
Maneuver Penalty: -0
Top Speed: 550/55
Defense: 8
Hardness: 8
Hit Points: 55
Size: Huge
Purchase DC: 45
Restriction: Military (+3)

“Audie Murphy” EX-M IV Light Infantry Power Armor (PL 6)

The Audie Murphy Military Exoskeleton Model IV (or the Murph, as it’s affectionately called) was the US Army’s oldest suit of Powered Armor. The first Murphs were deployed during the early 2020s, quickly developing a reputation as a dependable workhorse on chaotic Middle Eastern and Northern Mexican battlefields.

Nearly a century old, the Murph is still in active service for one simple reason: it works. The Murph might not be as fast or as versatile as later models of power armor, but it can dish out massive amounts of punishment, is easy to maintain and completely intuitive to operate. Despite its age, APEX has no plans to mothball the skinsuit for at least another half century.

Physical Description:

The Audie Murphy is a sleek suit of mass produced, man-sized power armor. The soldier slips into the armored skin suit like she would any other uniform; the black spandex body stocking is impregnated with carbon nanotubes stronger than steel, and reinforced at key points with dense plastic and ceramic armor plating.

Nearly microscopic tubes carry chilled water throughout the skinsuit, keeping the pilot cool and comfortable even in extreme temperatures; these tubes are barely visible underneath the fabric, giving the entire body stocking a rippled texture that resembles striated muscle tissue.

The Murphy's helmet resembles a standard motorcycle helmet, and has a self tinting visor incorporating a basic night vision and Heads Up Display system. The pilot's name and rank insignia are usually painted in matte white paint on the forehead, and again on the armor's chestplate and on the back. The paint is difficult to see with the naked eye, and looks faded and pale, however it glows brightly when viewed through the specially polarized helmet lens, allowing soldiers to easily tell friend from foe.

The standard color scheme for the Murph is flat black, though each theater has its own camo pattern. APEX Murphs are deco-ed with a grey and white snow pattern, a grey, white and black urban pattern, forest green or a desert beige and grey pattern. Murphs assigned to APEX One have the traditional blue and white check pattern on their left shoulder, arm and hand.

The Audie Murphy is a cheap enough suit of armor that all the members of a platoon can have one. While the Murph doesn't increase its wearer's firepower, it makes him as durable as a tank, gives enhanced sensory capabilities and prevents the



soldier from suffering the effects of any chemical or nuclear threats on the battlefield. The US Army doesn't view the ancient, trustworthy Murphy as a weapon, rather it views the power armor as a vital part of the soldier's standard equipment. The Murph's main purpose is to make the battlefield a more comfortable and less dangerous place.

Audie Murphy Skinsuit

Standard PL 5 Design Specs

Size: Small Skin suit worn by a Medium sized pilot

Superstructure: Spidersilk

Armor: Duraplastic

Armor Penalty: -2

Strength Bonus: +0

Speed: Equal to wearer's base speed (usually 30 ft)

Bonus Hit Points: 15

Hardness: 10

Defense Bonus: +1

Reach: 5 ft

Dexterity Penalty: -

Additional Modifiers: Toss Cams (+10 Spot and +1 Initiative when used)

Standard Sensors and Equipment: Integrated Nightvision Goggles (lowlight vision 90 ft) (helmet), M.A.V. Drone (left arm), Toss Cams, Life Support (right arm)

Standard Weapons Loadout: No integrated weapons. Soldier carries a machine gun or rifle of choice worn in a quick draw holster.

Base Purchase DC: 23

Restriction: Licensed (+1)

Suit Variants: Murph variants are too numerous to count. Virtually every faction on the planet- from cops to megacorps to foreign nations- has a good supply of the reliable skinsuits, not to mention the thousands of American hobbyists and military reenactors who have bought one to tinker with.

The Lifer pseudo-nation renamed their black and purple “Murphies” the ROS-01 Randall Terry, for Rescue Oriented Skinsuit and in honor of an early Lifer leader. Other than the name, the two suits are identical.

The Choicer version of the suit is brown and crimson and is commonly referred to as the “Little Athena”. The Little Athena has superior optics. The skin suit has an onboard Blindsight Suite, which gives the pilot Blindsight with a 180 ft radius. This modification increases the Purchase DC to 24.

Cobra II Assault Hardsuit (PL 7)

The Cobra II is a venerable armor design which entered active service in the late 2060s. The hardsuit was designed specifically to meet the needs of APEX’ infamous “Snake Squad”, and as such is one of the best special operations suits on the planet. Strong, agile and durable the Cobra II can climb silently, giving the pilot good tactical choices as how

to accomplish an infiltration. The suit’s invisibility capabilities make it a good candidate for recon and sniper/observer duties, as well as providing an exit strategy for the pilot once the mission is accomplished.

Though the design is more than three decades older, it can go toe-to-toe with the revolutionary Choicer “Black Lion” shell suit. It’s debatable which of the two armors is actually superior for spec ops missions, despite the newer armor’s multi-million dollar price tag, a fact that APEX pilots point out to their Choicer counterparts with glee.

Physical Description: The Cobra II closely follows the proportion of the human body. It has only few decorative touches- the Cobra II is a war-suit and nothing more. The suit’s chest and abdominal armor is composed of small, articulated plates which overlap and provide comprehensive protection without sacrificing mobility.

The pilot’s limbs are protected by a molecularly woven scaled mesh, which allows maximum flexibility. The scale-like pattern is retained, and is actually highlighted by the armor’s default paint scheme- a design element that recalls the original users of the hardsuit. Plastic hard points at the groin and joints provide additional armor.

The Cobra II’s helmet is dominated by a one-way polymer facebowl. Opaque from without, the visor is transparent from within. A smartlight matrix projects situational data on the smooth inner aspect of the helmet. In keeping with Snake Squad tradition, most Cobra II pilots wear a dark green or black cowl over their helmet, for extra psychological effect.

The Cobra II’s main weapon is the scimitar-like combat blade it can extend from the right gauntlet. The monomolecular blade is sharp enough to cut through reactive armor with only minimal force. The pilot is also equipped with a Dragontooth Quill Cannon on the right gauntlet, a quiet, precise weapon ideal for wet-work and urban combat. The frangible quills the weapon fires usually don’t have enough power to rip all the way through their target,

minimizing the risk of civilian casualties, while leaving lethal, difficult to remove shrapnel in the wound track.

Cobra II Assault Hardsuit

Standard PL 7 Design Specs

Size: Large Hardsuit designed for a Medium pilot

Superstructure: Hardcarbon Composite

External Armor: Polychain

Armor Penalty: -4

Strength Bonus: +6

Dexterity Bonus: +2

Speed: +10 ft

Climb: 30 ft climb speed

Bonus Hit Points: 60

Hardness: 10

Defense Bonus: +4

Reach: 10 ft

Additional Modifiers: Retains DEX bonus while Climbing, Immune to Mind Influencing abilities, -4 penalty on CHA based skill checks to influence wearer, Stealth Holo-Field: +40 to Hide checks when immobile, +20 to Hide checks while moving, invisible/50 % concealment. One minute on / two minute cool down.

Feats: Spring Attack

Sensors: Lowlight Vision, Blindsight 180 ft

Combat Bonuses: +1 masterwork bonus with Combat Claws

Standard Sensors and Equipment: Comfort Lining, Life Support, Electro-Responsive Paintjob, Psuedomuscle Endoskeleton (torso), Mag-Lev Skimmers (boots), Crawler Gloves (left hand), Thought Shield (helmet), Integrated Nightvision Goggles, Blindsight Suite, Stealth Holo-field (back and shoulders) Masterwork Monomolecular (x4) Combat Claws (right arm), Dragontooth Quill Cannon (right arm)

Standard Weapons Loadout: Slam (1d8 + STR)

Masterwork Monomolecular (x4) Combat Claws +1 (6d6 +1 + STR slashing)

Dragontooth Quill Cannon (3d6 piercing, 75

ft range increment, crit 20/x2, plus caltrops, 400 round internal)

Base Purchase DC: 41

Restriction Rating: Military (+3)

Suit Variants: The most expensive single component of the Cobra II is its stealth system, so its invisibility capability is often removed. Doing so reduces the suit's base purchase DC to 33, and frees up the Back and Shoulder equipment slots. Variants taking advantage of these extra slots are common.

The King Cobra Heavy Weapons Hardsuit mounts an AA-25 Downpour Chaingun (shoulder) and an AP-121 Liberty Fusion Cannon (back), vastly expanding the suit's firepower. The King Cobra is usually assigned as a special operations squad's heavy gunner, staying in reserve to cover their retreat or assault a hardened position.

A King Cobra HWH has a base purchase DC 34, and a restriction rating of Military (+3).

The King Cobra Upgrade II is a minor variant of the King Cobra design. It replaces the King Cobra's Psuedomuscle Endoskeleton with a Sprinter Endoskeleton. The rationale is that the King Cobra II is not designed for melee combat, so increasing the armor's battlefield mobility is seen as a good trade off. This suit variant has a STR bonus of only +4, but its base land speed is increased to +25 ft, and it grants the pilot the Run feat.

The King Cobra Upgrade II has a base purchase DC 34, and a restriction rating of Military (+3).

USAF-2101 “Nathan Rice” Air Interdiction Shell (PL 7)

The Nathan Rice is named for a former APEX One commander, awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions during the Battle of Boston. It is the centerpiece of APEX’ efforts to modernize its forces in the wake of the Abortion War. The first “Nates” rolled off the production line in the fall of 2099, and entered active service shortly after the new century began. Along with Aegis

mutates and Sky Panther fighters, “Nates” are expensive propaganda pieces- announcing to the world that a new, better APEX is here.

Like its older counterpart, the Choicer-built Atlanta, the Nate is designed for tank-busting. It is durable, heavily armored and frighteningly well armed. APEX pilots have reluctantly accepted the new warbird, though there is a surprisingly large faction of pilots still loyal to their reliable and proven Atlantas. Most pilots, however, have warmed to the

Nate’s superior avionics, smoother ride and better designed AI-interface.

Physical Description: The Nathan Rice is a heavy, ape-like suit of flight capable armor. Its forearms and shoulders are studded with low-profile mini-missile racks. Like the Atlanta, the Nate resembles a humanoid figure in heavy armor, though the Nate lacks the bulbous shoulder joints and feminine breastplate of its counterpart.

The suit’s avionics are integrated into the suit’s spinal armor. Four heavy duty mac-tik emitters rise from the armor’s lumbar armor and upper shoulders. These top emitters protrude nearly two feet above the crown of the Nate’s helmet, giving the armor an instantly recognizable profile. Short maneuvering wings and precision thrusters run the length of the armor, beginning at the lumbar spine region and continuing down the armor’s legs.

Some pilots have started referring to the Nate, with its



distinctive, glowing hover systems and maneuvering fins as “the Stegosaur” and a lot of Nathan Rice air-wings include a cartoon stegosaur (complete with bomber jacket and aviator sunglasses) on their unit patch.

The Nathan Rice has a sleek, featureless helmet which doesn’t open to the outside world. The pilot perceives his environment through a high-resolution camera system at the center of the faceplate, and a multi-optics band running along the armor’s skull.

Like most modern Shells, the Nate includes color-shifting Electroresponsive Paint. Its default color scheme is pristine white with navy blue trim. Suits assigned to duty with APEX One are easily recognizable thanks to the blue and white checkerboard pattern decorating their left shoulder, arm and gauntlet.

USAF-2101 Nathan Rice AIS

Standard PL 7 Design Specs

Size: Huge Shell Suit designed to be worn by a Medium pilot

Superstructure: Sculpted Chitin

External Armor: Steelweave

Armor Penalty: -5

Strength Bonus: +6

Dexterity Bonus: +0

Speed: -10 ft

Flight Capabilities: 150 ft flight speed (perfect maneuverability)

Bonus Hit Points: 120

Hardness: 22

Defense Bonus: +4

Reach: 10 ft

Additional Modifiers: +8 chassis bonus on Defense against guided missiles, +8 equipment bonus on Navigate checks, +4 equipment bonus on Drive and Pilot checks. +2 bonus on Initiative checks, +4 equipment bonus to Spot and Listen checks.

DR 10/- vs ballistic projectiles and +4 REF vs projectile explosives while Point Defense Grid is

active (max 1 minute on period, 2 minute cool down cycle)

Fire Resistance 10. Suit can survive indefinitely in space and withstand the stress of atmospheric reentry.

Sensors: Blindsight 180 ft

Disadvantage/Design Flaw: Complex Launch. Requires 1 hour to pre-flight and fuel the suit, or 30 minutes with a DC 20 Pilot check.

Heavy Combat Class: Armor is bulkier but much more durable than normal.

Standard Sensors and Equipment: Life Support, Comfort Lining, Electro-Responsive Paintjob, Advanced Avionics x5, Flight Mode (back), Expanded Flight Range (back), Point Defense Grid (torso), Hostile Environment Cladding (torso), Spaceskin (torso), Onboard Navigation, IFF Transponder, Blindsight Suite, Electronic Countermeasures (boots), Sensors: Combat Enhancement Load (helmet), Pencilbox Missile Launchers: 12 shot (left and right arms), Pencilbox Missile Launcher: 6 shot (shoulders)

Standard Weapons Loadout: Slam (2d6 + STR)

30x Pencilbox missiles (Variable Loads)

- Standard Combat Loadout:

14x anti-personnel rounds, 10x anti-vehicle rounds, 2x EMP bolus rounds, 3x mercy missile rounds, 1x gluebomb round.

- Anti-Armor Loadout:

15x anti-vehicle rounds, 4x coldburn rounds, 6x firestorm rounds, 5x EMP bolus rounds

- Police/Urban Pacification Loadout:

4x anti-personnel rounds, 2x EMP bolus rounds, 16x mercy missile rounds, 5x gluebomb rounds, 3x optic pulsar rounds.

Suit is usually deployed with a conventional assault rifle or energy weapon. Campanelli MP energy rifles or a light railgun are the most common options.

Base Purchase DC: 42

Restriction: Military (+3)

Suit Variants: Officially, the Nathan Rice is too new a suit of armor to have suit variants, as it is designed precisely for the kind of threats APEX must face today. Unofficially, minor variants are common.

Mechanics can easily swap out the shoulder mounted missile launcher for some other weapon. Some pilots prefer a more versatile suit, which has some on-board energy weapons, not just missile racks. Various railguns, particle beams and heavy lasers are common. If a squadron can get approval, they will often kit out at least one Nate with a G.N. Stream cannibalized from an Atlanta. If pilots complain about anything with the new suit, it's losing the G.N. Stream, which most regard as the world's best anti-armor weapon.

Some squadrons have swapped out the suit's Space Skin enhancement in favor of a strength enhancing Pseudomuscle Exoskeleton. The final price of the suit is virtually identical, and these 'Burly Nates' provide a +9 bonus to the pilot's STR score.

Concerns about radioactive weapons in crowded urban environments have led the US military to reconsider its use of the GN Stream and other high-energy weapons. Though not officially banned weapons, public pressure (much of it blamed, rightly or wrongly on Lifer politicians) has forced the US military to find alternatives to this ultra-lethal weapon. The fact that the Nathan Rice doesn't include a GN Stream is a testament to the weapon's current disfavor. The military expects to completely shelve its post-nuclear arsenal by 2125, a decision that doesn't sit well with many frontline troops.

Android APEX

Apex uses a greater variety of combat drones and AI-controlled military androids than most first world militaries, even their closest allies within the Neo-Witch covenant. With an almost inexhaustible well of funding to draw on, APEX spares no expense when it comes to keeping its people ahead of the technological curve. The following combat androids and drones are in wide use by APEX.

Familiar II UAV (CR 1/2)

Tiny Construct

Init +3 **Senses** Lowlight vision, Darkvision 120 ft

Defense 15, **touch** 15, **flat-footed** 12

HD 1/2 d10 (3 hp)

Immune Poison, radiation, disease, sleep, paralysis, stunning, necromancy effects and mind-influencing effects.

Fort +0, **Ref** +5, **Will** +0

Speed Flight 50 ft (good)

Melee None

Melee Space 1 ft x 1 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +0 **Grp** -12

Atk Options +3 ranged (light laser 1d8 fire, 10 ft range increment)

Abilities STR 1 DEX 16 CON - INT 3 WIS 12
CHA 1

SQ Construct Traits

Feats AWACs operator (B)

Skills Spot +13, Hide +12

Possessions None

Purchase DC: 26

Restriction Rating: Licensed (+1)

The Familiar II Unmanned Ariel Vehicle is a tiny, bird like scout robot, whose onboard AI is based upon avian brain structure. The white and grey plastic robot resembles a tiny, pigeon-like bird, small enough to rest comfortably in a man's palm.

Despite its tiny size, the Familiar II has excellent sensors, and an impressive wireless

broadcast capabilities. It acts as a small, easily concealable AWACs platform for urban warfare squads.

APEX typically assigns each familiar to a specific operator, over the course of their working relationship, the AI develops an emotional bond with its handler. The Familiar II's AI is basic, but is capable of learning, and over time, learns to anticipate its users strategies, and knows how best to watch its owner's back. Familiar II robots have their memory wiped before being transferred to a new owner. Operators often transfer Familiar II UAVs between commands, using the bird-AIs until they are damaged too badly to be repaired.

AWACs Sensors (EX): The Familiar II receives AWACs operator as a racial bonus feat. It provides the benefits of its sensory capabilities to the assigned members of its operator's squad. These same programs give the Familiar II incredible visual acuity.

Familiarity (EX): A Familiar II improves its performance based upon constant feedback from its operator. The Familiar II receives Alertness as a racial bonus feat after operating as a working partner for a specific operator for at least one month.

Light Laser Battery (EX): The Familiar II is equipped with a micro-light laser pistol.

Hammerhead Patrol Android (CR 2)

Medium Construct

Init +3; **Senses** Lowlight Vision, Darkvision 120 ft

Languages English, Spanish and three other languages of choice.

Defense 18, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 16

HP: 2d10 hp (21 hp) ; **DR** 5/-

Immune Poison, radiation, disease, sleep, paralysis, stunning, necromancy effects and mind-influencing effects.

Resist Cold 10, Fire 10

Vulnerable double damage from electricity based attacks or normal on a successful save

Fort +0, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3

Speed 30 ft

Melee Space 5 ft x 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +1

Atk Options + 3 melee slam (1d6+2 bludgeoning) or

+4 ranged (Campanelli plasma rifle, 2d6 fire, 20/x2 crit, 75' range increment, 40 shot internal energy cell)

Abilities STR 14 DEX 16 CON - INT 10 WIS 16
CHA 8

SQ Construct Traits

Feats Personal Firearms Proficiency, Burst Fire, Alertness

Skills Craft (visual arts) +2, Listen +12, Search +10, Spot +16

Possessions Tactical body armor, Campanelli MP Plasma Rifle, 3x tear gas grenades, 2 dozen zipline handcuffs

Purchase DC: 36 **Restriction:** Military (+3)

The Hammerhead Patrol Android is designed to supplement a flesh and blood police force, designed for urban combat patrols, sniper spotting duties as well as performing general 'beat cop' duties. The androids are a common sight in most cities, walking a foot patrol and protecting the public, guiding traffic and manning security checkpoints under the supervision of human officers.

The Hammerhead is a mostly humanoid robot, with a smooth carapace, usually painted dull grey, white or blue. They are usually designed for high visibility, not concealment, though Hammerheads deployed with APEX units are often equipped with electro-responsive paintjobs which give them phenomenal urban camouflage capabilities. Instead of a conventional skull, it's head is a thick, heavy disk, studded with dozens of cameras, which give the robot a clear field of vision 360 degrees around its body. The android's disk-shaped skull mounts an assortment of cameras, electronic warfare devices and communications systems.



A Hammerhead android is assigned to every APEX squad, acting as a scout and sensor operator. The androids have a good enough urban-combat AI they can provide fire support for the unit if necessary, though that is not their primary purpose. Hammerheads record every aspect of APEX missions, so a squad can dissect what went right (and wrong) during after-action debriefs, and providing a legal record of events to help ensure convictions if a mission goes to court.

Hammerheads are non-sentient, but can interact with humans on a basic, professional level. They are rarely given names by squadmates. Instead, the androids are identified by a number stenciled on the chest and the back of their head, as well as by their hull color.

Combat Programming (EX): A Hammerhead android is programmed with high-end tactical AI, which gives the construct access to several useful military skills and feats. The android's programming makes good use of it's onboard sensors,

turning the Hammerhead into a decent scout and spotter.

An 'artist-AI' subroutine helps the normally unimaginative androids produce compelling footage in their role as combat recorders. Hammerhead footage makes its way into APEX approved reality shows and military documentaries, helping to keep APEX in the public eye.

Omnivision (EX): A Hammerhead's sensor dome means the android cannot be flanked. Its 360 degree field of vision allows the android to respond to an attack from rear or the flanks as easily as it does to a frontal assault.

Integrated Electronics (EX): A Hammerhead maintains a constant encrypted Mesh link with its command headquarters, and includes integrated cell phone and walkie-talkie systems, to allow it to communicate with squad mates. The androids secondary systems include full recording capability.

In most cases, every thing the android sees is automatically recorded in a high-def digital format, and backed up to a central processor every few minutes. Hammerhead recordings are allowed as evidence in all US courts.

Authorized remote operators on the APEX Watchfloor can access video feeds from specific Hammerheads, and can even take direct command of the android if necessary, by temporarily shutting down its onboard AI.

Electro-vulnerability (EX): Hammerheads are mass production androids, designed by the lowest possible bidder. Their electronics are poorly shielded. Hammerheads suffer double damage from electricity based attacks, or normal damage on a successful save.

Longspear Artillery Droid (CR 5)

Medium Construct

Init +3; **Senses** Lowlight Vision, Darkvision 60 ft
Languages Understands English, Spanish and one other language of choice

Defense 16, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 13

hp 5d10+10 (37 hp); **DR** 5/-

Immune Poison, radiation, disease, sleep, paralysis, stunning, necromancy effects and mind-influencing effects.

Resist Cold 10, Fire 10

Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

Speed 70 ft

Melee +3 slam (1d4 bludgeoning)

Melee Space 5 ft x 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +3

Atk Options +6 ranged (particle beam, 100 ft range increment, 4d6 fire, crit 20/x3)

+6 ranged (light rail gun, 100 ft range increment, 6d6 ballistic, crit 19-20/x2)

Special Actions: Barrage (500 ft range, 10d10 fire/slashing, 10 ft radius, REF DC 15 half)

Abilities STR 10 DEX 16 CON - INT 1 WIS 14
CHA 1

SQ Construct Traits

Feats Point Blank Shot, Dead Aim, Far Shot

Skills Spot +12

Possessions None

Purchase DC: 38 **Restriction:** Military (+3)

The Longspear is a non-humanoid combat drone designed to provide close-in fire support to deployed units. The Longspear has an almost comical appearance- it resembles a large, mechanical ostrich whose body is studded with an array of energy weapons and light-rail guns. Its hull is sleek and heavily armored, and is usually painted in a grey and white urban camo pattern.

The Longspear's birdlike skull conceals impressive optics, and its long, reverse articulated legs give it amazing agility. The droid can easily lope along at 60 mph, and are often deployed as self-guided convoy escorts. When firing, the Longspear crouches flat for stability, and deploys support 'talons' if standing on loose earth, sand or mud.

Gunner Programming (EX): A

Longspear's targeting systems provide the droid with Dead Aim, Far Shot and Point Blank Shot as bonus feats. It's above average optics give the droid a high Spot check.

Barrage (EX): As a full round action, the Long Spear can unleash a barrage from every barrel simultaneously. The Barrage has a maximum range of 500 ft, and is an area effect attack, which damages all creatures within a 10 ft radius. The Long Spear must succeed at a DC 10 Ranged attack to hit the target square.

A Barrage inflicts 10d10 points of damage to all creatures and objects in the blast radius. Half the damage is slashing, half is fire. Targeted creatures can attempt a DC 15 REF save for half damage.



Chapter Four: APEX Advanced Classes

“The eruption of conflict instantly reduces the headache and trivia of daily life. The communal march against an enemy generates a warm, unfamiliar bond with our neighbors, our community, our nation, wiping out unsettling undercurrents of alienation and dislocation..... War makes the world understandable, a black and white tableau of them and us. It suspends thought, especially self-critical thought. All bow before the supreme effort. We are one.

Most of us willingly accept war as long as we can fold it into a belief system that paints the ensuing suffering as necessary for a higher good, for human beings seek not only happiness but also meaning. And tragically war is sometimes the most powerful way in human society to achieve meaning.”

-Christopher Hedges, War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning

Warfare Experts: Soldiers, Helix Warriors, Field Officers, Combat Types and Others

APEX is probably the best trained military on the planet. They have a clear chain of command and excellent, unbreakable supply lines, and lots of money to spend on enhancing their troops. APEX spends around twice as much per soldier in terms of training and physical enhancement as the Choicer government does.

As such, the majority of frontline APEX troops are multiclass Helix Warrior/Combat Types. Relatively few APEX troops select the Soldier advanced class, most choosing slightly less versatile, more powerful enhancement programs. Most APEX Soldiers multiclass into the Field Officer advanced class, and many later choose the Tactical Commander prestige class, if they can make the cut. These elite troops choose the old, traditional path of the Soldier so they aren’t forced to rely on ultra-tech or genetic enhancement, technologies which can be subverted.

APEX fields relatively few Frontliners (Psi-Watch campaign setting, 2008) and even fewer S.L.A.M. Soldiers (D7ACU series, Skortched Urf Studios, 2009). Both technologies are badly outdated, last-gen stuff, looked down on by APEX troops as typical jury-rigged Lifer 'shit-tech'. APEX prefers more advanced, precise and 'sexy' methods of dealing death.

Incinerators, Nano-Sculptors (Psi-Watch campaign setting), Gravity Slingers, Lightweavers (D7ACU) and other 'energy beings' form the nucleus of most APEX combat cells. These powerful metahumans are living weapons, able to deliver concentrated force more precisely than any man-made weapon. Only a handful of 'energy beings' reach the capstone level in their chosen advanced class. Most intentionally limit their evolution, fearful not only of civilian casualties in crowded urban environments, but also of the creeping dehumanization that wielding such world-shaking power brings. Gravity Grave's self imposed exile from Earthspace is a cautionary tale to most young APEX post-humans- these supersoldiers want to remain psychologically human, no matter how much their bodies may change.

Political Animals: Charismatic Heroes, Personalities, Negotiators, Diplomats, Advocates and Corporate Raiders (*Corporate Insiders, LPJ Designs, 2006*)

Many politicians began their career in APEX or another military branch, gaining leadership training and credibility through honorable service. Washington is crowded with career politicians, and maneuvering for resources, prestige, promotion and assignments is part and parcel of any military officer's career. American political leadership is more secular than Choicer or Lifer politics- the masses are swayed by patriotism, nationalism and questions of economic and military strength.

Playmaker generals and Scions of the Pilgrim control hidden avenues of power, but high level, respected Advocates, Diplomats and others can match them strength for strength in the political

arena... if they're clever and use the media to their advantage. Corporate Raiders manage APEX financial portfolios, investigate white collar crime for the government, and manipulate the wealth of nations to their advantage. Those working for the megacorps have even greater wealth, even greater discretion.

Any of the military and political feats described in the Psi-Watch campaign option are good feat choices for 22nd century politicians. Likewise, many of the Intermediary Classes, described in the self-titled 2005 LPJ Designs product (as well as Intermediary Classes described in Choice and Blood and Adrenaline Surge) are interesting variant starting builds for social-oriented heroes. Bloggers, Freelance Cameramen, Sidewalk Consolers, Traders, the Idle Rich and Porn Starlets aren't alien to the Otherverse, and can make an interesting centerpiece to a low level political adventure.

Police and Detectives: Investigators, Field Scientists, Tracers, Bounty Hounds, (*Urban Operatives, LPJ Designs, 2007*), and others

One of APEX' primary missions is the apprehension of meta-human criminals, at home and abroad. Various APEX squads track fugitives, follow the back trail of known criminals, and gather intelligence on known and unknown Lifer threats. APEX works closely with the FBI and local NESTs, and often draws expertise from these more experienced entities.

Multiclassing into one of the investigatory or police classes described above is fairly common. Many senior troops want to be able to investigate a crime scene or profile an adversary, but few APEX troops want to sacrifice their combat readiness with the kind of in-depth training a full career as a detective entails. APEX detailers encourage dabbling in police work, but only on a short-term, piece meal basis. An APEX soldier might be detailed for a short-term joint operation with the FBI, or for specialized training at Quantico, but in the end, must always return to their parent unit.

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Mid and high-level detectives are much more common in local and federal police forces. Since APEX often recruits directly from the FBI, NEST and INS, its certainly possible for an APEX combat type to also be a veteran detective. However, if an APEX member has a well honed investigatory talent, she probably acquired it before enlisting.

While most police agencies consider APEX detectives second rate, at best, the the American intelligence is among the best, and most secure in the world. Intelligence operatives often multiclass between Smart and Charismatic hero levels, Infiltrators, Investigators, and others. Most agents select a specialty- human intelligence, burglary, surveillance, blackmail, sexual manipulation- early in their career and design a unique multiclassing path towards that goal. Many of America's best agents begin as Intelligence or Charisma-keyed Powered Heroes, described in the Otherverso America campaign setting.

Finally, non-governmental entities also field their own detectives and investigators. The Lestada Group employs some of the most reputable arson and accident investigators in North America. Other companies employ private investigators, hackers and experts to perform internal security audits, run background checks and gather necessary mission data for themselves or their corporate allies.

Variant Rule: The FNG

“Fuckin’ new guy” - the new member of a combat team, the replacement for a trusted, heroic former member lost to either combat or the whims of a military detailer. The squad’s rookie is the FNG until he or she proves they can cut it, that they’re as good as the member they’re replacing.

New characters replacing fallen PCs, new NPCs assigned to the squad, replacement characters, any of them can be the FNG. FNGs get all the worst assignments in the squad, and aren’t considered competent enough to act on their own without ‘adult supervision’ from a senior squad member.

If you use the FNG variant rule, any incoming squad member is mistrusted and disrespected by the senior members of a unit.

Playing the FNG means that your character suffers a -2 circumstance penalty on CHA-based skill checks made against the senior members of the squad. However, the FNG is driven to prove themselves to the unit which gives them an edge. Anytime the FNG spends an action point, he or she can attempt a DC 15 Charisma check. If successful, the FNG retains the action point for future use. Once a character relaxes into the squad enough to stop being the FNG they lose some of their edge and begin using action points, and making CHA checks normally.

There’s no set criteria how long somebody is the FNG... that status usually lasts until a new FNG is assigned to the unit. Usually the last duty of the ‘old FNG’ as they transition into a full member of the unit is training / harassing the incoming FNG.



The Combat Sniper Prestige Class (5 level)

Combat Snipers are deployed alongside front-line units, tasked with killing enemies at incredible range and with complete surprise. Highly intelligent and excellently trained, Combat Snipers are trained to operate both solo and as part of a unit. In addition to long-distance warfare, they cover the movements of their comrades, act as spotters for their unit and perform counter-sniper duty.

Snipers assigned to APEX squads are usually issued a specific light rail gun, heavy laser weapon or particle beam. These masterwork weapons have exponentially greater range and penetration power than even the best 21st century sniper rifle.

Combat Snipers are usually former Gun-slingers and Soldiers, though many Combat Types eventually find their way into this class, especially if they prefer to use hard-tech long ranged weapons in

favor of their natural energy projection abilities.

Once a character makes the choice to enter a prestige class, they must progress through all five levels of the class before multi-classing again.

Requirements:

To qualify to become a Combat Sniper, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +8

Skills: Spot 6 ranks, Knowledge: tactics 6 ranks, Knowledge: physical sciences 2 ranks, Treat Injury 2 ranks, Climb 2 ranks, Hide 4 ranks

Feats: Dead Aim, Far Shot, Precise Shot

Special: The Combat Sniper must be an active duty member of a military or paramilitary organization, especially a large, well-trained tactical army such as APEX, the Choicer pseudonation, a police SWAT team, or a mega-corp security force.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Combat Sniper prestige class.

Hit Die

The Combat Sniper gains d8 hit points per level.

The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Combat Snipers are elite military athletes, who train constantly. They lack the raw size of other soldiers, with their training focusing on fine muscular control, breathing exercises and the ability to remain motionless for hours if necessary.

Action Points

The Combat Sniper gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half of her character level, rounded down every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Combat Sniper's class skills are as follows.

Balance (DEX), Climb (STR), Concentration (CON), Craft (mechanical) (INT), Disguise (CHA), Hide (DEX), Jump (STR), Knowledge (physical sciences, streetwise, tactics, technology) (INT), Move Silently (DEX), Profession (Soldier) (WIS), Read/Write Language, Speak Language, Spot (WIS), Survival (WIS)

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + INT modifier

Weapon Focus (EX): A first level Combat Sniper gains the Weapon Focus feat. The Combat Sniper must select a specific sniper rifle, such as the HK-PSGI or the MN-602AP "Werewolf".

The Combat Sniper receives a +1 bonus on attack rolls with her chosen gun.

Dialed Range (EX): Before an encounter, a first level Combat Sniper can dial in her chosen rifle's scope to make it more accurate when shooting towards a known distance. Doing so requires a DC 12 Knowledge: tactics check, which requires at least one minute.

When dialing in range, the Combat Sniper selects a distance, up to the rifle's maximum range, such as choosing a shot 80 feet away, 65 feet away or 5,000 ft away. When firing at a target within 20 ft of the chosen distance, the Combat Sniper receives a +2 competence bonus on ranged attack and damage rolls. However, sniping at other targets is more difficult, which imposes a -1 penalty on attack and damage rolls with the rifle.

Shooting Rest (EX): A second level Combat Sniper can remain on target for days, nearly motionless. While maintaining a combat vigil, the Combat Sniper is considered to be undergoing complete bedrest, which means she recovers HP at the maximum rate, and can even restore spells or psionic abilities while waiting for her kill-shot.

Augmented Critical (EX): Thanks to her familiarity with her chosen firearm, a 3rd level Combat Sniper increases the critical threat range of the rifle she selected as her Weapon Focus by one. Critical hits with this weapon have their critical multiplier increased by one (from 2x to 3x, 3x to 4x, and so on.)

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	FORT Save	REF Save	WILL Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+1	+1	+2	+1	Dialed Range, Weapon Focus	+1	+0
2nd	+2	+2	+3	+2	Shooting Rest	+1	+0
3rd	+3	+2	+3	+2	Augmented Critical	+2	+1
4th	+4	+2	+4	+2	Paralyzing Shot	+2	+1
5th	+5	+3	+4	+3	Kill-Shot	+3	+1

Action Enhancement 1: The Combat Sniper may spend an action point to automatically confirm any critical hit with her chosen rifle. .

Action Enhancement 2: The Combat Sniper may spend an action point to automatically inflict $\frac{3}{4}$ of her chosen sniper rifle's maximum damage on a critical hit.

Paralyzing Shot (EX): By exploiting her knowledge of humanoid anatomy, the Combat Sniper can inflict devastating wounds that shut down the voluntary nervous system, preventing a dying muscular twitch from resulting in random gunfire or other disasters.

Anytime the Combat Sniper's ranged attack roll beats the target's Defense score by 5 or more points, the target is *paralyzed* for 1 round, in addition to the normal effects of the gunshot wound.

Kill-Shot (EX): The Combat Sniper can kill even the most heavily armored post-human target with a single, extremely well placed gunshot. Once per day, a Combat Sniper may, as a full round action, attempt a kill-shot against a specific animal humanoid, monstrous humanoid, giant or draconic target, whose Challenge Rating can be no greater than the Combat Sniper's total character level +2.

To fire a kill-shot, the Combat Sniper must be using her chosen sniper rifle, and must be firing at her Dialed Range. By expending an action point, the Combat Sniper makes a kill shot against the target. Even without the need for a ranged attack roll, the target dies instantly. The only defense against a high-level sniper's kill shot is total cover, or somehow interrupting the sniper before she fires.

The Combat Teleporter Advanced Class

"Nothing in the universe can travel at the speed of light, they say, forgetful of the shadow's speed."

-Howard Nemerov

August 20, 2107.

*Blackhills, South Dakota.
0301.*

Three AM.

When the human circadian rhythm was at its lowest ebb, a pattern of humanity older than human sentience, a biological imperative that even genetically engineered super-soldiers might deny, but can never truly ignore. The assault began without a sound, and three post-humans died too silently for anything but the night bugs to notice, within the first fifty seconds. The crickets and cockroaches fell silent, and only in retrospect did the big-sky night of less than a minute ago seem noisy.

As they practiced, the seventh woman to call herself Sway breached the gate house. She appeared out of no where, in a storm of white and yellow fire the color of curdled milk, appearing out of a wormhole opened by sheer willpower at a fast, hard run. The gatehouse roof was old, rusty tin, but her racing footsteps made no sound. At the edge of the small roof, she leapt out into space, her hands catching the lid of the ancient roof. She swung easily into the gate house, and her target had just enough time to give a yelp of surprise. Than the gunmetal grey cyborg was dead, silent gravitic force bursting out of Sway's own cybered-up fingertips and shredding the terrorist 'borg's steel and violet skull. The sound of the dying 'borg collapsing against the guardhouse's folding card table and over-turning the archaic laptop, covered in neo-Nazi stickers and white power nano-foils was an explosion by comparison.

170 *The mission-mind grafted to her frontal lobe told Sway that the rest of her squad were at their objectives, in place without a single friendly causality. She thought hard into her communicator, ordering the second phase of the assault to begin and confirming she was good to go for another jaunt. She unhooked one of the grenades clipped to her web belt, and knelt beside the purple and grey cyborg's carcass. Working with practiced familiarity, she booby trapped the body, sliding the armed grenade under the dead 'borg's abdominal plating.*

The whole procedure took her two seconds, maybe three, and by the time she was done, the warm milk-and-honey light of her teleport wormhole was flaring at her back, and she knew without needing to look that the distant end of the wormhole would be open inside the Order's shell suit armory. Without turning, she let herself fall backward through the portal, and it winked shut behind her, leaving the silent gate house to darkness.

A second later, the crickets resumed their song.

Combat Teleporters are highly trained military psions, who have mastered the use of teleportation as an ultra lethal combat tactic. While other teleporters focus on transporting troops and material across planetary distances, Combat Teleporters focus on much shorter range, lower mass 'jaunts'.

They focus on the three foot jaunt necessary to leap behind an unsuspecting stash-house guard, and slit his throat. They focus on hurling 226 lbs of Lifer infantry in full field gear just thirty feet straight up so that gravity finishes the job for them. They focus on teleporting all 7.2 ounces of a Marine K-Bar combat knife directly into the center of a Choicer Atlanta's onboard fusion reactor and then teleporting clear of the ensuing detonation only a pico-second before the blast wave would incinerate them.

Profile of a Combat Teleporter

Combat Teleporters are infiltrators without equal, who use their physics-warping, spatial manipulation gifts and black ops dirty tricks to take down threats that conventional soldiers would be useless against. Combat Teleporters are often deployed alone, using their Wormhole talent to suddenly appear deep behind enemy lines. Very few defenses can keep out a Combat Teleporter assassin, as hundreds of Lifer war-criminals and primary targets have found out all too late.

Good, trustworthy human intelligence is the Combat Teleporter's best weapon. It doesn't matter if the target is protected beneath a Mac-Tik force dome strong enough to stop a tac-nuke, or if she's hiding out in a fortified Enclave, if the target's location is known, a Combat Teleporter can get to them. Conversely, when dealing with enemy militaries with Combat Teleporter troops, anonymity and misdirection may be the only things that keep your command staff alive and your supply caches intact when facing a determined Combat Teleporter saboteur.

Strong and Fast heroes, especially those with a few levels of Soldier or Martial Artist make excellent Combat Teleporters. Patriot Courier mutants often select this advanced class, as it builds on the Wormhole feat which the mutants receive as a racial ability.

The Combat Teleporter in the Campaign

APEX trains their elite Combat Teleporter super-assassins in near-total secrecy, though the military allows Mil-Media to speculate about the legendarily intense training protocols in action films and Mesh series. APEX wants the world to know about and respect the ever-present threat of their teleporting assassins, without a true idea of how to counter them. Many Combat Types have multi-million bounties on their heads, a legacy of their War-era missions against the Lifer high command.



Covenant teleporters are usually fully human, who've never undergone the grueling APEX training that makes 'true' Combat Teleporters. Covenant Combat Teleporters are rushed through a jury-rigged training program, based on incomplete intel and best-guesses about the actual APEX program. They may lack the polish, confidence and reputation of their APEX counterparts, but none of the lethality.

The Lifer pseudonation lacks the resources to field Combat Teleporters of their own. Any Combat Teleporter serving with the Lifer nation is probably a defector or merc, who received training elsewhere.

Requirements:

To qualify to become a Combat Teleporter, a charac-

The vast majority of all Combat Teleporters are specially trained Patriot Couriers, especially those who demonstrate a killer instinct and knack for rapid, successive teleports during their early childhood. Wash-outs from the "Long Jump" program, especially those lacking the team-bonding and empathy the US Military seeks in its Courier servants are often placed into Combat Teleporter pre-training.

A handful of psionic humans become Combat Teleporters, but those do face an uphill climb for rare slots in the Combat Teleport training program. The Covenant denies their existence but maintains a small squad of Combat Teleporter assassins detailed to permanent duty with Choice Squad Four and Choice Talon Six.

ter must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Skills: Knowledge: physical sciences 2 ranks, tactics 4 ranks, Move Silently 4 ranks, Tumble 4 ranks

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Stealthy

Psionic Feats: Wormhole

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Combat Teleporter advanced class.

Hit Die

The Combat Teleporter gains d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies. Combat Teleporters are healthy as a result of hard, military training. They realize their bodies are living weapons and take appropriate care of them.

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	FORT Save	REF Save	WILL Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Incomplete Wormhole, Slipjaunt	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Bonus Feat	+2	+0
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Disorienting Jaunt 1x/day	+2	+0
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Evasive Jaunt, Bonus Feat	+3	+0
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Jaunt Lock, Disorienting Jaunt 2x/day	+4	+1
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	Bonus Feat	+4	+1
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	Phase Strike	+5	+1
8th	+6	+2	+6	+2	Disorienting Jaunt 3x/day	+6	+1
9th	+6	+3	+6	+3	Tactical Blink	+6	+2
10th	+7	+3	+7	+3	Spacebreaker	+7	+2

Action Points

The Combat Teleporter gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half of his character level, rounded down every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Combat Teleporter’s class skills are as follows.

Demolitions (INT), Disable Device (INT), Hide (DEX), Intimidate (CHA), Knowledge (physical sciences, tactics, streetwise) (INT), Listen (WIS), Move Silently (DEX), Profession (any military) (WIS), Read/Write Language, Speak Language, Spot (WIS), Tumble (DEX)

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + INT Modifier

Bonus Feats: At 2nd, 4th and 6th level, the Combat Teleporter receives a bonus feat, which must be drawn from the following list. Bold feats are presented in the Psi-Watch campaign setting.

Acrobatic, Action Bank, Athletic, Audacity, Breach Expert, Combat Cover, Combat Cover (Improved), Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, **Combat Precog**, Crosstrained, Decisive-

ness, Decorated Veteran, Defensive Martial Arts, Elite Clearance, Heroic Surge, Improved Initiative, **Instinctive Defense**, Mobility, Personal Firearms Proficiency, **Psionic Jinx**, **Psi-Thief**, Quick Draw, SERE Training, **Teleport Trade**

Incomplete Wormhole (SU): A first level Combat Teleporter receives the Incomplete Wormhole Psionic feat. If the Combat Teleporter already has this feat, he inflicts an additional +2d6 points of damage when activating the feat.

Incomplete Wormhole (Psionic)

By opening microscopic wormholes within a target’s body, you rip away blood, bone and tissue, shredding a foe from within and spreading his remains across a thousand mile radius.

Prerequisite: Wormhole

Benefit: A number of times a day equal to one plus your INT modifier (minimum twice daily), you can create a series of random, dangerously incomplete wormholes within an enemy’s body. Your target must be within 60 ft of you, and you must be able to clearly see your target. As a standard action, you psychoportively disperse minuscule portions of the subject,

dealing 5d6 points of damage. A victim may attempt a *FORT* save ($DC\ 10 + \text{your levels in psionic classes} + \text{your INT modifier}$) for half damage.

Action Enhancement: You may also choose to spend an action point or points to increase this deadly power's lethality: for each action point you spend, this ability inflicts an additional +1d6 points of damage, with no maximum damage ceiling.

Slipjaunt (SU): When a Combat Teleporter moves, he instinctively warps physical space around him, 'jaunting' a few fractions of an inch for every few inches covered through conventional muscular power. Seeing the Combat Teleporter move is jarring, like watching a movie missing a few frames.

Each round, the Combat Teleporter can take an additional five foot step. He can choose to either use this ability to make a single '10 ft' step or make 2 five foot steps at various points on his turn.

The Combat Teleporter can also choose to grant any visible ally within 30 ft the ability to make an additional 5 ft step. The Combat Teleporter can make this choice at any time, even on another creature's turn. Doing so is an immediate reaction. However, if the Combat Teleporter uses the ability in this way, his Slipjaunt class feature is exhausted until the end of the current encounter.

Disorienting Jaunt (SU): Once per day, a 3rd level Combat Teleporter may activate this ability, which creates a field of discordant, unstable wormholes in his immediate vicinity. For a number of rounds equal to the Combat Teleporter's class level, any Large or smaller opponent who misses the Combat Teleporter with a melee attack is teleported to the nearest open square 15 ft away from the Combat Teleporter in a randomly determined direction. If the Combat Teleporter is clever, he'll try to activate this ability on hazardous terrain- nothing warms a Combat Teleporter's heart like seeing an enemy randomly dumped off the side of a 300 ft precipice, or into the path of an incoming mag-lev.

The sudden, unexpected teleportation renders the opponent *shaken* for 1 round, unless the adversary succeeds at a DC 12 WILL Save.

Starting at 5th level, the Combat Teleporter can use this ability twice per day. He can use this ability three times per day, starting at 8th level.

Evasive Jaunt (SU): If a Combat Teleporter of 4th level or higher is exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a REF saving throw for half damage, the Infiltrator suffers no damage if he or she makes a successful saving throw and only half damage on a failed save. Evasive Jaunt can only be used when wearing light armor or no armor.

For a Combat Teleporter who does not have evasion (see the Fast hero class description), Evasive Jaunt counts as evasion (and Improved Evasion) for the purpose of meeting the prerequisites on the Fast hero's defensive talent tree.

On any successful REF Save, the Combat Teleporter may also choose to instantly teleport up to 10 ft in any direction. This ability does not count towards the Combat Teleporter's regular movement allowance for the round. The Combat Teleporter can only teleport himself and up to 50 lbs of gear when teleporting in this manner.

Jaunt Lock (SU): A Combat Teleporter can push his body to the limits, and follow his prey through one of his random wormholes. Whenever a 5th level Combat Teleporter uses his Disorienting Jump class ability, he may choose where his opponent appears.

If the Combat Teleporter wishes, he may also teleport with his opponent to his new position, appearing in an adjacent open square. When moving in this manner, the distance traveled does not count against the Combat Teleporter's normal movement allowance. As with Evasive Jaunt, the Combat Teleporter can only use this ability when unarmored or lightly armored, and may only carry himself, his opponent and up to 50 additional lbs of mass when jaunting.

Phase Strike (SU): By teleporting a hand weapon with lethally precise timing, the Combat Teleporter can slice an enemy to ribbons without leaving a scratch on his armor. To activate this ability, a 7th level Combat Teleporter spends an action point, and the effects of this enhancement last until the end of the current encounter.

174 While using this ability, the Combat Teleporter treats all melee weapon attacks as *incorporeal touch attack*, which ignores the target's natural armor bonus and equipment bonuses to Defense. The Combat Teleporter may ignore a number of points of Hardness or Damage resistance equal to his INT modifier when this ability is active.

Tactical Blink (SU): At 9th level, the Combat Teleporter becomes fast enough to jaunt between bullets, and can move faster than the human mind can comprehend. Each round, as a free action, the Combat Teleporter can choose to teleport up to 20 ft in any direction, including vertically. Moving in this way does not count towards the Combat Teleporter's total movement allotment.

The Combat Teleporter must be unarmored or lightly armored to use this ability. He can only carry himself and up to 50 lbs of additional gear when using this ability.

Action Enhancement: By spending an action point, the Combat Teleporter receives a +4 deflection bonus to Defense any round he moves using Tactical Blink. This enhancement lasts until the end of the encounter, or until the Combat Teleporter chooses not to Tactically Blink in a round.

Spacebreaker (SU): A 10th level Combat Teleporter is one of the deadliest close range combatants on the planet. They have mastered their teleportational gifts to the point they may create an Incomplete Wormhole as often as once per round, as a standard action.

Each time the Combat Teleporter creates an incomplete wormhole, he also creates snags in the local space/time curvature, which he has learned to

exploit. Every Incomplete Wormhole the Combat Teleporter creates imposes a -1 luck penalty on attack rolls, skill checks and saving throws upon all creatures within 60 ft of the Incomplete Wormhole.

This penalty remains in effect for 1d4 rounds, and is cumulative with itself if the Combat Teleporter opens several wormholes in a short period (maximum -5 penalty). The Combat Teleporter is not subject to this penalty, but all creatures within the area of effect, including his allies, are.

Counter Measures: Killing Teleporters

APEX trained Combat Teleporters are some of the most feared special operations troops on the planet, but once a weapon system hits the battlefield, no matter how good it is, the enemy begins thinking up countermeasures and work-arounds.

Most teleportation systems can't function within highly charged environment. Mechanical teleporters, a Patriot Courier mutates' natural psionic talents, even the crude tele-tech of a S.L.A.M. Solider all fail in the presence of mega-energy electronics. The electrical discharges of electric substations, skyscraper fusion reactors and other massive power sources prevent teleportation into or out of a radius of about 500 ft around the generator. Combat Teleporters cannot access any Supernatural class abilities within this radius, and as such, most government maintain high security safe rooms near a basement reactor, in hopes that if all else fails, at least the Combat Teleporter will be forced to infiltrate conventionally.

Sparker Pylon: Sparker Pylons are simple iron spears equipped with electrical discharge circuitry, solar cells and back up power taps. The pylon's only purpose is to generate an electrical surge every few seconds which prevents teleportation (both technological and organic) from functioning.

No teleporters will function within 500 ft of a Sparker pylon. The pylon has a solar cell allowing for unlimited daylight usage, and can run indefinitely

on house current. The Pylon's internal storage cells hold enough power for 1d4+1 hours of use, and the Pylon can function for 4-6 hours when drawing on a standard automobile battery.

A Sparker Pylon is a relatively simple device to manufacture; a homemade sparker can be jury-rigged with a DC 25 Craft: electronic check, and at least 2 hours of work.



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The Juggernaut Brute Advanced Class

"Oh, it is fabulous to have the strength of a giant / But it is tyrannous to use it like a giant."

-William Shakespeare, Measure for Measure

*January 8, 2107.
Pensacola, FL.
The DMZ.*

The RPG slammed into his bio-mechanical guts, shredding overlapping layers of reactive armor, burning away his pseudo-muscle under-skin. The surprisingly delicate organ-analogues

within his abdomen ruptured and went into emergency triage mode. His cybernetic body tried to save what it could, crash-dumped the rest and shut down all non-vital systems. In less than half a second, his strength enhancement crashed, his integral weapons were offline and his network connection disintegrated.

And then a second RPG hit him in the lumbar spine and things got worse.

Battle Cry fell to his knees on the blazing Pensacola sidewalk, firefighting foam mixed with hydraulic fluid and nutrient gel pouring garishly from his wounds. System-shutdown

176 warnings were blaring silently in his forebrain, but the only thing he could actually hear with external senses was the high harmonic whine of post-explosion deafness. Not really sure what had happened, the hulking APEX cyborg blinked twice, fascinated as he watched a piece of his cranial armor (a piece he was pretty sure used to be part of his left cheek) fall to the cement and shatter.

He almost reached out to pick up the piece and see if he could fit in place, but he stopped himself. Confused, concussed from the massive force of the explosion, the big cyborg tried to figure out how it had got to this point, even as his last remaining systems were screaming their strident repair demands.

I was.... What was I doing? (Hydraulic sump 16-22 offline)

On duty. (Left patella actuator 60% fail rate)

Clinic defense duty. (Radiation leaks detected in sectors 6,7,12 and 15)

Escorting an abortion doc to-
Ah, shit.

As the gun smoke swirled around him, Battle Cry finally solved the equation. Kill the full conversion bodyguard first, and then kak the doctor. He shouted something he hoped sounded like his charge's name, even as he was trying to rebuild his comms array and call in back up.

Battle Cry tried to push himself up, felt his left leg give out, and fell again. Frantic, refusing to fail, refusing to let his charge die (and refusing to believe the red-handed woman was dead already), he pushed himself up, using an aluminum stop sign camera post for leverage. He felt the soft metal crumple under his weight, but it got him up.

Battle Cry looked around frantically, trying to see through the cloying black smoke, and realized he was still burning. He ignored it, the same way he ignored the error messages he was getting from his fire-control systems. He

shouted the doctor's name again into the smoke, and thought he heard something from the northwest, something that sounded like automatic weapons fire. Maybe.

Not knowing what else to do, the wounded cyborg limped forward, towards the sounds of sporadic gunfire. Wounded or not, he damn sure wasn't going to fail.

Juggernaut Brutes are a relatively new addition to APEX, a cybernetic weapon of last resort that the command echelon hopes will never have to be deployed. One of the many new weapons systems unveiled during the military's 2100 "New Century Initiative" the technology behind the Juggernaut Brute is far older. The first research into the creation of the USA's Juggernaut Brutes began nearly 40 years before.... on the dissection table.

The Abortion War began when Life Tank, the first and most fearsome Lifer Closer went on his rampage through South Dakota. The cyborg effortlessly slaughtered 26 women at the Unbowed Woman Health Center, and murdered nearly a half dozen highly experienced Choicer combat volunteers sent to stop his assault almost as easily. Life Tank died in the attempt, but he knew his death was always the final step of the mission profile. He died gladly, with the blood of 26 human women and 10 Powered supersoldiers on his hands.

The cyborg's massive steel and plastic carcass was seized by APEX within an hour of his death. The Lifechained cybersystems and alien bio-ware that gave the Life Tank his savage skills were removed and autopsied. Every onboard weapons system and optic nerve junction was catalogued. The goal was simple- find a way to stop other Closers before they wracked up body counts to matched Life Tank's. The task itself wasn't.

The Closer augmentation process wasn't just an extremely complex full cybernetic refit. The process required a mastery of ancient, alien biotechnology, and the subversion of the Closer's AI-OS, a

fully sentient, wildly violent implanted artificial intelligence that literally can't function outside of a pro-life psychology. A single misstep anywhere during the conversion surgery meant that instead of the American version of the Closer (which was the goal of the Juggernaut program), you might end up with a lobotomized cripple, at best. Worse, you might create a now-insane Closer, whose original consciousness and ideology had been overridden by the alien AI implanted into his brain.

It more than three decades before the US government's medics felt comfortable enough with the underlying technology to risk human trials. Even then, Juggernaut Program medics decided to play it safe, and avoid Lifechain bio-tech in favor of more conventional cybernetic design solutions. Juggernaut Program paraphysicians also chose to remove the Closer's "Rescue Rail" cannons, and the predatory fire-control AI with governed them, in hopes of protecting their patients' sanity.

The Juggernaut Brute in the Campaign

Juggernaut Brutes have only been a part of APEX tactics since 2100, and have only seen limited battlefield service. Their sheer size and

lethality makes them impractical in most urban settings, unless the bio-mechanical behemoths consciously restrain their tactics. They are designed to be deployed as a counter to Lifer Closers. A Juggernaut's mission brief is pretty simple: is to beat the terrorist cyborg to death barehanded, and if that's impossible at least form a wall between the Closer and more frail squad members.

Juggernaut Brutes are most often deployed in an Enclave, where they are **despised**. Even abortion doctors themselves rarely arouse the sheer rancor that the presence of a Juggernaut Brute does. First, Juggernaut Brutes were basically created from the dead flesh of one of the Lifer nation's greatest heroes. They represent a theft of identity from the Lifer nation, as well as a theft of technology. Second, Juggernauts are rarely encountered in a non-hostile situation. They man checkpoints between the two nations, lead raids on fortified Enclave structures, and down Closers who have taken refuge among the civilian population. The only time the average, street-level Lifer sees a Juggernaut Brute is when he or she is performing some act of violence.

Mil-Media goes out of its way to improve the Brute's image, though the agency realizes that

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Juggernaut Upgrade	FORT Save	REF Save	WILL Save	Special	DEF Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+5 HP	+2	+0	+0	Full Conversion, Powerful Frame, Slam 1d8	+0	+1
2nd	+1	DR 1/-	+3	+0	+0	Steel Lock Grapple	+1	+1
3rd	+2	+5 HP	+3	+1	+1	Bonus Feat	+1	+1
4th	+3	DR 2/-	+4	+1	+1	Penetrating Strike, Slam 1d10	+1	+2
5th	+3	+5 HP	+4	+1	+1	Secondary Upgrades, Combat Radiance	+2	+2
6th	+4	DR 3/-	+5	+2	+2	Bonus Feat, Slam 2d6	+2	+2
7th	+5	+5 HP	+5	+2	+2	Micro-EMP	+2	+3
8th	+6	DR 4/-	+6	+2	+2	Cybernetic Perfection	+3	+3
9th	+6	+5 HP	+6	+3	+3	Bonus Feat	+3	+3
10th	+7	DR 5/-	+7	+3	+3	Slam 3d6, Improved Critical 18-20	+3	+4

178 trying to improve the Brutes' relationship with the Lifer pseudo-nation is a lost cause. "Strong as America" is a documentary series about young Juggernaut Brutes, following a recruit through the long, arduous conversion process and through the first year of active service. The series hopes to convince the Choicer pseudo-nation that Juggernauts are courageous, trustworthy allies, not potential anti-choice monsters. Ordinary Americans are taught to view the behemoths as soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice- that of their flesh and blood 'birth bodies' - to defend the lives and liberty of others.

The extreme transformation and prodigious expense have kept the number of active duty Juggernaut Behemoths rare. Despite the fact that Juggernaut reconstruction is one of the most extreme examples of cyber-enhancement in history, APEX has had no difficulty recruiting into the program. As is common among all full conversion cyborgs, a high percentage of Juggernaut candidates were victims of physical and sexual abuse at some point in their past, who embrace bionics as a way of never being weak again.

Requirements:

To qualify to become a Juggernaut Brute, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Skills: Profession (military) 8 ranks, Knowledge (tactics) 4 ranks

Feats: Elite Clearance, Brawl, Defensive Martial Arts, Combat Throw

Special: A prospective Juggernaut Brute must be an active member of the US military, and must have dedicated at least one of his allegiances towards the military, the nation, or the members of his squad.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Juggernaut Brute advanced class.

Hit Die

The Juggernaut Brute gains 3d4 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies. Juggernaut Brutes are designed to survive direct hits

from air-to-ground missiles- they barely even feel anything smaller caliber than a combat shotgun. They always receive at least 3 HP each time they level up, and probably many more.

Action Points

The Juggernaut Brute gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half of his character level, rounded down every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Juggernaut Brute's class skills are as follows.

Climb (STR), Demolitions (INT), Drive (DEX), Gather Information (CHA), Hide (DEX), Intimidate (CHA), Jump (STR), Knowledge (current events, history, popular culture, streetwise, tactics, technology) (INT), Pilot (DEX), Profession (any military) (WIS), Read/Write Language, Repair (INT), Speak Language, Spot (WIS)

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + INT Modifier

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Juggernaut Brute receives a bonus feat, which must be chosen from the following list.

Athletic, Endurance, Cleave, **Clobber**, Frightful Presence, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Heroic Surge, Improved Brawl, Improved Combat Throw, Improved Knockout Punch, Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Knockout Punch, Power Attack, **Stranglehold**, Streetfighting, **Super Heavyweight**, Sunder, Unbalance Opponent, Weapon Focus (slam)

Juggernaut Upgrade Program (EX): Juggernaut Brutes are designed to survive direct engagements with hulking Lifer Closers. They hit harder than rail gun bursts, and can shred an armored APC with their bare hands. Juggernaut Brutes are every bit as durable as they are strong, thanks to the half ton of implanted cyber-armor and the tailored mutagens injected into their cerebro-spinal fluid upon their conversion.

At each odd numbered level, the Brute receives 5 bonus HP, in addition to the HP the warrior gains from leveling up and CON Modifier, if any.

On even numbered levels, the Brute's Damage Reduction increases by +1/-. This damage reduction increase stacks with DR increases from other sources, including feats and Tough Hero class levels.

By 10th level, the Juggernaut Brute has received DR 5/- and 25 bonus Hit Points from membership in this class.

Full Conversion (EX): The Brute represents one of the most extreme examples of military cyber-conversion in history. Nearly all the Brute's original tissue is replaced with military cybernetics. They are half ton tanks reinforced with titanium and molecular-diamond endoskeletons, their vast strength and truck-like speed made possible by miles of artificial vat-grown pseudo-muscle. Very little of the original creature remains- typically only the cyborg's organic brain, spinal column and optic nerves; the rest is surgically removed and replaced with alien bio-systems.

The Brute's new physique is a hulking biomechanical behemoth, resembling a suit of heavy power armor more than a living thing. Individual Brutes customize their cyber-chassis with unique decorative elements and additional weapons systems. Brutes are painted in unit colors, and Brutes assigned to APEX One are allowed to wear a blue and white checkerboard pattern on their left arm and shoulder, the same pattern worn by elite APEX power armor pilots.

At first level, the Lifer Brute receives the following enhancements, as a result of his onboard cybernetics.

- The Brute gains *lowlight vision* and *darkvision* with a 90 ft range.
- The Brute receives an implanted communication link and onboard computer, similar to the implants described in the Dept Seven Tech Update: Cybernetics. These implants allow the cyborg to communicate wirelessly through the Mesh, send and receive radio and cellphone signals, and perform computer use tasks as normal for a standard computer system. Brutes physically disable their wireless card when it is not in use, and cannot easily be hacked.
- The Brute receives a standard IFF (Identification Friend/Foe) transponder which identifies his military rank and unit assignment. The cyborg can activate or suppress this transponder beacon as a standard action.
- The Brute's integrated armor provides the creature with a +4 equipment bonus to Defense, which increases throughout the cyborg's career. This bonus increases to +6 at 5th level, and +8 at 8th level. Unfortunately, the cyborg's bulk prevents the Brute from wearing additional external armor. The cyborg can pilot power armor, but the Brute's proportions and anatomy mean the suit has to be custom fitted, increasing the total purchase DC by +6.
- The Brute no longer needs to eat, breathe, or drink. He becomes immune to the effects of vacuum and radiation. He becomes immune to non-magical heat and cold. The fully cybernetic Brute becomes immune to non-magical disease and poisons, ability drain and energy drain.
- Redundant organs and self repair systems enable the Brute to shrug off lethal damage. The Brute has a 50% chance to ignore the additional damage from a critical hit, as if he had the *fortification* ability.

The Brute's class abilities are derived from onboard cybersystems, but do not count against the

total number of implants the cyborg can receive. In campaigns using the variant Drain rules for cybernetics, the Brute's class-based cybernetics do not have a drain rating. Thanks to the Brute's integrated fusion stack, the cyborg can withstand a number of additional implants (or points of Drain) equal to ½ his class level, rounded down, with a minimum of one additional implant.

System Limitations: As a fully cybernetic creature, the Juggernaut Brute does not heal naturally, but may be repaired like any other high tech device. If the Brute possessed Gene Feats, Lifechain abilities or extraordinary racial abilities before the cybernetic conversion, they are lost.

All Brutes suffer a -2 penalty on all CHA based skill checks (except Intimidate) against any creature with less than two cybernetic implants. Even humanoids with a single implant or a hobbyist's interest in cyber-reconstruction find it difficult to relate to full conversion cyborgs. (If the Juggernaut Brute is a member of the Full Conversion Cyborg player race, these penalties do not stack.)

All Brutes require extensive maintenance, performed by a competent cyber-mechanic in a well equipped shop. Each month of active service, the cyborg must undergo extensive diagnostics and repairs. Doing so requires the FCB to receive a DC 32 Repair check, which requires at least 16 hours in a well equipped repair bay.

If the cyborg doesn't receive these repairs, he suffers a -1 penalty to his STR and DEX scores, and is considered *fatigued* until he receives these necessary refits. These penalties increase by one per week (maximum -10) until the cyborg receives repairs. If the cyborg performs nothing but rest or light activity during a month, he does not require maintenance, but any stressful activity puts a strain on his cyber-systems and increases the likelihood of a catastrophic system failure.

Powerful Frame (EX): A first level Juggernaut Brute is trained to take advantage of his size and great strength. He is treated as being one Size

category larger whenever it would benefit him. A Medium sized Brute is treated as being Large for the purposes of grapple checks, determining carrying capacity, which weapons he can wield without penalty, as well as determining whether a special ability, such as *swallow whole* can affect him.

A Juggernaut Brute's metallic fists provide the cyborg with a deadly punch- the Brute can punch through a submarine's double-hull with contemptuous ease. At first level, the Juggernaut Brute inflicts 1d8 + STR modifier points of lethal bludgeoning damage with a Slam attack. The Brute is considered armed and proficient when attacking with a slam. A Juggernaut Brute's slam attack improves steadily as he gains levels, and inflicts a critical hit on a 18-20 at 10th level.

Steel Lock Grappling (EX): Juggernaut Brutes are taught a unique form of wrestling which takes advantage of their enormous strength and nearly indestructible cyber-chassis. Beginning at 2nd level, the Juggernaut Brute may add one half his class level (rounded down) as a competence bonus on Grapple checks.

Also starting at 2nd level, a Juggernaut Brute automatically inflicts his normal unarmed damage each round a grapple is maintained and that he wishes to inflict harm. This ability is similar to a creature with the Constrict special attack.

Penetrating Strike (EX): Starting at 4th level, when attacking with his Slam attack, the Juggernaut Brute ignores a number of points of Hardness or non-magical damage reduction equal to his STR modifier (minimum 1 point ignored).

Secondary Upgrades (EX): When the Juggernaut Brute reaches 5th level, micro-production units and nano-foundries built into his endoskeleton awaken and begin streamlining and improving his cyber-chassis. Within a few days of reaching 5th level, the Juggernaut Brute enters a coma-like state for 24-36 hours. During this time, the cyborg is helpless and immobile.

When the cyborg reboots, he has become even more impressive than ever before. The cyborg receives a +2 inherent bonus to his STR and CON scores as well as a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks. The cyborg's powerful leg muscles and pneumatic knee systems allow the creature to make incredible leaps.

The Juggernaut Brute's maximum jumping distance is not limited by height, and he does not need to get a running start to make a long jump. If the Brute can make at least a 30 ft running start, he receives an additional +20 circumstance bonus on the Jump check.

Combat Radiance (EX): Also at 5th level, the Juggernaut Brute's onboard fusion stack begins producing a surplus of energy, far more than even the most active cyborg soldier would ever need. Heat sinks built into the cyborg's wrists, knuckles and palms can open to radiate intense, colorless heat.

If the cyborg chooses, his unarmed strikes and Slam attacks inflict an additional +2d4 points of fire damage. Any creature or object that suffer fire damage from the Juggernaut Brute's strike is considered to be *lightly irradiated* for 1 round after impact. The cyborg can leave his heat sinks sealed to avoid accidentally irradiating nearby creatures.

Action Enhancement: By spending an action point, the Juggernaut Brute's radioactive punches become even more lethal. For a number of rounds equal to the Brute's CON modifier (minimum one round), all critical hits made with his Slam inflict a triple fire damage. Anyone struck by a critical slam is considered to be *highly irradiated* for one round after impact.

Micro-EMP (EX): As the frequency and energy level of the Juggernaut Brute's radioactive punches increase, these impacts become more like tiny nuclear detonations rather than just radiation leaks. Each hit

causes a small electromagnetic pulse, which damages delicate electronics and causes cascading system failures.

When striking any creature or object that is immune to radiation damage (such as constructs and Closers), the Juggernaut Brute's Combat Radiance class feature inflicts an equivalent amount of electrical damage rather than fire damage.

Further, constructs, cyborgs and robots struck by the electrically-enhanced slam attack must succeed at a FORT Save (DC 15 + ½ the Brute's CON modifier) or be *stunned* for one round after impact.

Cybernetic Perfection (EX): At 8th level, the Juggernaut Brute's cybernetics are as good as they are ever going to be; the cyborg is a perfectly tuned, carefully maintained killing machine. The Brute becomes completely immune to critical hits, precision based additional damage, nonlethal damage and the effects of massive damage.



The Tactical Commander **Prestige Class (5 level)**

Tactical Commanders are career military officers entrusted with command of elite squads. They use their knowledge of military history, urban warfare tactics and military protocol to keep the men and women under their command alive in the face of overwhelming firepower.

Smart and Charismatic heroes often become Tactical Commanders, as do many Combat Types, Soldiers, Powered Heroes and other military characters. The abilities of the Tactical Commander prestige class synergize nicely with the talents offered by the Field Officer advanced class. Characters with levels in both classes are military geniuses, able to coordinate entire battalions into a seamless, integrated whole, exploit weaknesses in their opponents' strategies and achieve the kind of victories which turn the tide of entire wars.

Once a character makes the choice to enter a prestige class, they must progress through all five levels of the class before multi-classing again.

Requirements:

To qualify to become a Tactical Commander, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Skills: Knowledge (tactics) 10 ranks, Diplomacy 4 ranks, Profession (military) 2 ranks

Feats: Contingency Planning, Elite Clearance, Squad Leader

Starting Occupation: Military

Special: The Tactical Commander must be an active duty member of a military or paramilitary organization, especially a large, well-trained tactical army such as APEX, the Choicer pseudonation or a mega-corp security force.



Class Information

The following information pertains to the Tactical Commander prestige class.

Hit Die

The Tactical Commander gains d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies. Tactical Commanders are fit, combat trained athletes, whose military training regimens give them incredible endurance and energy.

Action Points

The Tactical Commander gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half of his character level, rounded down every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Tactical Commander's class skills are as follows.

Computer Use (INT), Demolitions (INT), Diplomacy (CHA), Gather Information (CHA), Intimidate (CHA), Knowledge (business, civics, current events, history, streetwise, tactics, theology & philosophy) (INT), Move Silently (DEX), Profession (military) (WIS), Read/Write Language, Spot (WIS), Speak Language

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + INT Modifier

Tactical Deployment (EX): A Tactical Commander's superior knowledge of history, expected deployment areas and urban warfare experience gives her an insight into enemy strategies and an almost supernatural gift for spotting ambushes.

The Tactical Commander may make a Knowledge (tactics) check, rather than a Spot or Listen check made to detect a hidden enemy or adversary.

Action Enhancement: By spending an action point and spending at least one minute addressing her troops, providing tactical guidance,

the Tactical Commander may extend the ability to substitute Knowledge (tactics) checks for a Spot or Listen check to a number of allies equal to her total character level plus CHA modifier. The allies may choose to use their Spot and Listen checks instead if they are higher.

The allies must be within 30 ft of the Tactical Commander, and clearly able to see and hear her. Once this bonus is granted, it remains in effect for a number of hours equal to the Tactical Commander's INT modifier (minimum one hour).

Second Stage Action Enhancement: When a 5th level Tactical Commander spends an action point and uses this ability, her allies use either her Knowledge (tactics) ranks or their own, whichever is greater.

Preferential Recruitment (EX): You are particularly fond of leading a specific kind of troops, as recruiting native soldiers, assistants and mercenaries from a specific population. Select one fairly narrowly defined demographic group, which can consist of a specific affiliation (Lifer or Choicer soldiers), a specific nation (like American sailors, or Somali mercenaries), metahuman species (Patriot Courier or Stonecutters) or members of a specific character class (Fast Heroes, Combat Types).

When recruiting followers or cohorts from this favored group, your effective character level for the purpose of Squad Leadership is increased by +4.

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	FORT Save	REF Save	WILL Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+1	+0	+0	+2	Tactical Deployment	+1	+1
2nd	+2	+0	+0	+3	Preferential Recruitment	+1	+1
3rd	+3	+1	+1	+3	Battlefield Insight 1x/day	+2	+1
4th	+4	+1	+1	+4	Decisive Tactics	+2	+2
5th	+5	+1	+1	+4	Battlefield Insight 2x/day	+3	+2

Soldiers you personally recruit from the favored demographic are exceedingly loyal to you and have top-notch morale. They receive a +1 morale bonus on WILL Saves and checks made to resist Intimidation so long as they can clearly see you on the battlefield.

Battlefield Insight (EX): Once per day at 3rd level, the Tactical Commander may draw upon her extensive military training and experience to land decisive blows or sidestep otherwise lethal attacks.

As an immediate action, which can be performed even on another character's turn, the Tactical Commander can add a +20 insight bonus to any attack roll. Alternatively, the Tactical Commander can impose a -20 penalty on any enemy's attack roll against her. This use of the talent must be declared after the roll to strike is made, but before damage is declared.

The Tactical Commander may use this ability twice per day at 5th level.

Action Enhancement: By spending an action point, the Tactical Commander can use this ability to benefit or protect any ally within 60 ft who she can clearly see. She shouts timely advice or a last second warning to the ally, who must be able to clearly hear her.

Decisive Tactics (EX): When spending an action point to activate any class feature, a 4th level Tactical Commander may attempt a DC 20 Knowledge (tactics) check. If the check is successful, the Tactical Commander retains the action point for future use. Failure means the action point is lost as normal. The Tactical Commander may not take 10 or take 20 on this check.

The X-SWAT Operative Advanced Class

*Savannah, Georgia. Outside the Enclave
May 1, 2106.
Beltane Night.*

They sensed her somehow.

One of the not-humans in the room beneath looked up, and fired a particle beam from her not-human eyes, and the roof exploded beneath Regina Moses' steel toed combat boots. She fell fast and hard, but for her time slowed down to a series of still photographs. Regina Moses lost her breath when she hit, oxygen and thought pushed out of her body with the same stinging impact. She heard something shatter on her web-belt, and felt shards of hot plastic dig into her spine. Moses lay where she fell, terrified for a second that despite the impact armor she was wearing she'd snapped her spine.

The black haired woman shook her head to clear it, not coherent enough to make sense of the voices shouting into the Bluetooth on her left ear. She blinked, once, twice and the not-humans were on her. They moved jerkily, scary-fast, like a movie reel missing frames. Regina Moses screamed at their touch, their taloned fingers scratching ineffectually at her black and grey Kevlar, and kicked out spasmodically. She heard the satisfying crunch of steel-toe meeting temple, and one of the not-humans crumpled even before the shock of the impact finished crawling up her bruised leg.

The not-humans looked just like any other Choicer rich-kids, nude and sleek and sweating, cyber-studded neo-pagans enjoying the orgiastic pleasure of the Beltane fires. That made this op a bit more fun for Moses, who grew up wearing Enclave purple. The one she kicked was blond and pretty, a waiflike girl whose nude body was covered in shifting, moving nano-paint. She looked human, they all did, but weren't anything close. All politics aside, Moses could sense the

alien DNA hiding inside her college-slut's body like a shiv hiding inside a prison cell.

Scrambling backward through the crowds of terrified real-humans, Moses finally reached her feet. She was only on her feet half a second before one of the not-humans, a black kid who looked like a he was going to college on a military scholarship fired some kind of energy bolt from the glowing maw opening at the center of his chest. Moses went down again, her armored breast plate superheating and burning through her undershirt. It held, barely, but Moses screamed again with the pain of her burns.

Dimly, she heard the high-pitched whine of backup- the overstressed harmonics of a suit of "Street Hammer" combat armor at top speed. She heard the sirens, the screams from the mission commander in her ear piece, and it gave her enough strength to stay on her feet. The burns to her breasts hurt, but she'd been hurt before, been burned before, fought for her life before.... Long before she ever joined the force. Moses spit blood, looked the not-human straight in his not-human eyes, and snarled

"Do that again. You just try to do that again, fucker. I'm X-SWAT, you moron.... And you are under fuckin' arrest."

And Regina Moses clenched her fist, concentrated past the agony of her burns, and did like she'd been taught. Her right forearm and fist went numb as neural pathways were overloaded with strange energies they were not

REGINA MOSES, CIRCA 2105 ATLANTA PD X-SWAT AGENT



designed to handle. Acid-green energy flared at the center of her palm, and Moses enjoyed the expression of dumb shock that exploded across the black not-human's smug face.

She called her weapon into existence, a sculpture of vile green energy that looked something like a standard police tonfa and something

like a former-Lifer soldier's worst PTSD nightmares. She raised her psi-stick to eye level, the acid green radiance staining her face. Moses took one step forward, another step...

...and she leapt at the not-human, drawing her stick backward hard for maximum force....

Adaptation

The X-SWAT Operative is designed for use as part of the [Otherverse America campaign setting](#). Some of the flavor text below only makes sense in the context of Otherverse America. However, the class can easily be adapted to most near-future or space opera sci-fi settings.

The class works best if you also include Lifechain monsters and feats, described in [Guide to the Known Galaxy](#), though you can easily adapt the X-SWAT operative towards hunting whatever alien race is most dangerous in your home campaign. Simply replace the Sense Lifechain ability with a similar power that allows the X-Swat agent to sense the presence of your own hostile aliens, and allow the operative to choose that species as one of his 'favored enemy' types.

Alien immigration is an accepted, everyday part of life in the 22nd Century. Every large city in the inner solar system boasts a Stonecutter business district of a Half Grey enclave. Just walking the streets of an 'alpha' city like San Francisco or Boston, an ordinary man or woman might do business with a dozen different humanoid species- a Half Grey restaurant owner, a Lanning-Injava mechanic, a Stonecutter missionary, a Polyflor celeb-whore- and spot even more exotic beings through the press of the crowd.

Of course, not all the alien visitors to Earth are benevolent. Some turn to crime, or join terrorist 'rescue-cells' deep within one of the Enclaves. Lifechained abominations might stow away in a starship's hold, using Earth as a hunting ground or neutral battlefield. Conventional police forces are at a severe disadvantage when dealing with xeno-threats, not only due to the impressive natural powers many aliens display, but also because of the galactic diplomatic entanglements an arrest entails.

That's where the idea of Xeno-SWAT originated.

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	FORT Save	REF Save	WILL Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+1	+1	+0	Target Specialization I, Psi-Stick, Sense Lifespawn	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+2	+0	Urban Tracking, Xeno-Diplomacy	+2	+1
3rd	+2	+2	+2	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4th	+3	+2	+2	+1	Tech Contact, Target Specialization II	+2	+1
5th	+3	+3	+3	+1	Sticking Point	+3	+2
6th	+4	+3	+3	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7th	+5	+4	+4	+2	Target Specialization III	+4	+2
8th	+6	+4	+4	+2	Surgical Takedown 1x/day	+4	+3
9th	+6	+4	+4	+3	Bonus Feat	+4	+3
10th	+7	+5	+5	+3	Surgical Takedown 2x/day Target Specialization IV	+5	+3

Profile of a X-SWAT Operative

Xeno-SWAT Operatives are highly trained, decorated, veteran officers recruited from out of their home departments. The FBI offers prospective X-SWAT ops a 10 week academy at Quantico, offering such comprehensive training that even APEX sends its troop to there for training against xeno-hazards. Those who graduate return to their home departments, to join their local Xeno-SWAT units, or if none exist back home, to found them.

X-SWAT operatives perform standard police SWAT duties, and when the need arises, they also take the lead in handling xenological crisis. X-SWAT agents are on hand to inspect off-planet imports, help investigate crashed ships, respond to possible contamination, spills and accidents, and off-planet disease. More often, the X-SWAT division is tasked with arresting xeno-criminals, investigating crimes against aliens, and escorting prisoners being repatriated to (or from) their homeworld.

The X-SWAT Operative in the Campaign

X-SWAT agents are very similar to members of the Xenophile Advanced Class presented in D20 Future. X-SWAT operatives are designed as an 'Otherverso specific' version of that class. Instead of a wide variety of alien threats, X-SWAT operatives focus on tracking, subduing and if necessary killing the humanoid aliens most common to the setting. X-SWAT agents have little fear of Lifechained xeno-predators, and bringing down rogue Lifechains is one of their highest profile missions.

X-SWAT agents are trained shooters, excellent hand to hand combatants, and decent tacticians. Like all SWAT agents, their primary role is urban infiltration- storming a fortified city site to apprehend criminals hiding within. X-SWAT agents often multiclass as military experts of various types- a few levels in Soldier, Gunslinger, Helix Warrior, Powered Hero or Combat Type are all equally common.

X-SWAT ops patrolling the Enclaves are usually Lifer War-veterans, who've probably picked up at least a few levels of the Closer Advanced Class before going federal. In the case of former Closers gone legit, its hard to tell which being is more alien- the X-SWAT operative or the alien immigrants he hunts. Lifer X-SWAT operatives are more likely to be the first of their kind- promising 'local sheriffs' who got a 10 week vacation from the Enclaves, and go back to try and teach the lessons learned to their under funded, mistrustful police forces. They're also the most likely to receive little or no cooperation from the locals- former friends and comrades in arms who wonder if those ten weeks of training also entailed subversion to the Beast of Revelations.

Choicer and Fed-Gov X-SWAT operatives have it easier, obviously. They have well-defined support structures and (generally) the trust of their tax-payers to fall back on. Choicer X-SWAT ops work closely with APEX, NEST and the FBI in the course of their mission, and a good number are recruited into an APEX strike-team after a successful tour of duty. A surprisingly large number of alien-born Choicers slip into this profession, seeing a tour of duty with X-SWAT as a way to protect the alien neighborhoods they grew up in.

Relatively few X-SWAT operatives, from any faction are themselves Lifechained, and in many cases being a Lifespawn is viewed as a security risk. Even fewer X-SWAT operatives ever multiclass into the Lifespawn Paragon Advanced Class, but those who do are some of the most powerful and effective of their kind. Even one or two levels in Lifespawn Paragon puts the agent on a completely different level of power than the other members of their squad, but as other X-SWAT members darkly mutter, makes the character that much more a risk if the unit runs into a mind-controlling Lifespawn.

Requirements:

To qualify to become an X-SWAT Operative, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Skills: Knowledge (tactics) 4 ranks, Diplomacy 2 ranks, Gather Information 2 ranks, Treat Injury 2 ranks, Speak and Read at least two alien languages

Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Brawl or Combat Martial arts

Special: Must be an active duty member of a police force, private security force or a military organization.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the X-SWAT Operative advanced class.

Hit Die

The X-SWAT Operative gains d10 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies. X-Swat members are recruited from the best trained, most physically adept and motivated members of the police force.

Action Points

The X-SWAT Operative gains a number of action points equal to + one-half of his character level, rounded down every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The X-SWAT Operative's class skills are as follows.

Climb (STR), Computer Use (INT), Demolitions (INT), Diplomacy (CHA), Drive (DEX), Gather Information (CHA), Intimidate (CHA), Investigate (WIS), Jump (STR), Knowledge (behavioral sciences, civics, current events, streetwise, tactics, technology) (INT), Listen (WIS), Move Silently (DEX), Profession (military or police related) (WIS), Read/Write Languages, Search (WIS), Speak Language, Spot (WIS), Treat Injury (WIS)

Skill Points at Each Level: 4+ INT Modifier

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the X-SWAT operative receives a bonus feat, which must be

chosen from the following list. Italicized feats are described fully in the *Psi-Watch campaign setting*.

Action Bank, Advanced Combat Martial Arts, Armor Proficiency (any), *Armored Survivor*, *Battle Hardened*, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Dead Aim, *Decorated Veteran*, *Elite Clearance*, Heroic Surge, Improved Brawl, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Improved Initiative, Knockout Punch, Power Attack, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting, *Squad Leader*, Weapon Focus (psi-stick)

Psi-Stick (SU): A major part of the X-SWAT curriculum is the training required to manifest a less lethal mental weapon. Recruits are expected to be able to summon their 'psi-stick' by the 8th week of the course.

A first level X-SWAT operative can manifest a semi-tangible combat baton at will. Manifesting or dismissing the weapon is a free action. The psi-stick inflicts 1d6 + CHA modifier points of subdual damage, and inflicts a critical hit (x2) on a natural 20.

When attacking with the psi-stick, the X-SWAT operative receives a +2 bonus on trip and disarm attempts. The operative may make a trip attack with the psi-stick. If this attempt fails, he can dismiss the psi-weapon to avoid being tripped in return. The X-SWAT agent is always considered proficient with the psi-stick.

An X-SWAT agent gains the Psionic subtype at 1st level, and may freely select from Psionic and Psionic Precursor feats, as described in the *Psi-Watch campaign setting*.

Sense Lifespawn (SU): A first level X-SWAT agent can automatically sense the presence and general direction to any creature with the Lifechain subtype provided it is within one mile of his position. X-SWAT trainees are taught minor psi-techniques to track these deadly predators.

X-SWAT agents cannot pin point invisible or concealed Lifespawn using this ability. Finally, an X-SWAT agent can automatically tell if a creature is Lifechained by making skin-to-skin contact with it—touching a Lifespawn produces an unpleasant tingling sensation, like grabbing hold of a live wire.

Target Specialization (EX): X-SWAT agents are trained as generalists, familiar with a wide variety of alien species, but over time, most focus on taking down sentient adversaries of a particular species.

Select a specific sentient race from any of the following creature types: aberration, dragon, giant, humanoid, monstrous humanoid, or outsider. In addition to choosing a separate creature type, the X-SWAT agent may choose to specialize in hunting creatures with the Lifechained or Psionic subtypes. In this case, the bonus provided applies to all sentient creatures with that subtype, and may stack if the creature is both of a specialized subtype and a specialized species.

Due to his extensive training in combatting that creature, as well as studying its native culture, the X-SWAT agent gains a +2 bonus on Bluff, Gather Information, Intimidate, Listen, Sense Motive and Spot checks made against or concerning that creature type.

X-SWAT training emphasizes capturing prey alive for trail or extradition. The agent receives a +2 bonus on damage rolls when striking to subdue when facing a member of his chosen species.

If an X-SWAT agent chooses to inflict subdual damage against a specialized target using a fire arm, he only suffers a -2 penalty on his attack roll. Normally, using a firearm to inflict subdual damage incurs a -4 penalty, if it is possible at all.

At 4th, 7th and 10th level, the X-SWAT agent may select an additional species. In addition, at each interval, the bonus against one targeted creature type, (including the one just chosen, if desired) increases by +2.

Urban Tracking (EX): A second level X-SWAT agent is a skilled investigator, and receives Urban Tracking as a bonus feat.

Urban Tracking (General)

You can track down the location of missing persons or wanted individuals.

Benefit: *To find the trail of an individual or to follow it for 1 hour requires a Gather Information check. You must make another Gather Information check every hour of the search, as well as each time the trail becomes difficult to follow, such as when it moves to a different area of town.*

The DC of the check, and the number of checks required to track down your quarry, depends on the community population and the conditions:

Population	DC	Checks Required
Fewer than 2,000	5	1d4
2,000-9,999	10	1d4+1
10,000-49,999	15	2d4
50,000-99,999	20	2d4+1
100,000-499,999	25	3d4
500,000+	30	3d4+1

Condition	DC Modifier
Each 3 creatures in group being tracked	-1
Every 24 hours quarry has been missing or tracked	+1
Tracked group lies low	+5

If you fail a *Gather Information* check, you can retry after 1 hour of questioning. The GM rolls the number of checks required secretly, so the player doesn't know exactly how long the task requires.

Normal: A character without this feat can use *Gather Information* to find out information about a particular individual, but each check takes 1d4+1 hours and doesn't allow effective trailing.

Special: You can cut the time per *Gather Information* check in half (to 30 minutes per check rather than 1 hour per check), but you suffer a -5 penalty on the check.

Xeno-Diplomacy (EX): X-SWAT operatives are trained to deal effectively with a wide variety of extra-solar cultures. Starting at 2nd level, the X-SWAT operative adds ½ his class level, rounded down on Diplomacy checks made against alien factions, corporations and governments.

Tech Contact (EX): An X-SWAT agent probably has contacts across known space. He's familiar enough with the xeno-cultures that comprise his 'beat' he can purchase advanced xeno-tech at a discount, by going through familiar, trustworthy brokers. When purchasing gear from the next higher progress level, the X-SWAT, this gear only has a +3 Purchase DC modifier if he goes through a broker from one of the alien cultures he has chosen as his Target Specialization.

Normally, technology from the next highest progress level has its Purchase DC increased by +5, if it is available at all.

Sticking Point (SU): At 5th level, the X-SWAT agent learns how to manifest debilitating telepathic viruses and turn his already impres-

sive psi-stick into a superior, non lethal weapon.

The X-SWAT agent may choose one of the following special qualities for his psi-stick. Once chosen, the selection cannot be changed.

- **Sick Stick.** A creature struck by the psi-stick is *sickened* for one round, suffering a -2 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks and saving throws.
- **Silent Stick:** A creature struck by the psi-stick is *silenced* for one round, and cannot speak, make vocal sounds, or cast spells or use abilities with verbal components.
- **Slow Stick:** A creature struck by the psi-stick is *slowed* for 1 round. Its base movement is reduced by half, and it suffers a -1 penalty to Initiative checks and Defense.



The duration of the chosen effect is increased to 2 rounds when used against one of the X-SWAT operative's specialized target species.

Action Enhancement: *By spending an action point, the X-SWAT operative can make his psi-stick even more effective against Lifechained adversaries. While enhanced, any Lifechained opponent struck by the psi-stick is paralyzed for one round, or two rounds if the target is from one of the agent's favored enemy species. Once activated, this enhancement lasts for a number of rounds equal to the X-SWAT agent's CHA modifier (minimum one round).*

Surgical Takedown (EX): A X-SWAT agent's knowledge of xeno-anatomy gives him a tactical advantage. He can target vulnerable areas to incapacitate even the most powerful alien behemoth.

Once per day, when facing any member of a species that he has selected as a favored enemy, the X-SWAT agent may add his ranks in Treat Injury as a bonus to damage. This additional damage may be lethal or subdual at the X-SWAT operative's option.

The X-SWAT op must declare the use of this power before rolling to strike. If he misses, this ability is expended without effect. This ability is usable twice per day at 10th level.

Action Enhancement: *By spending an action point when using this ability to inflict lethal damage, the X-SWAT agent may try for an instant kill. If successful struck by the agent, the target must make a FORT Save (DC 10 + ½ damage inflicted) or drop to -1 HP and begin dying.*

More Otherverse America Adventure Seeds

The adventure seeds epilogue was one of my favorite portions of the Otherverse America campaign setting. This new roster of plot hooks, potential missions, rumors and emerging threats focuses heavily on APEX and the mega-corps, and their interaction with the Choicers and Lifers.

Gamemasters can use them as seeds for episodic adventures, string several storylines together to form a campaign, or just occasionally pull a plot hook as a newspaper headline to add another layer of realism to the world. These adventure seeds also give players and gamemasters alike a good sense of what daily life is like within the Otherverse: segregated, alien, and at risk of history-altering violence at any moment.

1. Hercules Cray, better known by the war-name Battle Cry, is one of the stalwarts of APEX One, and one of the first troops to volunteer for Jugger-naut Brute conversion, with 5 years of good service under his belt as a cybernetic giant. His performance and marriage to a Choicer activist are both suffering recently, after a series of nightmares, revealing bits and pieces of Life Tank's history- information known only to Life Tank himself.
2. The US government has put the live feeds from several hundred low-priority Metroplex security cameras on Mesh, and scrolling through the Washington region's cameras and being a remote voyeur is rapidly becoming an emergent fad. Needless to say, Metroplex residents aren't happy about the further invasion of privacy.
3. An APEX deniable-ops team is tasked with eliminating a Chechyan 'kitten factory' producing Fluxminx sex slaves, and are joined for the mission by a Bastian platoon tasked to the infamous "Choice Squad Four".
4. A football riot in Buffalo, NY leaves 25 dead, as a pair of new Lifespawn post-humans uncontrollably



manifest their super abilities during the brawl. Though originally on opposites of the abortion line, the two new Poweredreds flee together, terrified of APEX reprisal.

5. Under the cover of a gambling junket to Monterrey, a team of newly promoted APEX soldiers must perform an off the books strike against a Familia gene-lab, without alerting the Mexican military, and without a single civilian causality.
6. Michelle Tavaris, a 15 year old Lifer hanger-on, working out of her basement, has developed a polymer immune to APEX' new Glasser grenades.

**SSGT MEGAN DELACROIX,
TAILGUNNER
SNAKE SQUAD FIRE
SUPPORT**



APEX R&D is torn between wanting the girl dead and wanting to recruit her for their own labs.

7. Armament Wear Inc, a major, Metroplex based 'hard-clothing' manufacturer is vying for the contract to produce combat uniforms and custom battle-costumes for the members of APEX One and APEX Two. The company's designers are pushing a sleeker, more streamlined, and much more uniform style.

8. Vivian Cole Online, one of the second tier porn-corps is pushing APEX command to relax its restrictions prohibiting active duty APEX members from starring in meta-porn.

9. Less than six weeks after installing a controversial Sky Hydra exhibit, the Smithsonian Air & Space

Museum is annihilated by a scratch-built micro-nuke. The entire Metroplex is put on lock down, while NEST sifts through the ruins and APEX hunts for the bomb-maker.

10. The current Pin Point, Major Maggie Newhope, and her wife Kim Newhope, a Patriot Mechanic assigned to flight support, are benched from active APEX duty as potential security risks after filing paperwork to adopt two young brothers from a Lifer-ran adoption broker.

11. A sociopathic, 13 year old Patriot Courier, Ellis Atlanta 45453, murders two of his tutors using his wormholes, and easily slips free of the Patriot Medical complex in Atlanta. He jaunts randomly across the country, trying to find a buyer for his unique, top-secret genetic code, but only leaves more bodies in his wake. So far, he's killed three potential buyers, two from the AOG, as a result of his growing paranoia and bloodlust.

12. A physicist working at the Abacedo Array antenna farm detects planet wide gravity and quantum decay fluxuations occurring at irregular intervals over the last fifteen years, as if something massively powerful was tapping Earth's gravity well. Charting the fluxuations against known appearances by Gravity Grave, Dr. Winston McNab is close to publishing his theory that Gravity Grave has returned to Earth far more often then he has admitted. Even the normally well connected Playmakers have no idea of McNab's work.

13. A cryo-technician at the RESCUE International exo-womb facility in New York City is arrested for selling more than 200 unclaimed, cryogenically frozen fetuses to a Haitian gene-corp for use in the production of a new batch of Fluxminx slaves. The city's Lifer community is urging prosecutors to seek the death penalty.

14. More than 16,000 people from all across Earth-space, most of them just kids, die in their sleep while logged into an APEX-ran 'first person shooter' Dreamscape site. Someone has laced the server with a thought-viral which shuts down the human respiratory system, and if APEX is to survive the disaster, the reprisal must be immediate and equally horrific.

15. Rogue agents within APEX have begun selling Hammerhead mission footage and their own memories from missions on the Lifer death-fetish circuit, operating under the collective name "Documented Deth". APEX is trying to track the leaks of assassination and execution footage primarily because when properly analyzed the snuff-films provide vital insights into current APEX strategy and deployment tactics.

16. A sniper is prowling the Metroplex, exploiting security loopholes and blindspots in the ever-present surveillance to assassinate promising young Neo-Sapien Mediator officers attending the various military academies in the region.

17. Clarice "Rescue Red" Ives, a Nanofeaster mutate born and raised in the Galveston-Beaumont Enclave rejected her Lifer faith six years ago, and after much soul searching, has petitioned the Covenant to begin the Neo-Witch Midwife's medical training program. If the answer is yes, she will be the first Nanofeaster to ever take up the profession the species was designed to slaughter.

18. Barbane "Choice" Merideth was one of North America's most wanted Bastian terrorists, until she was by a team of mostly unaligned metahumans in late 2106. While being transferred to a federal death row at Crawford, TX, reserved exclusively for handling war criminals, Choice's allies freed her, leaving an entire APEX squad dead in their wake.



19. When Ellen Dacoveney contacted Artemis in deep space, and brought the Lifechain to Earth, the Abortion War began. That's documented history. But how did Ellen know where and how to contact Artemis in the first place? APEX historians, working closely with the organization's intelligence arm and Covenant psychics are finally trying to piece together the real story behind one of the defining events of the late 21st Century.

20. A collective intelligence of hundreds of dispersed, low-grade AIs tasked with assigning random mission codewords and temporary callsigns has unexpectedly reached sentience. The AI collective is

happy to continue serving the US military, and too limited to pose any strategic threat, but is starting to enjoy coming up with more and more quirky, inappropriate, or just plain insulting code words.

21. Three basement fusion reactors red-line simultaneously, vaporizing two square blocks of New York's financial district. All three reactors were built and maintained by Amaretsu Safe-Power, a major Choicer manufacturer.

22. Black Dream Boston has begun a very tentative and still-fragile alliance with the city's well entrenched Lifer power structure, in hopes of finally removing the city's few, embattled abortion clinics. Black Dream doesn't like the Lifer pseudonation much, but their activists dislike abortion- the 'black holocaust' - even more.

23. A gang of power armor pilots are preying on cargo-haulers passing through the D/FW corridor in East Texas. They swoop in, killing the driver and

ripping through the cargo-hold in search of gene-cutting drugs, weapons and other valuable cargo, and escape, knowing the police won't risk a full scale Shell battle on a crowded, rush-hour freeway.

24. Female APEX troops are being encouraged by a well designed Choicer ad campaign to go on-Mesh and explain how an abortion in their past empowered and strengthened them, in an effort to counter the Lifer's annual "Summer of Forgiveness" event.

25. Snake Squad is in political hot water, because during a routine training exercise, some Snake Squaddies played the role of the opposing force- a simulated Lifer terror cell. Their "Lifer" tactics were such an improvement on the real ones, the Snake Squaddies wiped out the Choicer 'clinic' and its defenders easily. That's embarrassing, but the fact that the results of the simulation leaked out, and real Lifers are learning from Snake Squad's victory is a disaster.



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26. The nearly century old USS Barack Obama (CVN-90), the last of the old fission powered carriers, is scheduled for decommission and is being towed to the Chicago Naval Yard for service as a museum. With the Obama's removal from service, the US Navy becomes entirely fusion powered, at long last.

27. After a late-season hurricane almost levels Lifer-held South Florida, NEST and other federal disaster relief agencies arrive to help a mistrustful populace rebuild. APEX primary team members are tasked to assist, with metahuman soldiers being assigned to Seabee squads. Local Lifer combat volunteers also join the reconstruction efforts, marking one of the few peaceful encounters between Lifer and APEX troops.

28. Georgia Congressman Alistair Hark (Choicer) is sponsoring a bill to completely eliminate conventional aircraft carriers as 'unnecessary expenses on a post-human battlefield'. His plan is to decant a new generation of Patriot Couriers with even greater range and capacity, and use them to move troops and aircraft to target zones, projecting national power through psionic metahumans. Not surprisingly, his proposal would bring trillions of dollars into the Patriot Medical complex in Atlanta.

29. Vision-Star Agri-business, one of the largest beef producers in North America, is lobbying the FDA and EPA for the right to introduce Lifechained DNA into its cattle, in the hope of increasing beef yields.

30. The Provo, Utah Enclave goes completely offline. Mesh, radio and telephone communication is cut completely; only psi-based Dreamscape signals can get in or out of the fortified city-state, and that's near useless for tactical communications. The Enclave immediately goes to a combat footing, certain the comms black out is a prelude to an APEX incursion.

31. A Choicer blogger reveals that APEX's Patriot program includes at least one unrevealed mutate species, the Patriot Zulu, about which little is known other than their role and codename. Zulus are visibly non-humanoid to a degree the other Patriot mutates can't match, and are apparently a refinement of the Minuteman genome- creatures designed specifically to hunt Nemesis Lifespawn.

32. An entire APEX duty section- thirty six combat trained metahumans- stationed at Kadena Air Force Base, HI- dies en masse, just minutes before deploying on a mission. Autopsies quickly reveal that a fast acting, contact neuro-toxin had been sprayed on the inner lining of their combat armor.

33. Mil-Media is pushing APEX command to begin segregating codenames by gender, with historically female codenames (Pounce, Spar, Sheen) reserved for female service members, and male idents like Rift, Coil, Façade and others reserved for male soldiers.

34. Tennessee "Engine" King, a combat-trained partial reconstruction 'borg, is a rising star within the Black Dream movement. Younger and with more nationalistic message which places less emphasis on racial superiority doctrine, she is attracting a following among APEX members. She also lacks Chessman's distrust of cyborgs and the Covenant, making the charismatic young 'borg a natural rival for control of the movement.

35. The Covenant has begun a program actively recruiting Nanofeasters and Shy Minutemen into their ranks as highly paid guardians for some of their most dangerous out-colonies.

36. A cell of Half-Grey terrorists operating out of Diana Station has kidnapped and vivisected a pair of Patriot Courier teleporters. The cell remains convinced that Half Grey DNA was used in the design of the mutates- the torture of the pair was more about revenge than finding proof.



37. For 2107's Beltane Night revels San Francisco's Covenant has commissioned a troupe of Fluxminx performance artists to perform highly erotic shapeshifting displays at festival grounds and covenheaths across the city.

38. The Israeli government is funneling F-sticks (micro-nuclear grenades) to Lifer terror cells operating out of South Florida, via "Walk One" a Patriot Courier supersoldier of their own design, who was reverse engineered from US gene-technology.

39. Seeing the effectiveness of the mostly female Choicer spec ops community, APEX is considering implementing similar ideas among its own ranks. APEX is currently conducting an on-Mesh poll of its female agents, asking if they would be interesting in learning Choicer-based "Moonwise" Philosophies and beginning a Decision Red drug regimen.

40. To celebrate the Fourth of July, APEX will conduct a massive military parade and Powered fly-over of Washington DC. Every APEX troop not in the field is expected to be part of the parade, in full dress uniform- even highly classified metahumans who rarely appear in the public eye.

41. The sons and daughters of some of America's oldest, wealthiest families are dying en masse- falling to suspicious 'accidents' or outright murder. Their enemies have discovered the existence of the Mayflower Board, but not it's exact composition, and are trying to sever the bloodlines of anyone who may be a member.

42. When Dr. Miranda Raxwire is tapped for active duty with APEX One, as one of its combat medics, Lifers protest, as expected. After all, Raxwire is an abortion provider. What's not expected is the moderate and Covenant backlash. Moderates

protest because they feel her selection affiliates America too strongly with the Covenant; Choicers protest because the expanded lifespan metahuman is an old style abortion doc, of a kind that is almost extinct in 2107, not a Neo Witch Midwife.

43. Snake Squad is actively recruiting among the population of the Thray Resettlement Camp near Corpus Christi, TX. Their rationale: the aliens' natural abilities give them an advantage in covert operations, and most Thray refugees have some combat training already, a result of the conflict ripping their home world apart. Plus, most Thray retain their belief in their animistic native traditions, and have little interest in either Covenant or Lifer theologies, making them potentially loyal to APEX.

44. Futurians and urban planners are considering the ecological and security implications of planetary range "TTF Highways" linking major American cities. Were the technology to be implemented, stable wormholes built into roadways would allow people to drive from one end of the country to another, or even directly to Diana Station, in minutes.

45. Across the nation, nude human figures have appeared, seemingly melting into reality from nothingness. They have the faces, memories and even genetic code of abortion providers slain decades before, and have appeared in the places they died. No one is sure if these strange apparitions are leakage from a parallel reality, the ghosts they appear to be, or an artificially created, Philosophy-based propaganda species like the Neverborn.

46. Ejaw pirates have hit upon an ambitious plan to raid several human out-colonies simultaneously. The plan involves lighting quick raids during the Septem-

ber 22nd Ingathering celebrations, carried out before rescue ships can be dispatched. Meanwhile, Ejaw agents on Earth are working closely with Lifer hackers and info-terrorists to take down the entire Choicer comms network- not only will this prevent rescue-ships from effectively coordinating retaliation against the raiders, it gives the Lifers an unprecedented opportunity to strike an unprepared adversary here on Earth.



47. Angered at their loss there during the 2104 Presidential Elections, the Lifer pseudonation is spending unprecedented amounts 'preparing the ground' at Diana Station for the 2108 election cycle. Lifer businesses are encouraged to immigrate to the lunar colony, in hopes of balancing out the Choicer high tech industry that provides most lunar jobs.

48. Like many American cities, El Paso keeps the disassembled cybernetic corpses of Lifer combat troops, killed during the War, in secure morgues for study and evidentiary reasons. The Familia is working with a body broker to smuggle Closer components across the border for use in their own cyborg shooters.

49. The APEX Watchfloor's early warning array detect the approach of a massive starship, of unknown configuration, on a rapid approach to Earth. By the time the three mile long craft is detected, it is already far inside the Damocles Line. Every free APEX squad in Earth space is scrambled to respond to the incursion.

50. Roe Athene, field commander of the Choicer forces, is planning an expedition into the Inner Necklace, a terrifyingly dangerous region of space at the Galactic Core. In addition to her own, elite troops, she has requested that APEX provide mission support and high-level metahumans as escorts.

51. While laying fiber-optic cables across the Great Lakes, contractors discover the broken remains of Liberator 16, a now legendary Lifer Closer who fell during the summer of 2065. Somehow, the fearsome cyborg is still alive, having remained in a coma-like stasis while awaiting rescue. Now the question becomes: what to with the downed cyborg? Can (and should) he be awakened?

52. Each year, the Lifer nation holds "Summer of Rescue" events at alpha cities across North America, including massive week-long protests in their capital cities of Boston and Pensacola. If Bastian operative Foxmoor has his way, 2107's Summer of Rescue events will be the last. A well

planned raid in a Lifer ammo cache in Alaska has provided the supersoldier with more than a dozen F-sticks, and Foxmoor plans to nuke the Lifer nation into oblivion with its own cached weapons.

53. Some opportunities are just too good to pass up. Sat intel has just picked up Faith Fourgun, an incredibly violent Lifer metahuman who's been deep underground since the Treaty was signed, crossing the Mexican border back into the United States. Her projected course takes her deep into Choicer Phoenix, and at her current flight speed, it'll be less than 14 minutes before she's out of sat-range.

54. A serial killer is murdering nanite enhanced models/prostitutes in New York City, ripping them limb from limb with superhuman strength. Evidence at the scene suggests a rogue Nanofeaster who's abandoned his species' preferred target and gone after much easier prey. Every Nanofeaster in the city is under suspicion, and many are being held in preventative detention legally (and publicly) viewed as little more than animalistic predators.

55. Four weeks of deep cover and psi-surveillance are blown to pieces, as an independent Choicer strike-team, the New Power, moves on a Colorado Lifer cell while APEX operatives watch in complete, dismayed shock.

56. There's a rumor circulating through the post-human grapevine that Metamorphosis North is offering a multi-million dollar bounty on an undamaged suit of Choicer "Black Lion" powered armor, so they can dissect the advanced suit's technology.

57. Simultaneous, multiple but low-intensity terror strikes across North America during the Summer of Rescue 2107 leave APEX overtaxed and exhausted. Operatives are having to leap from crisis to crisis, and go into battle before their wounds are anywhere near fully healed. Things show no sign of calming down, and intel points to a major Lifer assault before the end of summer, when Choicer and Fed-Gov troops are overtaxed and exhausted.

58. Fabrique Modern, a European weapons manufacturer, has announced the development and first successful test of the AM-2109 “Perseus” Heavy Laser. Barely much longer or heavier than an assault rifle, the Perseus boasts a range just as good as MN’s “Werewolf” sniper rifle, and might become the cutting edge APEX weapon for the new century.

59. What was supposed to be a precise raid by Mexican Familia troops on the Texas faction’s headquarters somehow goes wildly out of control. Civilian casualties number in the hundreds, as platoons of Texas Familia and Mexican Familia supersoldiers erupt in open warfare across the streets of Brownsville, TX.

60. The January 22nd Roe Day remembrances in Boston change forever when an embittered Lifer loyalist releases Nemesis Lifechain-derived bio-weapon on the assembled crowds. Hundreds of his own people die, but thousands of powerful, new metahumans are created.

61. Tennessee King’s Black Dream faction is actively recruiting metahumans, even creating combat types and powered heroes of their own from the most dedicated activists within their own ranks. Under their guidance, Black Dream is mutating from a special interest group into an emerging metahuman pseudo-nation.

62. Jelly, a famed Fluxminx Lifer security officer is invited to address a graduating class of Fluxminx APEX recruits. The APEX chain of command is torn between embracing one of the strongest, most successful members of the new species, and maintaining long-standing security policy.

63. Neo-Witch Midwife Delores Quintanilla is arrested in Mexico City for performing illegal abortions, and would of simply been deported without much media attention, if not for the fact that a search of her offices lead Mexican police to a major Familia-backed genemod smuggling ring. The midwife has been working with the Familia to smuggle Nymphette and other common Choicer



genemods into the country, possibly with the tacit acceptance of her superiors within the Covenant.

64. Full conversion cyborgs- including military Juggernaut Brutes- begin suffering fatal system crashes at an unprecedented rate. Within hours of the first deaths, medics realize that the industry standard artificial nerve fiber has several fatal flaws. Virtually every cyborg on the planet is at risk for death- fixing the situation will cost billions, if not more, and will require 'grounding' most military 'borgs.

65. Evolutionary biologists have noted genetic and physical similarities among Combat Types and other military post-humans, regardless of their faction of origin or creation method used. The current theory is human evolution is tending towards the Lifechain spontaneously, as long-dormant alleles in the human genome are finally allowed to flower.

66. Just weeks after being promoted to APEX One status, the powered exemplar Sara Concord resigns her APEX commission. In her letter of resignation, she decries the institutional prejudice against the Covenant, and the organization's hostility towards its Choicer allies, as demonstrated by squads like Witch Watch.

67. In addition to their standard equipment load, APEX has begun issuing any soldier with an enhanced physique unpowered melee weapons, specifically constructed to take advantage of their size and strength. APEX has hired Covenant fencers to train their enhanced troops in melee combat in hopes of minimizing civilian casualties during future engagements.

68. APEX intelligence has been trying (and failing) to get design specs for the new Lifer "Octagon" ECCM Hardsuit for the last two years. Supposedly a 22nd century upgrade of the already impressive "Tigerfly" the Octagon is designed to give the Lifer nation control of the electronic battlefield. The agency's reputation takes a catastrophic hit when its revealed in late 2107 that the Octagon is a Lifer lie- a perfectly crafted disinformation campaign designed

to expose leaks within the pseudo-nation and force APEX to expend resources on a wild-goose chase.

69. Some longstanding questions and myths about the Battle of Boston are exploded when a cache of war-letters are found in a Boston tenement scheduled for demolition. During the last battle of the War, a small APEX squad, cut off from the main body of their forces, took shelter in the building, and downloaded their thought diaries to external hard drives, which they cached in the basement. Though most of them died during the last battle, their recording survived.

70. Powered tourists are being warned away from Mexico, especially low- and mid-level post-humans. Familia genelabs are kidnapping metahumans and vivisectioning them in search of salable genetic material.

72. An underground fight club is discovered on APEX bases across the Midwest. Though the nightly brawls are shut down, the new martial arts style that's developed in these rings, a mix of Lifer and Choicer combat styles and Philosophies, is intriguing enough that rather than being sent for NJP (non-judicial punishment), the best fighters are now refining and teaching the technique.

73. The Nineteen Claws, a Bastian strike team, takes down the 13th Ghost of Babies Past in downtown Denver. They may have won the battle, but the civilian casualties are in the high dozens, and property damage tops the six million dollar mark. With this very public disaster, and the Claw's commander's chilling response that the dead "well, they're only monotheists." Witch Watch finally gets the funding it's been pushing for decades. Suddenly, anti-Bastian ops become a top APEX priority.

74. A Lifechained virus, possibly sentient, is spreading across North America's metahuman community. The virus overloads the victim's amygdala, causing uncontrolled aggression, especially sexual aggression. Controlled by alien instincts, some of the most powerful beings are driven to breed at any cost. Even the Powereds who would normally be called

upon to stop the outbreak of animalistic rape and murder can't trust themselves, not knowing if they're already infected.

75. An upscale boutique in New York begins (illegally) selling breast milk collected from Lifechained women, which has a price tag of more than \$700 a bottle. The milk is supposedly safe thanks to the pasteurization process, but is still capable of spreading the Lifespawn genome... and metahuman diseases.

76. The latest urban fad is 'shadow-catching' - snapping a covert digital photograph of a celebrity, Powered or priestess' shadow. For neo-pagan devotees of the hobby, it's a new kind of celebrity driven talismanic magic, for everyone else, it's just star-watching taken in a new direction. For security experts, it's a major hazard, as civilians come even closer to their targets than usual.

77. It starts small and ridiculous. Crimson Coast LTD begins pushing a line of shape-memory sex toys with shapeshifting capabilities and rudimentary dumb-AI. A month later, their Los Angeles office is firebombed by a Bastian black ops unit, and most their design staff is murdered. Searching for a reason, the FBI's forensics teams discover that the source code for the sex toys is identical to the highly classified OS used by Neo-Witch Midwife prosthetics.

78. Almost every kid in the Lifer-held enclaves owns a Dreamscape based AI baby, which they tend in their dreams and play with (in holographic form) during their waking life. Or at least they did until last night, when a Patriot Mechanic hacker 'killed' every virtual newborn in near-Earth space.

79. APEX's Psych-Ops division is under fire, and threatened with closure and a full Congressional

inquiry after its revealed they have manipulated unit assignments and used their emotion manipulation expertise to encourage romances between post-human soldiers. Their goal was the covert creation of a metahuman breeding program equal to the Lifer pseudo-nation's.

80. After a series of successful missions, the most senior member of the player's unit is offered a chance at a drill instructor slot in Texas. The assignment would be good for the PC's career, but at the cost of seeing him or her out of action for at least 9 months to 1 year. During this time, the character would have a chance to personally train several hundred first level recruits, including young metahumans.

81. American Customs agents, working with Snake Squad and Choice Squad Four, the two best anti-Lifer organs on the planet, trace funding for Lifer rescue-cells to Solomon Station, and are faced with a cross-planetary invasion of a completely insular society in order to bring the terrorist money-men to justice.



82. American Catholic Pope Thomas Augustine I dies in his sleep, motivating the first national election of a pontiff since the Treaty of Boston was signed. Millions of Am-Catholics descend on New York to cast their ballots and attend the ceremonies.

83. Waco, Texas' NEST is one of the most corrupt and problem-ridden in the nation. A two year investigation has traced the sale of scavenged cyber-components and stolen jewelry from War-era crime scenes back to rogue agents within the NEST, including some military-grade hardware.

84. During routine maintenance, advanced, nearly undetectable nanotech based surveillance equipment is discovered in about half the on-base housing at Ft. Meade. No one is sure exactly who put it there, why or even how or when.

85. There's some pretty convincing circumstantial evidence that both pseudo-nations are 'subcontracting' assassinations and bombings out to the Familia, the Nails and other major criminal organizations. That way, ideological crimes can masquerade as simple robberies or random street crimes, and might slip under APEX's radar.

86. A Philosophy-enhanced post human tagger answering to SHAGGY ORANGE MIRAGE! is using his invisibility and illusion casting powers to tag huge chunks of urban Chicago. His emotion-twisting holograms have turned rush hour traffic into a surreal psychotropic wonderland, and decent auto-drive



software is the only reason that casualties have been limited to broken bones, not fatalities.

87. China and the United States are competing to be the first nation to have an extra-solar state or province. China is rushing to establish the prosperous White Rivers Outcolony in the Southern Spiral Arm as a 'remote province', while the US is trying to entice the Laredo-Braxton Outcolony, near the Stonecutter home world to accept their offer of

statehood. National prestige, not to mention profitable trade agreements, are on the line.

88. As its cloaking devices fail sequentially, APEX early-warning stations detect a massive, unregistered space station in Mars orbit. SIGINT data from the unidentified station leads APEX to believe that it belonged to the star-goddess Artemis, before her death at Boston. An APEX strike team is scrambled from Damocles Base to seize the abandoned station, hopefully ahead of the Lifer recovery teams already en route.

89. A group of young Choicer combat types and post-humans in Cincinnati have made enemies- lots of 'em- in the local Lifer community by assuming traditionally Lifer war-names. The combat-tribe's MO is simple- defeat a Lifer combat type through a mix of cunning and superior firepower, unmask them and begin using the fallen Powered's war-name. Naturally, these kids have hundred thousand dollar bounties on their heads.

90. Three members of Snake Squad- Koil 4x4, Grey Mamba and CaleGun disappear after a drunken bender in Vegas. They'd broken protocol and gathered en masse, bragging about their identities as powered warriors to every one in Caesar's Palace. Have the Lifers finally paid out the million dollar bounty they've had on the heads of these three 'old reptiles'?

91. His name is Charles Longscale, but very few people know that. He's a male Fluxminx and one of the greatest masters of disguise on the planet. His specialty is committing atrocities, caught on secure, un-alterable, certified video. He's shapeshifted into CEOs and raped little girls, become Senators and shot drug dealers down for their stash, and has made several million dollars blackmailing his celebrity victims to cover up their supposed crimes. His current target? Managing Director of the Coalition for Life, Fairfax Dacoveney, which puts Longscale on a collision course with Dacoveney's bodyguard Jelly.

92. The insular Lifer culture has finally accepted that Patriot Mechanics aren't marked by the beast (even if the weird hands are uncannily similar to the prophecies of Revelations). Though there are plenty of adult Mechanic members of the pseudo-nation, many of whom served during the War, they have few "Rescue Mechanic" newborns, which the CFL is trying to change by encouraging in-utero Mechanic gene-mods and adoptions.

93. Samhain remembrances at Salem, MA reveal deepening rifts within the Covenant. Bastian attendees want the eerie, mournful ceremonies to force American Christians to confront their crimes against 17th century witches, and to remain a call for justice. Dianic Rite Wiccan believers want this year's events to finally lay the old ghosts to rest, both metaphorically and ceremonially.

94. A Familia gunslinger fresh across the border, goes on a rampage through the Los Angeles Enclave, killing more than 20 Lifer Combat-Types and nearly 100 civilians. His raid is unsanctioned and shocking in its brutality. The Familia gunslinger gets away clean, and his reasons for the atrocity are unknown... but every Lifer Powered he took down had Mexican-styled cybertech, so maybe it was all a pride thing.

95. APEX founder Coil was cashiered out of the military in the early 2030s, after a sex scandal involving his CO's wife... and mistress. The super-strong Powered always had a reputation as a lady's man, he never had any children of his own. However, a few weeks ago, genetic testing of a post-human APEX recruit reveals he is the grandson of the legendary powered, who just may be allowed to reclaim the Coil identity.

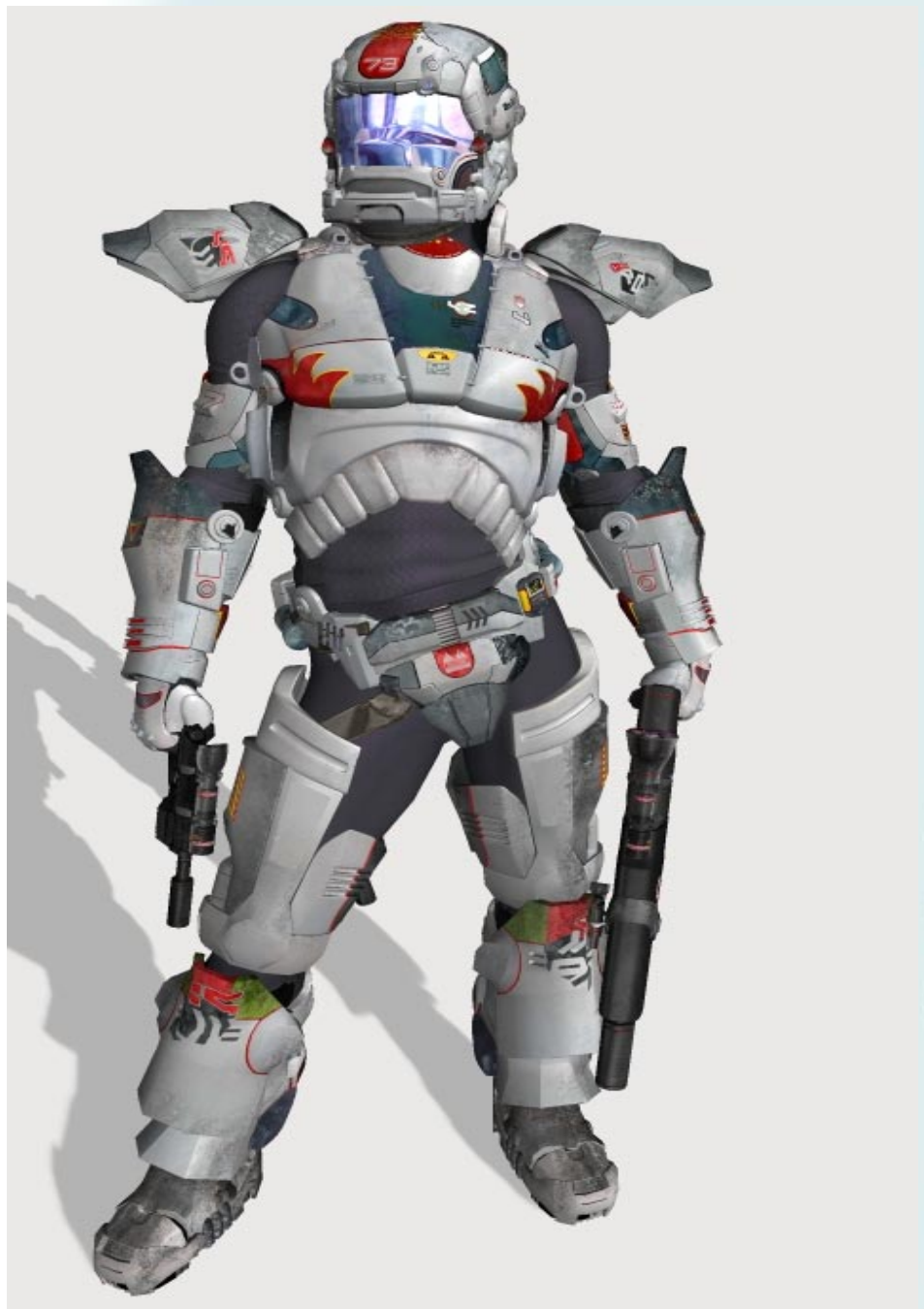
96. Citing violation after violation of the Treaty of Boston's terms, Choicer lawyers are doing their best to see Lifer political candidates banned from the 2108 election. The case is pending at the Supreme Court, and according to the whisper-stream, lawyers on all sides are targets for assassination.

97. A collection of urban big-game hunters are murdering Powered in alpha-cities across the nation. The Warfire League is organized, well funded, and communicates purely psionically, giving them great security. Individual hunters compete for points, taking down more and more powerful post-humans.

98. An untested nano-weapon is accidentally released at Lackland AFB, in San Antonio, violently merging Shell pilots with their machines, creating an entire air wing of hideously mutated full conversion bio-borgs. Of those that survive the transformation, many are too traumatized for further service, but a handful plan to return to APEX service.

99. Every Sky-Hydra aircraft still in active service is bathed in a thin film of blood. It's a feat only possible for an extremely high-level post-human, and the vandalism is obviously Lifer symbolism. The world holds its breath to see if this unknown Lifer demi-god will stop playing protest-pranks and does something worse.

100. Some losses are acceptable, even if they're monstrous. When the Abortion War threatens to reawaken, and Lifer metahumans engage their Choicer counterparts in a full scale battle for the first time since the Treaty was signed, hardliners within APEX push to implement the previously unthinkable "Slatewiper" contingency. As the most powerful post-humans on both sides clash, a nuclear strike will be called down on the city. Millions of Americans will die, but the tactical strike will gut both pseudo-nations.



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